

April 20, 1861 (Doc. 109)

109. SIMON CAMERON TO [HENRY KNOX CRAIG]¹

April 20/61^A

The Colonel of Ordnance will cause to be issued to Professor J. Henry of the Smithsonian Institute twelve muskets and 240 rounds of ammunition, for the protection of the Institute against lawless attacks.²

Simon Cameron
Secy of War

Folder 31, Box 39, Henry Papers, Smithsonian Archives.

1. Craig (1791-1869) was chief ordnance officer at the Ordnance Bureau in Washington. John H. Eicher and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford, California, 2001), pp. 63, 188; Washington City Directory, 1860, p. 211.

2. The order was probably in response to the events of the previous two days, when secessionists in Baltimore attacked regiments from

Pennsylvania and Massachusetts who were on their way to Washington. Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Symbol, Sword, and Shield: Defending Washington during the Civil War* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, 1991), pp. 22-24; Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950*, 2 vols. in 1 (1962; Princeton, 1976), 1:241; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, p. 285.

110. TO STEPHEN ALEXANDER

Washington April 26, 1861

Dear S---: I perhaps ought not to say anything in the present condition of affairs, considering the position I hold in regard to the country. We are all well and in as good spirits as the dark prospect before us will permit. The girls are quite cheerful and have not exhibited the least fear. They have, however, as yet been merely surrounded with the pomp and circumstances of the war,¹ and have experienced only a few of its inconveniences but have not been called upon to witness any of its horrors. "He laughs at scars who never felt a wound"² is an aphorism which may be applied to many who are panting for battle, as well as to those who are fanning the war spirit, or enjoying the excitement of the eventful times. There is an immense amount of madness in a latent condition in the public mind, which only requires an exciting occasion to break forth into actual mania. The paroxysm may be excited by an apparently trifling incident, the result of design or ignorance, but when once induced it is impossible to check its fury, unless with the effusion of blood.

What is the cause of the present state of the country? Is there any proper grounds for a civil war; are great and important principles to be settled by it? Is the progress of humanity to be accelerated by conquering