

John S. Mosby to Samuel Chapman

Washington, D.C., 4 June 1907.

Autograph letter signed, 2 pages + envelope.

June 4th 1907.

Dear Sam:

I suppose you are now back in Staunton. I wrote you about my disgust at reading the Reunion speeches: It has since been increased by reading Christian's report. I am certainly glad I wasn't there. According to Christian the Virginia people were the abolitionists & the Northern people were pro-slavery. He says slavery was "a patriarchal" institution – So were polygamy & circumcision. Ask Hugh if he has been circumcised. Christian quotes what the Old Virginians – said against slavery. True; but why didn't he quote what the modern Virginians said [*struck:* about] [*inserted:* in] favor of it – Mason, Hunter, Wise &c. Why didn't [*struck:* t] he state that a Virginia Senator (Mason) was the author of the Fugitive Slave law – & why didn't he quote The Virginia Code (1860) [*strikeout*] that made it a crime to speak against slavery, or to teach a negro to read the Lord's prayer. Now while I think as badly of slavery as Horace Greeley did I am not ashamed that my family were slaveholders. It was our inheritance – Neither am I ashamed that my ancestors were pirates & cattle thieves. People must be judged by the standard of their own age. If it was right to own slaves as property it was right to fight for it. The South went to war on account of slavery. South Carolina went to war – as she said in her [2] Secession proclamation – because slavery w^d. not be secure under Lincoln. South Carolina ought to know what was the cause for her seceding. The truth is the modern Virginians departed from the teachings of the Father's. John C. Calhoun's last speech had a bitter attack on M^f Jefferson for his amendment to the Ordinance of '87 prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory. [*struck:* Jo.] Calhoun was in a dying condition – was too weak to read it – So James M. Mason, a Virginia Senator, read it in the Senate about two weeks before Calhoun's death – Mch. 1850. Mason & Hunter not only voted against The admission of California (1850) as a free state but offered a protest against [*inserted:* it] wh. the Senate refused to record on its Journal Nor in the Convention wh. Gen. Taylor had called to from a Constitution for California, there were 52 Northern & 50 Southern

men – but it was unanimous against slavery -- But the Virginia Senator, with Ron Tucker & Co. were opposed to giving [*inserted: local*] self-government to California. Ask Sam Yost to give Christian a skinning. I am not *strikeout* ashamed of having fought on the side of slavery – a soldier fights for his country – right or wrong – he is not responsible for the political merits of the course he fights in.

Yours Truly

The South was my country.

Jno: S. Mosby

[*written across the top of page 1*]

In Feby. 1860 Jeff Davis offered [*inserted: a*] bill in the Senate wh. passed, making all the territories slave territory. (see Davis' book.) He was opposed to letting the people decide whether or not they w[*struck: ould*] [*inserted: ^d have*] slavery – W^m. A. Smith, President of Randolph Macon quit his duties as a teacher & in 1857-8-9-60 traveled all over Virginia preaching slavery & proving it was right by the bible.

[*envelope*]

Captain Sam Chapman

Staunton

Virginia

[*verso*]

Senator Jas. M. Mason was the author of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850; but the Ordinance 1787 for the government of the Northwestern Territory, contained in its amended form, as passed, the fugitive slave provision.

See Benton's Thirty Years, p 133.

Notes: Written on Department of Justice stationery. Christian is George Christian (see GLC 3293).

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