Charlotte Dixon County Tenn
Dec 28th 1862

Genl C. J. McRae
Dear Sir

My last letter to you was from Shelbyville Tenn of the 17th inst, in which I gave you a detailed account of the proceedings between myself and the Military authorities, & which I hope has reached you before this. From that you can form some idea of the trouble and annoyance that I have had to contend with in the last few weeks, with the other papers I sent you, was a copy of an order given me by Major Moore the chief of subsistence in Sparks Corps, and which was given to me, by order of Genl Sparks, (who by the bye, treated me very kindly and done all he could for me,) which order I now have with me, I thought when I reached this County a week ago, to be able to start the teams immediately with the Bacon, I found on my arrival here, that the Agent Mr Bell had that same day started some 18 or 20,000 lbs Bacon to Columbia, and among the wagons was three that had promised to haul for me to Ala, so I needed one more team to make up the number that I would want, and as I could not hire, neither for love or money I had to buy one, for which I had to give a very high price, as everything of that kind is selling at enormous prices, but it was a very superior lot of mules, good harness and good wagon I bought the team at $1500, for which I gave my note at thirty days, as I did not have the money, (And I hope you will send me enough to pay for the team and some more for other expenses which have been necessarily incurred,) The mules in the team are worth in that section of Ala $250. apiece the Gentleman from whom I bought the team, had been offered the day before I bought them $225. cash apiece for the mules, without the harness or wagon, but he would not sell them until after he seen me and had given me the refusal, as he said he did not wish to sell the mules without selling the harness and wagon with them, I said the ~~gentlem~~

Gentleman who had made the offer to buy the Mules, the next day after I had bought them; and he offered me the same price he had made the Gentleman from whom I had made the purchase, but I would not sell, as I knew very well, I could not do ~~not do~~ near so well again in buying, for the reason that there were none to be bought, and if there had been, I could not have found any near so good, and would have had to pay as much for them as I had paid for these, the Waggon was loaded with flour when I purchased, which the owner wanted me to take also, but I would not do so, but got Mr Bell to buy for the Government, and as I thought I could go on up to Columbia with Mr Bell and get my Bacon up there out of the lot which he had sent up, I let the Waggon haul up the load of flour that was in it, Bell and I then started for Columbia, at which place we arrived by the time the train of waggons did. I told Major Bulkley the post Commissary that I wanted the Amount of Bacon that my order, "which I showed him" called for, he refused to let me have it in Columbia, and said that I must come back to Charlotte with Mr Bell and load my Waggons in that place out of the next lot the Agent would have there, so I could do nothing else but start my teams back to this place, where they will arrive today, and wait until the 10.000 lbs Bacon can be gathered up, which I hope will be in three or four days I made them pay me for the hauling my team had done for them. And they if justice was done you, should be made to pay you for at least 4 weeks detention in getting the Bacon down to Ala, as the teams could have gone there, and been back a week ago, had they not been stopped in the first place, I have an order from the Commander of the post at Columbia to let my Waggons pass through that place with Bacon, and that Agents & Officers in the Confederate States Service were to see that the Waggons were not to be impressed and that the Bacon was not to be interfered with until it reached its destination, The only thing I fear now is that the Federals may drop in on us here and capture the whole concern teams Bacon & all, but I hope our people will send a force here in a day or two to protect their Agents in getting out supplies, as they promised me they would do so,

Whilst in Murfreesboro week before last, I found a No 1 Moulder who promised to let me know through Major Ledbetter of that place by the first of this week whether or not he would go to Selma to work in the foundry, he is highly recommended as being an excellent moulder and perfectly steady, The reason why he could not give me an answer when I saw him was, that a Mr Spence who owns a small foundry in that Town had spoken to him a few days previous, that he wanted him to work for him awhile, he had been working for Spence previously, but he told me if he could not get a permanent job, he would not work for Spence, I told him that you would ~~not~~ give him as good wages as you were giving any moulder, and work for two years or longer if he suited, I think it more than likely he will go to Selma, Major Ledbetter will write you by him, I also heard of an excellent machinist who lived in Murfreesboro, and called at his house to see him, but he was not in Town, had gone off on some business, and would be back in a few days, I requested Major L. to hunt him up and get him to go to Selma also, told him to say to him that he would get the same wages that you was paying other men who were employed in the same business, Major L thought he would be able to get him, I go down tomorrow to see if I can get some negro moulders and blacksmiths from a Mr Lixin who has been running a furnace in this County, but has stopped it now, I hope to hear from Knight the Roll Turner & the Puddlers who used to work at our old place, in a day or two, I will try and get some one to go through to the mill tomorrow or next day, and see them for me, and get them to come up here and see me themselves, I think if I can get to see them, I can get them to go down & work for you, It is a heavy drag to get negroes as their owners are anxious to keep them at home as long as there is any probability of our forces holding this Country, I will keep trying however as long as I can find any & I may succeed after awhile,

If you do not want the team I bought they will suit Col Boykin, as they are No 1 Mules, and he wants some, so he told me when I was down there. H.H.E.

Yours Very Respectfully
H. H. Ermin

H. H Erwin

Dec 28th /63

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