

Accession No. M1981-1010  
Bruce Collection  
Box 2, Folder 59

[COPY of a letter from Henry Bruce, Sr. to Henry Bruce, Jr., April 1854]

Fleming County [Kentucky] April 29th 1854 [April 29, 1854]

Dear Henry,

your letter enclosing an inventory of the various articles purchased by your Sister Ellen (or rather I ought to have said taken at the appraisal [appraisement]) came to hand by Wednesdays Mail

and you request that I should write you immediately on the subject of your Mother's present health. it is improved considerably since I wrote last though she is very feeble and yesterday had one of her frequent attacks of headach [headache]. I doubt whether it is strictly lawful for widows to take property at the appraisalment price especially more than one third

I was once tolerable well acquainted with the law and duty of Executives and administrators having acted in that capassity [capacity] and if the law remains as is then was I have never seen or heard of any alteraticion [alteration] the directicion [direction] to Executives and Administrators was, that whether it be for the payments of debt or not they should sell on a reasonable credit all the property that is liable to perish, be consumed or rendered worse by keeping and after the debts are paid the widow is entitled to half thecirplus [the surplus] if there is not children and if there is a child or Children she is to have one third only, and there is a difference in the opinions of lawyers whether or not the widow could take anything at the appraisalment [appraisement] as tis [it is] presumable that the property would bring more if exposed to sale, though I believe it is right and lawful too that a widow should have her interest at the appraisalment price if she preferred it. I thought it probable that you might need this paper you enclosed me to present to the commissioners on a final settlement of your administracion [administration] accounts

I believe I did not tell you before that I hired out two or my Negro boys and curtailed my farming very much and reduced my stock and don't intend to raise more horses, and sell the coalts [colts] in time to wean them and yesterday I engaged two Mules Coalts [Colts] at \$60 each and have offered for those I may have next year \$55 close of the season, your Brother James has engaged his at that price, I think it is better than to raise them I only raised about a ton of hemp last crop from 10 acres, and James made less from about 10 acres, and your Brother George raised in about the same proportion [proportion] per acre. he sold his at 6 dollars and James sold last week at 6 ½ dollars per hundred I have mine on hand and expect it will be higher yet, perhaps get above seven dollars as tis [it is] very scarce

I am astonished to find that a large majority of the southern [southern] members in Congress is in favor of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise Law (so called) and the law passed in 1850 for the apprehencion [apprehension] of Fugitives which was much opposed by the people of the free states in general tho [though] reluctantly submitted to will of course be repealed if the Missouri Act is. and you know the North has and ever will have the majority of members in Congress and the slave holders will never have another act passed for their benefit. and you may expect to see more agitation [agitation] on the Slavery question than ever was before. ain't it somewhat singular that Douglas [Frederick Douglass?], a man from a free state should be the author of this disturbance. I suspect that his object is to influence the souther voaters [southern voters] of boath [both] parties to Support him for next President. the Northern Representatives in Congress never will consent that Slavery shall be admitted in any Territory that is now Free, and Mister Clay [Henry Clay?] said emphatically that he never would consent to it and he you know was not often wrong on any subject

I would prefer that Slaves should be admitted and held in every state than to exist as it does, and I beleave [believe] it was a bad policy to admit negroes to be brought to the Continent especially

as Slaves, and I could wish there never had been a Black Man in these united States, if ever the union is desolved I beleave [believe] that Slavery will be the prominent cause

you know the southern people is very sensitive and jealous on the subject of Slavery, and notwithstanding the Federal Constitution allows every Five Negroes to be equal to three White voters which you must believe is very repugnant to the feelings of the people generally of the no Slave holding States, yet it appears that the Slave holders are not willing that they should say or do anything against the further extencion [extention] of Slavery and all must or ought to admit that the will of the majority ~~eg~~ ought [ought] to govern. and I believe there is intelligence and virtue enough in the majority of the people to act right on any subject when correctly informed, and not misled by designing demogogs [demagogy] which sometimes cause the people greatly to err. I am much more reconciled on hearing your version of Doctor McMillins account I had heard that it was \$500 all for medical services I had supposed that any division of the Covington [Kentucky] property that Ellen would get the dwelling house. and that it would rent for about \$300 a year, and if so she would have less trouble and probably make more than she could from the Farm, and I concur in your opinion that she ought not to live in town to raise her Children and I want you to rest satisfied that I never have nor never expect to feel like you have done, or will recommend any course for her to pursue that you believe is not for her benefit. though I could wish she could own some of the Negroes. when I wrote you last I did not recollect the precise amount of Jerrard Morgans Note, I have not the article including the various transfers made by Woodson Morgan and find that note to be \$767 and dated on the First day of August 1835 [August 1, 1835] to bear 10 percent interest till the fourteenth day of May 1843 [May 14, 1843] the time the Note became due, which is seven years and upwards of nine months which would ~~leave at~~ have at the time due been about \$1300, as I said before of that sum I never received a cent and I suppose J.S. Morgan got the benefit of that entire Note. I wish you would inquire of Jerrard Morgan what he recollects about it

J.S. Morgan withheld from me one payment on one of James Morgans Notes that of course I presume James has no knowledg [knowledge] of

we had Snow hear [here] on Monday Morning the 17<sup>th</sup> instant about an inch deep and yesterday another snow fell nearly an inch deep, some peaches is yet alive, and very few apple Blooms this year our crop of Apples is almost gone by reason of rotting rather more than usual when I began to write I did not think I should more than fill one side of a half sheet though I have kept on scribbling you see till nearly three sides is blackened, though tis [it is] a task to compose my mind to write on any subject. besides the pain in my hip when long sitting annoy me considerably if Tulley had not owned or remembered that he got \$300 of J.S. Morgan it might have been an entire loss to Woodson. the Doctor is quite industrious [industrious] and the Masons has began his house. all well as in usual tender our respects to your Aunt and to Mary and the Children and accept the sincear [sincere] for yourself of your afflicted Father

Henry Bruce

I felt truly sorry for Gilbert he said you told him to stay as long as he pleased but he could not feel satisfied under the circumstances to remain any longer under existing circumstances. tell your Mother in law that we would be pleased to see her hear [here] this spring also Mary and Polene [Pauline?]