

Suff.<sup>o</sup> Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>. 1860.

Dear Bro.

I thank the good Lord for having spared us all to see another Christmas-day. It is remarkably quiet in Suff.<sup>o</sup> to-day, and I feel that I could not spend a portion of it more to my satisfaction than to sit down by the fireside and write you a letter. The day carries me back to many circumstances and events both melancholy and pleasurable, and tho' I am growing old and losing my relish for many things that used to interest and amuse me, yet I cannot help feeling somewhat youthful and merry about Christmas times. It no doubt is natural and peculiar to our constitutions to feel so. We should like very much to have you, and sister Judith, and all of your children with us to-day, to sit down to an old-fashioned dinner and talk about old-times; but so it is, we are deprived of this pleasure, and the best we can do

is to converse a little on paper. I  
suppose you are all safely quartered at  
your new-home, and I truly hope, well  
pleased with the same. You certainly have  
acted wisely in providing a home for  
your family, and retiring from the confer-  
ence. You have had your day, and spent  
the strength and vigor of your manhood  
in trying to do good; and no doubt  
but that you look back with thrilling  
emotions at the success of your labors  
in the vineyard of the Lord. You will  
yet be useful and capable of doing much  
good as a local minister, and the cul-  
tivation and improvement of your farm  
will give you plenty of exercise and em-  
ployment. When I was about your age  
I could do ~~about~~ as good a day's  
work as I ever did, but when a man  
gets to my age, he finds himself going  
down hill very fast. We should like to  
pay you a visit when the weather gets  
mild and pleasant again, which we  
cannot expect until next Spring or Summer.  
I find the chimney-corner to be the best



place for old people. You and sister  
Judith must visit us, and in the mean  
time let the girls come down and spend  
some of their time with us and their old  
acquaintances. Suff: looks about as  
usual, dull and full of drones, who  
do nothing, and yet eat up all the honey.

The Methodist and the Christian churches  
are about finished, and I suppose we  
may expect better times in a spiritual  
way than heretofore. As to my own  
part, I have nothing to do with any  
of them. People are making loud com-  
plaints about the disturbed condition  
of the country, and the scarcity of money:  
and many think the dissolution of the  
Union inevitable. Now this is a great  
noise for nothing. My word for it,  
the dispute between the N. & the S. will  
be settled, reconciled, and made satis-  
factory to both parties, in less than  
60 days. The negro question will be  
at rest for at least 100 years to  
come, and we shall have glorious,  
peaceable, prosperous, and happy times again -

So do not be uneasy about your funds; they are perfectly safe - go ahead and fear no danger - I must now close, by asking if your oysters got safely to hand! I attended carefully to your order myself, and had the bucket sent on Monday morning the 24<sup>th</sup> - Any further orders will be promptly and cheerfully attended to.

This leaves us all well and I trust it may find you and yours the same.

Our family is small at this time, comprising Cornelius and his wife, Mary and Henry and the old lady and myself.

Do accept the assurances of us all for the present, future and eternal welfare of you, Sister Judith and all the children. Farewell. Write me as often as you can, and I will try to drop you a line every now and then.

Yrs. Very affectionately  
Henry Bidwell





Rev. Jas. A. Riddick  
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