

Missouri Black Soldier to His Daughters, and to the Owner of One of the Daughters
[Benton Barracks Hospital, St. Louis, Mo. September 3, 1864]

My Children I take my pen in hand to rite you A few lines to let you know that I have not forgot you and that I want to see you as bad as ever now my Dear Children I want you to be contented with whatever may be your lots be assured that I will have you if it cost me my life on the 28th of the mounth. 8 hundred White and 8 hundred blacke solders expects to start up the rivore to Glasgow and above there thats to be jeneraled by a jeneral that will give me both of you when they Come I expect to be with, them and expect to get you both in return. Dont be uneasy my children I expect to have you. If Diggs dont give you up this Government will and I feel confident that I will get you Your Miss Kaitty said that I tried to steal you But I'll let her know that god never intended for man to steal his own flesh and blood. If I had no cofidence in God I could have confidence in her But as it is If I ever had any Confidence in her I have none now and never expect to have And I want her to remember if she meets me with ten thousand soldiers she [will?] meet her enemy I once [thought] that I had some respect for them but now my respects is worn out and have no sympathy for Slaveholders. And as for her cristianantty I expect the Devil has Such in hell You tell her from me that She is the frist Christian that I ever hard say that aman could Steal his own child especially out of human bondage

You can tell her that She can hold to you as long as she can I never would expect to ask her again to let you come to me because I know that the devil has got her hot set againsts that that is write now my Dear children I am a going to close my letter to you Give my love to all enquiring friends tell them all that we are well and want to see them very much and Corra and Mary receive the greater part of it you sefves and dont think hard of us not sending you any thing I you father have a plenty for you when I see you Spott & Noah sends their love to both of you Oh! My Dear children how I do want to see you

[*Spotswood Rice*]

[*Spotswood Rice*] to My Children, [3 Sept. 1864], enclosed in F. W. Diggs to Genl. Rosecrans, 10 Sept. 1864, D-296 1864, Letters Received, series 2593, Department of the Missouri, U.S. Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393 Pt. 1, National Archives. The first fourteen lines of the letter appear to be in Private Rice's handwriting, but the remainder is in another hand. Rice, a tobacco roller and the slave of Benjamin Lewis, had enlisted in early February 1864 at Glasgow, Missouri. On the date of this letter, he was hospitalized with chronic rheumatism. (Service record of Spottswood Rice, 67th USCI, Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations: Civil War, series 519, Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives.)

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I received a letter from Cariline telling me that you say I tried to steal to plunder my child away from you now I want you to understand that Mary is my Child and she is a God given rite of my own and you may hold on to her as long as you can but I want you to remember this one thing that the longer you keep my Child from me the longer you will have to burn in hell and the quicker you'll get there for we are now making up a bout one thousand black troops to come up through and want to come through Glasgow and when we come we be to Copperhead rebels and to the Slaveholding rebels for we don't expect to leave them there root nor branch but we think however that we that have Children in the hands of you devils we will try your [virtues?] the day that we enter Glasgow I want you to understand Kitty Diggs that where ever you and I meet we are enemies to each other I offered once to pay you forty dollars for my own Child but I am glad now that you did not accept it Just hold on now as long as you can and the worse it will be for you you never in your life before I came down here did you give Children any thing not any thing whatever not even a dollar's worth of expenses now you call my children your property not so with me my Children is my own and I expect to get them and when I get ready to come after Mary I will have about a power and authority to bring her away and to execute vengeance on them that holds my Child you will then know how to talk to me I will assure that and you will know how to talk right too I want you now to just hold on to her if you want to if your conscience tells that's the road go that road and what it will bring you to Kitty Diggs I have no fears about getting Mary out of your hands this whole Government gives cheer to me and you cannot help your self

Spotswood Rice⁽²⁰⁾

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