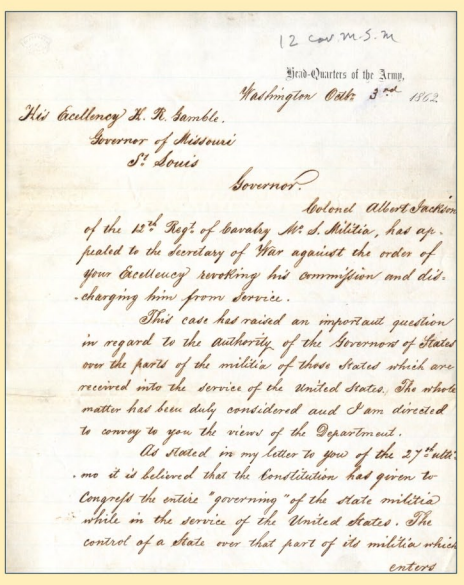
DIVIDED LOYALTIES
CIVIL WAR DOCUMENTS FROM THE
MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES

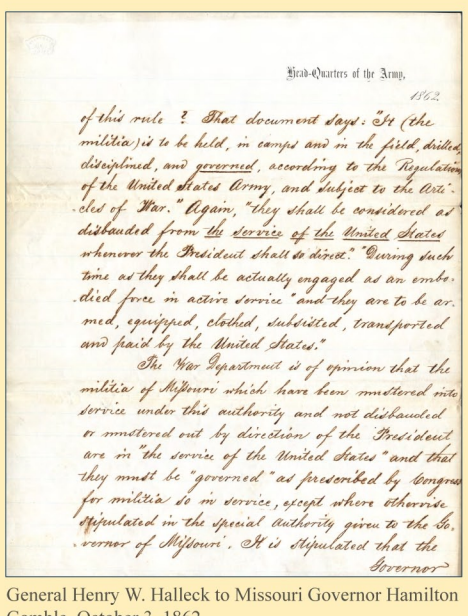
UNION TROOPS AT ODDS OVER SLAVERY

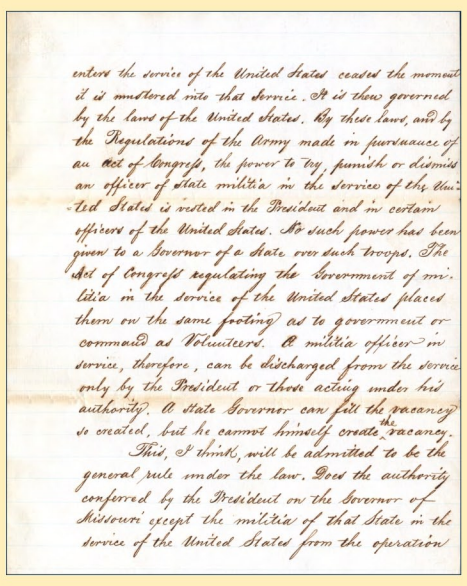
WHO IS IN CHARGE?

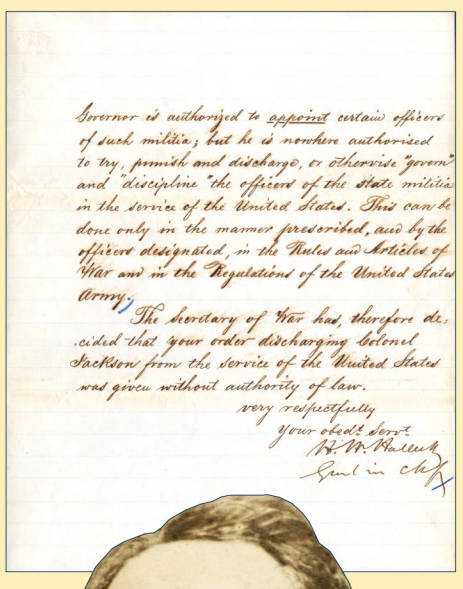
Despite the fact that they fought on the same side of the war effort, state-controlled Union troops and federally-controlled Union troops were often at odds with each other. Missouri officials believed the Enrolled Missouri Militia was accountable only to the laws of the State of Missouri. However, federal officials asserted that state troops must answer to federal laws.

This disagreement became a problem, especially as it related to slavery. Federal authorities in Missouri often aided escaped slaves and sometimes forced slave owners to free their slaves. Because slavery remained legal in Missouri until 1865, state officials would not free slaves and often tried to return escaped slaves to their owners.



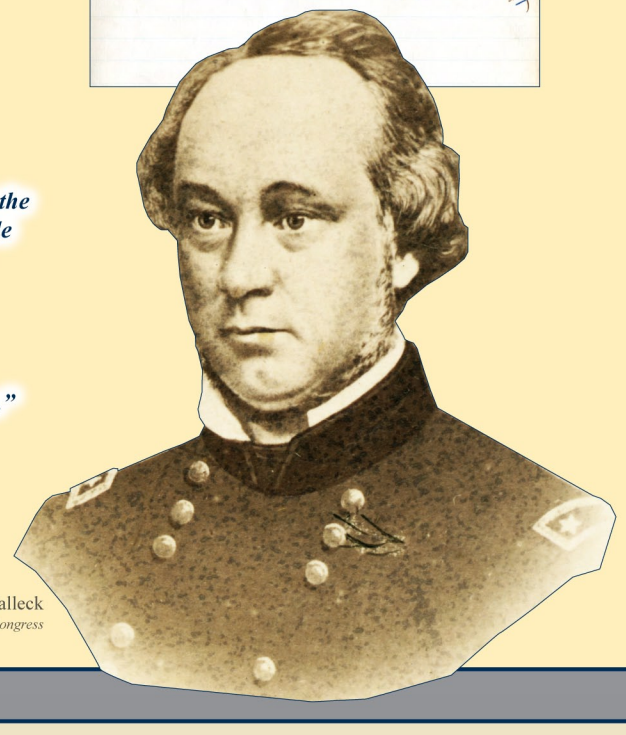




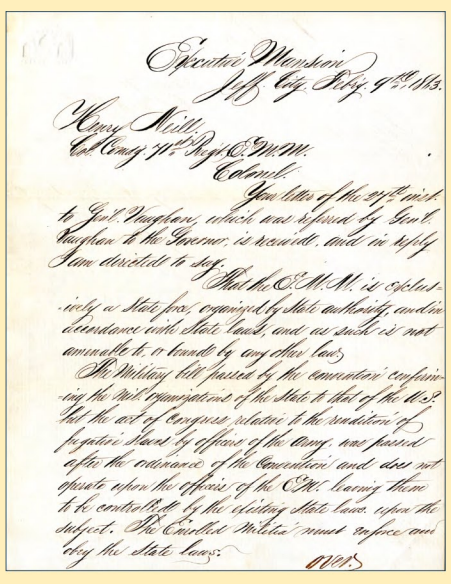


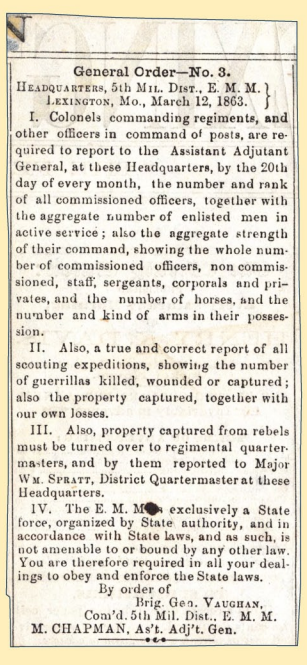
General Henry W. Halleck to Missouri Governor Hamilton Gamble, October 3, 1862.
Missouri State Archives

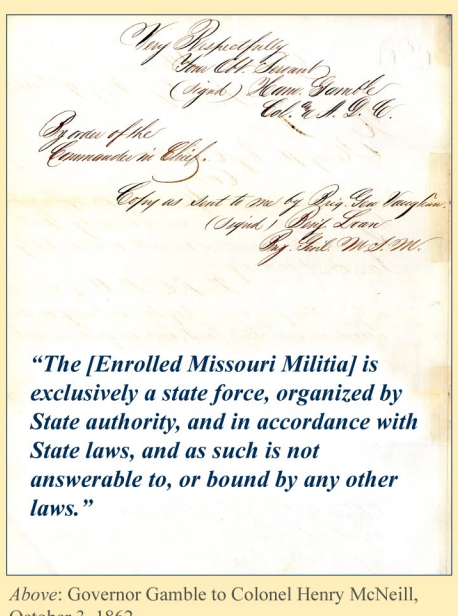
"The Constitution has given to Congress the entire 'governing' of the state militia while in the service of the United States. The control of the State over that part of its militia, which enters the service of the United States ceases the moment it is mustered into that service. It is then governed by the laws of the United States."



General Henry W. Halleck
Library of Congress



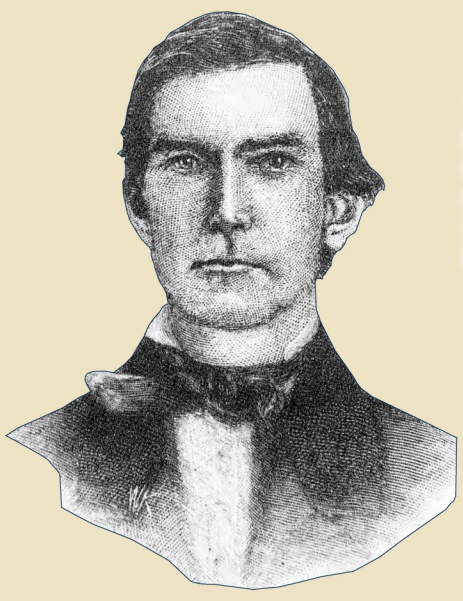




"The [Enrolled Missouri Militia] is exclusively a state force, organized by State authority, and in accordance with State laws, and as such is not answerable to, or bound by any other laws."

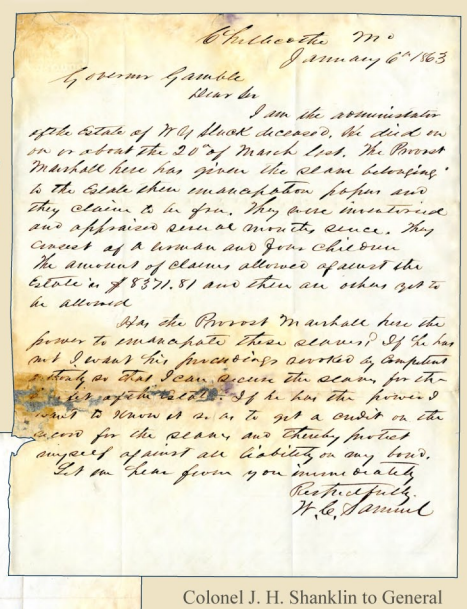
Above: Governor Gamble to Colonel Henry McNeill, October 3, 1862.
Left: General Order No. 3 from the Headquarters of the 5th Military District in Lexington, Missouri, March 12, 1863.
Missouri State Archives

SETTING SLAVES FREE

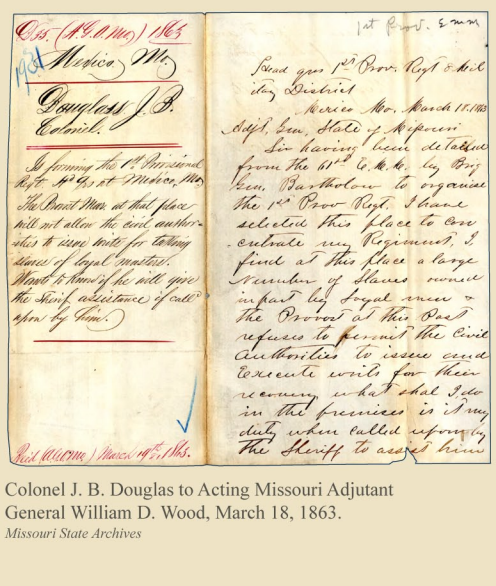


Confederate Brigadier General William Slack was killed in the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas in March 1862.
Missouri State Archives

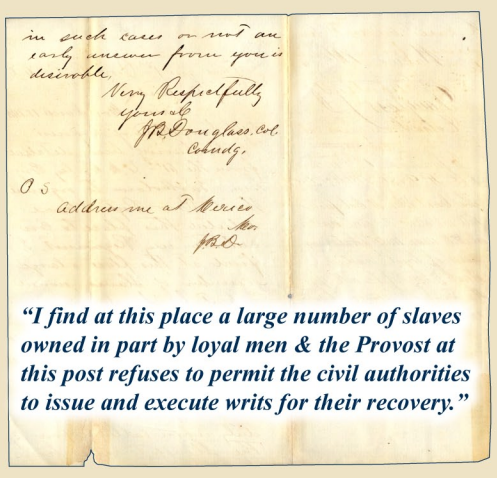
"The Provost Marshal here has given the slaves belonging to the estate [of William Slack] their emancipation proper and they claim to be free. . . . Has the Provost Marshal the power to emancipate these slaves?"



Colonel J. H. Shanklin to General Willard P. Hall, November 5, 1862.
Missouri State Archives

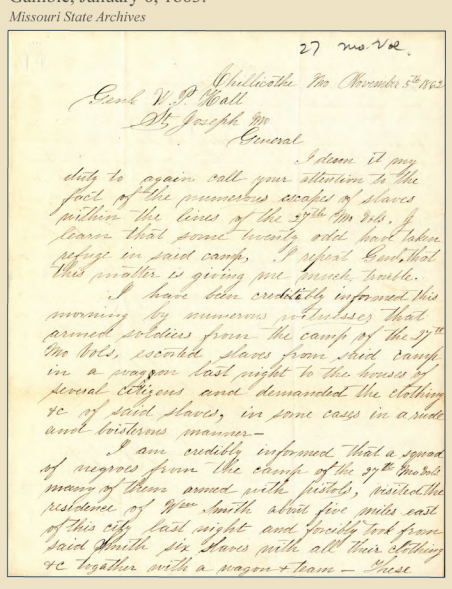


Colonel J. B. Douglas to Acting Missouri Adjutant General William D. Wood, March 18, 1863.
Missouri State Archives

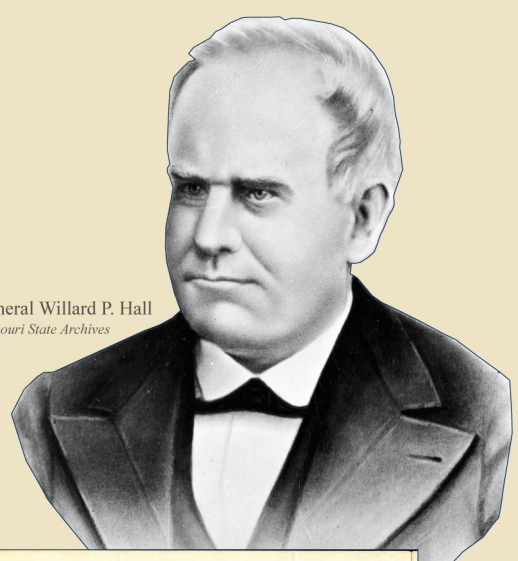


"I find at this place a large number of slaves owned in part by loyal men & the Provost at this post refuses to permit the civil authorities to issue and execute writs for their recovery."

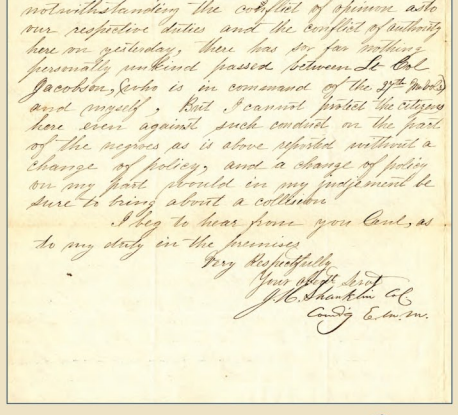
W. C. Samuel to Missouri Governor Hamilton Gamble, January 6, 1863.
Missouri State Archives

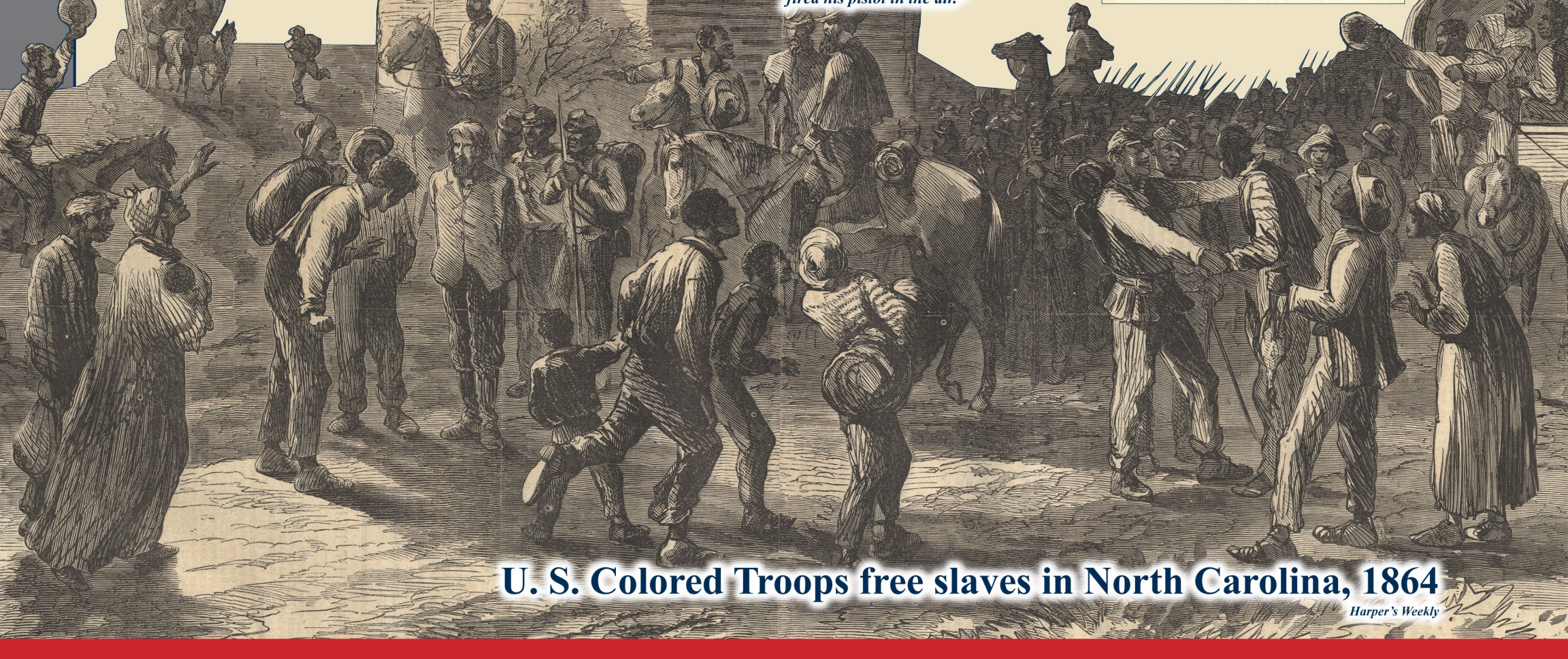


"I am credibly informed that a squad of negroes from the camp of the 27th [Missouri Volunteers], many of them armed with pistols, visited the residence of [William] Smith about five miles east of [Chillicothe] last night and forcibly took from said Smith six slaves with all their clothing, etc. together with a wagon and team. These negroes acted rudely and one of them, after threatening to shoot Smith, fired his pistol in the air."



General Willard P. Hall
Missouri State Archives





U. S. Colored Troops free slaves in North Carolina, 1864
Harper's Weekly

1861 - 1865