

## “Social Studies / History Activity” “African-American Soldiers”

### **Background**

Approximately 179,000 African Americans served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Federal Law, however, prevented them from serving in the United States Army during the first years of the war. While the Lincoln Administration struggled with emancipation, Gen. John C. Fremont, in Missouri, and Gen. David Hunter, in South Carolina, emancipated slaves in their respective states. Fremont and Hunter’s proclamations were eventually overturned by Abraham Lincoln. On July 17, 1862, Congress passed the Second Confiscation and Military Act, which allowed Lincoln to authorize enlistment of African Americans into the military; however, Lincoln did not exercise this authority until the passage of his Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

Although men of African descent were not allowed to officially enlist in the United States Army, by early fall of 1862 multiple African American regiments were raised throughout the country. Jim Lane, appointed as Commissioner for Recruiting in the Department of Kansas, authorized Capt. James Williams and Henry Seaman on August 4, 1862 to enlist black and white men into service. Lane began organization of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry. In October 1862, five companies from the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored successfully engaged a larger force of Rebels at the Battle of Island Mound. The 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored was officially mustered in as a battalion on January 13, 1863.

While African Americans enlisted as soldiers, they were not treated equally compared to white soldiers. African American soldiers were initially paid \$10 per month, from which \$3 was automatically deducted for clothing. White soldiers received \$13 per month, with no clothing allowance deducted. Unequal treatment lowered morale among African American troops. Williams reported to Col. Charles W. Blair, post commander at Fort Scott that, “My men have never yet received our cut of Bounty or of pay although they have now been in the Service nearly 10 Months; While other troops about us have been regularly paid.”

In response to the growing numbers of African American soldiers in the Union Army and President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, Jefferson Davis issued General Orders, No. 111. His proclamation authorized the execution of Union officers commanding African American soldiers, and the return of African American slaves in the Union Army to the state in which they belong. Despite these conditions, thousands of African American men joined the service. By the end of the war, roughly 10% of the men in the Union Army were of African descent. 19,000 African American men served in the United States Navy, and nearly 40,000 African American men died during the war.

## **Task**

This task is designed for use at the fourth, eighth and high school grade levels. Questions and activities corresponding with the respective levels are located with each activity. Teachers are encouraged to use or adapt the provided sample questions for their individual classroom. Students are required to watch a five minute clip from the 1989 movie *Glory*, which directly connects with Jefferson Davis' General Orders, No. 111. Students will reflect on the motivations and hardships African American Soldier's faced in the Civil War. Next, they will be asked to read Jefferson Davis' General Orders, No. 11 and answer corresponding questions. Students will be presented with correspondence between the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry and Thomas Livingston, a Missouri Bushwhacker. The correspondence explores the application of Davis' order. Students will also read correspondence between Union officials that discuss the treatment of African Americans as soldiers and will discuss the difference in pay white soldiers received compared to African-American troops. Students are expected to provide verbal or written feedback regarding the primary source documents.

## **Show-Me Knowledge Standards Addressed**

- SS 2 (knowledge of) continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world
- SS 6 (knowledge of) relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions
- SS 7 (knowledge of) the use of tools of social science inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps, documents)

## **Show-Me Performance Standards Addressed**

- 1.2 conduct research to answer questions and evaluate information and ideas
- 1.5 comprehend and evaluate written, visual and oral presentations and works
- 2.3 exchange information, questions and ideas while recognizing the perspective of others
- 3.1 identify problems and define their scope and elements
- 4.1 explain reasoning and identify information used to support decisions

## **Background information about the film *Glory* and the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts**

*Glory* was a film directed by Edward Zwick in 1989 starring Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, and Morgan Freeman. The film depicts the experiences of the men of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, an all-black volunteer company and its commander Robert Gould Shaw.

The men who comprised the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts were all freedmen, with 75% of them being from Free states. There were several notable members of the regiment including Frederick Douglass's two sons Charles and Lewis Douglass and William Harvey Carney who would be the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor. Most of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts had some education or were at least literate enough to read and write. The regiment was initially used as

laborers and was put on fatigue duty as opposed to combat status of white soldiers. They dug trenches, cooked, and completed other physical tasks.

Shaw was an abolitionist; however, he did not support equality of black and white men. The men in the 54th were initially given unequal pay; they were paid only \$7, where their white counterparts were paid \$13. The men in the regiment were also made aware of Jefferson Davis's Order No. 111, which said that any black soldier captured by the Confederate army would not be considered a prisoner of war and would be executed. These men would have to prove themselves through fire and blood and did so at the battles of Fort Wagner and Olustee. Their courageous efforts did not go unnoticed and General Strong said, "The 54th did well and nobly," after the attack at Ft. Wagner.

### **Activities**

**Have students read Jefferson Davis' General Orders, No. 111 and watch a short clip from the film *Glory*.**

#### **Jefferson Davis' General Orders, No. 111 (See Resource Packet)**

-Full text of the order is available online

<http://www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen/pow.htm>

#### **Watch film clip**

- Time clip 23:50 to 28:35

Section available on youtube.com

\*Without closed captions

[[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_TSrug2ZLA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_TSrug2ZLA)]

\*With closed captions

[[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao4KYGTOP\\_Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao4KYGTOP_Q)]

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **(4<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

- *Why did the men remain in camp over night?*
- *Explain why the men would want to fight for the Union in the Civil War.*
- *Tell how this treatment was different from white Union soldiers.*
- *Give the reasons you would have stayed in camp.*
- *What does Jefferson Davis order to be done with officers under the command of Benjamin F. Butler?*
- *What does Jefferson Davis order to be done with slaves captured in arms?*
- *What is the significance of order 4 in the proclamation?*
- *How is this proclamation different from the one quoted in the movie *Glory*?*

#### **(8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

- *Explain why the men would want to fight for the Union in the Civil War.*

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<http://www.ozarkscivilwar.org>

- *What does Jefferson Davis order to be done with freed slaves captured in arms?*
- *Tell how this treatment was different from white Union soldiers.*
- *Write what the Union officer said about the African American soldiers in his letter to his mother.*
- *How is this proclamation different from the one quoted in the movie Glory?*
- *How would someone know if the slave had been freed?*
- *What do you think happened to freed slaves captured in arms?*

**(High School)**

- *Evaluate why the men wanted to fight for the Union in the Civil War?*
- *Speculate on what would happen if the African American soldiers were caught in the Union Army?*
- *Explain how this treatment was different from white Union soldiers.*
- *Analyze the reasons why the Union officer wrote to his mother about the African American soldiers.*
- *How is this proclamation different from the one quoted in the movie Glory?*
- *What events, people or actions influenced Jefferson Davis to give this proclamation?*
- *Why would the Confederate States of American care if African American soldiers served in the Union Army?*
- *What is the national significance of this proclamation?*

**Read Correspondence between Col. James Williams and Thomas Livingston. (See Resource Packet)**

-Williams and Livingston exchanged six letters discussing terms of prisoner exchange

Discussion Questions

**(4<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

- *List Thomas Livingston's reasons for not exchange the African American soldiers.*
- *What did James Williams threaten to do if the African American soldiers were harmed or sent to southern states?*
- *What happened to the African American soldier in Livingston's camp?*
- *Explain why you think one of Livingston's men killed the soldier.*

**(8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

- *List Thomas Livingston's reasons for not exchange the African American soldiers.*
- *What was Col. Williams' reaction to Livingston's first letter?*
- *What happened to the African American soldier in Livingston's camp?*
- *Explain why you think one of Livingston's men killed the soldier.*
- *Tell why you think Livingston either did or did not follow the orders issued by Jefferson Davis.*

**(High School)**

- *List Thomas Livingston's reasons for not exchanging the African American soldiers.*

- *What did James Williams threaten to do if the African American soldiers were harmed or sent to southern states?*
- *Explain what Livingston implying in the May 23<sup>rd</sup> letter, "I understand that you have a confederate Soldier in your hands that is somewhat crippled if it suits you, you can send him for one as I want you to have able bodied men in your possession."*
- *Identify what happened to the African American soldier in Livingston's camp.*
- *Compare Livingston's actions to the orders issued by Jefferson Davis?*

**Read Correspondence between Col. James Williams and Thomas Livingston about treatment of African American soldiers and equal pay. (See Resource Packet)**

**View another clip from *Glory***

- Time: 6:10-9:00min
- [[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v\\_bACdkiVNU&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_bACdkiVNU&feature=related)]

Discussion Questions

**(4<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

- *Why did James Williams write the letters?*
- *How long had it been since the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored had been paid for their service?*
- *If you were one of the soldiers in the 1st Kansas Colored, what would you do if you didn't get paid?*
- *What did Williams fear if his men continued to work on the fort?*
- *Tell what did Williams said he was going to do with his men.*
- *Why did the soldiers tear up their paychecks? If you were one of the members of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts would you have done the same?*
- *What was the difference in pay between white soldiers and black soliders?*

**(8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

- *Give the reasons James Williams wrote the letters.*
- *If you were one of the soldiers in the 1st Kansas Colored, what would you do if you didn't get paid?*
- *Why did Williams stop his men from working on the fort? What concerns did he have about their continued presence there?*
- *Explain what Williams was going to do with his men.*
- *Was Williams upset with his men or the Union army? Explain your answer.*
- *Why did the soldiers tear up their pay slips? If you were one of the members of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts would you have done the same?*
- *What was the salary of white soldiers? What was the salary of African-American soldiers?*

**(High School)**

- *Appraise the impact of the lack of pay have on the soldiers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored.*
- *What fears did Williams have if his men continued to work on the fort?*
- *Explain what Williams was going to do with his men.*

- *Was Williams upset with his men or the Union army? Explain your answer.*
- *Why did the soldiers tear up their pay slips? If you were one of the members of the 54th Massachusetts would you have done the same?*
- *What was the difference in pay between white soldiers and African American soldiers? Why do you believe that African-American soldiers were paid less than their white counterparts?*

### **Additional Ideas and Information**

**This unit may be used to compare with African-American regiments in WWI and WWII. A video that makes excellent comparisons of WWI is *Men of Bronze*.**

*Men of Bronze: The Black American Heroes of World War I*  
Directed by William Miles  
Released 1995  
60mins

## **Resource Packet**

Community & Conflict: The Impact of the Civil War in the Ozarks  
<http://www.ozarkscivilwar.org>

## **General Order No. 111**

Now therefore, I Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, and in their name do pronounce and declare the said Benjamin F. Butler to be a felon deserving of capital punishment. I do order that he be no longer considered or treated simply as a public enemy of the Confederate States of America but as an outlaw and common enemy of mankind, and that in the event of his capture the officer in command of the capturing force do cause him to be immediately executed by hanging; and I do further order that no commissioned officer of the United States taken captive shall be released on parole before exchange until the said Butler shall have met with due punishment for his crimes.

And whereas the hostilities waged against this Confederacy by the forces of the United States under the command of said Benjamin F. Butler have borne no resemblance to such warfare as is alone permissible by the rules of international law or the usages of civilization but have been characterized by repeated atrocities and outrages, among the large number of which the following may be cited as examples:

Peaceful and aged citizens, unresisting captives and non-combatants, have been confined at hard labor with balls and chains attached to their limbs, and are still so held in dungeons and fortresses. Others have been subjected to a like degrading punishment for selling medicines to the sick soldiers of the Confederacy.

The soldiers of the United States have been invited and encouraged by general orders to insult and outrage the wives, the mothers and the sisters of our citizens.

Helpless women have been torn from their homes and subjected to solitary confinement, some in fortresses and prisons and one especially on an island of barren sand under a tropical sun; have been fed with loathsome rations that had been condemned as unfit for soldiers, and have been exposed to the vilest insults.

Prisoners of war who surrendered to the naval forces of the United States on agreement that they should be released on parole have been seized and kept in close confinement.

Repeated pretexts have been sought or invented for plundering the inhabitants of the captured city by fines levied and exacted under threat of imprisoning recusants at hard labor with ball and chain.

The entire population of the city of New Orleans have been forced to elect between starvation, by the confiscation of all their property, and taking an oath against conscience to bear allegiance to the invaders of their country.

Egress from the city has been refused to those whose fortitude withstood the test, even to lone and aged women and to helpless children; and after being ejected from their homes and robbed of their property they have been left to starve in the streets or subsist on charity.



The slaves have been driven from the plantations in the neighborhood of New Orleans till their owners would consent to share the crops with the commanding general, his brother Andrew J. Butler, and other officers; and when such consent had been extorted the slaves have been restored to the plantations and there compelled to work under the bayonets of guards of U.S. soldiers.

Where this partnership was refused armed expeditions have been sent to the plantations to rob them of everything that was susceptible of removal, and even slaves too aged or infirm for work have in spite of their entreaties been forced from the homes provided by the owners and driven to wander helpless on the highway.

By a recent general order (No. 91) the entire property in that part of Louisiana lying west of the Mississippi River has been sequestered for confiscation and officers have been assigned to duty with orders to “gather up and collect the personal property and turn over to the proper officers upon their receipts such of said property as may be required for the use of the U.S. Army; to collect together all the other personal property and bring the same to New Orleans and cause it to be sold at public auction to the highest bidders”—an order which if executed condemns to punishment by starvation at least a quarter of a million of human beings of all ages, sexes and conditions; and of which the execution although forbidden to military officers by the orders of President Lincoln is in accordance with the confiscation law of our enemies which he has directed to be enforced through the agency of civil officials. And finally the African slaves have not only been excited to insurrection by every license and encouragement but numbers of them have actually been armed for a servile war—a war in its nature far exceeding in horrors the most merciless atrocities of the savages.

And whereas the officers under the command of the said Butler have been in many instances active and zealous agents in the commission of these crimes, and no instance is known of the refusal of any one of them to participate in the outrages above narrated;

And whereas the President of the United States has by public and official declaration signified not only his approval of the effort to excite servile war within the Confederacy but his intention to give aid and encouragement thereto if these independent States shall continue to refuse submission to a foreign power after the 1st day of January next, and has thus made known that all appeals to the laws of nations, the dictates of reason and the instincts of humanity would be addressed in vain to our enemies, and that they can be deterred from the commission of these crimes only by the terms of just retribution:

Now therefore I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America and acting by their authority, appealing to the Divine Judge in attestation that their conduct is not guided by the passion of revenge but that they reluctantly yield to the solemn duty of repressing by necessary severity crimes of which their citizens are the victims, do issue this my proclamation, and by virtue of my authority as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the Confederate States do order—



1. That all commissioned officers in the command of said Benjamin F. Butler be declared not entitled to be considered as soldiers engaged in honorable warfare but as robbers and criminals deserving death, and that they and each of them be whenever captured reserved for execution.
2. That the private soldiers and non-commissioned officers in the army of said Butler be considered as only the instruments used for the commission of the crimes perpetrated by his orders and not as free agents; that they therefore be treated when capture as prisoners of war with kindness and humanity and be sent home on the usual parole that they will in no manner aid or serve the United States in any capacity during the continuance of this war unless duly exchanged.
3. That all negro slaves captured in arms be at once delivered over to the executive authorities of the respective States to which they belong to be dealt with according to the laws of said States.
4. That the like orders be executed in all cases with respect to all commissioned officers of the United States when found serving in company with armed slaves in insurrection against the authorities of the different States of this Confederacy.

In testimony whereof I have signed these presents and caused the seal of the Confederate States of America to be affixed thereto at the city of Richmond on this 23d day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two.

**Col. James Williams and Thomas Livingston Letter Transcriptions (Prisoners)**

Camp Jackson  
May 20th 1863

Col [James M.] Williams honored sir

I have five of your Solgers prisoners three Whight and two Black men The whight men I propose Exchanging with you if you have any of My men or other confederate Solgers to exchange for Them as for the Negros I cannot Reccognise them as Solgers and In consiquence I will hav to hold them as contrabands of war if my proposels Sootes your you will Return ammeadately my men or other confedorate Solgers and I will send your your men x arrested a citizen of this Naborhood by the name of Bishop If that is your mode of warefair to A rest civil citizens who air living at home and trying to Rase a crop for their familys

Let me know and I will try to play to your hand Mr Bishop was once arested taking to Fort Scott Examoned Released and past home a civil citizen Sum of your men stated that he was burnt up in Mrs Radors House but I am sadisfied that you are to high toned a jentelman to stoope or condescend to such Brutal deeads of Barbarity.

I remain yours truly  
[Thomas] R. Livingston  
Maj comdg confederate forces

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Head Quarters 1st K.C.V. Camp Hooker Ks.  
May 21st 1863

Maj T. R Livingston Commanding Confederate forces

Sir Yours of the 20th inst is at hand, you have in your custody as I believe Privates, Pipkins & Whitstine of the 2nd Kansas Battery for which I will exchange two confederate Soldiers, now prisoners in my camp, in regard to the other white man now a prisoner with you, I do not know of any man belonging to my command not otherwise accounted for. And you can arrange for his exchange at Fort Scott.

In regard to the colored men, prisoners, belonging to my Regiment, I have this to say, that it rests with you to treat them as prisoners of war or not but be assured that I shall keep a like number of your men as prisoners untill these colored men are accounted for, and you can safely trust that I shall visit a retributive justice upon them for any injury done them at the hands of the confederate forces, and if twenty days are allowed to pass without hearing of their exchange I shall conclude that they have been murdered by your Soldiers or shared a worse fate by being sent in chains to the slave pens of the South, and they will be presumed to be dead

In regard to Bishop I have to say that he was known as a paroled prisoner of war, he was taken in arms against our forces, and was convicted of having shot a wounded prisoner, disarmed and at

his mercy, he was shot and shared the fate of other Soldiers for whom spades could not be found to dig their graves, and if this be "brutal barbarity" compare it to the fiendish treatment he himself visited upon one of my men and of the bodies of club bruised, and brain bespattered corpses of my men left on the prairie by your men and leave it to a candid world who profits by the comparisons,

Sir these men are enlisted and sworn into the service of the United States as soldiers, and I doubt not the Government I have the honor to serve will take necessary steps to punish her enemies amply for any such gross violation of all rules of civilized and honorable warfare, and you can rest assured that knowing the justice of the course, I shall not long wait for orders in the premises, but will act as I have a right to upon my own judgement, and myself assume the responsibility and if you take exceptions to this course of procedure you are at liberty to "play to my hand" as best suit your pleasure or convenience, "But I will promise to follow suit or trump" If these two men appear in Camp Pipkins and Whitstine unharmed by your forces, I will conduct beyond my lines two Soldiers of the confederate army in exchange for them, you will of course furnish them with exchange papers, And your men will be furnished accordingly, or if you choose to send a man with them, he will be allowed to return with the men exchanged for.

[James] M. Williams  
Col Commanding Regt

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Camp Chester Mo  
May 23rd [1863]

Col Williams.

Sir I send you by [MS illegible] Wheley H. Pipkins and David Whitstine which which you will please send me two Confederate Soldiers in return for them. I have yet in my custody a private soldier by the name of W T. Akers belonging to the 6th Kansas [Cavalry] Co (K)" If it suits your views you can send me a man for him for which I will send him to you, as soon as I receive my man; I have a better opinion of of your Government in regard to the treatment of prisoners and citizens than you appear to have from the tenor of your letter. For they very well know that my Government is very able to retaliate, and have it in there power to do so at least three too one. though they do not allow such conduct. I understand that you have a confederate Soldier in your hands that is somewhat crippled if it suits you, you can send him for one as I want you to have able bodied men in your possession.

T [Thomas] R Livingston,  
Major Com of Batt. Bloody Spikes

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Head Quarters 1st K.C.V. Camp Hooker [Kansas]  
May 23 1863

Maj T. [Thomas] R. Livingston

Sir Yours of this date is at hand and contents noted. The two men sent by you for Exchange Pipkins and Whitstine having arrived safely in Camp. I released your Jacobs and S. Y. Shirir and will give them a safe pass through the lines. As to the prisoner Akers held by you. The proper place to Exchange him will be at Fort Scott.

Yours Respectfully,  
[Richard] G. Ward  
Maj 1st K.C.V. Comdg Regiment

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Head Quarters Camp Ben Butler  
May 26th 1863

Maj T. R. Livingston

Sir, I desire to call your attention to the fact that one of the colored prisoners in your Camp was murdered by your Soldiers. And I therefore demand of you the body of the man who committed the dastardly act, And if you fail to comply with the demand, and do not within forty eight hours, deliver to me this assassin, Shall hang one of the men who are now prisoners in my camp. Further, you must understand that when I burn a dwelling in a Rebel country, it is a notice to the occupants thereof to remove beyond the Federal lines, and failing to do which they will be summarily dealt with, and if afterwards found quartered upon any Union mans premices they will be treated as thieves and maraunders and neither age nor sex shall shield them from the full measure of punishment due to such Criminals.

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter from Gen Blunt, to one Col Parker and I feel myself bound by its directions. And fully competent to execute the same. I repeat to you that I am not going to lie here hunting a rebel force, who have no specific character or purpose and who are supported by persons living within our lines. Tell them from me to put their house in order, for if I cannot find the force and have a fair stand up fight, I will destroy them by taking from them the means whereby they live.

Yours &c  
[James] M Williams  
Col Comdg

"P.S." You need not excuse the murder of the colored man by claiming that it was beyond your power to prevent it. If you are fit to command, you can control your men, and I shall act from the belief that the murder was committed by your consent and will receive no excuse therefor.

J M Williams  
Col Comd

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Camp Diamond Grove  
May 27th 1863

Col Williams

Sir yours of the 26th is at hand and contents noted. I confess my surprise at an Officer of your rank should have fixed such conditions to your demand as you are doubtless aware that the one who committed the offense charged is not a member of any company over which I have any control but was casualy at my camp & became suddenly enraged and an altercation took place between him and Deceased which resulted in way I very much regret & that said offenders whereabouts is to me unknown. Consequently, making it impossible for me to comply with your demand, and as to threats of retaliation upon prisoners of mine that you hold. I am not aware that you have any belonging to my command consequently the innocent will have to suffer for the guilty and I much regret that you compel me to adopt your own rule, but had much rather be governed by the established usage of civilized warfare

Sir your letter with accompanying letters from Gen Blunt, will be immediately layed before the Government of the Confederate States unless immediately retracted by you and your answer will be anxiously looked for.

In regard to your threats against both sects, carries with it its own consideration and needs no reply to. In regard to the little attack made upon your train yesterday, it was by some forces on their way to my command. If I had have been there myself or some of my old trained Spikes it would have been a sure thing though I hope you will meet before long and then I will show you how I can Shuffle the cards.

I have the honor to remain your most obedient  
T. [Thomas] R. Livingston  
Major Com. Confederate forces

## Col. James Williams and Thomas Livingston Letter Transcriptions (Pay)

Head Quarters 1st Regt Kansas Col'd Vol Inft  
Camp Emancipation  
April 21, 1863

Col C [Charles] W Blair  
Comd Post of Ft Scott

Sir owing to the bitter feeling of disappointment and wrong which my men now cherish on account of not receiving pay from the paymaster now paying off troops in this vicinity And as my men have never yet received our cut of Bounty or of pay although they have now been in the Service nearly 10 Months; While other troops about us have been regularly paid. I have decided to withdraw the details from the works on the fortifications now being erected in the vicinity of Fort Scott. I shall refer the whole matter to the Commanding General and will defer any further proceedings untill I get his decision. In the mean time I shall devote myself assiduously to the duty of discipling my Command which I find may suffer in this respect from the failure of pay as above indicated

I am Major with high Respect Your verry Obt Servt  
J M Williams  
Lt Col Comd Rgt

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Head Quarters 1st Kansas Colored Vols  
Camp Emancipation Near Ft. Scott Kansas  
April 21st 1863

Capt H G Loring  
A A A G

Sir In view of the fact that my Command is to receive no pay from the paymaster now paying off troops in this vicinity, and that we have for the Ten months that we have been in Service, as yet received not received one cent, and further that out of all this there seems to be growing a restlessness and insubordination, which are the results of these long trials and Sufferings, I have taken the responsibility to order the details for the work on the fortifications in this vicinity to be discontinued from tomorrow morning in order to give my whole time to the discipline of the Regiment I feel that this step though irregular and unauthorized nevertheless is absolutely necessary to restrain the mutinous and insubordinate spirit which has all along manifested itself in a Small degree in the command (Growing out of the treatment from the Government in regard to pay) from Culminating in open anarchy and perhaps mutiny.

My men feel sorely to troubled and grieved about their pay and I feel that this Course taken at this Stage of the proceedings is really necessary for the interests of the General Service. And I preferred to take this course Seemingly of my own accord to prevent being forced to do so. Indeed I fear trouble from desertions and other Sources But I will do all that an officer can do and hope I will by this means Secure the end I desire that is to maintain the good discipline of the Command. I would prefer to be ordered down the Country for a short distance if no further to get beyond the reach of Outside influence. Hoping General that this will work with your approbation I am with high respects

Your Obedient Servant  
[James] M Williams