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Hd Quarters, U S Forces
Columbia Tenn Dec 15th 1863

Meigner Henry R
Col Commdg

Raid by Col Downey
15th Colored Infantry
and impressment of negroes
for soldiers

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Head Quarters, U.S. Forces
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Captain,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of instructions from the General Commanding, also copy instructions from Capt Drury to Col Downey with reference to enlistment of colored troops.

Col Downey returned to day after an absence of several days having been assisted by two companies of the 18th Missouri under direction of General Dodge upon a general scout to the South and West of Columbia. Long before the arrival of Col Downey, the best Union citizens of Maury County came running to me with the report that a most extensive raid was being made by Federal soldiers. That the most loyal citizens were being plundered of their bed quilts, poultry, stock and negroes. Regarding the outrage as being perpetrated by a portion of

General Dodge's command I determined to arrest them and send them to the General Commanding for trial and for that purpose directed Major Fitzgibbon to take every available man and move out to secure the Party. Just as my men were reporting, Col Downey made his appearance and the secret was revealed. The raid had been most disgraceful and was so pronounced by a Detachment of Ten men of Col Stokes Cavalry who accompanied them. The soldiers had straggled everywhere, robbed every one in their route and by force brought away stock and the negroes of Mrs Webster, Major Rowen, Mr Runyan Frierson and Matthew D. Cooper the Father of Hon Edward Cooper of Shelbyville as loyal citizens as live anywhere and every one of them having my protection - They took also I am informed all the negroes of Mr Hillman of the Etna Iron Furnace stopping the works, though Mr Hillman had the protection of Generals Rosecrans & Granger - Learning that the negroes of Major Rowen Messrs Frierson and Cooper forced away by the presence of armed soldiers, not wishing

to enlist but desiring to return home and being claimed by the gentlemen as forcibly taken from them, I stated candidly that negroes could not be forced to become soldiers but that the enlistment must be voluntary and that under the circumstances they (as I think) were at liberty to pass out of my lines, which they immediately did — Col Downey afterwards showed me an order of Genl Dodge to press all serviceable stock and able bodied negroes, it appearing that Genl Dodge's command was to have the stock and Col Downey the negroes for soldiers — I apprehend however that the Order was not intended to be operative at the residences of the parties named who are under my jurisdiction —

Very Respectfully
Your Obdt Servt
Henry R. Mizner
Col Commdg

Capt Thos C. Williams
A.A.A.G.
Nashville