Spottswood Rice to His Children
and to Kitty Diggs

Spottswood Rice escaped from a Missouri tobacco plantation and enlisted in the 67th U.S. Colored Infantry in February 1864. He wrote to his children and to Kitty Diggs, the owner of his daughter Mary, from Benton Barracks in St. Louis. F. W. Diggs, Kitty Diggs’s brother and the owner of Rice’s daughter Cora, sent both of his letters to Major General William S. Rosecrans, the Union commander in Missouri, on September 10. In an accompanying note Diggs professed his loyalty to the Union and wrote that “to be thus insulted by such a black scoundrel is more than I can stand.” Rice was eventually reunited with his daughters.
SEPTEMBER 1864

in hell. You tell her from me that she is the first Christian that I ever heard say that a man 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 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 yourself and don't think hard of us not sending you anything. 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.

September 3, 1864

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 hear 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 makeing up about one thousand black troops to come through Glasgow and when we come we be to Copperhood rabbels and to the Slaveholding rebell for we don't expect to leave them there root near branch but we think how ever that we that have Children in the hands of you devils we will try your vertues the day that we enter Glasgow. I want you to understand kittey diggs that wherever you and I meets we are enmays 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 dollars 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 bout a powrer and autherity to bring hear away and to exacute vengencens on them that holds my Child you will then know how to talke to me I will assure that and you will know how to talk rite too I want you now to just hold on to hear if you want to iff your conchosence tells thats the road go that road and what it will brig you to kittey diggs I have no fears about geting mary out of your hands this whole Government gives chear to me and you cannot help your self

Spottswood Rice

*September 3, 1864*