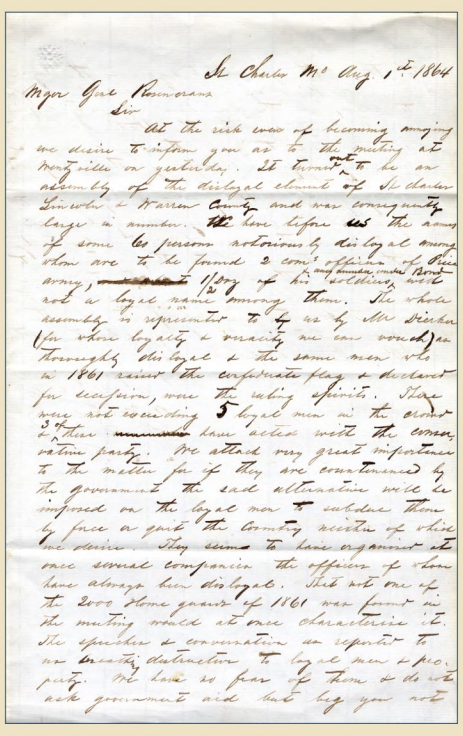
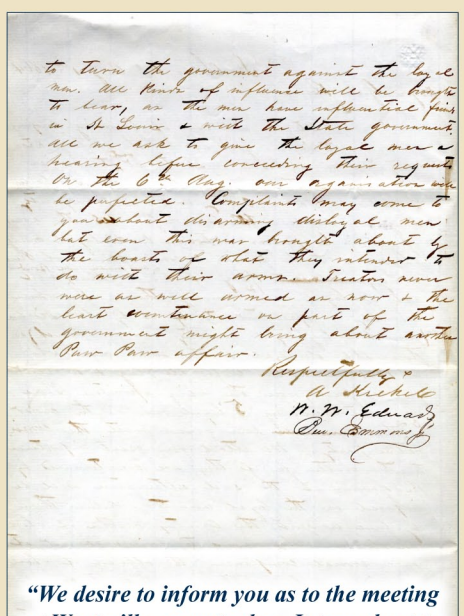
DIVIDED LOYALTIES
CIVIL WAR DOCUMENTS FROM THE
MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES

MARTIAL LAW



A. Krekel, W. W. Edwards, and B. Emmonds to General William S. Rosecrans, August 1, 1864.
Missouri State Archives

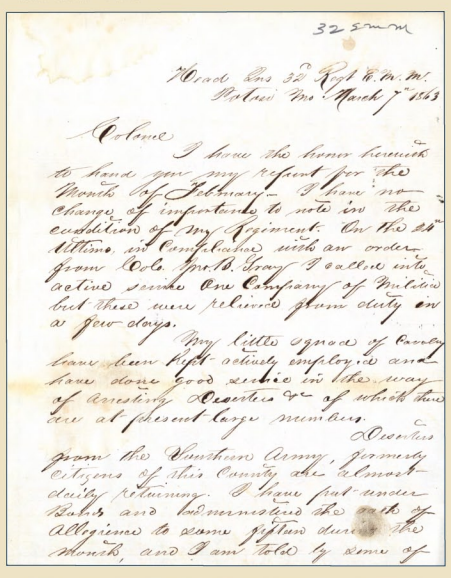


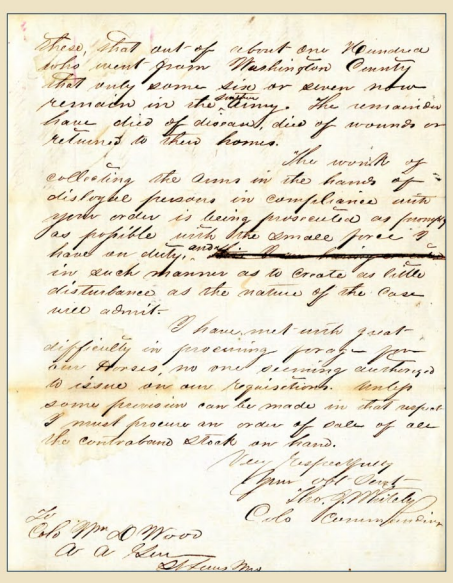
"We desire to inform you as to the meeting at Wentzville on yesterday. It turned out to be an assembly of the disloyal element of St. Charles, Lincoln, and Warren County."

LOYALTY

Almost immediately after taking control of Missouri, the Union military imposed martial law on the state's citizens. Maintaining order became especially important as violence spread across the state. To ensure order, the Provost Marshal and the State Militias restricted the lives of citizens in many ways. For example, Missourians had to have a military pass to travel away from home. Passes were available only to people who swore their loyalty to the Union. Only people who took the oath of loyalty were allowed to keep firearms. Those who spoke publicly against the military or the Union, and even those who were suspected of not being loyal to the Union, could be jailed, have their property seized, or could become the target of violent retribution.

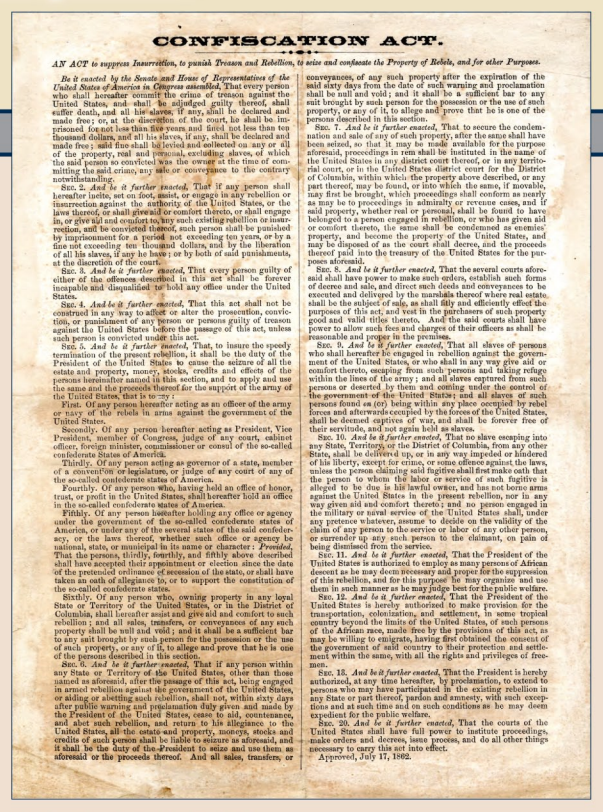
Colonel Thomas G. Whitely to Acting Adjutant General William D. Wood, March 7, 1863.
Missouri State Archives





"The work of collecting the arms in the hands of disloyal persons in compliance with your order is being prosecuted as promptly as possible with the small force I have on duty and in such manner as to create as little disturbance as the nature of the case will permit."

"That if any person shall hereafter incite, set on foot, assist, or engage in any rebellion or insurrection against the authority of the United States, or the laws thereof, or shall give aid or comfort thereto, or shall engage in, or give aid and comfort to, any such existing rebellion or insurrection, and be convicted thereof, such persons shall be punished by imprisonment . . . or by a fine . . . and by the liberation of all his slaves."



CONFISCATION ACT.

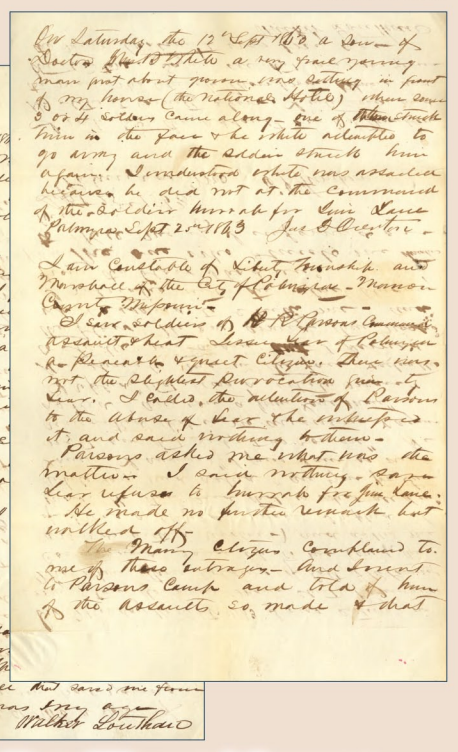
Confiscation Act, July 17, 1862.
Missouri State Archives

VIGILANTE JUSTICE

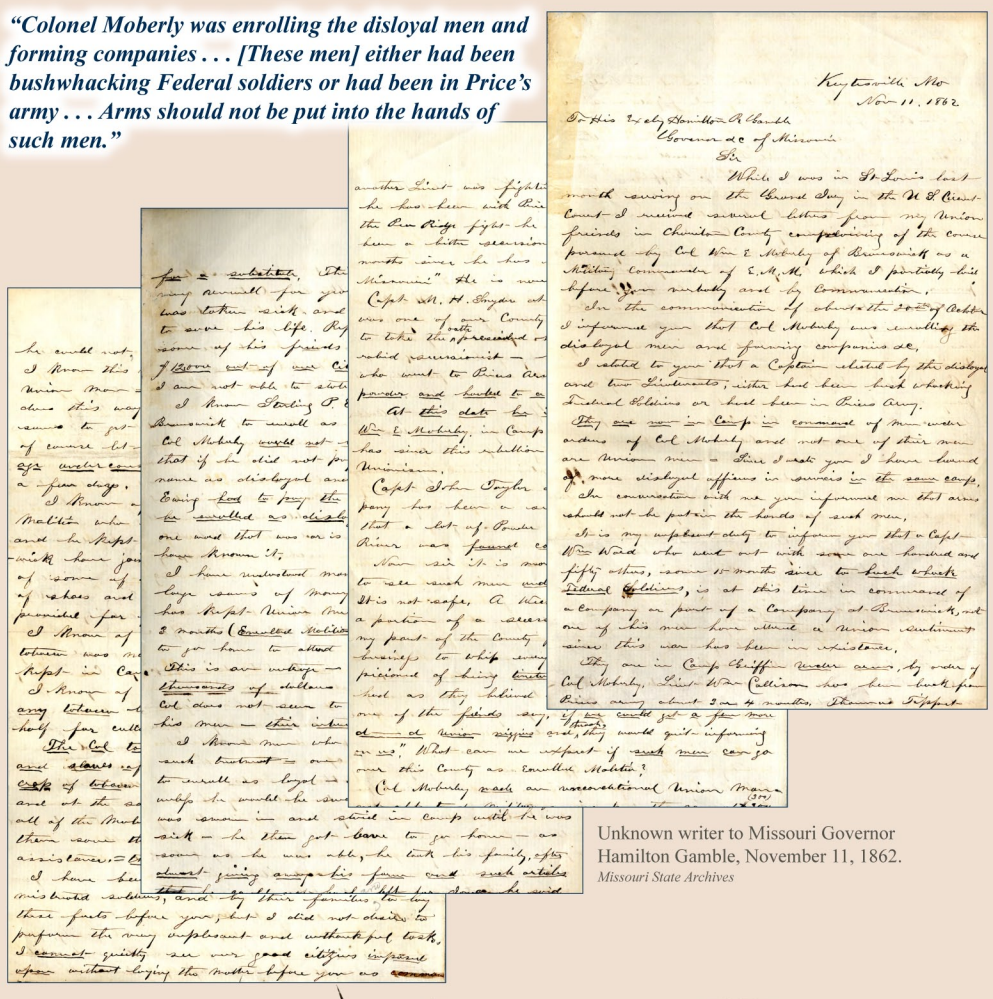
At times, the Union troops charged with keeping the peace in Missouri took the law into their own hands. This vigilante form of justice sometimes turned bloody. In September 1862, Brigadier General Lewis Merrill ordered 11 prisoners to be executed near Macon, Missouri. The prisoners had been charged with bushwhacking. Three weeks later, Union troops executed 10 more Confederate prisoners at Palmyra, Missouri.

Sometimes, the actions of the troops were less severe. Colonel William Moberly, commander of the 35th Regiment of the Enrolled Missouri Militia (E.M.M.), was accused of discriminating against Union men in Chariton County, enrolling former members of Sterling Price's Confederate army as officers in his regiment, abusing slaves who expressed support for the Union, and using slaves to harvest his own tobacco crop. Another Union officer, Captain H. R. Parsons, was accused of assaulting people whom he suspected were disloyal to the Union (*see below*).

Depositions from witnesses of alleged assaults carried out by Militia Captain H. R. Parson in Palmyra, Missouri, September 12, 1863.
Missouri State Archives



"Colonel Moberly was enrolling the disloyal men and forming companies . . . [These men] either had been bushwhacking Federal soldiers or had been in Price's army . . . Arms should not be put into the hands of such men."



Unknown writer to Missouri Governor Hamilton Gamble, November 11, 1862.
Missouri State Archives

"On Saturday, 12 September 1863, a son of Doctor White, a very frail young man just about grown was sitting in front of my house. When some 3 or 4 soldiers came along, one of them struck him in the face and he attempted to go away and the solider struck him again. I understand White was assaulted because he did not at the command of the soldiers hurrah for [Kansas abolitionist] Jim Lane."

Taking the Loyalty Oath at the Provost Marshal's Office
Harper's Weekly illustration by Thomas Nast

1861 - 1865