Wednesday January 21. 1863

Davis Mills Miss

With 25 men drew a car to Grand Junction. (7 miles) after hay and oats. We were gratified to learn that we could have 7 Bales of hay 18 sacks of oats and 20 sacks of corn, and a Locomotive to run it down to Davis Mill.

Memoranda. In august last I enrolled as a Soldier, a young man named Richard Patten. it was said, and undoubtedly true that he was a "Fugitive Slave", and had escaped from slavery, and come into our lines. Patten is as white as I am, and his hair is very light colored. his eyes are blue. he is a faithful Soldier. has never been on extra duty, nor has there ever been a complaint against him. he is neat and tidy, but unfortunately he has been a slave. Some of my men are so much afraid that they will be considered no better than a

2 "Nigger" as they term him, have become uneasy, and have been insulted by several Gentlemen whose superior qualifications for offices in the Battery have not been appreciated by the majority of the Battery, have to sign a Petition to Gen Denver, to investigate the conduct of Officers of Cheney's Battery. On my return from Grand Junction today the following Petition was handed to me by Henry Horn, who is now under arrest for straggling from camp and staying 24 hours. But to the Petition. In Camp at Davis Mills Miss RR.

January 21. 1863.

Maj General Denver

Sir - We the undersigned privates and non-commissioned Officers of Company F (Cheney's Battery) 1st Reg Light Artillery, Ill vol. have had our feelings outraged on several occasions by our Officers. We respectfully appeal to You for an investigation.

Specification 1st

In that Capt John P. Cheney has enrolled Richard Petty a Negro and formerly a slave a private in said Company, and mustered for pay on three seperate occasions. Said Petty was a slave at Senetobia on the Penn and Miss R Road in this State previous to the breaking out of the Rebellion.

Specification 2nd

In that Lieut S. S. Smyth of said Company has declared that a Negro was as good as an Irishmen or any other foreigner, or white man of any Nationality. This has caused great dissatisfaction in our Company and is likely to continue unless an investigation is granted in order that we may ascertain if such conduct is tolerated in the Army.

Signed James Thompson
W. H. Horn
W. O. Loveland
Peter Gleason
Charles Horen
Edward Martin

John N. Graves
Reuben Booth
Henry Menchin
E. A. Shivers
Mex Lentz
Ezra Risley
George Conrad
John W. Lyle
L. A. Sewell
E. F. Braley
James Vance
Thomas Mitts
John Mann
Michael Reams
Elijah P. Vance
George M. Beardsley
J. N. Basnick
E. N. Waight
Lloyd Burninger
Newton G Eades
A Reams
George P. Lane
John Menter
M. Mc. Mannus
Laurence Snyder
John Reardon
Henry O'connor
Joseph Locke
John N. Singleton
John Ford
Jeremiah Lenham
George Galenby
James Mantis
William Phillipps
George Clark
William Blair
Matthew Colahan
Thomas Shelley
J. E. Thornsbury
Peter Rentschler
James Taylor
Phillip Ott

C. N. Moon	H Overcutter
Joseph Tober	E S Lovelesp
W. M. Kemp	Henry Witter
Albert Jennys	Fred Holbrew
C. E. Christiance	Charles Hough
John J. Cox	Addison Wagner
John Dyer	George Carey
John Hennies	Rush Slick
James Lahey	Frank Rembindall
Augustus Baker	Walter Little
Edward Murat.	

45 of the above named have been punished at different times. two have been Court Martialed and 6 were and are under arest. and will be Court Martialed. Henry Horn. Corporal Simeon A Sewell Corporal James Thompson. and privates George P. Lane. Charles Hough James Lahey are the ones under arest. I asked Mr Horn what he wished me to do with the Petition and was informed that I was requested to forward it to Gen Denver. they having presented it to

7 Col Hicks of the 40th Ill. and he noted fully refused them to me. I informed him that they could select a man from the Petitioners to accompany me to Gen Dennis Head Quarters to see that they had fair play. He said they did not wish to send anyone but I insisted and Michael Mc Mennis was the one selected. After looking over the Petition I found the signatures were all in one hand writing and I informed the men that I must have the genuine signatures or else no notice would be taken of the Petition, and respectfully requested them to call at my Quarters and sign the document with their own hands. In a very few minuts I was furnished with the "original document" and found that it read as follows. the signatures appended by Corporal Luman A Sewell under arrest.

Davis Mill Miss RR. Jany 12. 1863

Maj Gen Denver

Sir. We the undersigned Privates and Non Commissioned Officers of Company F ("Cheney's Battery") 1st Reg of Light Artillery Ill Vol. having had our feelings outraged on several occasions by our Officers we respectfully appeal to you for satisfaction

Specification 1st

In that they enrolled Richard Petty a Negro (and formerly a Slave) a private in said Company F and mustered him for pay on three separate occasions. Said Petty was a Slave in Senatobia on the Miss R Road in this State, previous to the breaking out of the Rebellion

Specification 2nd

In that some (if not all) our Officers have frequently

10 and also recently declared that a
Negro is as good as an Irishman
or any other foreigner or White Man
of any Nationality, and we respectfully
appeal to you for an investigation into
this matter, as it is the cause of
much dissatisfaction in the Company.
The foregoing was signed on the 12th
and after certain Gentlemen were unduly
arrest: it was remodelled to suit
the taste of the scribe who copied
it.

Thursday Jenuary 22. 1863

Davis Mill. Miss.

This morning the signers to the "Declaration of Independence" (as some of the Boys call it) were called up to know from them which Petition they wanted to go in, and some wanted one and some another and some neither. They all acknowledged that Patten his (real name) was as good a Soldier as we had, declared there was not a man in the Battery who wished to censure me, one said he meant Lieut Burton as he had written to the Republican and Telegraph, that his "Nigger Horse" was highly intelligent, and had he had an education, would have been superior to 3/4 of the whitemen. I concluded that the Petitions should both go, and accordingly Mc Munns and I mounted our horses and started for Lagrange. Gen Denver

had gone to Ohio and Col Mc Dowell in command of this Division. The matter was submitted to him and at my urgent request a Court of inquiry was ordered. Col Mc Dowell informed Mr Mc Mannus what the consequence would be if it should appear that the charges were malicious. After visiting Grand Junction we returned to our camp well satisfied that small fires sometimes create a vast amount of smoke. "When a Man thinks he is he ant also" I do not know when the court will set, but what its decision may be in the case of Richard Patten, but here is my record. A Slave, is a Man who behaves himself properly, let his nationality be what it may, let him be Slave or free. if a Slave

so much more sympathy for him, and if I am to be punished for any crime, I prefer that it be for trying to build up and encourage, than to crush any one of God's creatures in his own image. I say also that if Richard Potter is forced to leave the service of the United States, I will also leave the service, if I can honorably get out. I would like to open a Battery on the so called Democratic Politicians of Ill, who have caused all such prejudices as now exist among the members of the Army, who are ready to sign such Petitions as the ones referred to. Six months since we hardly knew that we had ever been Republicans or Democrats, but now how different.