

24 Holliday St. Baltimore
May 28th 1864

His Excellency A. W. Bradford
Governor of the State of Maryland
Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 26th inst. in regard to Joseph J. Harris enlisted as a slave, and enrolled and paid bounty as a free man. I have made due enquiry in regard to the matter and regret to find the facts as stated.

The error could only have occurred by the carelessness of the officer at Pirney Barracks whose sole duty it was to receive recruits and enroll them. Lieut. Quimby no doubt sent the proper report with the recruit and his status should have been preserved.

No doubt Harris after being in Camp conceived the idea of representing himself free with a view to bounty, but it was the business of Lieut. Ropes to detect the imposition. For carelessness of this kind I relieved him from duty as a Recruiting officer and sent him to the front and I now regret that I did not do it sooner.

It has been my earnest desire to conduct this complicated and difficult business properly and fairly; to set the slaves down to their owners; to set the free men down where they belong in the different Counties, but as you must know I was obliged to rely on a large number of officers and clerks whose facts and figures I could only accept.

I have paid bounty as yet in only a few cases. Hereafter I will pay only to the extent of fifty dollars which is due as a slave and retain the balance for thirty days, except in cases known by me to be correct. By doing this it will be in my power to indemnify the State - fifty dollars will relieve the necessities of the recruit and I hope in the space of thirty days to issue all "descriptive lists" wanted.

The call for "descriptive lists" will develop any errors undetected. The bounty for Harris has not been paid and of course will be withheld.

There is no just ground for the idea that recruits belonging to Anne Arundel County will be credited to Baltimore. None but slaves will enlist there because there is no bounty and the slaves will be set down where the owners reside.

Very Respectfully
Your obt. servant

S. M. Bowman

Col. 84th Penna. Vols.

Chief Messg. & Recy.

Officer for Co Troops in Med.