

Brattleboro, Vermont, March 29th, 1881

Mr. M. D. Gilman,  
Librarian of the Vermont Historical Society

Dear Sir: On looking over some of my papers the other day I found a duplicate of the original requisition which I made in July 1862 for arms and equipments for arming slaves in Louisiana for the defense of the government. It was refused, and in consequence I resigned my commission of Brigadier General of Volunteers. This was at a time when there was great need of troops in that quarter for occupying the important strategic points which had fallen into our possession, and by failing to do which, the war was protracted, and the expense of life and treasure very greatly increased.

I send the document to you for a place in the collections of the Vermont Historical Society, thinking that it may be possessed of some interest to the State, since it was as a Volunteer from Vermont that I held and exercised my commission.

Very respectfully yours,

J. W. Phelps

Requisition for Ordnance and Ordnance Stores for the use of three (3) African Regiments of the National Guards of Louisiana Volunteers.

		Total
Muskets complete	3000	3000
Non Comd Officers Swords	225	225
Cartridge Boxes	3000	3000
Cartridge Box Plates	3000	3000
Cartridge Box Belts	3000	3000
Cartridge Box Belt Plates	3000	3000
Waist Belts	3000	3000
Waist Belt Plates	3000	3000
Cap pouches	3000	3000
Pickers	3000	3000
Bayonet Scabbards	3000	3000
Gun Slings	3000	3000
Spare Parts assorted for each	600	600
Rounds of Ball Cartridges	400,000	400,000

These arms and accoutrements are for arming three regiments of Africans which it is proposed to raise for the defense of this point.

Camp Parapet La                      J. W. Phelps  
 July 30, 1862                      Brig. Genl.

[The following is glued to the bottom of the requisition]

Found among my papers and presented to the Vermont Historical Society.

The War of the Rebellion began in April 1861. New Orleans, La. was entered and occupied by Government troops May 1st, 1862. The matter of raising colored volunteers into the service was not decidedly allowed until 1863, or some two years after the war commenced; and even then it was not pressed with the systematic energy and purpose due to the emergency and to the wide and varied interests involved. The delay occasioned an immense loss of life and treasure.

A requisition for a year's supply of clothing for three Colored Volunteer Regiments was sent in at the same time as the above and both were rejected as opposed to the policy and decisions of the government.

March 24th, 1881

J. W. Phelps