



o. B. GOODLANDER, Editor and Proprietor.

PRINCIPLES, not MEN.

TERMS:—\$2 00 Per Annum, if paid in advance

VOL. XXXVIII—WHOLE NO. 1916.

CLEARFIELD, PA., WEDNESDAY, JULY 4, 1866.

NEW SERIES—VOL. VI.—NO. 51

THE NEGRO BUREAU AGAIN.

Steadman and Fullerton in South Carolina and Georgia.

Missionaries Running Plantations — "Brother French" as an Overseer and Speculator, &c., &c.

Generals Steadman and Fullerton have sent in their report on the management of the Negro Bureau in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia. The following is the grand retinue of the Negro Bureau in South Carolina, and the cost of the luxury:

COMMISSIONER OF BUREAU:
One Brigadier General, Commissioner.

STAFF:
One Lieutenant Colonel; one Major; six Captains; one Bureau Missionary.

SUB-ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS:
One Colonel; two Lieutenant Colonels; four Majors; seven Captains; six First Lieutenants; one Second Lieutenant.

ON STAFF DUTY ELSEWHERE:
Three Lieutenants.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT:
Three Surgeons, United States Volunteers; thirteen Assistant Surgeons.

CITIZEN EMPLOYEES:

Nine Clerks, at an average pay each per month,	\$108 33
One Rental Agent, at monthly pay of	75 00
One Store-keeper, at monthly pay of	50 00
One Counsellor, at monthly pay of	85 00
One Superintendent of Education, at monthly pay of	125 00
One Printer, at monthly pay of	100 00
One Contract Surgeon, at monthly pay of	100 00
Twenty-five Laborers, at an average pay per month of	19 20

At an average, there have been supported, for the past five months by the United States Government, over five thousand negroes. They were furnished gratuitously supplies, consisting of pork or bacon, fresh beef, flour or soft bread, hard bread, corn meal, beans, peas and hominy, sugar, vinegar, candles, soap, salt and pepper. It will be noticed above that among the ornaments to the Negro Bureau are a "Bureau Missionary," a "Bureau Counsellor," a "Bureau Printer," and a "Bureau Storekeeper." These, Generals Steadman and Fullerton think superfluous decorations, and advise that they be dispensed with. We now quote from their report in extenso:

The first point at which we commenced our investigations was at Columbia, where we found Brevet Brigadier-General Ely, Sub-Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau, in charge of an indefinite number of counties. We were unable to obtain from him a statement of the extent of the territory over which he presided, for the reason that he himself did not know the limits of his jurisdiction. This officer is quite extensively engaged in the cultivation of plantations, his planting interests in the vicinity of Columbia requiring so much of his time that in one instance at least, we found he had neglected the proper duties of his office.

General Ely stated to us that he was cultivating two plantations on government account, leased by himself as Bureau agent, at a cash rent of \$5,000 a year. On three other plantations he stated that he had put freedmen to work, and furnished them with rations which were to be paid for out of their crops. One of these plantations he afterwards said had been rented by William B. Shepley, of the Twenty-fifth Ohio Infantry, who had been a clerk in his office. He (Gen. Ely) had put the freedmen to work on the plantation while Shepley was away at his home, and had promised to give them one-half of the crop.

A delegation of freedmen subsequently called on us and stated that in addition to the two plantations which General Ely was cultivating on government account, he was also planting on his own account the farms of Robert Joiner and A. M. Hunt. This delegation further stated that twenty-nine colored persons—men, women and children—suffering from the small-pox, were crowded into one room, about twenty feet by twenty-four, and placed on the bare floor, with no bedding, and their only covering was the blankets they brought with them. These poor creatures were left in this condition several days, some of them delirious, with only one black woman to attend them, and without any nourishment but meat and meal. A number of respectable old colored people attacked with small-pox were thus taken from their comfortable homes and placed in this room to die of neglect. One of this

delegation assured us that he called to see General Ely on several different days to inform him of the suffering condition of the freedmen in the small-pox hospital, and was told on each occasion that the General could not be seen, as he was absent attending to his plantations. This neglect of duty by General Ely was complained of in a letter written by Beverly Nash, and published in a Charleston paper devoted to the interests of the freedmen. After the publication of this letter, General Ely told Nash he did not like such statements made about him, and wished the freedmen to get up some resolutions denying the truth of the allegations published, which they refused to do.

We examined a contract between a planter and freedmen, which is on file in General Ely's office, and herewith forward a copy marked "A." If this contract is to be regarded as evidence of the condition of the freedmen under the charge of General Ely, they are certainly very little better off than they were while in slavery. The system established by this contract is at best but a system of peonage.

From Columbia we proceeded to Charleston, the head-quarters of the Bureau for South Carolina, where we met Brigadier-General R. K. Scott, the Assistant Commissioner. We found him to be an energetic and competent officer, laboring to correct the mistakes and blunders of his predecessors. Although he has been on duty in this department but a short time, he has produced a marked change for the better in the administration of the affairs of the Bureau. We called at his office for the purpose of examining the records of the Bureau, but were informed that all the books, papers, records, and documents pertaining to the affairs of the freedmen prior to the establishment of the Bureau and all the records relating to the administration of the Bureau for the organization of the time of General Scott's assuming charge of the affairs, had been carried off by a General Saxton, who had left only a file of his own general orders in the office. General Saxton gave as a reason for this proceeding, that it was necessary for him to have the books and records "to make him all right at Washington." In the absence of official documents we were, of course, unable to institute any close examination into the conduct of the officers of the Bureau who had been on duty in South Carolina prior to General Scott's administration. We could only judge of their conduct by the condition in which we found the freedmen in those places where the policy of General Saxton had been fully carried out, and where its effects were still apparent. Reasoning from these data, we are convinced that the effect of the operations of the Bureau on the freedmen in respect to their habits and disposition to labor and support themselves under the administration of Gen. Saxton was exceedingly pernicious, especially on the Sea Islands, to which we will allude further in our account of the freedmen's settlements on the seaboard.

Chaplain M. French, U. S. C. I. Bureau Missionary and Superintendent of Marriage Relations, and Lieutenant L. J. Lott Superintendent Assistant Commissioner, having charge of a freedman's camp at Charleston, are in partnership with Mrs. Hanahan, of Charleston, in cultivating a plantation on Edisto Island. They furnished \$1,500 in money to carry on the plantation and to receive one-half of the net profits of the undertaking. They purchase supplies in Charleston, and forward them to the plantations. Chaplain French explained to us that in making the agreement with Mrs. Hanahan he was actuated solely by a desire to assist her, and furnish labor for the poor freedmen; but with even an ordinary crop he will not receive less than 250 or 300 per cent. of the money advanced.

When we called the attention of General Scott to the planting operation of General Ely, Chaplain French, and Lieutenant Lott, he avowed his disapprobation of the action of these officers. Under the guidance of General Scott, the condition of the freedmen in Charleston has been very much improved, and the bad feeling which had grown up between the whites and blacks under the former administration is gradually wearing away. Most of the freedmen are now at work, and receiving good wages.

We visited Edgelfield Court House, near the centre of the district of which Lieutenant Colonel Devereaux has charge, the head-quarters of which are at Hamburg, on the Savannah river, opposite the City of Augusta, Georgia. There have been a number of brutal outrages committed in this district by a band of outlaws who, through the apparent neglect of the agent of the

Bureau or the inability or unwillingness of the citizens to bring them to justice, have escaped punishment, and are still at large; a number of intelligent and influential citizens in Edgelfield, in conversation strongly condemned the conduct of the villains who had murdered unoffending freedmen. These citizens stated that the murders were committed by a band of men from the States of Texas, Kentucky, and Tennessee, who had been in the rebel army, and were prevented by their enemies from returning to their respective homes, and who had taken to the road for a livelihood, and were stealing horses from white people and robbing and murdering colored men because they were defenceless. We asked the citizens why the murderers were not arrested and punished by the civil authorities. The reply was, that they were in doubt as to their authority to act; that the Freedmen's Bureau, with the military support, was the superior power, claiming exclusive authority to arrest and punish persons committing outrages upon freedmen, and that as long as this state of things existed they were powerless to punish crimes of this character. They evinced much indignation at what they termed the injustice of a portion of the press in holding them accountable for crimes and barbarities which they said were as revolting to them as to any other portion of the American people, while the power to punish the perpetrators was withheld from them. They also assured us with unanimity that hereafter, although their civil government was still partially paralyzed, every effort would be made to punish all who were guilty of committing outrages on freedmen.

We learn that six or seven freedmen had been murdered by a band of outlaws, referred to during the months of March and April, and although a month has elapsed since the last of these crimes was committed, more than a month ago no action had been taken in the matter by Gen. Sickles. The investigation by the Bureau agency was commenced only a few days since, and was now progressing at Hamburg, thirty miles from the scene of the murders. We earnestly hope that these murderers may be brought to justice.

SEA ISLAND.

On the 18th of May we left Charleston by steamer, and visited, first, the Sea Islands, on the coast of Georgia, which have been, and are still, together with the island on the coast, under the exclusive control of the Freedmen's Bureau. On these islands there are one hundred and forty-one possessing titles held by the freedmen, under the order of General Sherman, and decided to be valid. They encumber those two plantations situated on James, John, Wadmelaw, and Edisto Islands. The number of freedmen now on all the South Carolina islands is about thirty thousand. They form, however, but a proportion of the aggregate number who have occupied the islands since General Sherman's order was issued. Many of those who first came here remained on the islands but a short time, and then returned to their homes on the mainland; others, who made small crops, gathered them in, and left to seek other employment.

A large majority of the freedmen who still remain on the islands are in destitute circumstances. On Wadmelaw and Edisto Islands many who are cultivating land for themselves would be compelled to abandon their crops were it not for the provisions furnished them by the planters. Last season government rations and clothing were issued to most of the negroes who were working lands on their own account, with the understanding that they should afterwards pay for the supplies furnished, out of the crop. But none of the outlay thus incurred has been repaid. We found on inquiry that some few of the freedmen raised good crops, and could easily have reimbursed the government for the supplies provided for them, but most of them were swindled out of all they made by a gang of white sharpers who, pretending to be their friends, set up little stores provided with sweetmeats, cheap jewelry, and worthless articles of dress, with which they plundered these poor creatures of their hard earnings. The same class of persons who thus defrauded the freedmen last year have made extensive preparations to secure this season's crop by the same means. We found a number of these stores on Edisto and Wadmelaw Islands, and mention one case as an example.

This is on a farm rented and cultivated by Mr. Underwood, of Boston, Massachusetts.

Accompanied by General Scott, we stooped on this plantation and investigated the condition of the freedmen. They were working by the "task," which is precisely the manner in

which their former owners worked them. The price paid per task is fifty cents, which, if paid in money or its equivalent, would be fair wages; but in lieu of money, tickets were given them, on which were printed, "Good for—in provisions from our store." These tickets were taken to the store-keeper, with corn at three dollars a bushel, and other articles at similar prices. There was no meat in this shop. The freedmen gathered round us while we were there, and complained bitterly of their treatment, stating that with the wages paid them, they were unable to earn enough to buy, at the prices charged them, necessary subsistence. If these freedmen were paid in money for their labor, they could escape the extortions of the shop-keepers; but with the tickets issued to them they were compelled to pay the price charged, and to take whatever the shop-keeper sees fit to give them. Competition, which would greatly reduce the price of provisions, is prevented, at least on this plantation, by military orders. Mr. Tolls, on an adjacent plantation, was selling corn to these people at two dollars per bushel, and taking Underwood's tickets in payment, but he was compelled to desist by a special order.

Major J. E. Cornelius, Acting Sub-Assistant Commissioner for the islands in the Department of South Carolina, stated to us that his attention had been called to some difficulty among the freedmen on Underwood's plantation, which he had investigated, and found the freedmen in fault, therefore he required the freedmen to resume work, and notified them that if they did not do so he would arrest them. Our examination led us to a different conclusion from that arrived at by Major Cornelius. In our opinion the condition and treatment of the freedmen on Underwood's plantation fully justified them in refusing to work.

Near the plantation rented and worked by Mr. Unerwood is that of Mr. Jenkins, on which a very opposite mode of treatment is pursued. The freed people here were working three days of the week for wages, fifty cents a task paid in corn at two dollars a bushel, and bacon at twenty-five cents per pound, with other articles at proportionate prices, and during the remainder of the week they were allowed to cultivate for themselves as much land as they could manage, the land being given them by Mr. Jenkins, free of rent.

On the Bayward plantation, on Edisto Island, the following circumstances were brought to our knowledge. This farm has been cultivated by freedmen on their own account, partly under land grants, partly without. On the 12th of May last, when the crop was being hoed, a man from New York named Holton came on the farm with a squad of colored soldiers under charge of a sergeant, and compelled the freedmen to contract with him to cultivate the land for his benefit. What the exact terms of the contract were none of the freedmen with whom we conversed seemed to know. Some believed they were to get a third of the crop, while others stated they were to pay five dollars a month for their cabins. Mr. Holton was not on the plantation at the time of our visit, and we were consequently unable to ascertain the nature of the contract, no copy having been left with the freedmen. We called the attention of the Assistant Commissioner to the complaints of the freedmen on this plantation.

Chaplain French, Bureau Missionary, and the Rev. C. L. Bradwell (colored), of Edisto Island, stated to us that similar occurrence had taken place on the plantation rented by a gentleman recently mustered out of the United States army, where the freedmen, after planting their crops, had been dispossessed, and forcibly compelled to sign a contract—a squad of colored soldiers having been used for that purpose.

While on Edisto Island, we visited the Edgings plantation, which is being cultivated by freedmen exclusively, working under the direction of one of their own number, a superintendent chosen by themselves. Here the people are apparently doing well, and have a fair prospect of a good crop. This, however, is almost the only instance we met with on any of the islands, where the freedmen, cultivating exclusively for themselves without white direction, were doing even tolerably well.

We visited other plantations besides those above named on Edisto and Wadmelaw Islands, but mention these only as a fair index of the condition of things generally on those islands.

There are no land grants under General Sherman's order on Port Royal Island, but the freed people hold and are cultivating a considerable

portion of this island on tax titles. Some of them made three crops last season on trust lands; but notwithstanding the advantage thus enjoyed, nearly all of them are now in destitute circumstances. Their present impoverished condition is attributed to the fact that their crops were purchased by Beaufort store dealers and others, at merely nominal rates—in most instances, at less than a fourth of their net value. These thrifty traders, many of whom made their advent at Beaufort with the army, purchased the sea island cotton at ten cents per pound in the seed, and have this season already secured mortgage on a large proportion of the freedmen's crops—in some instances even on their lands.

After visiting the South Carolina Islands, we proceeded to Savannah, Ga., where we were joined by Brevet Major-General Davis Tilson, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau for Georgia. He accompanied us on our way to the Sea Islands under his charge. There has been much confusion and disorder occasioned by Rev. Tunis G. Campbell, a colored man from Nova Scotia, who was located on the Island by Major-General Saxton, as an agent of the Bureau. This man abolished all the simple rules and regulations adopted by the freedmen for their own guidance, and established, instead, a parody of the United States government, putting himself in the position of President, and assuming, in addition, dictatorial powers. Under his administration the freedmen were armed. No white man was allowed to land on the island, and every effort was made to stir up feelings of animosity against the white race. Amongst other powers assumed by Campbell, he issued land grants, claiming to do so "by virtue of the authority vested in him by the President of the United States and General Saxton;" and took especial care to bestow the best allotments on himself and relatives. The conduct of this man had a most prejudicial influence on the freedmen, and placed them for a time entirely beyond the control of the Assistant Commissioner for Georgia. On his first visit to the island, General Tilson discovered that prompt action was necessary in the interests of the freedmen themselves, for the lands were lying uncultivated, and they were not far removed from absolute want. With much difficulty he obtained a hearing from them, and succeeded in restoring order and getting them to work, and abolishing the absurd form of government established by Campbell. General Tilson ascertained that of the whole number of land grants on the island, seventeen only were valid. These grants covered five hundred and fifteen acres, and were scattered all over the island. He consolidated them, so as to occupy one section of the island only, leaving the remainder for cultivation by the owners. There are at present 625 freedmen on the island; of these 147 are working for Messrs. Winchester and Schuyler, of New York, who have rented a part of the Walburg plantation, and the remainder are cultivating land on their own account. The 147 freedmen working for Winchester and Schuyler have planted 530 acres of cotton and 115 of corn; the 475 freedmen working for themselves have planted only 200 acres of cotton and 200 acres of corn.

From St. Catherine's we went to Sapelo Island, cultivated exclusively by Messrs. Dickson and McBride. The freedmen here are working the land for two-thirds of the crop, and, so far as we could perceive, were well treated and cared for, and will make money if they can be protected from the bad influence of unprincipled men, who came amongst them last year with a permit from Captain Ketchum, Bureau agent under General Saxton, bought their cotton at ten cents a pound in the seed and paid them mainly in whiskey. This vicious man has exerted such an evil influence over the freedmen as to make them dissatisfied with an exceedingly liberal contract.

On St. Simon's Island there are eighteen valid land grants encumbering four plantations. There are between five and six hundred freedmen on the island, most of whom are working for wages, are well fed and appear to be perfectly contented. On two of the plantations they are working without formal contracts, but we were assured that these freedmen relied confidently on being fairly dealt with by their employers. Our visit to this island satisfied us that the freedmen there were doing exceedingly well.

OGEECHEE RIVER SETTLEMENT.

This settlement, embracing originally several freed people, the largest colony on the coast under General Sherman's order, was last year under the control of the Rev. Mr. Tiffany, an agent of the Bureau appointed by

General Saxton. If the records kept by General Saxton were within our reach we could, without doubt, obtain official information as to the workings of this settlement, but in the absence of the records, we can only report such facts as are within the knowledge of General Tilson and other officers on duty in the department.

On taking charge of this settlement Mr. Tiffany hired twenty-five freedmen as a guard, armed them with United States muskets, and used them to prevent any white man entering the settlement. Even United States officers, who had not Mr. Tiffany's pass, were halted and were refused the use of the government boat to cross the Ogeechee River. This guard of twenty-five men, who served the entire season, were to be paid out of the proceeds of the rice crop raised by the freedmen of the settlement. Mr. Tiffany gave them certificates for the amount due to them, which certificates they still hold, but for which they are unable to get either rice or money.

All the freed people of this colony were supplied during the season with government rations, which were to be paid for out of their crops.

We were informed by the Bureau officers of the Department that none of these rations have ever been repaid. A very considerable crop of rice was made by the freedmen, and Mr. Tiffany, the agent, afterwards advertised sixty thousand bushels of it for sale.

General Tilson, who had in the interim assumed command of the Bureau for Georgia, seeing the advertisement, ordered the sale to be suspended, and notified Mr. Tiffany that only bonded officers were authorized to sell government property. What disposition was eventually made of the rice crop, or who received the profits of it, we were unable to ascertain. Mr. Tiffany, shortly after this, retired; whether voluntarily or otherwise, can only be determined by records, which are not within our reach. Many of the freed people became disheartened, voluntarily abandoning their land-grants, and are now working under contracts for the owners of the land, or the persons who have rented the plantations from land owners. We have mentioned these particular cases as indicating the condition of the freedmen occupying the Sea Islands and the coast under Gen. Sherman's order.

Our personal observations of the evidence we have taken, and the inquiries we have been obliged to make to supply the place of records, have convinced us that the condition of the freedmen of these settlements, while in charge of General Saxton, was such as to give but little hope that, under the policy pursued by that officer, they would ever have become self-supporting, even with the fertile lands on which they were located, placed at their disposal free of rent or taxes.

The failure of General Saxton's administration resulted, from a variety of causes, among which may be enumerated:

The unnecessary continuance of government support to the freedmen, which tended to increase their natural improvidence, and to encourage habits of idleness. Keeping them under such guardianship and tutelage that they were disciplined to make proper exertions for their support, or improvement. Teaching them to distrust all white men, but those who had immediate control over them, or who came amongst them with passes from the Freedmen's Bureau, thus preparing them to fall an easy prey to the sharpers, who afterwards obtained access to them under the guise of friendship, took advantage of their credulity, and fraudulently appropriated their crops. Their inexperience in providing for their own support in managing business for themselves.

It is not in the power of Generals Tilson and Scott, until a crop has been raised under their own respective administrations, to materially improve the condition of the freedmen on the Sea Islands, although these officers have effected salutary reforms in the habits of the blacks and in their disposition to labor, and have been instrumental in removing from their minds many of the absurd ideas which had been instilled among them. Idleness, discord, and bitter prejudice against the white people still exist. The extent to which they were deluded by the few white men who had intercourse with them is almost incredible. Among the evidence taken in reference to their condition, and which bears directly on the point, is the statement of a distinguished general officer, who was in command of a district embracing a part of the island, and whose statement was as follows:

"I assumed command in January, 1866, of a district in which the South Carolina Sea Islands were included. They were then in a state of turmoil,