

THE FREEDMEN, REFUGEES, &c.

First Official Report of Major-General Howard.

WAR DEPARTMENT, BUREAU OF FREEDMEN, REFUGEES, AND ABANDONED LANDS, WASHINGTON, December 4, 1865.---Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:--I have the honor to submit, for the consideration of His Excellency the President of the United States, the following report, called for by an act of Congress approved March 3, 1865.

Table with columns: Name, Rank, Regiment, Date of Arrival, etc. Lists names of freedmen and their military service details.

These were established and maintained, to a great extent, by benevolent associations of the North. There were, however, extensive government schools in several of the Southern States.

On the 1st of January, 1865, the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands was organized, and its duties were defined by an act of Congress.

By Circular No. 5, I empowered the Assistant Commissioner to do everything possible to "organize and control the industry of the refugees and freedmen, that they and their communities may do all that can be done for the season, already so far advanced, to receive a start and to get ready to promote good order and prosperity."

"Negroes must be free to choose their own employers, and to be paid for their labor as they see fit, bona fide acts, and approved by proper officers, and their inalienable rights, on both sides. The old system of overseers, leading to cruel and oppressive, is prohibited."

In consequence of the varied operations of our armies, detachments of troops moving over nearly every section of the insurrectionary States, carrying to the negroes the knowledge of their freedom, the whole Southern country, even in the interior, had labor more or less abundant.

In several of the States, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Alabama, and the District of Columbia, the interests of the freedmen were under the control of military officers assigned by the War Department, previous to the organization of the Bureau.

Amount on hand January 1, 1865, and received since, to October 31, 1865: From Freedmen's Fund, \$468,028 35; From Retained Bounties, \$115,236 49; From Clothing, Fuel and Subsistence, \$7,791 21; From Rents of Buildings, \$5,012 42; From Rents of Lands, \$125,521 40; From Quartermaster's Department, \$12,269 00; From Conscript Fund, \$13,498 11; From Schools (tax and tuition), \$34,481 53.

EXPENDITURES. \$8,009 14 Clothing, fuel and subsistence, \$7,504 05; \$40,669 71 Household furniture, \$1,470 88 Rents of buildings, \$287,697 62; \$4,828 07 Contingent expenses, \$300 00 Rents of lands, \$1,578 85; \$1,445 51 Conscript and fund, \$27,819 60 Schools, \$478,363 17.

Balance on hand, Oct. 31, 1865, \$429,033 11. Balance on hand held as retained bounties, \$115,236 49. Total amount received, \$907,366 28. Total amount expended, \$478,363 17.

The breaking up of the old plantation system has necessarily left the sick with little or no medical provision, excepting that existing among the freedmen themselves. As soon as they earn money and become better versed than now in the ordinary means of self support, they will doubtless secure the necessary medical relief.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant, O. O. HOWARD, Major-General, Commissioner.

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