

... Report of the assistant commissioner for Alabama. 1866-

BUREAU OF REFUGEES AND FREEDMEN.

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR ALABAMA.

1867.

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**REPORT OF BREVET MAJ.-GEN. WAGER SWAYNE, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR ALABAMA,
FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30th, 1867.**

Head-Quarters, District of Alabama, Montgomery, Alabama, Oct. 10, 1867.

Major-General O. O. Howard, *Commissioner Bureau Refugees and Freedmen*, Washington, D. C.

General: I have the honor to submit the following Annual Report of the operations of the Bureau in this District.

At the beginning of November, 1866, the status of the freedmen, by the laws of Alabama, was nominally the same as that of other non-voting inhabitants. They were, it is true, prohibited from testifying in cases in which whites only were concerned, and for a single crime a different penalty from that imposed upon white persons was prescribed for them. But in all those rights of more important and ordinary use, of holding and acquiring property of all kinds, of suits and contracts, of travel and inheritance, no difference against them was expressed in terms.

Laws were in force, however, of the harshest nature, which, though nominally applicable to all persons, were put in execution only against freedmen, and were designed to permit the exaction from them of forced labor, and the withholding of its dues. The wrong thus contemplated by the Legislature was in part restrained among the people by the impulses of honesty and the desire to retain the laborer beyond the current year, combining with the efforts of the Bureau officers to

avert and to redress it. Enough remained, however, to create a succession of cases calling loudly for reform. Several attempts were made to remedy this evil at its source, and the repeal of the "vagrant law" was finally accomplished.

Yet it was not from this cause more than from their express disabilities, that the severest injury to freedmen came. Constant and severe wrongs, inaccessible to relief because wholly intangible, were wrought out by a feeling on the part of jurors and magistrates, that freedmen were not persons by or for whom the laws were made, or to whom their protection or benefits need be faithfully extended. There was no feeling, that the situation of the parties might one day be reversed—none of that scruple which responsibility engenders. The result was continually experienced in verdicts and decisions contrary to justice, and more widely, in the tenor of all those transactions with the freedmen which were liable to be reviewed in court.

The condition of those persons left in destitution by the war, of whom a great majority were white, and who are known as "refugees," was very far from promising. By an issue of what was known as the "destitute ration," relief on a large scale had been afforded to them during the preceding year; in the hope that with the maturing of the crops that system might be discontinued. But an alternate excess of frost and heat, of rain and drought, in turn severely injured every crop, creating an amount of suffering greater than that which it had been attempted to relieve. An order had been issued in October, directing that in lieu of rations from the Commissary Department, the issue be confined thenceforth to corn and bacon, to be purchased and issued entirely by officers of the Bureau. This system it was found necessary to maintain until the maturing this year of an excellent crop of cereals permitted the entire discontinuance of this species of relief.

The following is a statement of the food issued, and the persons relieved in the State of Alabama under Government appropriations for relief, during nine months ending August 31, 1867:

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AMOUNT OF SUBSISTENCE STORES ISSUED, AND NUMBER OF PERSONS RELIEVED IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA, DURING NINE MONTHS, ENDING AUGUST 31, 1867.

WHITE.	COLORED.	CHILDREN.	CHILDREN.	MONTH.	Men.	Women.	Male.	Female.	Total.			
Men.	Women.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Total No. of Men.	Total No. of Women.	Total No. of Children.	Aggregate.	Bushels Corn.	Pounds Bacon	Pounds Pork.	Pounds Flour.
1,648	4,289	4,930	5,229	16,096	760	1,272	1,657	1,584	5,273	2,408	5,561	13,400
21,369	17,458	52,920	January	1867	644	2,307	3,217	3,558	9,726	250	476	570
858	2,154	894	2,783	8,203	11,880	9,957	21,702	February	1867	255	1,151	1,546
1,787	4,739	96	314	181	261	852	351	1,465	3,775	5,591	1,559	3,685
8,600	17,746	March	1867	1,736	5,365	6,715	8,193	22,009	1,080	2,267	1,995	2,398
7,740	2,816	7,632	19,301	29,749	19,977	42,742	4,200	7,940	April	1867	2,024	5,782

7,419 10,177 25,402 601 2,502 2,452 2,782 8,337 2,625 8,284 22,830 33,739 16,720 33,088
 3,200 5,096 May 1867 1,255 4,457 5,721 7,205 18,638 901 1,876 1,963 2,395 7,135 2,156
 6,333 17,284 25,773 12,910 26,350 June 1867 298 2,731 3,222 4,632 10,883 398 1,210 1,367
 1,890 4,865 696 3,941 11,111 15,748 13,367 12,786 3,500 9,016 July 1867 1,040 3,539 4,701
 4,336 13,616 425 1,043 731 819 3,018 1,465 4,582 10,587 16,634 7,935 13,919 August 1867
 539 1,281 1,974 2,344 6,138 292 694 692 539 2,217 831 1,975 5,549 8,355 8,970 Total 9,439
 30,902 39,445 47,461 127,247 4,803 11,654 11,608 13,526 41,591 14,242 42,556 112,040
 168,838 99,883 216,162 19,500 39,798 6

REPORT OF RATIONS ISSUED TO DESTITUTE REFUGEES AND FREEDMEN IN "COLONIES" DURING THE YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 1866, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1867.

WHITE. COLORED. Children. Children. MONTHS. Men Women Male Female Total Men Women
 Male Female Total Total Number of Men Total Number of Women Total Number of Children
 Aggregate Total Number of Full Rations issued Total value of Rations issued
 October, 1866 6 5 6 17 202 312 181 178 873 202 318 370 890 20,042 \$3,708 51
 November, 1866 1 3 1 6 11 183 271 135 155 744 184 274 297 755 17,550 3,166 62
 December, 1866 2 1 2 5 201 278 138 152 769 201 280 293 774 18,487 3,323 35
 January, 1867 1 30 5 7 43 176 249 108 112 645 177 279 232 688 18,050 3,278 01
 February, 1867 2 1 2 5 152 206 87 102 547 152 208 192 552 12,051 2,665 24
 March, 1867 2 1 1 4 158 212 87 86 543 158 214 175 547 15,640 3,815 81
 April, 1867 1 1 2 166 209 86 79 540 166 210 166 542 13,831 3,244 82
 May, 1867 1 1 2 165 212 83 80 540 166 213 163 542 14,241 3,525 46
 June, 1867 4 6 1 4 15 173 224 82 84 563 177 230 171 578 14,136 3,524 96
 July, 1867 60 75 93 30 258 174 232 95 112 613 234 307 330 871 16,803 ½
 4,026 59 August, 1867 3 4 7 184 224 89 76 573 187 228 165 580 15,471 4,063 59
 September, 1867 3 4 7 178 226 78 72 554 181 230 150 561 13,784 3,274 94
 Total 73 136 109 58 376 2112 2855 1249 1288 7504 2185 2991 2704 7880 190,086 ½ \$41,617 90 7

Meanwhile, early in the current year, the general distress so far exceeded the appropriations for this purpose, as to arouse that feeling at the North which found expression through relief associations at the great commercial centres, in distributing gratuitous supplies here and elsewhere, according to a sense of the necessity in different States. There seemed to be no limit to this generosity except that of necessity for its continuance, and it is not too much to say that by its timely exercise not only have the poorer counties been relieved from numerous individual cases of starvation, but they have been rescued also from disorder and disease, such as result from famine.

The gentlemen of the Southern Famine Relief Commission of New York were foremost in this good work, and our correspondence with their excellent Secretary, Dr. Edward Bright, has afforded us a satisfaction scarcely exceeded by that derived from the largeness of their contributions.

Associations in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Louisville and Boston also responded liberally to appeals for assistance, and many contributions were forwarded through private channels to points where they were most needed.

The supplies thus sent to Alabama were consigned in part to Governor Patton, and in part to the Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau. In accordance with the method already found to be most effective, these were all treated as one, and applied by our joint direction, under the immediate care of Col. W. C. Arthur, late Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, and Hon. M. H. Cruikshank, State Commissioner for the Destitute. They are therefore presented as a whole in the table accompanying this paper. In their distribution finally to individuals, as heretofore with Government supplies, the aid of trustworthy and public-spirited residents has been made use of, in preference to that of paid agents, and in some counties societies organized for the relief of different neighborhoods have been made use of as the medium of distribution. As close scrutiny as was practicable has been maintained over the whole by reports, correspondence, and inspection.

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STATEMENT of Supplies for the Destitute in Alabama, received from charitable organizations for distribution through the Freedmen's Bureau and State authorities, from April 1, 1867, to August 31, 1867, with the disposition of the same:

Counties.	Philadelphia Relief Commission.	N. Y. South. Famine Relief Com.	Maryland Relief Commission.	Cincinnati.	St. Louis, Mo.	Louisville.	Boston.	Total.	Corn.	Bushels	Corn.	Bushels	Bacon.	Pounds.	Corn.	Bushels	Corn.	Bushels	Bacon.	Pounds.	Corn.	Bushels		
Autauga	900	600	1,500	1,500	1,500	Baldwin	800	800	Baine	800	800	Barbour	435	986	435	986	Bibb	1,232	400	1,000	1,632	1,000		
Butler	1,882	1,882	Bullock	200	488	1	740	688	1,740	Calhoun	1,428	400	1,000	1,828	1,000	Chambers	300	746	1,000	1,046	1,000	Cherokee		
600	5,000	5,600	Choctaw	800	800	Clarke	400	400	Clay	1,428	400	1,000	1,828	1,000	Cleburne	1,428	400	1,000	1,828	1,000	Coffee	1,486	1,486	
Conecuh	800	800	Coosa	500	600	1,500	1,100	1,500	Covington	2,168	2,168	Crenshaw	1,560	1,560	Dale	435	986	435	986	Dallas	2,159	400	1,000	2
559	1,000	De Kalb	1,000	1,000	Elmore	400	600	1,500	1,000	1,500	Fayette	1,200	1,200	Franklin	1,000	1,000	Greene	1,178	1,178	Hale	808	808		
Henry	435	986	435	986	Jackson	1,000	1,000	Jefferson	1,748	600	1,500	2,318	1,500	Lawrence	500	500	Lauderdale	1,500	1,500	Lee	688	1,200	1,888	
Limestone	400	400	Lowndes	320	750	320	750	Marengo	604	604	Marion	1,000	1,000	Macon	400	400	1,000	800	1,000	Mobile	1,200	1,200		
Montgomery	700	1,400	4,888	2,100	4,888	Monroe	800	800	Perry	288	400	1,000	850	2,000	1,538	3,000	Pickens	1,212	1,212	Pike	1,042	400	1,000	
1,442	1,000	Randolph	300	335	1,959	635	1,959	Russell	488	1,920	488	1,920	Shelby	1,745	600	1,500	2,345	1,500	St Clair	600	1,230	400	1,000	
2,230	1,000	Sumter	808	808	Tallapoosa	500	609	1,500	1,100	1,500	Talladega													

2,216 950 7,425 3,166 7,425 Tuscaloosa 1,200 600 3,000 250 2 050 3,000 Walker 1,400 1,400
 Washington 800 800 Wilcox 800 800 Special issues 850 936 850 936 Lost on Nyanza 4,000
 4,000 Rec'd in bad cond'n 28 14 42 Asylums Mobile 520 520 On hand 13,100 13,100 Total 1,000
 60,698 14 784 41,576 4,600 1,450 5,000 250 5,000 90,782 46,576 9

For this class of supplies, as well as for those purchased with the Government appropriations, transportation was furnished by the Quartermaster of the Bureau from the port of entry where they were received to the principal points of distribution. At these points—Mobile, Eufaula, Greenville, Montgomery, Selma, Demopolis, Tuscaloosa Talladega, Decatur and Huntsville—they were received by Bureau officers, who assisted in their subdivision, according to a prescribed apportionment, among the different counties. Beyond these issuing depots, the expense of transportation was defrayed by the several counties in all cases in which it was possible for them to do so. Where it was not, the obstacle was found well nigh insuperable until a donation of seven thousand dollars was received through William Gray, Esq., of Boston, from which not only was this system made complete, but much good was accomplished in a class of cases where it was not food that was required.

Among the later shipments which have been received, in June, the U. S. ship "Purveyor," Captain Simpson, arrived at Mobile, having on board twenty-eight thousand bushels of corn, sent by the New York Southern Famine Relief Commission, of which one half only was designed for Alabama, and the remainder for Charleston and Savannah. Upon examination of the cargo by the Captain, and after consultation with experienced shippers, it was found to have been so affected by protracted dampness as to be unfit for a continued voyage, and the whole was left at Mobile and sent out to the depots. Unexpectedly added to the shipments already provided for, it has occasioned a partial supply to still remain on hand, which will be used through the winter, as special occasions may arise.

The prevailing impoverishment, of which this scarcity of food was part, prevented also the establishment of any poorhouse system, although greatly needed since the war, and compelled the maintenance throughout this year of the infirmaries or hospitals which were already in existence, the re-opening of that at Talladega, and the establishment of an additional one at Garland, Butler county, to which a large number of infirm persons have been transferred from Greenville.

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A large and well-conducted ward has also been added to the hospital at Montgomery. Seven of these hospitals are now maintained, whose personnel, capacity and operations the annexed tables fully represent. All of them are in good condition, and are well supplied with usual and necessary stores:

RELIEF ESTABLISHMENTS in Operation in Alabama during the period commencing November 1, 1866, and ending August 31, 1867.

STATIONS. ATTENDANTS. Surgeons. Stewards. Male. Female. Capacity Beds. Mobile, Ala.
 1 1 6 3 100 Montgomery ^{*} 50 Home Colony, near Montgomery 1 2 1 4 100 Selma 1 1 4 3 50
 Demopolis 1 2 3 40 Garland 1 2 2 50 Talladega 1 1 50 Huntsville 1 1 1 50

* Consolidated with Home Colony Hospital in August, 1867.

CONSOLIDATED REPORT of Refugees Treated and Died during the period commencing November 1 st, 1866, and ending August 31 st, , 1867, together with the number remaining at the end of each month.

MONTHS. TREATED. DIED. REMAINING. Men. Women. Male Children. Female Children.
 TOTAL. Men. Women. Male Children. Female Children TOTAL. Men. Women. Male Children.
 Female Children TOTAL. Percentage of Deaths. November, 1866 14 24 7 10 55 2 8 3 4 17
 December 1866 8 15 6 4 33 1 1 3 5 3 11 03 January 1867 6 13 8 27 2 5 2 9 February 1867 4 7
 3 2 16 1 1 3 2 1 6 06 March 1867 3 2 1 6 April 1867 3 3 2 2 May 1867 1 3 4 1 3 4 June 1867 3 4
 2 9 3 4 2 9 July 1867 3 4 2 9 2 2 1 3 2 6 22 August 1867 1 3 2 6 1 1 1 3 4 16 Total 43 78 25 22
 168 3 1 1 5 1 3 9 8 4 029 11

CONSOLIDATED REPORT of Freedmen Treated and Died during the period commencing November 1, 1866, and ending August 31, 1867, together with the number remaining at the end of each month.

Months. TREATED. DIED. REMAINING. Men. Women. Male Children. Female Children. Total.
 Men. Women. Male Children. Female Children. Total. Men. Women. Male Children. Female
 Children. Total. Percentage of Deaths. November, 1866 203 225 96 88 612 9 8 6 1 24 118 164
 66 64 412 039 December, 1866 182 214 80 73 549 12 4 3 19 113 176 70 62 421 034 January,
 1867 163 242 84 77 566 8 8 1 17 123 165 63 56 407 030 February, 1867 169 239 84 76 568 7 6
 1 3 17 114 154 66 48 382 029 March, 1867 158 223 80 59 520 1 5 1 1 8 112 152 62 33 359 015
 April, 1867 168 201 76 46 491 6 5 2 1 14 137 171 67 42 417 028 May, 1867 188 251 81 58 578
 7 2 1 10 136 205 61 42 444 017 June, 1867 203 279 77 71 630 4 5 3 3 15 154 218 63 55 490
 020 July, 1867 225 297 80 82 684 7 6 1 2 16 157 229 65 54 505 023 August, 1867 284 352 121
 103 860 12 5 5 22 166 235 81 51 533 025 Total 1943 2523 859 733 6058 73 54 24 11 162 166
 235 81 51 533 026

It will be observed that the occupants are almost exclusively freedmen, and that the percentage of deaths has been unusually low.

Eleven contract surgeons have been employed during the year past, of whom four have been discharged, and seven are still in service. These gentlemen have discharged their respective duties with fidelity and skill.

Meanwhile efforts have been made which resulted in transferring from the charge of the Government most of those aged or infirm persons who remained after employment had been

found for the early inmates of the "colonies." And as the State Tax for this year is now giving to the several counties means for the first time for such a purpose; and in pursuance of your orders, arrangements have been made which are expected to result during the current month in the transfer of all these institutions, each to the charge of the county in which it is now situated, but with sufficient guarantee for its maintenance.

But little difficulty has been experienced during the year past in extending our school system in accordance with our means, and a high degree of success has attended its prosecution. The method heretofore adopted of searching out 12 localities where schools might well be opened, opening the schools ourselves but encouraging the freedmen to take part in their support, was maintained until the year closed with vacation, with excellent results. The school year opened with sixty-eight teachers and thirty-one hundred pupils; one hundred and fifty teachers were instructing ninety-eight hundred pupils at its close; and the advancement in scholarship was not less than the increase in numbers. No difference in natural capacity or interest is observed between these pupils and those of any schools known to the writer in this country.

The year has witnessed no diminution, but apparently a widening of the remarkable interest taken by the freedmen in the new facilities for education. Great efforts are made to support their children while in school, and among themselves primers are found in every situation, laid away for use during the intervals of labor.

The decks of steamboats, wagons upon the road, hackstands, and almost every other place open to observation, present illustrations of this feeling.

As well to make this interest permanent, as for the immediate benefit derived, aid has been rendered by the Bureau in the erection of school-houses according to its means, and wherever efforts made among the freedmen have resulted in procuring the necessary ground without cost to the Government. In this way, permanent structures have been secured at Montgomery, Greenville, Evergreen, Selma, Demopolis, Gainesville, Wetumpka, West Point, Mount Meigs, Union Springs, Florence, Lafayette, Huntsville and Decatur. Preparation is making to erect large buildings for schools of a high order at Mobile, Montgomery and Selma; and others are in contemplation. The title has in every case been vested in a board of suitable trustees, with proper guaranty against a failure of the trust.

At points less central, and on numerous plantations, many rude school rooms have been put up, and these the Bureau has assisted in a measure with school furniture. Applications for help in all these ways have steadily increased throughout the year, the demand being greater than could be supplied. Two small buildings have been destroyed by incendiarism, and some individual

lawlessness has been encountered, but the severe hostility that was at first so general has now disappeared. The Mobile School Board, a corporation of long standing and high character, have expressed to the Bureau their desire to co-operate in extending their schools among the colored people, and there is other evidence of a growing preparation for a comprehensive system of free schools, supported by the State.

In prosecuting the work of this year, as heretofore, important aid has been received from missionary associations at the North. The American Missionary Association now maintains teachers at Montgomery and Mobile, and has recently purchased a large college building with abundant ground, at Talladega, for the immediate establishment of a normal school. The commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church have charge of schools at Huntsville and Decatur, and at several lesser points, and prosecute their work with growing enterprise.

It is noteworthy that the voluntary labor of the teachers has imparted Sabbath-school instruction to eight thousand pupils, and that, through the office of the school superintendent, more than five thousand bibles and testaments, kindly donated for the purpose by the American Bible Society, have been distributed among the freedmen, most of whom thus for the first time in their lives, came into possession of the Word of God.

At the last session of the Legislature, a new "school law" was reported, which provided for a pro rata division of the school fund between the white and black children of the State. It passed one house, but was defeated in the other, possibly, as was alleged, for reasons other than because the provision above referred to was contained in it. Meanwhile the revenue to be applied this year had been too far distributed to permit the same end to be attained by judicial decision, as would otherwise have been attempted.

The following table exhibits the operations of the schools during the year:

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT TO THE BUREAU OF REFUGEES AND FREEDMEN IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA, FOR THE YEAR 1866-7.

MONTH. No. of Schools. TEACH'RS. PUPILS ENROLLED. White. Colored. Total. Male. Female. Total. Average Attendance. Always present. Always punctual. In Alphabet. Spell and read Easy Lessons. Advanced Readers. In Geography. In Arithmetic. In higher Branches. In Writing. Sabbath Schools. Pupils in Sabbath Schools.

November 1866	46	58	10	68	1,451	1,769	3,220	2,434	1,798	1,724	551	1,770	1,004	398	800	77	994	37	4,713
December 1866	51	57	12	69	1,548	2,091	3,639	2,578	1,800	1,724	548	1,864	1,227	237	816	54	991	41	4,613
January 1867	68	57	17	74	1,735	2,253	3,988	3,730	1,961	1,972	767	1,898	1,323	488	1,007	81	1,356	40	3,665

February 1867 95 75 20 95 2,274 3,078 5,352 4,217 3,427 3,393 1,032 2,374 1,946 769 1,149
153 1,471 50 4,268 March 1867 104 82 19 101 2,540 3,262 5,802 4,962 3,952 3,762 1,326
2,998 1,531 714 1,487 278 1,412 55 4,308 April 1867 130 94 19 113 3,538 4,065 7,603 6,079
5,473 5,240 2,293 2,996 2,314 1,061 1,803 270 2,893 77 6,804 May 1867 155 111 21 132 3,977
4,845 8,822 7,526 6,410 6,440 2,743 3,960 2,129 1,334 2,545 353 2,787 83 7,041 June 1867
175 126 24 150 4,373 5,426 9,799 8,123 7,700 7,750 3,396 4,385 2,044 1,782 2,888 813 3,447
96 8,140 July 1867 62 98 3 101 2,082 2,353 4,435 3,200 2,668 2,670 705 2,611 1,119 457 796
91 836 26 2,660 August 1867 Schools closed for Summer Vacation. September 1867 15

As a result of this system of eliciting voluntary co-operation, the average cost of these schools to the Government has been but sixty-one and one-half cents per month for each scholar in actual daily attendance.

The entire expenditure for school purposes has been forty-five thousand two hundred and thirty-seven dollars and fifty-five cents (\$45,237 55), the principal items of which are given in the schedule of disbursements for the year. The expenditure for salaries of teachers has not been resumed since the vacation, there being no longer means under our control properly applicable in that way, and the increased ability of the parents of the pupils to sustain the schools warranting this attempt to make them self-supporting.

The operations of the Quartermaster's Department have been limited during the year to the transportation of subsistence stores and hospital supplies, and to the distribution of a few articles of the irregular army clothing left on hand from last year. Transportation has also been issued to a limited extent to teachers in the employ of the Bureau, or of missionary associations, and to a small number of refugees and freedmen. In these last cases, families that had been separated by slavery or the war were re-united, or paupers removed to self-supporting situations.

The discontinuance of the issues of subsistence stores, and the prospective transfer of the Hospital Department to the civil authorities, have already permitted a material reduction of Quartermaster's expenses of all kinds, and point to an early disposition of the materials for transportation on hand, and the closing up of the Department, except for purposes of storage and the rendition of accounts.

The receipts of the disbursing officer during this year have been almost entirely from your office, and require little presentation beyond a mere statement of accounts. The tax on contracts was quite early discontinued, and proceedings to obtain for educational purposes the real property owned by the late rebel government, or the proceeds when sold, have not resulted as yet favorably to the Bureau.

The receipts and disbursements during the year are shown in the following statement:

Statement of receipts and disbursements in the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, in the State of Alabama, for the year ending September 30, 1867.

RECEIPTS.

Amount on hand November 1, 1866, date of last Report \$ 9,256 04

Received from Chief Disbursing Officer, War Department 349,590 73

“ for approving contracts 254 53

“ proceeds of sale of damaged corn 2,836 60

“ rents of properties of rebel government 2,331 83

“ amount returned on voucher improperly paid 50 00

Total receipts \$364,319 73

DISBURSEMENTS.

Salaries of Sub-Assistant Commissioners \$ 3,778 77

“ of Clerks 37,952 80

Stationery and Printing 1,821 07

Quarters and Fuel 16,575 96

Clothing for distribution 1,294 00

Commissary Stores 151,567 91

Quartermaster's Stores 771 70

Medical Department 26,660 33
Transportation of all kinds 47,965 71
Superintendent of Education 1,458 34
Rents and Repairs of School-houses 12,987 72
Teachers of Schools 29,085 05
Transportation of Teachers 1,237 92
Telegraphing and Postage 1,680 75
Miscellaneous 1,633 93
Total disbursements \$336,471 96

A material retrenchment, embracing all the departments, and similar to that in the Quartermaster's department already referred to, is in progress. The cessation of the purchase of subsistence stores; the transfer of our hospital system, with its personnel of employees to the civil authorities; the establishment of our schools upon an independent basis, so far as the support of teachers is concerned, and the discharge of civil agents, which the advancing status of the freedmen is beginning to permit, not only materially contribute to remove the burden our necessities have heretofore imposed, but point to an early and permanent cessation of expense.

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BALANCE SHEET OF DISBURSING OFFICER, BUREAU REFUGEES AND FREEDMEN IN ALABAMA, FOR ELEVEN MONTHS, COMMENCING NOVEMBER 1 st, 1866, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30 th, 1867.

RECEIPTS.

1866.

Balance on hand November 1st \$ 9,256 04

Received in November 100,537 16

Received in December 13,910 42

1867.

Received in January 82,808 48

Received in February 193 00

Received in March 25,576 12

Received in April 14,333 46

Received in May 14,311 43

Received in June 69,732 76

Received in July 32,988 24

Received in August 633 62

Received in September 39 00

\$364,319 73

EXPENDITURES.

1866.

Paid in November \$ 80,797 98

Paid in December 15,540 94

1867.

Paid in January 14,992 04

Paid in February 57,140 79

Paid in March 17,729 05

Paid in April 34,298 07

Paid in May 13,589 08

Paid in June 16,879 31

Paid in July 39,156 79

Paid in August 35,741 25

Paid in September 10,696 66

Balance carried down 27,847 77

\$364,319 73

Remaining on hand, October 1st \$27,847 77

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Through the Adjutant General's Department, in addition to the usual correspondence and returns, there have been forwarded during the year past for gratuitous collection, one hundred and eighteen claims for the bounty and back pay of soldiers, and the results transmitted. Through the same office, a supervision of the different Bureau agencies throughout the State has been maintained, and the condition of the freedmen ascertained from time to time.

During part of the year, twenty-three of these agencies have been maintained, ten of which have recently been closed, and five new ones established. Stations are now in existence at the following named places, under the charge of the gentlemen designated.

Huntsville B'v't Brig. Gen. John B. Callis, V.R. C.

Talladega James F. McGogy.

Tuscaloosa Robert Blair.

Demopolis B'v't Maj. C. W. Pierce, V. R. C.

Selma 1st Lieut Geo. Shorkley, 15th U. S. Inf.

Montgomery John C. Hendrix.

Opelika Robert T. Smith.

Eufaula Wm. E. Connelly.

Greenville Samuel S. Gardner.

Mobile Capt. James Gillette, 15th U. S. Inf.

Greensboro H. G. Claus.

Eutaw G. A. Farrand.

Girard J. B. Healy.

These gentlemen, by faithful service and the earnest kindly spirit of their work, have laid me under obligation, and have rendered the freedmen invaluable service.

Brevet Major George H. Tracy, Captain 15th U. S. Infantry, lately in charge of the station at Mobile, died at his post on the 17th of September, of yellow fever. An officer of rare capacity and promise, his talents had not caused him to be more admired than he was beloved for his fine qualities of heart and manner. Remaining at his post and "faithful unto death," it is hoped he has ere this received his "crown of life."

The following named officers compose the present staff:

B'v't Lieut. Col. Chas. J. Kipp, Surgeon U. S. V. Surgeon in chief.

B'v't Lieut. Col. Edwin Breecher, U. S. V. Disbursing officer.

O. D. Kinsman (late B'v't' Lieut Col.) Acting Assistant Adjutant Gen.

W. C. Arthur (late B'v't Lieut. Col.) Commissary of Subsistence.

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Rev. C. W. Buckley (late Chaplain U. S. V.) Superint't of Schools

Lieut. L. J. Whiting. 45th U. S. Infantry Chief Quartermaster.

The fidelity and courtesy for which I am indebted to these gentlemen, have greatly enhanced both the pleasure and the usefulness attending the discharge of my own duties.

The reports of the several stations at the close of last year showed innumerable cases of refusal or of inability to pay the freedmen the balance of wages due for the year. The failure of the crop had much to do with this, but yet there was a general disposition to regard the freedmen as fair subjects for fraud. The most frivolous pretexts and most oppressive methods were resorted to, to make the laborer quit before his year had quite expired, or to afford occasion for driving him away. His patience under all this was remarkable, scarcely a case of violent resistance coming to my knowledge.

As many of these cases as could be, were taken up and remedied by Bureau officers, and an attempt was made to prevent their recurrence by legislative enactment. A bill creating a lien for agricultural laborers upon the product of their labor for its dues passed through the Senate, and was reported and certified as having passed the House at the last day of the session, but on examination of the journals was found not to have become a law. For want of this, and from the bias of the inferior courts against the freedmen, very many cases have gone unredressed.*

* Since the above was written, and to prevent the same result in this year's settlements, the following has been issued in General Orders:

"In order to secure to agricultural laborers in this State payment for the labor of this year, a lien is hereby created in their favor upon the crops grown on the farms on which they are respectively employed. Said lien attaches from this date, and is subordinate to prior liens.

"This lien will be recognized by the several Courts and Magistrates of this State, and will be enforced by attachment to be issued by any Judge, Clerk of a Court of Record or Justice of the Peace. In case the amount claimed to be due is one hundred dollars or less, it shall be returnable before a Justice of the County; and when it exceeds one hundred dollars, it shall be returnable before a Court of Record having jurisdiction of such cases.

"Such attachment will be issued when any part of the crop shall hereafter be removed or be about to be removed without payment of the wages, and without the consent of the laborer.

"Affidavit being made of either of the facts above recited, and of the amount of wages due or to become due to the laborer, or due or to become due for his share of the crop, and bond being given as in other cases of attachment, the attachment shall at once issue to the proper officer, to be levied

on so much of the crop produced on the plantation as shall be sufficient to supply the demand; but in case the plaintiff shall swear in his affidavit that he is unable to give security, then the attachment shall issue without any security on the bond.

“The attachment suit shall be triable at the first term of the Court after the execution and return of the writ of attachment, and any number of laborers on a plantation may join in one suit.”

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For this year's labor, many freedmen were able to secure land to work upon their own account, and the facilities for doing so by purchase or by lease are constantly increasing. Those who worked as before quite generally contracted to receive a portion of the crop “and found” in lieu of money wages; an arrangement preferred by the laborer as more secure, and by the planter, from his inability to pay until the crop was prepared for sale.

Throughout the close of last year and the first of this, much hardship was experienced by freedmen from unfair application of the law giving authority to probate judges to apprentice minor children, who from orphanage or poverty of parents were left unprovided for. A custom had grown up to have the force of law—that every former slaveholder might have the children of his former slaves apprenticed to him until they were twenty-one. Cases were known of attempts made to seize young men but two or three years under age and hold them under such a system, and loud complaints were made by parents who were well to do, of younger children taken from them as the result of judicial process of which they had never before received any intimation. An amendment to the law was speedily procured, requiring that the parents in all cases should be summoned; but this did not reach the corrupt exercise of a discretionary power.

A parallel to this was found in the system of “chain-gangs,” a savage mode of punishment adopted in the several counties in lieu of sending their convicts to the jail or to the penitentiary, and in the cities as a means of working out the fines imposed for misdemeanor. This was among those measures authorized by law without distinction, but confined in practice to the punishment of freedmen.

In March, the “Military Reconstruction Bill” was passed, and the Assistant Commissioner remaining in command, 21 authority was found to remedy the two last evils by an order which was speedily applied.

“I. Complaints of hardships in the needless apprenticing of minors, “particularly in pursuance of the preference given to the “former “owner” in the law, have been almost incessant. It is enjoined “upon Probate Judges, upon application, to revise the action taken “in such cases, and as a rule, to revoke indentures made within the “past two years of minors who were capable of self-support.

"II. The attention of Magistrates is called to the repeal by the "last Legislature of the "vagrant law," approved December 15, 1865, "and published with the Code. Attempts which are still made to "put it in execution, will hereafter be the subject of military "cognizance.

"III. The use of "chain-gangs" as a mode of legal punishment, being found to involve serious abuses, will be henceforth discontinued "except in connection with the penitentiary."

This was, however, but one feature of what followed from the passage of the Reconstruction Bills. A general amendment in the treatment of the freedmen signaled the fact, and has been steadily progressing. The sense of coming power brought immediate respect. A new and summary process menacing those ruffians who eluded or defied the civil law, brought a degree of order which has been a sensible relief. The very passage of the bill, regarded as a punishment by those who were opposed to it, has vindicated those among them who had previously insisted upon justice, and brought a new responsibility to bear on those who had been pandering to the animosities of race.

The freedmen themselves promptly took new heart at the improvement in their prospects. Laboring with as much industry as ever, they seem to study with more zeal, to have new confidence in trying to improve. Already they have been admitted to the jury box, and some of them employed in the lower branches of the public service, so that they have little need to fear injustice in the future.

And the Convention which is soon to meet, will hardly fail to properly enlarge their scope of opportunities, or to provide their children with facilities of education, such as are required by their new capacities and powers.

With these, and with such fair rewards of industry as average years afford, it is not difficult to see how they may 22 before many years present, if not as large, as bright an illustration of the worth of freedom as the world has known, and at the same time of the Providence by which their freedom has been wrought.

I have the honor to be, General,

Very respectfully, your ob't serv't, Wager Swayne, B'v't Maj.-Gen. U. S. A., Ass't Com'r.