

From The Freedmen's Bureau's Papers**Transcribed from microfilm at the Thomas Balch Library****by Betty L. Morefield****Roll 45, pgs.489-491**

Bureau of R F and A L

Leesburg, Va Sept. 31st 1866

B'v't Maj W R Morse
Superintendent B of R F and AL
4th Dist Gordonsville Va

In compliance with Circular No 6, dated Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Head Quarters Assistant Commissioner, State of Virginia, Richmond, Va January 29th 1866. I have the honor to report that the Freedmen, as a general thing are enterprising and industrious – nearly all being employed who are old enough to labor, and when there are opportunities for sending children to school, these opportunities accord to the best advantage. There are now four schools established in this county – three of which are [?], sustained by benevolent societies north. The other is taught by an educated and intelligent colored man, and is a private institution. [See William O. Robey]

In many instances efforts are made and with some success, too, by the whites, to help the colored people, as much as possible, in the same condition they were before they were manumitted – by paying them for their labor, whenever they can in old clothes and such other old [trash?] as they can put off on them, at a fabulous price, and in many other ways which their bitterness of feeling and cunning can suggest. As regards their chances before the law I would respectfully invite your attention to my report on that particular subject.

It is indeed surprising to witness the muteness of the freedmen to all these abuses I have not known of an instance where a colored man has returned violence when assaulted by a white man, but they have with all control they could appeal to the civil authorities for redress, which I am sorry to say they seldom receive.

I earnestly hope that time may mend matters very much in removing the deep rooted prejudices which these people entertained towards the freedmen, the Bureau and the Govt.

Meetings to decorate with flowers the graves of the rebel dead, and to commemorate by erecting their monuments, to the rising generation as they learn it, the just cause in which their lives were sacrificed, are frequently held here.

I am, Major, Very Respectfully Your Obt Servt

Sydney B. Smith

B? Asst Supt Loudoun Co.Va

Roll 45, p.761

Bureau of R F and A Lands Leesburg, Va Oct. 27th 1866

B'v't Major W R Morse

Supt B of R F and A Lands 4th Dist Va Gordonsville, Va

Major: In compliance with circular No 6, dated Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands Head Quarters, Assistant Commissioner, State of Virginia, Richmond , Va January 29th 1866 I have the honor to report that there is no visible improvement

existing between the white and freed people of this county, the latter are mute and forbearing, while in some instances the former are disposed to take all the advantage in their favor of the freed people's ignorance and circumstances. I give you something of an idea of the regard which is entertained from the freedmen by the white people I will state the circumstances which came to my notice this week in one of the courts of this county. One Landon S. Lovett was tried on two indictments viz: for the shooting of a colored boy and for horse stealing. He was found guilty of them both, for the former he was sentenced to the penitentiary for one year, and for the latter fourteen years.

I will here state that the colored boy did not die. However, Lovittis entitled to no credit for his recovery as the ball entered the body at the small of the back immediately over the back bone or spine and glanced as it struck the bone. There is no doubt whatever but he intended to kill the boy when he fired.

I have related the above circumstance that you may form some idea of your own of the sentiments of white people towards the freedmen I will however here add that the colored boy was shot last May, but the man was not arrested until last month, after stealing the horses. The civil authorities in my opinion would never have arrested him for shooting the "nigger" I would not misrepresent the real sentiments of these people either toward the freedmen, the bureau or the Govt. In my opinion these people hate the latter (the Govt) quite as much as they did these three/these? years ago and knowing that the Freedmen and Bureau being [?] only by the strength of the Govt all three incurr their most bitter hatred.

I am Maj, Very Respectfully

Your Obt Servt Sydney B. Smith

Br'v't Captain V?? & Sup'ent.

Roll 46, p. 0074

Bureau of R F & A Lands

Office of Asst Superintendent

Leesburg Va Nov. 28th 1866

[?] Major W. R. Morse

Dept B of R F & A L 4th District Va Gordonsville Va

Major, In compliance with Circular No 6 dated Bureau of refugees Freedmen and Abandoned Lands Hd Va

Assistant Commissioner state of Va Richmond Va Jan 29th 1866 I have the honor to report that the Freed people of this county are doing finely – nearly all are industrious and orderly. I, however, see no visible improvement of feeling toward them by the white people. Wages for male adults range from \$8 to \$12? a month, females from \$4 to \$8 according to the proficiency of their labor.

I am Major, Very Respectfully Your Obt Sert
 Sydney B. Smith
 B’v’t Capt VRC & Asst Supt

Roll 46, p. 287

Leesburg, Va Dec.28th, 1866

B’v’t Maj. W R Morse
 Supt B. of R F & A L 4th Dist. Gordonsville, Va

Major, In compliance with Circular No 6 dated Bureau of R F. and A L Head Quarters Asst Com’r state of Va Richmond Va January 29th 1866 I have to report that no material change in regards the affairs of this Bureau is concerned has occurred since last report.

Many of the Freedmen who have been hired for the year which is now closing appear to be willing to labor by the year [?] Instead of their conforming to the old custom of spending the whole break [?] between Christmas and the New Year in idleness and dissipation I am happy to state that but comparatively few have discontinued to labor and will at termination of the present year have filled their labor contracts.

Some few who have labor by the month complain of indisposition of their employers to pay them but I find on making inquiry that quite as many who make such complaints are in fault as the parties complained of.

As a general thing the more reliable class of Freedmen who are common laborers work by the year with good able farmers who are desirous of securing their services for another year but this alone is a sufficient incentive for them to pay their employees fairly and promptly.

I do not consider the wages paid other people a sufficient remuneration for their labor. On making inquiry I find the wages of a slave hire in [?] years was nearly as much as is paid to the freedmen at the present time. While now the product of the laborers’ labor is worth nearly twice as much to the farmer as this is surely not very encouraging to the colored people as they can hope to lay by but little, however industrious they may be.

Since my last report I have seen nothing indicative of a change of feeling for the better on the part of the white toward the colored people nor on the other hand have I seen anything which would justify me in saying any change for the worse had occurred since my last report. The (answer?) is the expression of the face is an (indel?) of the smallness of the mind and feelings particularly among the ??? of the females of this place it is certain that people have not under gone any change for the better toward officers and agents of the government and toward the “Bureau” as they are pleased to call it since my last report.

I am Maj. Very respectfully,
 Your Obt Servt
 Sydney B. Smith
 B’v’t Capt VRC & Asst Supt

Roll 46 pgs. 537- 538

Bureau of R F and A Lands
Office of Asst Superintendent Leesburg, Va
January 28th, 1867

Major W R Morse
Sup'int Bureau of R F & A L Gordonsville Va

Major: In compliance with Circular No6 dated Bureau of R F and A L Hd Qut Asst Com'er State of Va Richmond Va Jan 29th 1866 I have the honor to report that the affairs of this Bureau [?] ing finely in this county

The Freedmen appear to have entered upon the new year with resolutions of industry as all appear to be employed.

The Freedmen of this County were at the beginning of new year entirely inadequate to supply the demand for labor consequently the wages are somewhat enhanced when compared with the previous year. Many of the farmers have hired their labor for the present year from Alexandria and elsewhere as a sufficient supply could not be obtained here.

I think the feelings on the part of the white people towards the colored people and toward the Bureau is gradually but perceptibly improving. I think that time will greatly improve if not entirely considering the hostile feeling which the whites have hereto fore manifested towards the Freedmen and this Bureau.

I am Major very Respectfully your Obt Servt
Sydney B. Smith
B'v't Captain VRC & Asst Supt

Roll 46, pgs. 675-677

Bur of R. F and A. Lands Office of Asst Superintendent
Leesburg Va February 27th 1867

B'v't. Brig. Cor O.
Brown?? Richmond
Va

General, Incompliance with Circular No 6 Bureau of R F and A L Hd Qt, Asst Com'er Richmond Va January 27th 1864 I have the honor to report that the affair of this Bureau in this county during the present month have progressed about the same as here before.

There is no doubt, however, but the Bureau continue to be an eyesore to the great majority of the people as nearly all [?] alone unless they find it to their material advantage to appeal to it. What few persons in this

place who pretend to be loyal are which but two or three exceptions, of the poorer class of society as well as [?] and are slaves to public opinion to such an extent that there are but very few persons, indeed, who are to be at all which [unconditionally loyal.

A lady, teaching a colored school here under the auspices of the Friends Society Phil "Penn" is obliged to live in a house of a Freedman or rather in one room of a house occupied by a colored family, or ---- school, as she could not get heard elsewhere. Hence she is annoyed not a little by the "Chivalry of the Old Dominion" A scurrilous paragraph appeared in one of the papers of this place some days ago in consequence of her having taken lodging where she [-----?-----] of the most malignant character are suspected against her, by the people.

I simply sight this case the lady teacher as I believe it to be typical of the sentiments of the people regarding the Bureau, and the Government, generally.

I am happy, however, to report that no acts of violence have been perpetrated which have come to my knowledge during the present month.

I am very respectfully,
Your Obt Servt
Sydney B. Smith