



Smithsonian

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Records of the Assistant Commissioner
for State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Historical Note.....	2
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Letters and Telegrams Sent.....	4
Series 2: Endorsements Sent.....	6
Series 3: Registers of Letters and Telegrams Received.....	8
Series 4: Letters and Telegrams Received.....	11
Series 5: Orders, Circulars, Circular Letters, and Letters of Instruction.....	16
Series 6: Reports of Operations and Conditions in Virginia.....	18
Series 7: Records Relating to Specific Bureau Functions.....	20
Series 8: Records Relating to Destitute Freedmen and Refugees.....	22
Series 9: Records Relating to Murders and Outrages.....	23
Series 10: Records Relating to Court Cases Involving Freedmen.....	24
Series 11: Personnel Records.....	26
Series 12: Records Relating to Property Owned or Rented by the Bureau.....	28
Series 13: Miscellaneous Records.....	29

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of African American History and Culture
Title:	Records of the Assistant Commissioner for State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869
Identifier:	NMAAHC.FB.M1048
Date:	1865–1869
Extent:	67 Microfilm
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection is comprised of digital surrogates previously available on the 67 rolls of microfilm described in NARA publication M1048. These digital surrogates reproduced the records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869. The records consist of 40 bound volumes and 51 linear feet of unbound documents. The bound volumes include letters and endorsements sent, registers of letters received, orders and circulars issued, and some personnel records. The unbound records consist primarily of letters and reports received.
Digital Content:	Image(s): M1048-Representative-Image

Administrative Information

Acquisition Note

Acquired from FamilySearch International in 2015.

Related Archival Materials

See also [Freedmen's Bureau Digital Collection](#)

Citation Note

Courtesy of the U. S. National Archives and Records Administration, FamilySearch International, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Access Note

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Historical Note

[The following is reproduced from the original NARA descriptive pamphlet for M1048.]

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

The Freedmen's Bureau, as the Bureau was commonly known, was established in the War Department by an act of March 3, 1865 (13 Stat. 507), and extended twice by acts of July 16, 1866 (14 Stat. 173), and July 6, 1868 (15 Stat. 83). Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard, appointed by the President in May 1865, served as Commissioner throughout the life of the Bureau, which was terminated in accordance with an act of June 10, 1872 (17 Stat. 366).

Although the Bureau was part of the War Department, its work was primarily social and economic in nature. Bureau officials cooperated with benevolent societies in issuing supplies to destitute persons and in maintaining freedmen's schools. Bureau officials also supervised labor contracts between black employees and white employers; helped black soldiers and sailors collect bounty claims, pensions, and backpay; and attended to the disposition of confiscated or abandoned lands and other property.

The act of March 3, 1865, authorized the appointment of assistant commissioners to aid the Commissioner in supervising the work of the Bureau in the States. In Virginia, operations began in June 1865, when Assistant Commissioner Orlando Brown established his headquarters in Richmond. Colonel Brown served until May 1866, when he was succeeded by Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry, who remained in office until August 1866. Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield served from August 1866 to March 1867, when Brown again assumed office. In accordance with an act of July 25, 1868 (15 Stat. 193), Bureau operations in the States were terminated on January 1, 1869, except for educational functions and the collection of claims. Brown, however, continued to serve as Assistant Commissioner and Superintendent of Education until May 1869.

The organization of the Bureau in Virginia was similar to that of the Bureau headquarters in Washington, D. C. The Assistant Commissioner's staff consisted, at various times, of a Superintendent of Education, and Assistant Adjutant General, an Assistant Inspector General, Chief Medical officer, and a Chief Quartermaster. Subordinate to these officers were the subassistant commissioners in command of the subdistricts. Under the supervision of the subassistant commissioners were civilian and military superintendents, assistant subassistant commissioners, and agents.

From July 4, 1865, to April 14, 1867, Virginia was divided, for administrative purposes, into 10 districts with an agent or superintendent in charge of each. Districts were further divided into subdistricts, each headed by an assistant superintendent. On April 15, 1867, the state was reorganized into 10 subdistricts with a subassistant commissioner in charge of each. Each subdistrict was divided into divisions that were headed by assistant subassistant commissioners. Subdistrict headquarters were established at Alexandria, Fort Monroe, Fredericksburg, Gordonsville, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond, Winchester, and Wytheville. On January 1, 1869, the subdistricts were reorganized into eight educational subdistricts with an assistant superintendent of schools in charge of each.

From June 1866 to March 1867, Assistant Commissioners Terry and Schofield also served as military commanders of the Department of Virginia and its successor, the Department of the Potomac. The two generals thus created and received records in both capacities. Although Terry and Schofield maintained separate sets of records for this period, the dual nature of their roles is reflected in some of the letterheads used on official correspondence and other records reproduced in this publication. The title "Department of the Potomac," for example, is frequently encountered. Records created by Terry and Schofield while serving in their military capacities are found among the Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, Record Group 393.

The volumes reproduced in this microfilm publication were arbitrarily assigned numbers by the Adjutant General's Office (AGO) of the War Department after the records came into its custody. In the table of contents, the AGO numbers are shown in parentheses were assigned by the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) staff. Numbered blank pages have not been filmed. Indexes precede the volumes to which they pertain.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- American South
- Freedmen's Bureau
- Reconstruction, U.S. history, 1865-1877
- Slaves -- Emancipation

Container Listing

Series 1: Letters and Telegrams Sent

Scope and Contents: The six volumes of fair copies of letters and telegrams sent, which also contain some orders, reports, and circular letters, June 1, 1865–May 13, 1869, are arranged chronologically. Fair copies are handwritten duplicates of the originals. The letters copied in each volume are arranged and numbered in chronological order by year or time expired. All volumes have separately bound name indexes except volumes 3 and 5; the indexes for these volumes are bound with fair copies. Enclosures to letters are not copied in the volumes.

Major correspondents include the AGO, Commissioner Howard's headquarters in Washington, subordinate officers of the Bureau in Virginia, U. S. Army officers, State and county officials, and private citizens and organizations. Most letters were signed by the Assistant Commissioner, but correspondence dealing with routine business matters was often signed by subordinates, principally the Inspector General and the Adjutant General, who assisted in handling correspondence.

Although many of the letters transmitting reports to the Commissioner announce appointments, request reports from subordinate Bureau officials, or deal with similar routine administrative matters, some of them concern more important matters, and transfers of Bureau property. In addition, volume 6 contains copies of the District of Virginia's monthly operation reports, December 1868–March 1869.

The margins of the volumes contain numerous cross–references to related letters sent or to other series of records of the Assistant Commissioner. The symbols "LS" and "LB" refer to the letters sent series; "LR" refers to the registers of letters received; and "B," "EB," or "E&B" refer to endorsement and memorandum books. Frequently, cross–references in the style of fractions are in the left margin of a page. The numerator is the age number in the volume of the preceding communication to the same addressee; the denominator is the page number of the subsequent communication to that addressee.

Four letters, three dated May 13 (and one dated May 31), 1869, located in a volume of duplicate (press) copies of letters sent (not reproduced as part of this microfilm publication), have been filmed at the end of volume 6 in order to complete the series of letters sent.

In addition to the main series of letters sent, there is a single volume of fair copies of letters, reports, and telegrams sent to Commissioner Howard, June 1, 1865–December 31, 1868, with a name index. The letters are numbered in sequence by year or time period. The correspondence concerns attacks on freedmen by whites, restoration of confiscated or abandoned lands, activities of Bureau personnel, transportation requisitions, and applications for pensions and bounties. Copies of district monthly operations reports, April 1867–November 1868, are included. Letters sent to Commissioner Howard after December 1868 are copied in the main series of letters sent.

1.1: Volume 1

1.1.1: [Name Index to Volume 1 \(12\)](#)

1.1.2: [Volume 1 \(12\), June 1, 1865–Feb. 13, 1866](#)

1.2: Volume 2

1.2.1: [Name Index to Volume 2 \(13\)](#)

1.2.2: [Volume 2 \(13\), Feb. 13–Sept. 6, 1866](#)

1.3: Volume 3 (14), Sept. 7–Dec. 31, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.4: Volume 4

1.4.1: [Name Index to Volume 4 \(15\)](#)

1.4.2: [Volume 4 \(15\), Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 1867](#)

1.5: Volume 5 (16), Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.6: Volume 6

1.6.1: [Name Index to Volume 6 \(17\)](#)

1.6.2: [Volume 6 \(17\)](#)

1.7: Letters Sent to General Howard

1.7.1: [Name Index to Letters Sent to General Howard \(18\)](#)

1.7.2: [Letters Sent to General Howard \(18\), June 1, 1865–Dec. 31, 1868](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Endorsements Sent

Scope and Contents: Endorsements sent are characteristics of 19th-century recordkeeping practices. A reply to an incoming letter was frequently written on the letter itself or on a specially prepared wrapper. The reply (known as an endorsement) was then copied into an endorsement book, and the endorsed letter was returned to the sender or forwarded to another office. Endorsement books usually contain a summary of the incoming letters and sometimes the text of previous endorsements that were written on the letter.

The 11 volumes of endorsements sent, June 1, 1865–May 3, 1869, are arranged chronologically. Each volume has a separately bound name index, except for volumes 1 and 2, which are bound with the volumes. The endorsements cover a diversity of subjects, including criminal cases involving freedmen, warrants and arrests for those sought on criminal charges, educational requirements, and reunions of separated members of former slave families. In addition, many endorsements refer to Bureau relations with civil authorities, the operation and maintenance of such Bureau institutions as schools and hospitals, the approval of transportation requisitions, and the rental of property for Bureau use.

Many of the entries are cross-referenced. Cross-references citing a volume and page number refer only to entries in the same volume. Cross-references with the volume and page number preceded by the letters "B," "EB," or "E&M" refer to entries in the other endorsement or memorandum books of this series. Cross-references to entries in the register of letters received include the symbol "LR" followed by a letter of the alphabet, an entry number, volume number, and year. Cross-references usually appear in the margin of the endorsement book page to the left of the pertinent entry.

2.1: Volume 1 (22), June 1–July 23, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.2: Volume 2 (23), July 21–Oct. 23, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.3: Volume 3

2.3.1: [Name Index to Volume 3 \(24\)](#)

2.3.2: [Volume 3 \(24\), Oct. 23, 1865–Jan. 1, 1866](#)

2.4: Volume 4

2.4.1: [Name Index to Volume 4 \(25\)](#)

2.4.2: [Volume 4 \(25\), Jan. 5–Apr. 7, 1866](#)

2.5: Volume 5

2.5.1: [Name Index to Volume 5 \(26\)](#)

2.5.2: [Volume 5 \(26\), Apr. 7–Oct. 4, 1866](#)

2.6: Volume 6

2.6.1: [Name Index to Volume 6 \(27\)](#)

2.6.2: [Volume 6 \(27\), Oct. 5–Dec. 31, 1866](#)

2.7: Volume 7

2.7.1: [Name Index to Volume 7 \(28\)](#)

2.7.2: [Volume 7 \(28\), Jan. 1–June 29, 1867](#)

2.8: Volume 8

2.8.1: [Name Index to Volume 8 \(29\)](#)

2.8.2: [Volume 8 \(29\), June 29–Dec. 31, 1867](#)

2.9: Volume 9

2.9.1: [Name Index to Volume 9 \(30\)](#)

2.9.2: [Volume 9 \(30\), Jan. 1–July 3, 1868](#)

2.10: Volume 10

2.10.1: [Name Index to Volume 10 \(31\)](#)

2.10.2: [Volume 10 \(31\), July 3–Dec. 31, 1868](#)

2.11: Volume 11

2.11.1: [Name Index to Volume 11 \(32\)](#)

2.11.2: [Volume 11 \(32\), Jan. 1–May 3, 1869](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Registers of Letters and Telegrams Received

Scope and Contents: Registers of letters and telegrams received are also typical of 19th-century recordkeeping practices. In addition to a summary of the contents of an incoming letter, the registers usually include such identifying information as the name and sometimes the office of the writer, the date of receipt, the date of communication, the place from which it was written, and the entry number assigned to it.

The records of the Assistant Commissioner include 10 volumes of registers of letters and telegrams received and a single volume register of communications received and referred. Entries in the 10 volumes of registers of letters and telegrams received, December 1, 1865–May 5, 1869, are arranged by time period, thereunder alphabetically by surname or office of correspondent, and thereunder chronologically by date of receipt. Correspondence from General Howard is usually entered under "W" for the War Department, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. All registers, except for volume 9, have name indexes prepared by Bureau employees. The name index for volume 9 was prepared by the NARS staff. The number appearing after the name refer to the number of the letters rather than to the number of the pages.

Since the number of pages allotted to each alphabetical division in a column sometimes proved insufficient, it became necessary to continue the entries elsewhere in the volume. The NARS staff filmed the registers in correct order, consequently, the pages are not in the original numerical sequence. A number of documents entered in the registers are no longer among the series of registered letters and telegrams received. Often communications were forwarded to Bureau headquarters, referred to staff or other subordinate officers, or returned with endorsements to the sender. The NARS staff has annotated the registers with a single asterisk to show which letters remain on file among the registered letters and telegrams received. Entries marked with a double asterisk are on file in the series of reports reproduced in this microfilm publication.

Entries in the one volume of communications received and referred by the Assistant Commissioner, June 5, 1867–November 16, 1868, are arranged chronologically according to date received. Each entry contains the correspondent's name, the date of the communication, a brief synopsis of contents, and the date it was forwarded. The entries in this register duplicate in part entries found in the volumes of the main series of registers of letters received for the same time period. There are numerous cross-references in the margins to other correspondence series, and the symbols used are similar to those described on page 3.

3.1: Volume 1

3.1.1: [Name Index to Volume 1 \(1\)](#)

3.1.2: [Volume 1 \(1\), Dec. 1, 1865–Mar. 6, 1866](#)

3.2: Volume 2

3.2.1: [Name Index to Volume 2 \(2\)](#)

3.2.2: [Volume 2 \(2\), Mar. 1–June 23, 1866](#)

3.3: Volume 3

3.3.1: [Name Index to Volume 3 \(3\)](#)

3.3.2: [Volume 3 \(3\), June 22–Oct. 4, 1866](#)

3.4: Volume 4

3.4.1: [Name Index to Volume 4 \(4\)](#)

3.4.2: [Volume 4 \(4\), Oct. 5–Dec. 31, 1866](#)

3.5: Volume 5

3.5.1: [Name Index to Volume 5 \(5\)](#)

3.5.2: [Volume 5 \(5\), Jan. 1–Apr. 30, 1867](#)

3.6: Volume 6

3.6.1: [Name Index to Volume 6 \(6\)](#)

3.6.2: [Volume 6 \(6\), May 1–Aug. 19, 1867](#)

3.7: Volume 7

3.7.1: [Name Index to Volume 7 \(7\)](#)

3.7.2: [Volume 7 \(7\), Aug. 20–Dec. 31, 1867](#)

3.8: Volume 8

3.8.1: [Name Index to Volume 8 \(8\)](#)

3.8.2: [Volume 8 \(8\), Jan. 1–June 30, 1868](#)

3.9: Volume 9 (9), July 1–Dec. 31, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.10: Volume 10

3.10.1: [Name Index to Volume 10 \(10\)](#)

3.10.2: Volume 10 (10), Jan. 1–May 5, 1869

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Letters and Telegrams Received

Scope and Contents: The registered letters and telegrams received, December 1, 1865–May 5, 1869, are generally arranged as entered in the registers of letters and telegrams received. The correspondence received generally concerns topics similar to those of letters and telegrams sent. The correspondence received from assistant superintendents in the subdistricts, however, contains more detailed information about criminal cases and the operations of the Bureau in their particular areas. File citations on individual documents include the entry number from the register, the initials R. F. & A. L. (Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands), and the year. Many letters contain additional file citations from previous offices of receipts.

4.1: Registers of Communications Received

4.1.1: [Register of Communication Received and Referred, June 15, 1867–Nov. 16, 1868](#)

4.1.2: Entered in Registers 1 – 4, June 15, 1867–Nov. 16, 1868

4.1.2.1: A, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.2: B, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.3: C, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.4: D – G, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.5: H – I, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.6: J, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.7: K – L, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.8: M, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.9: N – R, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.10: S – V, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.11: W1 – W440, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2.12: W411 – Y, 1865–1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3: Entered in Registers 5 – 7

4.1.3.1: A, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.2: B – E, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.3: F – K, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.4: L, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.5: M, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.6: N – R, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.7: S – V, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.3.8: W – Y, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.4: Entered in Registers 8 – 9

4.1.4.1: A – C, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.4.2: D – J, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

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[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.4.3: K – M, 1868

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[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.4.4: N – T, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.4.5: W – Z, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.5: Entered in Register 10

4.1.5.1: A – W, 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.2: Unregistered Letters and Telegrams Received

Scope and Contents:

The unregistered letters and telegrams received, May 1865–January 1869, are arranged in two subseries. The first subseries, beginning on roll 36, consists of letters received from governmental and private offices or organizations, arranged alphabetically by office or organization of origin and thereunder chronologically. The offices or organizations include northern charitable societies, agencies of the Federal Government, and Bureau districts in Virginia. A complete list of these offices and organizations has been filmed immediately preceding these records. The second subseries, roll 40, consists of correspondence received from individuals, arranged alphabetically by surname and thereunder chronologically by date written. This subseries includes a number of letters of introduction, requests for restoration of property, and requisitions.

4.2.1: [Northern Charitable Societies, May 1865–Jan. 1869](#)

4.2.2: [Federal Agencies, Aug.–Nov. 1865](#)

4.2.3: [Department of Virginia, U. S. Army, May 1865–Oct. 1866](#)

4.2.4: [Governor of Virginia, June 1865–Feb. 1866](#)

4.2.5: [Bureau Headquarters in Washington, May 1865–Apr. 1866](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

[4.2.6: Headquarters Staff in Virginia, June 1865–May 1868](#)

4.2.7: District Headquarters in Virginia

4.2.7.1: 1st and 2nd Districts, May 1865–Sept. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.2.7.2: 3rd – 8th Districts, June 1865–May 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

4.2.7.3: 9th and 10th Districts, Aug. 1865–July 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

[4.2.8: District Headquarters in Western North Carolina, Oct.–Nov. 1866](#)

4.2.9: Individuals, A – W

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Orders, Circulars, Circular Letters, and Letters of Instruction

Scope and Contents: The records of the Assistant Commissioner include seven volumes of orders, circulars, circular letters, and letters of instruction issued and unbound issuances received.

General orders, circulars, circular letters, and letters of instruction were often used interchangeably to convey information to staff and subordinate officers. These directives relate to matters of general interest, including the implementation of Bureau policies in Virginia, duties of subordinate personnel, administrative procedures, acts of the Congress, and issuances from Bureau headquarters in Washington. Special orders normally communicate information of less general interest, such as duty assignments of individual field officers, appointments of boards of investigation, and the restoration of abandoned lands and property to former owners.

The seven volumes, June 15, 1865–April 24, 1869, are arranged in two parts. In part 1, 1865–1867, the issuances are arranged chronologically without regard to type of issuance. In part 2, 1868–1869, the arrangement is generally by type of issuance and thereunder chronologically. Each volume has a name index.

The unbound series of issuances received, May 1865–April 1869, is arranged by year, thereunder alphabetically by issuing office, and thereunder chronologically. The issuances consist of general orders, special orders, circular, and circular letters. Many of the special orders are extracts rather than complete orders and relate to Bureau officials in Virginia. There are name indexes for the special orders and lists of some general orders and circulars.

5.1: Volume 1 (33), June 15–Dec. 30, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

5.2: Volume 2 (34), Jan. 1–Dec. 29, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

5.3: Volume 3 (35), Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

5.4: Special Orders Issued

5.4.1: [Volume 4 \(36\), Jan. 3–Dec. 31, 1868](#)

5.4.2: [Volume 6 \(38\), Jan. 5–Apr. 24, 1869](#)

5.5: Circulars Issued

5.5.1: [Volume 5 \(37\), Feb. 26–Dec. 30, 1868](#)

5.5.2: [Volume 7 \(39\), Jan. 1–Mar. 19, 1869](#)

5.6: Unbound Issuances Received

5.6.1: Unbound Issuances Received, May 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

5.6.2: Unbound Issuances Received, Jan. 1867–Apr. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Reports of Operations and Conditions in Virginia

Scope and Contents: The monthly narrative reports of operations and conditions of the Bureau in Virginia, January 1866–December 1868, are arranged chronologically. These reports were sent to the Assistant Commissioner by the assistant superintendents of the districts in compliance with circular 6, January 29, 1866, issued by the Assistant Commissioner. This circular prescribed that the monthly reports would show the condition of Bureau affairs in the subdistricts, the state of feeling between whites and freedmen, and all matters concerning the general welfare of freedmen. The reports also include such matters as the relations of the Bureau with civil authorities in the districts, the relations between freedmen and their employers, and the quality of justice meted out to freedmen in the local courts.

6.1: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions

6.1.1: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, Jan.–June 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

6.1.2: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, July–Oct. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

6.1.3: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, Nov. 1866–Apr. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

6.1.4: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, May–Sept. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

6.1.5: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, Oct. 1867–Apr. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.1.6: Monthly Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, May–Dec.
1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Records Relating to Specific Bureau Functions

Scope and Contents: The four series of records relating to specific Bureau functions consist of monthly reports on confiscated and abandoned lands, case files relating to applications for and restoration of property, monthly ration reports, and records relating to bounties.

The monthly (form) reports on confiscated and abandoned lands, August 31, 1865–August 31, 1870, are arranged chronologically. The reports, prepared by the subdistrict and district assistant superintendents, give the name of the former landowner and the location and a description of property, indicate whether the property was abandoned or confiscated and describe any alterations since the last report, and include remarks that generally contain the property's assessment value. At the beginning of each monthly file there are retained copies of consolidated reports summarizing the district and subdistrict reports prepared by the Assistant Commissioner for General Howard. After the termination of the Assistant Commissioner's office in May 1869, the consolidated monthly reports were prepared by the Superintendent of Education.

The case files relating to applications for and restoration of property, August 1865–December 1866, are arranged by initial letter of surname of applicant. They contain petitions from former landowners, oaths of amnesty taken in accordance with the provisions of the President's Proclamation of May 29, 1865, pardons granted by President Andrew Johnson, and certificates of title to the land in question. The petitions and related documentation were forwarded to the Assistant Commissioner by the assistant superintendents and usually were endorsed recommending approval. Many of the documents bear references to the volumes of endorsements: the citations "EB" or "B" followed by a volume number and a page number.

The monthly (form) reports of rations, clothing, and medicine issued, August 31, 1865–April 30, 1869, arranged chronologically and thereunder by district, provide statistics on the number of freedmen and refugees in each district to whom rations, clothing, and medicine were issued. At the beginning of each month there is a copy of the Assistant Commissioner's consolidated report to General Howard of all rations issued by the Bureau in Virginia.

Records relating to bounties, August 1864–November 1865, are arranged chronologically. The records consist of lists of bounty claimants received from units of colored troops and correspondence from the Chief Disbursing and Accounting Officer of the Bureau in Washington relating to the compilation of lists of bounty claimants and to the payment of bounty claims. The lists of bounty claimants were originally records of the predecessor Superintendent of Negro Affairs in the Department of Virginia and North Carolina. After the organization of the Freedmen's Bureau, the lists were transferred to the offices of the Assistant Commissioner.

7.1: Monthly Reports on Confiscated and Abandoned Lands

7.1.1: Monthly Reports on Confiscated and Abandoned Lands, Aug. 1865–Jan. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.1.2: Monthly Reports on Confiscated and Abandoned Lands, Feb. 1867–Aug. 1870

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.2: Case Files Relating to Applications for and Restoration of Property

7.2.1: A – G, Aug. 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.2.2: H – P, Aug. 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.2.3: R – Y, Aug. 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.3: Monthly Ration Reports

7.3.1: Monthly Ration Reports, Aug. 1865–Aug. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.3.2: Monthly Ration Reports, Sept. 1867–Apr. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.4: Records Relating to Bounties, Aug. 1864–Nov. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 8: Records Relating to Destitute Freedmen and Refugees

Scope and Contents: There are one series of reports and three series of lists relating to the condition of destitute freedmen and refugees. The series of narrative reports from Bureau field officers (describing the financial and logistical plans of local boards of overseers of the poor to meet the needs of destitute freedmen living within their jurisdiction), March 24–June 14, 1866, are arranged chronologically. The reports were submitted by local boards to the appropriate district assistant superintendent as required by circular 12, issued by the Assistant Commissioner, March 21, 1866.

The remaining three series are monthly lists of destitute freedmen and whites and are as follows: (1) Lists of destitute freedmen, arranged by district and undated, except for one dated October 26, 1865. Each district list is further subdivided by counties included in the district and provides the name, age, sex, and former home of the destitute freedmen. An undated report at the beginning of the series lists the counties and districts in the state and the names of destitute freedmen receiving government rations. (2) Monthly lists of destitute whites, May–September 1866, reveal the destitute whites in each district and the amount of rations needed to sustain them. (3) Monthly lists of unemployed freedmen, March 1866–December 1868, are arranged chronologically. The lists were sent to the assistant superintendents in compliance with circular 1, issued by the Assistant Commissioner, January 1, 1866.

8.1: Narrative Reports Relating to Policies of Local Boards of Overseers of the Poor Toward Destitute Freedmen, Mar.–June 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

8.2: Lists of Destitute Freedmen

8.2.1: 1st – 10th Districts

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

8.3: Monthly Lists of Destitute Whites, May–Sept. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

8.4: Monthly Lists of Unemployed Freedmen, Mar. 1866–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 9: Records Relating to Murders and Outrages

Scope and Contents: The records of the Assistant Commissioner include three series relating to murders and outrages involving freedmen. The largest of the series, an 1868 register of outrages committed on freedmen, is divided into two parts. Part 1 lists cases numerically (1 – 90) for the period January 1–December 15, 1868. Each entry includes the name and race of the victim; the name and race of the perpetrator; date, location, and nature of the outrage; name of the person reporting the outrage; and the action taken. File citations refer to the letters sent and letters received series of the Assistant Commissioner's Office. The front of the volume contains a descriptive list for cases 1 – 81. Part 2, the smaller section, lists three cases, May, June, and July 1868, relating to the discharge of freedmen from employment for exercising the right to vote and for participating in political organizations.

Two small series have been filmed immediately following the register. The first series contains a descriptive list of reports of outrages, March 12–June 30, 1866, including brief synopses that provide substantive information on the nature of the outrages; dates of the reports; and the counties and districts where the outrages occurred (the full reports to which the list refers have not been located). The second series, containing statements by freedmen who were victims of abuses in Richmond, June 1 – 30, 1865, is arranged alphabetically.

9.1: Register of Outrages Committed on Freedmen, Jan.–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

9.2: Descriptive List of Reports of Outrages, Mar.–June 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

9.3: Statements Relating to Abuses of Freedmen in Richmond, June 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 10: Records Relating to Court Cases Involving Freedmen

Scope and Contents: The records of the Assistant Commissioner contain three series of records relating to court cases involving freedmen: (1) narrative reports of criminal cases involving freedmen, March 31, 1866–January 31, 1869, arranged chronologically, dealing with cases in which State authorities assumed jurisdiction (some records display the number "10" indicating that they were made in response to instructions in circular 10, March 12, 1866, issued by the Assistant Commissioner's Office to monitor the quality of justice given to freedmen by civil authorities); (2) narrative monthly and weekly reports of proceedings in the freedmen's courts, December 2, 1865–July 30, 1867, arranged chronologically, summarizing cases and legal business conducted in the freedmen's courts in various counties in Virginia; and (3) monthly reports submitted by the assistant superintendents of the districts listing civilians chosen by the citizens of various counties to serve in the freedmen's courts, December 1865–February 1866, and arranged chronologically.

10.1: Narrative Reports of Criminal Cases Involving Freedmen

10.1.1: Narrative Reports of Criminal Cases Involving Freedmen, Mar. 1866–
Feb. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

10.1.2: Narrative Reports of Criminal Cases Involving Freedmen, Mar.–Dec.
1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

10.1.3: Narrative Reports of Criminal Cases Involving Freedmen, Jan. 1868–
Jan. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

10.2: Narrative Monthly and Weekly Reports of Proceedings in the Freedmen's Courts, Dec. 1865–July 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

10.3: Monthly Reports Listing Civilians Serving in Freedmen's Courts, Dec. 1865–Feb. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 11: Personnel Records

Scope and Contents: Four series of records relate to personnel of the Bureau in Virginia: (1) station books and rosters of officers and civilians on duty; (2) unbound returns, rosters, and reports of changes of officers, enlisted men, and civilians; (3) muster rolls of enlisted men on detached duty at the headquarters of the Assistant Commissioner; and (4) applications for positions with the Bureau in Virginia.

Three volumes of station books and rosters of officers and civilians on duty, January 1, 1867–May 1, 1869, are arranged by year and thereunder by type of record. The volumes for 1867 and 1868 are similar in format and each is divided into four sections. Section 1 lists all personnel by name; rank, and command (for military); station, duty, and order assigning to duty; and monthly remarks noting transfers and assignments to duty. Section 2 is a roster of all Bureau personnel as of January. In addition, the 1868 volume has a similar roster as of July 1. Each roster gives the name, rank, and duties or occupation of the employee; duty station; salary; service dates; name of employer; former command (for military); date of assignment order; and related remarks. Section 3 consists of monthly lists of changes in personnel assignments. Section 4 consists of monthly lists of civilian agents and clerks employed by the Bureau. In the 1867 volume the lists begin with June; in the 1868 volume the lists cover the entire year. The lists in both volumes, subdivided into sections for agents, acting assistant surgeons, and clerks, give the same kind of information as the general list of personnel. The volume for 1869, arranged somewhat differently, contains monthly rosters of all officers and civilians on duty, January–May.

The unbound returns, rosters, and reports of changes of officers, enlisted men, and civilians, July 1865–December 1868, are arranged chronologically by month and thereunder by district. For the period January 1867–December 1868, consolidated monthly reports prepared by the Assistant Commissioner are filed at the beginning of each month. The consolidated reports give the name, rank, and regiment (if military) of the employee; name of person ordering the detail; date of detail; place and nature of employment; and related remarks.

The muster rolls of enlisted men on detached duty at the headquarters of the Assistant Commissioner, August 1865–February 1869, are arranged chronologically. The muster rolls give the name, rank, and company of each enlisted man; information as to place of enlistment, length of enlistment, name of enlistment officer, and last payday; and remarks, usually relating to the duties performed at headquarters.

Applications from private citizens and military officers for positions as agent, teacher, or superintendent of education with the Bureau in Virginia, May–November 1865, are arranged chronologically and thereunder alphabetically by name of applicant.

11.1: Station Books and Rosters of Officers and Civilians

11.1.1: [Volume 1 \(40\), Jan.–Dec. 1867](#)

11.1.2: [Volume 2 \(41\), Jan.–Dec. 1868](#)

11.1.3: [Volume 3 \(42\), Jan.–May 1869](#)

11.2: Unbound Returns, Rosters, and Reports of Changes of Officers, Enlisted Men and Civilians

11.2.1: Unbound Returns, Rosters, and Reports of Changes of Officers, Enlisted Men and Civilians, July 1865–Sept. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

11.2.2: Unbound Returns, Rosters, and Reports of Changes of Officers, Enlisted Men and Civilians, Oct. 1866–Jan. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

11.2.3: Unbound Returns, Rosters, and Reports of Changes of Officers, Enlisted Men and Civilians, Feb.–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

11.3: Muster Rolls of Enlisted Men on Detached Duty at Headquarters, Aug. 1865–Feb. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

11.4: Applications for Positions with the Bureau in Virginia, May–Nov. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 12: Records Relating to Property Owned or Rented by the Bureau

Scope and Contents: The three series of reports relating to property owned or rented by the Bureau, 1866–1869, are arranged by type of record. A series of leases for property rented by the Bureau, forwarded to the Assistant Commissioner by the assistant superintendents, April 1866–January 1869, is arranged alphabetically by place of rental. Two lists of Bureau property enumerating carts, wagons, horses, oxen, and various types of office equipment are filed at the end of the series. A small series of reports of the predecessor Department of Negro Affairs, January 1–June 30, 1864, is concerned with the value of transportation and office equipment transferred to and from the Department of Negro Affairs.

The last series consists of reports, October 1866–December 1868, from boards established by the Assistant Commissioner in special order 76, June 9, 1867, to determine the rent of buildings for use by the Bureau.

12.1: Leases for Property Rented by the Bureau, Apr. 1866–Jan. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

12.2: Reports from the Department of Negro Affairs, Jan.–June 1864

[Image\(s\)](#)

12.3: Reports from Boards Established to Determine the Rent of Buildings for Use by the Bureau, Oct. 1866–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 13: Miscellaneous Records

Scope and Contents: These records are reports, 1866–1869, concerning taxation, boundaries of magisterial and voting districts, prominent whites and freedmen, and temperance activities.

13.1: Reports Relating to Taxation, Apr.–Sept. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

13.2: Reports on the Boundaries of Magisterial and Voting Precincts, Mar.–Apr. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

13.3: Reports on Prominent Whites and Freedmen, Mar.–May 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

13.4: Reports Relating to Temperance, Aug. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)