



Smithsonian
*National Museum of African American
History and Culture*

Records of the New Orleans Field
Offices, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen,
and Abandoned Lands 1865–1869

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of African American History and Culture
Title:	Records of the New Orleans Field Offices, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869
Identifier:	NMAAHC.FB.M1483
Date:	1865–1869
Extent:	10 Reels
Language:	English
Summary:	<p>The collection is comprised of digital surrogates previously available on the 10 rolls of microfilm described in the NARA publication M1483. These digital surrogates reproduced the records of the New Orleans area field offices of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands for Iberville, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and West Baton Rouge Parishes, together with those of the Freedmen's Hospital, 1865–69. These records, consist of 38 bound volumes and approximately 6.5 linear feet of unbound records. The volumes include letters and endorsements sent, registers of letters received, circulars and special orders, journals, registers of patients, reports of occupancy and conditions in the Freedmen's Hospital, and abstracts of internments in the Freedmen's Cemetery. The unbound documents consist primarily of letters received, morning reports of sick and wounded in the Freedmen's Hospital, and various field office reports. There is also a register of patients in the Corps d'Afrique General Hospital, 1863–1865.</p>

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Acquired from FamilySearch International in 2015.

Related Materials

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

Preferred Citation

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Restrictions

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Historical Note

[The following is reproduced from the original NARA descriptive pamphlet for M1483.]

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 commissioner by the President in May 1865, served in that position until June 30, 1872, when activities of the bureau were terminated in accordance with an act of June 10, 1872 (17 Stat. 366). Although the bureau was a part of the War Department, its work was primarily social and economic in nature. Bureau officials cooperated with benevolent societies in issuing supplies to the destitute and in maintaining freedmen's schools; supervised labor contracts between black employees and white employers; helped black soldiers and sailors collect bounty claims, pension, and backpay; and attended to the disposition of confiscated or abandoned lands and property.

The act of March 3, 1865, also authorized the appointment of assistant commissioners to aid the commissioner in supervising the work of the bureau in the southern states. In Louisiana, operations began in June 1865 when Assistant Commissioner Thomas W. Conway established his headquarters in New Orleans. The names and terms of the other assistant commissioners or acting assistant commissioners in Louisiana were: Gen. James S. Fullerton, October 4 – 18, 1865; Gen. Absalom Baird, October 19, 1865–September 7, 1866; Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, October 5–November 27, 1866; Gen. Joseph A. Mower, November 28, 1866–December 4, 1867; Lt. Col. William H. Wood, December 5, 1867–January 2, 1868; Gen. Robert C. Buchanan, January 3–August 24, 1868; and Gen. Edward Hatch, August 25, 1868–January 1, 1869. In accordance with an act of July 25, 1868 (15 Stat. 193), bureau operations within the states were terminated on January 1, 1869, except for educational functions and the collection of claims.

Under Thomas W. Conway, the Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana operated regional offices in Alexandria, Opelousas, and Shreveport. In August 1865 Louisiana was divided into 33 districts. An assistant superintendent of freedmen was appointed to supervise each district. Until these appointments were made, the appropriate provost marshal acted as the assistant superintendent. District assistant superintendents were later called agents.

In April 1867 administration of the Louisiana Freedmen's Bureau was reorganized. The state was divided into seven subdistricts, each under the direction of a subassistant commissioner. The first subdistrict consisted of the parishes of Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Helena, Livingston, Washington, and St. Tammany. The second subdistrict comprised the parishes of Iberville, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, East Feliciana, and West Feliciana. Subordinate to the subassistant commissioners were the assistant subassistant commissioners, whose local administrative unit was usually the parish but occasionally included several parishes.

At the parish level, bureau officials were responsible for protecting the rights of freedmen, safeguarding freedmen's schools, and investigating difficulties between freedmen and their employers or other white men. They were ordered to make frequent inspections of the territory under their supervision, to examine and approve labor contracts between freedmen and employers, and to ensure that all terms of such contracts were fully understood by both parties. Parish-level officials periodically reported to state headquarters on such matters as the attitude, conduct, and requirements of freedmen; the type and

condition of plantation crops; and the status of local freedmen's schools. In time, these officials acquired new tasks, such as the distribution of rations to indigent and destitute persons.

The New Orleans Freedmen's Hospital, which operated under the supervision of a surgeon-in-chief, the principal medical official of the Louisiana Freedmen's Bureau, was a continuation of a wartime institution. After Union troops captured New Orleans in 1862, federal authorities created several black military organizations to support the northern war effort. The largest of these was the "Corps d'Afrique." But the hospital that took its name from this organization was not primarily a soldiers' hospital, but rather a general hospital for the local black population. The Freedmen's Bureau took charge of most patients in this facility in July 1865, although the Corps d'Afrique hospital remained in operation as a special smallpox ward until its patients and those of the new Freedmen's Hospital were moved into the vacant Marine Hospital that December. The Refugees Home, which had formerly occupied several local hotels, was also moved into the Marine Hospital at this time and became known as the Dependents Home Branch of the Freedmen's Hospital. In April 1866 an orphan asylum, previously operated in New Orleans by a private citizen, was transferred to share the quarters of the Freedmen's Hospital, and the hospital's medical staff subsequently made daily inspections of this orphanage. Difficulties in transferring patients to other facilities delayed the closing of the New Orleans Freedmen's Hospital, which continued operations until June 1869.

Records Description

When the Freedmen's Bureau was abolished, its records were sent to the Office of the Adjutant General. Here clerks arranged the state-level records by administrative unit and the local records alphabetically by the location of the office that created them, and then numbered the bound volumes from each state in a single numerical sequence, beginning with the office of the assistant commissioner and then working down to the offices of the assistant subassistant commissioners. In these notes and the table of contents, the Adjutant General's Office numbers appear in parentheses as an aid in identifying the volumes. In general, documents in this microfilm publication have been filmed in the order imposed by the Adjutant General's Office. Occasionally, clerks arranged volumes incorrectly and assigned numbers that do not reflect the sequence in which the volumes were actually created. For example, Volume 412 should precede Volume 405, and Volume 419 should follow Volume 420.

There is considerable variation in the remaining records from individual Freedmen's Bureau field offices. Some offices retained reference copies of reports they submitted to state headquarters; others did not. Some records were evidently removed or destroyed.

Nonetheless there are fundamental similarities between the records of local offices and the following remarks are generally applicable to all the records reproduced on this microfilm publication.

The letters received and copies of the letters sent constitute much of the surviving documentation of the bureau's field operations. Reflecting the scope of the bureau's responsibilities, correspondence between its local officers and other government officials and private citizens dealt with labor contracts between freedmen and planters, legal cases, child custody questions, locating and transporting freedmen, reducing illness and destitution among freedmen, and such matters as the finances, personnel, equipment, and procedures of Freedmen's Bureau offices.

In addition to the letters sent and received, another important series of local office records are the various reports submitted to higher headquarters. The trimonthly reports, mandated by Circular No. 36 (Dec. 30, 1865), which were due on the 10th, 20th, and final day of each month, concern the economic, psychological, and moral state of freedmen; plantation labor contracts and crops; actions taken on various problems referred to the local Freedmen's Bureau official; distribution of rations; freedmen's schools; and race relations in general.

The Freedmen's Bureau also used several types of issuances to disseminate information. General orders and circulars (or circular letters) related to matters of general interest, including implementation of bureau policies throughout the state, duties of subordinate personnel, administrative procedures, issuances of the bureau's national headquarters, acts of Congress, and the appointment or relief of staff officers. Special orders were used to communicate information of less general interest, such as duty assignments of individual officers.

Local Louisiana Freedmen's Bureau offices maintained files in accordance with characteristic 19th-century record-keeping practices. Fair copies of outgoing letters were transcribed in letter books. Replies to incoming letters were frequently written on the letters themselves or on specially prepared wrappers. These replies, known as endorsements, were subsequently copied into endorsement books. The endorsed letter was either filed, returned to the sender, or forwarded to another office. Endorsement books usually included a summary of the incoming letter and sometimes a summary of previous endorsements inscribed on it. A summary of an incoming communication was normally entered in a register of letters received. In addition to a summary of the contents of the incoming letter, these register entries usually indicated the name (and sometimes the office) of the writer, the date of the letter and date of receipt, its place of origin, and the entry number assigned it by the receiving office. The incoming letters were folded for filing, usually in three segments; information recorded in the registers was transcribed on the outside flap of the letter.

Freedmen's Bureau clerks used abbreviations such as "L. R." (letters received), "L. S." (letters sent), and "E. B." (endorsement book). Since the application of these abbreviations varied from office to office, explanations of indexing and cross-referencing practices are given in the series listings in connection with the records to which they pertain.

Freedmen's Bureau Personnel in Louisiana

This list provides the names and dates of services of known Freedmen's Bureau personnel at selected subordinate field offices for Louisiana. Additional information regarding persons assigned to various field offices might be found among the Bureau's Washington headquarters station books and rosters of military officers and civilians on duty in the states and other appointment-related records.

ORLEANS PARISH LEFT BANK

<i>May 1867</i>	Assistant Subassistant Commissioner A. N. Murtagh
<i>June–Aug. 1867</i>	Assistant Subassistant Commissioner L. Jolissaint
<i>Sept. 1867</i>	Assistant Subassistant Commissioner W. H. Cornelius
<i>Oct. 1867</i>	Assistant Subassistant Commissioner John T. White
<i>Nov. 1867–Dec. 1868</i>	Assistant Subassistant Commissioner L. Jolissaint

NEW ORLEANS FREEDMEN'S HOSPITAL

<i>Aug. 1865</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge Samuel Angel
<i>Aug.-Sept. 1865</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge E. H. Harris
<i>Sept. 1865-June 1866</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge C. W. Brink
<i>July-Oct. 1866</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge E. H. Harris
<i>Oct.-Nov. 1866</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge David Hershey
<i>Nov. 1866-Mar. 1867</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge E. H. Harris
<i>Mar.-May 1867</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge David Hershey
<i>June 1867</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge David MacKay

<i>June-Aug. 1867</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge Henry L. Downs
<i>Aug.-Oct. 1867</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge David MacKay
<i>Oct. 1867–May 1868</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge William H. Gray
<i>May–June 1868</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge David Hershey
<i>June–Dec. 1868</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge William H. Gray
<i>Dec. 1868–May 1869</i>	Surgeon-in-Charge A. C. Swartzwelder
ST. BERNARD AND PLAQUEMINES PARISHES	
<i>Apr.–Dec. 1867</i>	Agent and Subassistant Commissioner Ira D. M. McClary
<i>Jan. 1868</i>	Agent and Subassistant Commissioner Oscar A. Rice
<i>Jan.–June 1868</i>	Agent and Subassistant Commissioner P. J. Smalley
<i>June–Dec. 1868</i>	Agent and Subassistant Commissioner H. M. Whittemore
IBERVILLE AND WEST BATON ROUGE PARISHES	
<i>Jan. 1865</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Provost Marshal M. Masicot
<i>Feb.–Oct. 1865</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Provost Marshal Nelson Kenyon
<i>Oct. 1865</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Provost Marshal James M. Eddy
<i>Dec. 1865</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Agent A. R. Houston
<i>Feb.–Apr. 1866</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Agent J. C. Stiomell
<i>May 1866–Apr. 1867</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Agent F. A. Osbourn
<i>Apr.–Dec. 1867</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Assistant Subassistant Commissioner F. A. Osbourn
<i>Jan.–Dec. 1868</i>	Freedmen's Bureau Officer and Assistant Subassistant Commissioner E. Charles Merrill

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: Records of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner for Orleans Parish Left Bank

1.1: Letters Sent (401), May 1867–May 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The single volume of letters sent, May 1867–May 1868 (401), is arranged chronologically and contains a name index (pp. 119 – 122).

1.2: Register of Letters Received (398), May 1867–Sept. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Entries in the register of letters received, May 1867–September 1868 (398), are arranged chronologically. The actual letters registered in this volume have not been found.

1.3: Endorsements Received and Sent (399 & 400), May 1867–Aug. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The two volumes of endorsements received and sent, May 1867–August 1868 (399 & 400), are arranged chronologically. Each volume includes a name index. In these volumes, cross–references to "Letter Sent Book," "Letter Book (Sent)," or "Lett. B. R.," etc., refer to the book of letters Sent (401) and to the register of letters Received (398), respectively.

1.4: Special Orders and Circulars Received (403), Feb.–Dec. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

The volumes of special orders and circulars received, February–December 1867 (403), is arranged chronologically. It consists primarily of printed issuances from the Bureau's Louisiana State headquarters. It also includes a list of accounts handled by the Bureau (pp. 106 – 121). The entry for each account indicates the date money was received, from whom it was received, to whom it was paid, and the amount. The list also bears the signatures (or marks) inscribed by payees when they received the money.

1.5: Monthly and Trimonthly Reports (402), Mar.–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The monthly and trimonthly reports, March–December 1868 (402), consist of fair copies, arranged chronologically. There is a name index on pages 67 – 73. A loose sheet inserted in this volume lists the names, addresses, and pastors of local churches.

1.6: Register of Complaints (404), (bulk May–July, Nov. 1867)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Synopses of the civil cases decided by the assistant subassistant commissioner are arranged chronologically in the register of Complaints (404). These 19 cases, which involved such matters as breach of contract, abandonment, and unjust treatment, were adjudicated in May–July and November 1867. Entries for each case indicate date, plaintiff, defendant, charge, and decision.

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Series 2: Records of the Freedmen's Hospital

The Freedmen's Hospital records also include six registers of patients treated at Freedmen's Hospital and its predecessor, the Corps d'Afrique Hospital. The data provided in these registers varies but sometimes includes the patient's name, hospital number; age; sex; disease; admission date; discharge, transfer, or desertion date; ward assignment; and place of residence.

2.1: Letters Sent and Special Orders Issued (406 & 409), Sept. 1867–May 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Records in the two volumes of letters sent and special orders issued, September 1867–May 1869 (406 & 409), are arranged chronologically. An incomplete index appears at the beginning of the first volume. The volume also contains a table of hospital property, November 1867 (pp. 14 – 15) and an inventory of hospital property, February 1868 (pp. 29 – 49). Within the volumes such cross-reference citations as "L. B. R." refer to the volumes of letters, general orders, and special orders Received (412 & 405).

2.2: Letters, General Orders, and Special Orders Received (405 & 412), August 1865–December 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Documents in the two volumes of letters, general orders, and special orders received, August 1865–December 1868 (412, 405), are arranged chronologically. They relate to admission, operating, and reporting procedures, to personnel assignments, and to hospital property. The first volume includes monthly statements (October 1865–January 1867) of the Freedmen's Hospital fund. Similar statements for the period from August 1867–May 1869 may be found in the Statement of Hospital Fund (414).

2.3: Letters Received, Aug. 1865–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The letters received, August 1865–December 1868, are generally arranged chronologically. They include communications from the surgeon-in-chief, the acting assistant adjutant general, and certain assistant subassistant commissioners. The series also contains some special orders. There are also letters sent by the acting assistant surgeon in charge of Freedmen's Hospital and returned with endorsements from officers at state headquarters. These documents relate to hospital administration. Some of the letters include cross-references such as "L. B.," which pertain to the letters sent books of the surgeon-in-chief; "E. B.," which related to the endorsement books of the surgeon-in-chief; or "E. B. 4/100," which refers to the endorsement books maintained in the assistant commissioner's office (the numerator indicates the volume and the denominator the page number). Such citations as "G 14 Bu R F A L La 68" refer to the registers of letters received by the assistant commissioner's office, and the registered letters.

2.4: Reports by Officer of the Day on the Condition of the Hospital (407 & 408)

[Image\(s\)](#)

The two volumes of reports by the officer of the day on the condition of the hospital, December 1865–August 1868 (407 & 408), are arranged chronologically.

2.5: Morning Reports of Sick and Wounded

The morning reports of sick and wounded, August 1865–February 1869, are arranged chronologically. These reports were prepared daily on tabular forms whose format varied but generally included two sections. The first section is an abstract indicating the number of patients remaining on the previous report; the number of patients who had been admitted, discharged, transferred or who had deserted or died; the number of patients remaining still in the hospital; and the number of occupied and unoccupied

patient and attendant beds. The report's second section provides narrative information on individual patients who had entered or left the hospital since the previous report. This information generally includes the patient's name, hospital number, sex, age, nature of the change in status (i.e., admitted, discharged, etc.), and, except for newly admitted patients, the disease.

2.5.1: Morning Reports of Sick and Wounded, Aug. 1865–June 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.5.2: Morning Reports of Sick and Wounded, July 1866–Mar. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.5.3: Morning Reports of Sick and Wounded, Apr. 1867–Feb. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.5.4: Morning Reports of Sick and Wounded, Mar. 1868–May 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.6: Miscellaneous Hospital Reports, 1866–69

[Image\(s\)](#)

The miscellaneous hospital reports include three subseries arranged by type of report: reports of orphans and sick and wounded patients from the Rost Home Colony who were transferred to the Orphans Home Asylum or the Freedmen's Hospital (December 1866–January 1867), monthly reports of persons in the Freedmen's Hospital Orphan Asylum (January–December 1868), and monthly reports of destitute discharged soldiers and their families who were treated at Freedmen's Hospital (February 1867–April 1869). The first and third subseries contain the names and personal and medical data about individual patients (or orphans); the second subseries includes statistical data about orphans at the hospital.

2.7: "Register of Contrabands in Corps d'Afrique General Hospital" (417), Oct. 1863–Dec. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

The "Register of Contrabands in Corps d'Afrique General Hospital" (417), lists patients treated from October 1863–December 1865. "Contrabands" in this context refers to freedmen, who, while their legal status remained uncertain, were sometimes regarded as contraband of war. The register consists of two sections. The first is a register, arranged chronologically, on which patients' names were entered when they were admitted. It covers the period October 1863–September 1864. The second section, arranged alphabetically by the initial letter of patient surnames, was apparently begun as an index for the first section. Although there are no entries on the register after September 1864, entries in the second section

continue through December 1865. The volume also contains morning reports of the contrabands in the Corps d'Afrique General Hospital, October 1864–July 1865.

2.8: Register of Patients (415), Mar. 1868–Mar. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Entries in the register of patients, March 1868–March 1869 (415), are arranged chronologically by admission date.

2.9: Registers of Sick and Wounded (420 & 419), May 1865–April 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Entries in the two volumes of registers of sick and wounded, May 1865–April 1869 (420 & 419), also are arranged chronologically by admission date.

2.10: Register of "Disabled Destitutes, Sick, etc. Admitted to Hospital" (413), May 1867–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Entries in the register of "Disabled Destitutes, Sick, etc., Admitted to Hospital," May 1867–December 1868 (413), are arranged chronologically by admission date. This volume lists those sick, handicapped, and destitute refugees who were admitted to the Dependents Home Branch of the Freedmen's Hospital. Those patients next to whom an "O" appears in the "Remarks" column were transferred to the regular hospital Register (419) in January 1869. A separate list of persons from outside New Orleans who were admitted to the home between May and October 1868 appears in the back of the register.

2.11: Register of Interments at Freedmen's Cemetery (87), May 1867–Apr. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

The register of interments at Freedmen's Cemetery, May 1867–April 1869 (87), is arranged in two parts and thereunder chronologically by date of interment. The first part (pp. 1 – 28) lists those buried from May 1867–April 1869, providing, in most cases, the decedent's name and age; date, place, and cause of death, decedent's hospital number; burial date; and location of the grave site. The second part (pp. 131 – 225) lists persons reinterred in Freedmen's Cemetery, November 1867–March 1868.

2.12: Register of Prescriptions (416), July–Aug. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

Entries in the register of prescriptions, July–August 1865 (416), are arranged chronologically, thereunder by ward, and thereunder by patient. The daily entries usually indicate the patient's name, bed number, disease, prescription, dosage, and type of diet.

2.13: Statement of Hospital Fund (414), Aug. 1867–May 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

The monthly statements of the hospital fund, August 1867–May 1869 (414), are arranged chronologically. Each statement gives the balance of credit from the previous month and the value of rations due. It also lists the types, quantities and costs of items (primarily foodstuffs) issued and purchased during the month and indicates the new balance of credit.

2.14: Transportation Orders Received from the Assistant Commissioner (411), Mar.–July 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

The transportation orders received from the assistant commissioner, March–July 1867 (411), are arranged in reverse chronological order. These orders were sent to Freedmen's Bureau agents, directing them to send specified indigent freedmen to New Orleans for admission to Freedmen's Hospital.

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Series 3: Records of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner for St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes and Predecessors

3.1: Letters Sent (535 & 536), Apr. 1867–Oct. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The letters sent, April 1867–October 1868 (535 and 536), are arranged chronologically. Each of the two volumes contains an index (beginning on p. 67 and p. 23 respectively). Trimonthly reports submitted by the agent and, later, by the assistant subassistant commissioner, in accordance with Circular No. 36 (Dec. 30, 1865) make up a large part of these volumes.

3.2: Endorsements Sent and Received (537), May 1867–May 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The single volume of endorsements sent, May 1867–May 1868 (537), is arranged chronologically and contains a name index (pp. 15 – 19). It also includes endorsements from the acting assistant adjutant general and the subassistant commissioner for the first subdistrict. Among the cross–references in this volume are citations such as "L. B. Off ASAC Par St. Bernard + Plaquemines," "Letter Book," or "L. B.," which pertain to the letters sent books of the assistant subassistant commissioner's office. Citations such as "L. R. W17 Office A. S. A. C. Par. St. Bernard + Plaquemine," or simply "L. R. B.," evidently refer to register(s) of letters received that were maintained in the assistant subassistant commissioner's office, but no longer exist.

3.3: Journals of Business (538 & 539), Apr. 1867–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The journals of business, April 1867–June 1868 (538 and 539), are arranged chronologically and consist of daily narrative descriptions of the assistant subassistant commissioner's investigations, travels and other activities. The cross–references to "L. B." or "(L. B.);" etc., relate to the letters sent books of the assistant subassistant commissioner's office.

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Series 4: Records of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner for Iberville and West Baton Rouge Parishes and Predecessors

4.1: Letters Sent (425, 426, 427, & 428), Apr. 1867–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The four volumes of letters sent, April 1867–December 1868 (425 – 428) are arranged chronologically. The first Volume (425) consists of three sections: circulars, November 1866–March 1868; letters sent, April–July 1867; and a register of endorsements sent by the assistant subassistant commissioner, January–June 1867. Subsequent Volumes (426 – 428) continue the series of letters sent. The fourth volume includes a name index (pp. 416 – 428). Trimonthly reports make up a large part of these records, which also include circular letters and special reports on indigent and destitute persons and on persons and articles hired. Most cross–references in these records refer to the registered series of letters received and the endorsement books in the assistant commissioner's office.

4.2: Endorsements Sent (429), July–Aug. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The volume of endorsements sent, July–August 1868 (429), contains only a few entries. The cover bears the inscription, "Endorsement Book No. 3," but the other endorsement books maintained by the assistant subassistant commissioner, to which certain cross–reference citations in this office's records apparently refer, have been lost or destroyed.

4.3: Registers of Letters Received (423, 424), July 1867–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Entries in the two volumes of registers of letters received, July 1867–December 1868 (423 – 424), are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of correspondent's surname or office and thereunder chronologically by date of receipt. Letters from Freedmen's Bureau officials were sometimes registered under "R" and other times under the initial letter of the writer's surname. Many letters in the second Volume (424) are not registered in correct alphabetical sequence. Attached to the front endpaper of the first Volume (423) is a table of contents (labeled "Index") that indicates the pages on which the various alphabetical groupings are located. Letters received from Acting Assistant Adjutant General L. H. Warren (pp. 130 – 139) and General Superintendent of Education Frank R. Chase (pp. 50 – 53) are registered in special sections of this volume, although the table of contents does not indicate this. There are two name indexes in the second Volume (424): one on page 19 and another pages 345 – 356. Among the cross–references in these two volumes, most, such as "L. B.," "L. S.," and "Letter Book," refer to the four volumes of letters Sent (425 – 428) from the Plaquemine office. The cross–references to endorsement books ("EB," etc.) apparently pertain to records of the assistant subassistant commissioner that are no longer extant. Letters received from March–June 1867 are registered in the volume of special orders Received (422).

4.4: Registered Letters Received, July–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The letters received by the assistant subassistant commissioner are in two unbound subseries—one of registered letters, the other of unregistered letters. The registered letters, July–December 1868, are arranged in the same order in which they were entered in the register of letters Received (424).

4.5: Unregistered Letters Received, Jan. 1865–June 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

The letters received by the assistant subassistant commissioner are in two unbound subseries—one of registered letters, the other of unregistered letters. The unregistered letters January 1865–June 1868, are arranged chronologically. They include communications from military officers and Freedmen's Bureau officials. These letters concern plantation business and property matters, labor contracts between planters and freedmen, the poll tax, distribution of emergency rations, transportation of freedmen, and general administrative procedures.

4.6: Special Orders Issued (422), Apr. 1866–Apr. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

The volume of special orders Issued (422) is arranged numerically and includes copies of Special Orders Nos. 1 – 67, issued by the agent from April 1866–April 1867. A name index to the special orders is at the back of this volume. A subseries within the volume consists of fair copies of letters received from March–June 1867.

4.7: Monthly Inspection Reports, May 1866–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

The monthly inspection reports, May 1866–December 1868, are arranged chronologically and consist of retained copies of the reports submitted in accordance with Circular No. 35 (Dec. 28, 1865). These tabular forms contain an entry for each plantation inspection. Each entry identifies the plantation owner or lessee and indicates the number of freedmen (subdivided according to fitness, age, and sex), the number of schools and students therein, the quantity of land under cultivation (subdivided by type of crop), the number of workers receiving compensation, the amount of land rented or sold to freedmen, and average monthly wages.

4.8: Miscellaneous Reports Relating to Schools, 1866–68

[Image\(s\)](#)

The miscellaneous reports relating to schools, 1866–68, are arranged in three subseries and thereunder chronologically. The first subseries consists of district superintendent's monthly school reports, September–December 1868. On these tabular forms, entries for individual schools include information about school societies and patrons, finances, teachers, buildings, pupils, attendance, and students' educational attainments. This subseries also includes the assistant subassistant commissioner's monthly reports, October–December 1868, which contain comments on public sentiment toward education of freedmen and the feasibility of establishing self-supporting schools. The second subseries consists of abstracts of accounts, monthly reports of schools, and receipts for expenditures in the support of schools, May–December 1868. The third subseries consists of tabular monthly returns, abstracts, and lists of school property received and issued, May 1866–December 1868.

4.9: Monthly Reports of Persons and Articles Hired, Jan.–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Monthly reports of persons and articles hired, January–December 1868, are arranged chronologically on tabular forms indicating, for each person or article hired, the period involved, the occupation of a person or use of an article, the rate of compensation, the total pay or rent, and the amount due.

4.10: Journals of Business (430, 431), Aug. 1867–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Journals of business, August 1867–December 1868 (430, 431), are arranged chronologically. Daily entries in these volumes record letters and complaints received, reports submitted, letters written, and other activities of the assistant subassistant commissioner. Among the cross-references, "Letter Book"

and "L. B." refer to the letters sent books (425 – 428), and "L. rec'd" refers to the registers of letters received (423, 424).

4.11: Tax Rolls, Aug.–Oct. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

The tax rolls, August–October 1865, are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of planters' surnames. These documents record collection of the poll tax prescribed by General Order 23 (Mar. 12, 1865). All of these tax rolls are from Iberville Parish, and most are dated September 4, 1865.

4.12: Miscellaneous Records, 1864–68

[Image\(s\)](#)

The miscellaneous records, 1864–68, are arranged in seven subseries according to type of record: (1) Bills of lading, January 1866–November 1868, are arranged chronologically. These are consignee's copies recording the shipment of supplies from New Orleans to Planquemine, the town in which the office for the two parishes was located. (2) Abstracts of provisions issued to citizens under a joint resolution of March 30, 1867 (15 Stat. 28). These documents cover the months April–July 1867 and indicate the quantities of cornmeal and pork distributed, the numbers of men, women, and children receiving these rations, and their places of residence. (3) Monthly returns of stores, May–June 1868, are arranged chronologically. These records include abstracts (Form 15) that show the quantity of foodstuffs on hand, the totals of foodstuffs received and issued, and the new balance. Subvouchers (Form 62) filed with these abstracts have entries for each household, with such information as the numbers of adults and children and the quantities of various foodstuffs received. Special abstracts (Form 32) were used with the subvouchers to indicate the total amounts of foodstuffs distributed. (4) Monthly statements of accounts current, January 1867–December 1868, are arranged chronologically. These forms record the amount of purchases, expenditures, and transfers. (5) Monthly reports of the number of freedmen to whom rations, clothing, and medicine were issued, May–December 1866 and March–June 1868, are arranged chronologically. These tabular forms list the numbers of ration recipients in various classes according to health, sex, age, and economic status and indicate the value of the rations issued to each class. (6) Registers of freedmen employed by or attached to certain plantations, ca. May 1864. These four registers indicate name, age, sex, wage category, former owner, and former residence for each person listed and occasionally provide additional information on occupations, disabilities, and relatives. (7) Court and other records, 1865–67. These documents consist primarily of affidavits, agreements, receipts, settlements, and legal papers relating to work contracts and unresolved debts. There's are also reports of destitutes who required rations, 1866–67, and a few documents pertaining to poll taxes.

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