



Smithsonian

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the
State of South Carolina, Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1870

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of African American History and Culture
Title:	Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of South Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1870
Date:	1865–1870
Identifier:	NMAAHC.FB.M869
Extent:	44 Reels
Language:	English .
Summary:	<p>The collection is comprised of digital surrogates previously available on the 44 rolls of microfilm described in the NARA publication M869. These digital surrogates reproduced the records of the Assistant Commissioner for the state of South Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–70. A few of the records are dated as early as 1863. The records consist of 38 volumes and approximately 30 cubic feet of unbound records. The volumes include letters and endorsements sent, registers of letters received, and orders issued. The unbound records consist mainly of reports, letters received, and applications for restoration of property. The documents were primarily created or received by the Assistant Commissioner and his assistant adjutants. A few of the documents were created or received by Capt. Alexander P. Ketchum, one of Commissioner Oliver Otis Howard's staff officers, who was sent to South Carolina to mediate a dispute over restoration of abandoned land on the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.</p>
Digital Content:	Image(s): M869-Representative-Image

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Acquired from FamilySearch International in 2015.

Related Materials

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

Preferred Citation

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

Restrictions

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Historical Note

[The following is reproduced from the original NARA descriptive pamphlet for M869.]

The Freedmen's Bureau, as the Bureau was commonly known, was established in the War Department by an act of March 39 1865 (13 Stat. 507). Congress assigned to the Bureau responsibilities that previously had been shared by military commanders and by agents of the Treasury Department. The duties included supervision of all affairs relating to refugees, to freedmen, and to the custody of abandoned property.

Under the provisions of the initial legislation, the Bureau was to have been terminated 1 year after the close of the Civil War. It was twice extended by laws of July 16, 1866 (14 Stat. 173), and July 6, 1868 (15 Stat. 83). Its functions were limited to education and assistance in the collection of claims by an act of July 25, 1868 (15 Stat. 193), effective January 1869. Remaining Bureau functions were terminated following the discontinuance of the Bureau in 1872, in accordance with a law of June 10 of that year (17 Stat. 366).

The operations of the Freedmen's Bureau resembled, in many ways, the work of later Federal social agencies. In addition to supervising the disposition of abandoned or confiscated lands and property, Bureau officers issued rations, clothing, and medicine to destitute refugees and freedmen; established hospitals and dispensaries; cooperated with benevolent societies in establishing schools; listened to complaints of the freedmen; witnessed the writing of labor contracts; and helped black soldiers and sailors to file and collect claims for bounties, pensions, and pay arrearages.

In May 1865 Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard was appointed Commissioner of the Bureau and established his headquarters at Washington, D. C. Assistant commissioners were appointed to supervise the work of the Bureau in the States, but because the number of assistant commissioners was limited to 10 by an act of Congress, some officers were assigned to duty in more than one State.

Bvt. Maj. Gen. Rufus Saxton, who had directed the "Port Royal Experiment," was appointed Assistant Commissioner for South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.¹ Shortly after Saxton assumed his new duties, Howard appointed Assistant Commissioners for Georgia and Florida. Thus, by September 1865, Saxton was, for all practical purposes, Assistant Commissioner solely for South Carolina. Generally, the records pertaining to Georgia and Florida among those of the Assistant Commissioner of South Carolina were created during this early period.

The organization of the Bureau in South Carolina was similar to that of the Bureau headquarters at Washington, D. C. Saxton's original staff included an Assistant Adjutant General, an Inspector General, a Superintendent of Education, an Assistant Quartermaster, a Chief Commissary of Subsistence, and an aide-de-camp.

Officers subordinate to Saxton were responsible for administering the policies of the Bureau in the subdistricts of South Carolina. These subdistricts, as they finally evolved in February 1867, were: Anderson, Beaufort, Columbia, Charleston, Lynn, Darlington, Edisto, Greenville, Georgetown, Hilton Head, South Carolina side of the Savannah River, Unionville, and Williamsburg. The subdistricts were administered by officers titled subassistant commissioners.² Officers or civilians serving under subassistant commissioners were called agents.

During the period of the Bureau's existence in South Carolina, there were three Assistant Commissioners operating from three different cities. Gen. Rufus Saxton established his headquarters at Beaufort, but in September 1865 he moved his headquarters to Charleston. Bvt. Maj. Gen. Robert K. Scott succeeded Saxton in January 1866 and carried out the duties of Assistant Commissioner until July 1868 when he resigned to become Governor of South Carolina. Just before Scott resigned, the headquarters was moved to Columbia. Assuming the position of Assistant Commissioner in August 1868, Bvt. Col. John R. Edie served until May 1869. Bvt. Maj. Horace Neide, Superintendent of Education, acted as Assistant Commissioner until May 31, 1869, when the office was abolished in South Carolina.

Neide and his successor, Bvt. Maj. Edward L. Deane, served as Superintendent of Education until June 1870 when that office was discontinued. Many of the series of records begun by Assistant Commissioners were continued by Superintendents of Education; thus, some records created by Superintendents of Education will be found with those of Assistant Commissioners. The Bureau functioned in South Carolina until June 1872, but its activity after June 1870 was mainly in the area of claims. These claims records are among the Provisions and Claims Divisions records and have not been reproduced on this microfilm publication. They are part of the records of the South Carolina Freedmen's Bureau.

When the Freedmen's Bureau was abolished, its records were sent to the Office of the Adjutant General. Clerks in the Adjutant General's Office numbered the volumes or book records and prepared "Indexes" or lists of these books. In this microfilm publication the number assigned to the volume by the clerks in the Adjutant General's Office appears in parenthesis. This number is useful only as a more precise method of identifying the volume.

ENDNOTES

1 The "Port Royal Experiment," originally launched by the Treasury Department in March 1862, was to provide work and education for blacks on the sea islands of Georgia and South Carolina. In the summer of 1862 the experiment was transferred to the War Department, and Gen. Rufus Saxton was placed in command. Under Saxton the amount of land administered was greatly increased in 1865. When the Bureau was established the experiment was placed under the Bureau's control, and Saxton was retained, with authority over the three States.

2 One of the subassistant commissioners, John William DeForrest, wrote an account of his experiences. See John W. DeForrest, *A Union Officer in the Reconstruction*, ed. by James H. Croushore and David M. Potter (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948).

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 Sent

Scope and Contents: The six volumes of letters sent, June 13, 1865–January 22, 1870, consist of fair copies of letters, telegrams, and reports sent mainly by the Assistant Commissioner and assistant adjutants. The communications in these volumes are generally arranged in chronological order. A name index is at the beginning of each volume except the sixth (14). The National Archives has prepared a name index for Volume 6 (14), and it is filmed before the volume on Roll 2.

In the left margin of the pages of the volumes is the name of the person or title of the officer to whom the letter was sent. There are also notations in the form of fractions in the margins of Volumes 1 (9) and 3 (11). The numerator is the number of the page in that volume on which there is a preceding letter to the same person, and the denominator is the number of the page on which there is a subsequent letter to the same officer. The subject of the letter is also found in the margin.

Filmed after the volumes are six unbound copies of letters sent, October 30, 1865–May 5, 1868, addressed to Bureau headquarters at Washington, D. C., and not duplicated in the volumes of letters sent. Also reproduced here is an enclosure to a letter sent that is in Volume 2 (10), November 20, 1865, Document Number 317.

1.1: Volume 1 (9), June 13–Nov. 1, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.2: Volume 2 (10), Nov. 1–Dec. 30, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.3: Volume 3 (11), Jan. 1–Dec. 29, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.4: Volume 4 (12), Jan. 1–Dec. 30, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.5: Volume 5 (13), Jan. 2–Dec. 31, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.6: Volume 6 (14), Jan. 4, 1869–Jan. 22, 1870

[Image\(s\)](#)

1.7: Unbound Copies of Letters Sent, Oct. 30, 1865–May 5, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 2: Endorsements Sent

Scope and Contents: According to the recordkeeping practice of the day, the Assistant Commissioner kept a series of records known as endorsements sent or endorsement books. Frequently, instead of writing a letter, the Assistant Commissioner or assistant adjutants wrote the reply or forwarding statement on the incoming letter and either returned the communication to the sender or forwarded it to another officer. These replies or forwarding statements were copied into endorsement books, with a summary of the contents of the incoming communication and with the previous endorsements that had been written on the communication.

The nine volumes of endorsements sent, June 15, 1865–June 24, 1870, are generally arranged in chronological order. In the left margin of the pages are the number of the endorsement (assigned in the order that it appears in the volume), the name of the person or title of the officer to whom the endorsement was sent, and the subject of the endorsement. The entry number of the letter received on which the endorsement was written also appears in the left margin (abbreviations used to denote registers of letters received are "IMB" and "IB"). Also found in the left margin of some of the pages are the words "Continued To" and "Continued From" with the number of a subsequent or preceding endorsement. This serves the same purpose as the fractions did for letters sent.

There are name indexes for the first four volumes and the last.

2.1: Volume 1 (17), June 15–Oct. 4, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.2: Volume 2 (18), Oct. 4–Oct. 31, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.3: Volume 3 (20), Nov. 1–Dec. 30, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.4: Volume 4 (19), Jan. 2–Dec. 31, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.5: Volume 5 (21), Jan. 2–July 30, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.6: Volume 6 (22), Aug. 1–Dec. 30, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.7: Volume 7 (23), Jan. 2–June 27, 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.8: Volume 8 (24), July 1, 1868–Jan. 20, 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

2.9: Volume 9 (25), Jan. 22, 1869–June 24, 1870

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 3: Registers of Letters Received

Scope and Contents: Another recordkeeping practice of the day was that of entering incoming communications into registers of letters received. The entries in the registers include such information as the name or office of the correspondent, the place from which the letter was written, an abstract of the letter, and the register entry number assigned to the communication. Document numbers for related letters and endorsements sent are also given. Abbreviations used in the registers to denote such correspondence are "LB," "EB," or "EMB".

Entries in the eight registers of letters received, June 1865–October 1870, are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname or office of correspondent and thereunder generally by date of receipt of the communication. The letters were assigned entry numbers in the order that they were entered in the volume, with a separate numerical sequence for each alphabetical division.

Because the number of pages allotted to each alphabetical division in the registers often proved insufficient, it became necessary to continue the entries elsewhere in the volume. The National Archives has filmed the registers in correct order; therefore some of the pages are not in the original numerical sequence. Blank numbered pages have not been filmed. There are name indexes for Volumes 1 (1) and 3 (3).

Cross–reference symbols enclosed in brackets have been entered by the National Archives. The notation "F/W" before a cross–reference indicates that the letter is filed with the cited letter. The notation "F/as" indicates that the letter is filed under the designated cross–referenced file number. Not all letters entered in the registers are among the records of the Assistant Commissioner. The National Archives has placed an asterisk (*) in the registers by the entry number of each letter that is still in the series of registered letters received. Others were forwarded to Bureau headquarters at Washington, D. C., or were sent to officers subordinate to the Assistant Commissioner. Some of the letters are filed in the series of applications for restoration of property. The National Archives has stamped a double asterisk (**) by the entry number in the register when a letter was found in that series. The applications are reproduced in Series 6: Records Relating to Restoration of Property.

Stamped explanations of the asterisks and symbols appear in the front of each register.

3.1: Volume 1 (1), June–Oct. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.2: Volume 2 (2), Oct.–Dec. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.3: Volume 3 (3), Jan.–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.4: Volume 4 (4), Jan.–Aug. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.5: Volume 5 (5), Aug.–Dec. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.6: Volume 6 (6), Jan. –June 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.7: Volume 7 (7), July 1868–Jan. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

3.8: Volume 8 (8), Jan. 1869–Oct. 1870

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 4: Registered Letters Received

Scope and Contents: The letters and telegrams received by the Assistant Commissioner are in two unbound series--one series of registered letters and one series of unregistered letters.

The letters entered in the register of letters received, May 1865–February 1870, are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname or office of correspondent and thereunder generally in chronological order. The file citation on a letter includes the abbreviation "IB," the letter of the alphabet under which it will be found in the register, and the entry number assigned to it.

4.1: Entered in Registers 1 and 2

4.1.1: A – O, May–Dec. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.1.2: P – Y, May–Dec. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.2: Entered in Register 3

4.2.1: A – G, Oct. 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.2.2: H – O, Oct. 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.2.3: P – Z, Oct. 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.3: Entered in Registers 4 and 5

4.3.1: A – E, Nov. 1866–Dec. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

4.3.2: F – J, Nov. 1866–Dec. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

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

4.3.3: K – R, Nov. 1866–Dec. 1867

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

4.3.4: S – Y, Nov. 1866–Dec. 1867

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

4.4: Entered in Registers 6 and 7

4.4.1: A – G, Oct. 1867–Jan. 1869

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

4.4.2: H – R, Oct. 1867–Jan. 1869

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

4.4.3: S – Y, Oct. 1867–Jan. 1869

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

4.5: Entered in Register 8

4.5.1: A – W, Jan. 1869–Feb. 1870

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

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Series 5: Unregistered Letters Received

Scope and Contents: The letters and telegrams received by the Assistant Commissioner are in two unbound series—one series of registered letters and one series of unregistered letters.

The unregistered letters received, May 1865–May 1869, are arranged by year, thereunder alphabetically by initial letter of surname or office of correspondent, and thereunder in chronological order. Letters received from Bureau headquarters at Washington, D. C., are filed under the letter "H" for O. O. Howard. The letters were not given file citations by the Assistant Commissioner's office, but some letters were given file citations by other offices, such as Headquarters, Military District of South Carolina.

5.1: A – W, May–Dec. 1865

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

5.2: A – E, 1866

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

5.3: F – W, 1866

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

5.4: A – J, 1867

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

5.5: L – W, 1867

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

5.6: A – W, 1868–May 1869

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

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Series 6: Records Relating to Restoration of Property

6.1: Register of Applications for Restoration of Property (38), Aug. 1865–May 1866

Image(s)

Scope and Contents: The entries in the register of applications for restoration of property, August 1865–May 1866, are arranged alphabetically by the initial letter of surname or office of correspondent and thereunder generally in chronological order by date of receipt of the application.

In the register for each letter entered, there is an entry number, the name of the petitioner, the name or description of the property, and the date the land was restored, if applicable. A cross–reference entry number is given for the application if it is also entered in the Assistant Commissioner's registers of letters received.

Not all the applications entered in the register are among the records. Some were forwarded to Bureau headquarters or other offices or officers. The National Archives has placed an asterisk (*) in the register by the entry number of each application still among the records of the Assistant Commissioner. The National Archives has also placed cross–reference symbols in the register in the same manner as in the registers of letters received.

6.2: Registered Applications for Restoration of Property

Scope and Contents: The unbound series of registered applications for restoration of property, May 1865–May 1866, consist of several different types of documents. These include the application itself, and often filed with it are the loyalty oath of the owner, the pardon of the owner, the proof of ownership, and the restoration order.

The applications are arranged according to their entry in the register of applications for restoration of property. The file citation on the application gives the letter of the alphabet and entry number under which the application was entered in the register.

6.2.1: A – B, May 1865–May 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.2.2: C – F, May 1865–May 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.2.3: G – K, May 1865–May 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.2.4: L – R, May 1865–May 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.2.5: S – Z, May 1865–May 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.3: Unregistered Applications for Restoration of Property

Scope and Contents: The unregistered applications for restoration of property, July 1865–October 1868, are applications that were received too late to be entered in the register, or they were applications administered by Ketchum. The applications are arranged alphabetically by the surname of the owner or organization. While these applications have no file citations that pertain to the register of applications for restoration of property received, some do have file citations that apply to the registers of letters received or to Ketchum's register of applications for restoration of property.

6.3.1: [A – K, July 1865–Oct. 1868](#)[Image\(s\)](#)[Image\(s\)](#)[Image\(s\)](#)6.3.2: [L – Z, July 1865–Oct. 1868](#)[Image\(s\)](#)[Image\(s\)](#)[Image\(s\)](#)

6.4: Captain A. P. Ketchum's Records

Scope and Contents: The records created or received by Ketchum consist of an endorsement book, November 1865–March 1866; a register of letters received, November 1865–March 1866; a register of applications for restoration of property, November 1865–February 1866; a register of lands and occupants, May 1865–December 1868; a register of restoration orders, December 1865–February 1866; and an unbound series of restoration orders, December 1865–February 1866. The endorsements sent and the register of letters received are arranged in the same way as their counterparts in the records of the Assistant Commissioner.

6.4.1: [Endorsements Sent \(40\), Nov. 1865–Mar. 1866](#)6.4.2: [Register of Letters Received \(39\), Nov. 1865–Mar. 1866](#)6.4.3: [Register of Applications for Restoration of Property \(41\), Nov. 1865–Feb. 1866](#)

Notes: The entries in the register of applications for restoration of property are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname or institution of correspondent and thereunder in chronological order. The entry numbers were assigned chronologically without regard to alphabetical divisions.

6.4.4: [Register of Lands and Occupants \(42\), May 1865–Dec. 1868](#)

Notes: The register of lands and occupants is arranged first by geographic area, such as island or city, and thereunder alphabetically by surname of owner of a parcel of land. Some of the more important listings are: the amount of land being used, the number of freedmen working on the land, and the date that the land was restored. After Ketchum was recalled in February

1866 entries in this register continued to be recorded in the office of the Assistant Commissioner.

6.4.5: Restoration Orders

Notes: The register of restoration orders is arranged chronologically by the date of restoration, and it corresponds to the unbound series of restoration orders that is arranged numerically, 1 – 123. Often filed with the restoration orders are the applications for restoration of property, correspondence, loyalty oaths, and other pertinent documents. A name index has been completed by the National Archives that indexes both series of applications for restoration of property and the restoration orders. To use the index the name of the petitioner, whether owner, lawyer, administrator, or institution, must be known. This index has been filmed before each of the series.

6.4.5.1: [Register of Restoration Orders \(42\), Dec. 1865–Feb. 1866](#)

6.4.5.2: Restoration Orders 1 – 123, Dec. 1865–Feb. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

6.5: Abandoned Land Reports, Aug. 1865–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The abandoned land reports, August 1865–December 1868, are arranged in chronological order. They contain listings of the former owner of the land, how the land was acquired by the Bureau, and a description of the land.

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Series 7: Reports

Scope and Contents: Among the records of the Assistant Commissioner are three series of reports: reports of murders and outrages, reports of conditions and operations, and miscellaneous reports.

7.1: Reports of Murders and Outrages, Oct. 1865–Nov. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: Reports received from subordinate officers relating to murders and outrages, October 1865–November 1868, are arranged chronologically. The reports usually list the names of the persons murdered or assaulted and of those accused of the crime, the race of the people involved, and the action taken on the case. Some of the officers submitted two reports for one month--one listed offenses committed by whites against blacks, and the other listed offenses of blacks against whites.

7.2: Reports of Conditions and Operations

Scope and Contents: The reports of conditions and operations, July 1865–December 1868, are arranged chronologically. Reports of prevailing conditions, such as race relations and the status of crops, and of the operations of the Bureau, were submitted monthly to the Assistant Commissioner. They were written by the Assistant Commissioner's staff and by subordinate officers and civilians in South Carolina.

7.2.1: (Part 1), July 1865–Dec. 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.2.2: (Part 2), Jan. 1867–May 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

7.2.3: (Part 3), June–Dec. 1868

7.3: Miscellaneous Reports, 1865–67

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The miscellaneous reports, 1865–67 are arranged by type of report and thereunder chronologically. They include one report of indigent people in Greenville District, January 1867; a report of black orphans in South River District, April 1867; a report of a visit to Buzby Plantation, John's Island, January 1866; three reports of arrests in Anderson District, April, May, and July 1867; a report of a tour of inspection in South Carolina by Insp. Gen. C. H. Howard, November 1865.

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Series 8: Orders and Circulars

Scope and Contents: Among the records of the Assistant Commissioner are a volume of general orders and circulars issued, four volumes of special orders issued, a volume of special orders received from Headquarters, 2d Military District, a volume of orders received pertaining to Bureau personnel in South Carolina, and unbound orders and circulars issued and received.

8.1: General Orders and Circulars Issued (26), Jan. 1866–May 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The volume of general orders and circulars issued, January 1866–May 1869, is generally arranged in chronological order. There is no index to this volume.

8.2: Special Orders Issued

Scope and Contents: The four volumes of special orders issued, June 1865–July 1870, are generally arranged chronologically. There are indexes to the first three volumes.

8.2.1: [Volume 1 \(27\), June 1865–Jan. 1866](#)

8.2.2: [Volume 2 \(28\), Jan. 1866–Dec. 1867](#)

8.2.3: [Volume 3 \(29\), Jan.–Dec. 1868](#)

8.2.4: [Volume 4 \(30\), Jan. 1869–July 1870](#)

8.3: Special Orders Received from Headquarters, 2d Military District (32), Apr. 1867–July 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The volume of special orders received from Headquarters, 2d Military District, April 1867–July 1868, is arranged chronologically. There is no index to this volume.

8.4: Orders Received Pertaining to Bureau Personnel in South Carolina (31), July 1865–Feb. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The volume of orders received pertaining to Bureau personnel in South Carolina, July 1865–February 1869, is arranged by name of officer to whom the order or orders pertain and thereunder generally chronologically. The names are not in alphabetical order but there is a name index. These orders were issued by Bureau headquarters and Headquarters of the Army.

8.5: Orders and Circulars Issued and Received, 1865–67

Image(s)

Scope and Contents: The unbound orders and circulars issued and received, 1865–67, are arranged by type of order or circular, thereunder by whether received or issued, and thereunder chronologically. Included in these records is a copy of General Sherman's Special Field Order 15.

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Series 9: Records Relating to the Issuance of Rations

Scope and Contents: A specific function of the Bureau was to issue rations to the destitute of the State as well as to soldiers. Records pertaining to the issuance of rations consist of the following series: a ration book, lists of destitutes, ration returns, estimates of rations required, ration reports, a receipt for rations, applications for relief, bonds of planters for supplies, proceedings of the Commission on Liens, and a register of orders given planters for provisions for black employees.

9.1: Ration Book (36), May 1863–July 1866

Image(s)

Scope and Contents: The ration book, May 1863–July 1866, is generally arranged in chronological order. It was begun when Saxton was in command of the "Port Royal Experiment," but entries were later made by Bureau officials. It contains lists of rations for teachers, superintendents, destitutes, enlisted men, and civilians.

9.2: List of Destitutes, 1866–67

Image(s)

Scope and Contents: The lists of destitutes, 1866–67, are arranged in alphabetical order. Each list, sent in by a subordinate officer or civilian, is arranged alphabetically by names of the destitutes.

9.3: Ration Returns, Jan. 1866–Nov. 1868

Image(s)

Scope and Contents: The ration returns, January 1866–November 1868, were received from subordinate officials. They are arranged in chronological order. Generally the returns list the amount of rations issued, the amount remaining, and the people to whom the rations were issued.

9.4: Estimates of Rations Required, July 1865–Aug. 1866

Image(s)

Scope and Contents: The estimates of rations required, July 1865–August 1866, are arranged in chronological order. These estimates were submitted by subordinate officers.

9.5: Ration Reports

Scope and Contents: The ration reports, August 1865–December 1868, are arranged in chronological order. These monthly reports submitted by the Assistant Commissioner to Bureau headquarters list the subdistricts of the State and the amount of rations issued in each.

The one receipt for rations, June 1867, is for the district of Edisto. Each destitute person is listed and the amount of rations issued to each is given.

9.5.1: [\(Part 1\), Aug. 1865–Mar. 1866](#)

9.5.2: [\(Part 2\), Apr.–Dec. 1866](#)

9.5.3: [\(Part 3\), Jan.–Aug. 1867](#)
[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

9.5.4: (Part 4), Sept. 1867–Dec. 1868

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

9.6: Applications for Relief, Jan.–Dec. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The three applications for relief, January–December 1868, were submitted to the Assistant Commissioner by planters, and explain the need for rations and the number of workers requiring relief.

9.7: Bonds of Planters for Supplies, June 1867–Feb. 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The bonds of planters for supplies, June 1867–February 1869, are arranged in chronological order. The amount of money or crops borrowed and other important data is given.

9.8: Proceedings of the Commission on Liens (34), Oct. 19, 1868–Jan. 16, 1869

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: Before the growing season of 1868 many people borrowed money or crops from the Assistant Commissioner, and in return they signed a lien on their future crops. During the summer and fall, many people lost their crops and were, therefore, unable to repay their loan. As a result, a Commission on Liens was established to decide which liens would be extended and which would be called in immediately. The Commission, which met from December 16, 1868–January 16, 1869, was composed of the Assistant Commissioner, Col. James P. Low, and ex–Governor William Aiken. The proceedings of the Commission on Liens, October 19, 1868–January 16, 1869, which also include some letters sent by Commissioner O. O. Howard, are generally arranged in chronological order. The name of each person considered and the decision reached is listed. There is an index to this volume.

9.9: Register of Orders Given Planters for Provisions for Black Employees (35), Apr. 1–July 14, 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: The register of orders given planters for provisions for black employees, April 1–July 14, 1865, is arranged chronologically. This register was begun by Saxton before he was appointed Assistant Commissioner. It contains the name of the planter, the plantation, the number of field hands, and the types and amounts of rations issued.

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Series 10: Records Relating to Contracts

Scope and Contents: There are two unbound series of records relating to contracts: contracts received, February 1866–January 1868, and contract reports, January 1867–September 1868. Both series were received from subordinate officials and are arranged chronologically. The contracts state the conditions under which an employee or employees worked or rented land and the compensation, in money or crops, that would be paid or received. Each contract report gives the name of the employer, the number of employees, and the terms of the contract.

10.1: Contracts Received, Feb. 1866–Jan. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

10.2: Contract Reports, Jan. 1867–Sept. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 11: Records Relating to Legal Actions

Scope and Contents: There are a few small series of records relating to legal actions: investigations of charges, January 1866–July 1867; ten affidavits, September 1865–June 1868; and four powers of attorney, September–October 1865. In each series the records are arranged in alphabetical order.

11.1: Investigations of Charges, Jan. 1866–July 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

11.2: Affidavits, Sept. 1865–June 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

11.3: Powers of Attorney, Sept.–Oct. 1865

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 12: Quartermaster Records

Scope and Contents: Among the records of the Assistant Commissioner are returns of quartermaster stores received and issued, December 1865–April 1867, and requisitions for quartermaster supplies, August 1868. Staff and subordinate officers usually submitted copies of returns and requisitions to the Assistant Commissioner for approval. These records are arranged chronologically and generally list the stores received, issued, or requisitioned, and the amounts.

12.1: Returns of Quartermaster Stores Received and Issued, Dec. 1865–Apr. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

12.2: Requisitions for Quartermaster Stores, Aug. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

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Series 13: Personnel Records

13.1: Personnel Rosters

Scope and Contents: The personnel records consist mainly of the unbound personnel rosters, August 1865–July 1868. Arranged chronologically in one body of records, the rosters are of agents and clerks, of officers, and of officers and civilians. Usually prepared monthly, the rosters list the name of the official and such pertinent information as his duty station and Bureau title.

13.1.1: (Part 1), Aug. 1865–Dec. 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

13.1.2: (Part 2), Jan.–July 1868

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Series 14: Records Relating to Transportation

Scope and Contents: The records relating to transportation consist of a list of requests for transportation, October 1, 1865–December 31, 1866; a register of signed transportation orders given to officers, March 6, 1866–February 3, 1867; a register of orders authorizing transportation, February 9–September 4, 1866; an unbound series of transportation requests received, April 20–December 21, 1866; an unbound series of transportation orders issued, December 19, 1865–December 31, 1866; a series of monthly transportation reports, October 1866–November 1868; and a transportation receipt, November 16, 1865. All of these records are arranged by type of record and thereunder generally in chronological order. They usually give the name or names of the people requiring transportation and their proposed destination.

Filmed directly after the records relating to transportation are a few unbound miscellaneous records, 1865–67. They are arranged by type of record and consist mainly of documents relating to property titles, marriage of freedmen, and receipts or bills of lading for such items as machinery and tools, furniture, and newspaper advertisements.

14.1: List of Requests for Transportation (35), Oct. 1, 1865–Dec. 31, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

14.2: Register of Signed Transportation Orders Given to Officers (35), Mar. 6, 1866–Feb. 3, 1867

[Image\(s\)](#)

14.3: Register of Orders Authorizing Transportation (35), Feb. 9–Sept. 4, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

14.4: Transportation Requests Received, Apr. 20–Dec. 21, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

14.5: Transportation Orders Issued, Dec. 19, 1865–Dec. 31, 1866

[Image\(s\)](#)

14.6: Monthly Transportation Reports, Oct. 1866–Nov. 1868

[Image\(s\)](#)

14.7: Other Records, 1865–67

[Image\(s\)](#)

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