



Smithsonian Institution

Freedmen's Bureau

Mississippi Assistant Commissioner, Reports, Narrative Reports from Subordinate Officers, Nov.–Dec. 1867, Part 2

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 11:05:14

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Freedmen's Bureau as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Freedmen's Bureau website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Freedmen's Bureau or transcribe@si.edu

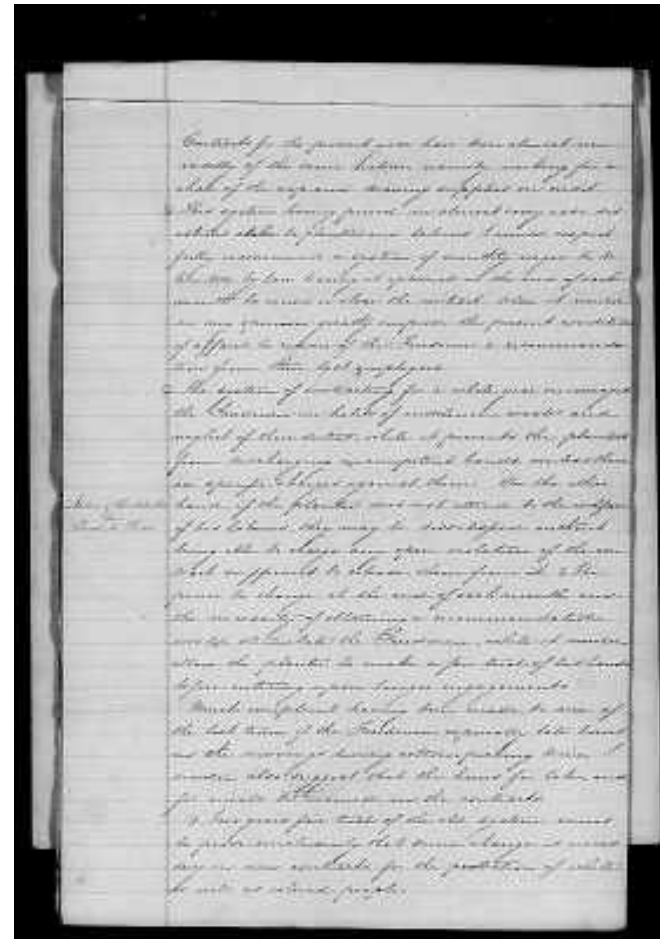
For more information on this project and related material, contact the Freedmen's Bureau. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

Contracts for the present year have been almost universally of the same nature namely working for a share of the crops, and drawing supplies on credit. This system having proved in almost every case disastrous alike to planters and laborers. I would respectfully recommend a system of monthly wages to be limited by law, leaving it optional at the end of each month to review or close the contract. Also, it would in my opinion greatly improve the present condition of affairs, to require of the Freedmen a recommendation from their last employers.

The system of contracting for a whole year encouraged the Freedmen in habit of indolence, waste and neglect of their duties, while it prevents the planters from discharging incompetent hands unless there are specific charges against them. Nature of Contracts for Present Year On the other hand, if the planter does not attend to the welfare of his laborers, they may be dissatisfied without being able to charge any open violation of the contract sufficient to release them from it. The power to change at the end of each month, and the necessity of obtaining a recommendation, would stimulate the Freedmen, while it would allow the planters to make a fair trial of his hands before entering upon longer engagements.

Much complaint having been made to me of the lost time of the Freedmen, especially late hours in the morning during cotton picking time. I would also suggest that the hours for labor and for meals be named in the contracts.

Two years fair trial of the old system, seemed to prove conclusively that some change is necessary in new contracts for the protection of white as well as colored people.



Mississippi Assistant Commissioner, Reports, Narrative Reports from Subordinate Officers, Nov.-Dec. 1867, Part 2
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers
Extracted Mar-28-2024 11:05:14



Smithsonian Institution

Freedmen's Bureau

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)