



Smithsonian Institution

Freedmen's Bureau

Registers and Letters Received by the Commissioner, Letters Received, Entered in Register 2, I, Oct. 1865–Feb. 1866

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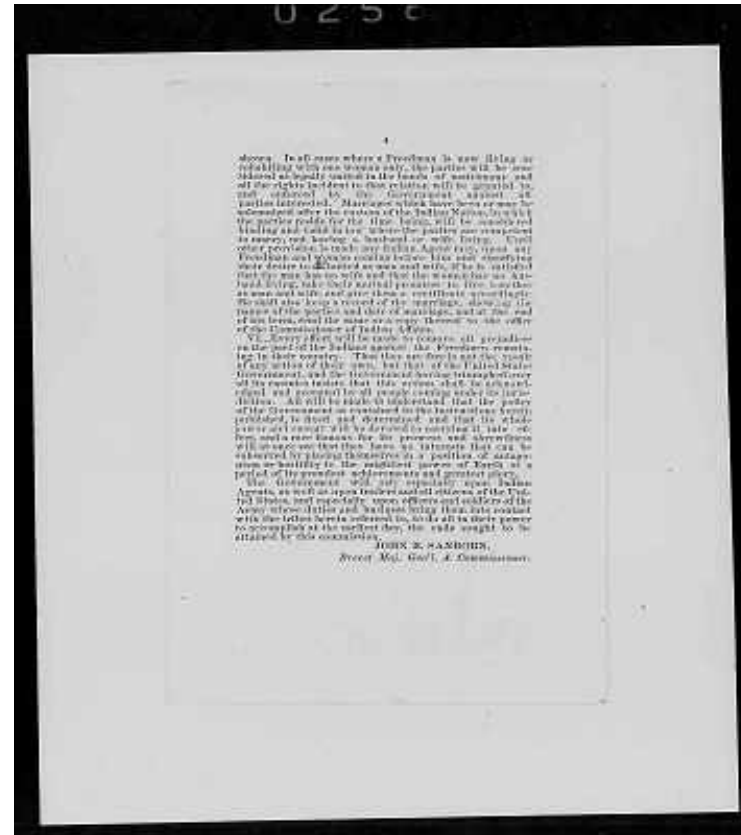
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shown. In all cases where a Freedman is now living or cohabiting with one woman only, the parties will be considered as legally united in the bonds of matrimony and all the rights incident to that relation will be granted to, and enforced by the Government against all parties interested. Marriages which have been or may be solemnized after the custom of the Indian Nation, in which the parties reside for the time being, will be considered binding and valid in law where the parties are competent to marry, not having a husband or wife living. Until other provision is made an Indian Agent may, upon any Freedman and woman coming before him and signifying their desire to ~~be~~ be united as man and wife, if he is satisfied that the man has no wife and that the woman has no husband living, take their mutual promises to live together as man and wife, and give them a certificate accordingly. He shall also keep a record of the marriage, showing the names of the parties and date of the marriage, and at the end of his term, send the same or a copy thereof to the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

VI...Every effort will be made to remove all prejudices on the part of the Indians against the Freedman remaining in their country. That they are free is not the result of any action of their own, but that of the United States Government, and the Government having triumphed over all its enemies insists that his action shall be acknowledged and accepted by all people coming under its jurisdiction. All will be made to understand that the policy of the Government as contained in the instructions herein published, is fixed and determining and that its whole power and energy will be devoted to carrying it into effect, and a race famous for its prowess and shrewdness will at once see that they have no interests that can be subserved by placing themselves in a position of antagonism or hostility to the mightiest power of Earth at a period of its proudest achievements and greatest glory.

The Government will rely especially upon Indian Agents, as well as upon traders and all citizens of the United States, and especially upon officers and soldiers of the Army whose duties and business bring them into contact with the tribes herein referred to, to do all in their power to accomplish at the earliest day, the ends sought to be attained by this commission.

JOHN B. SANBORN
Brevet Maj. Gen'l. & Commissioner.



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