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3449 3/27/1866

*From:* Sam'l Thomas

*To:* Major Genl O.O. Howard

OOH-3393

*Source:* Bowdoin

Bureau Refugees,  
Freedmen and  
Abandoned Lands  
Office of Assistant  
Commissioner  
for the State of  
Mississippi  
Vicksburg Miss

Commissioner Bureau R.F.  
and A.L.

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[195, 196, 197, 198]

Bureau Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands  
Office of Assistant Commissioner  
for the State of Mississippi  
Vicksburg Miss March 27th 1866.

Major Genl O.O. Howard  
Commissioner Bureau R.F. and A.L.  
General,

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a letter, addressed by me to Major Genl Wood, at the request of Genls Thomas and Wood, that they might have some facts as to the misrepresentations of a correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial, with reference to the character of the Freedmen's Bureau.

I am sure I have the entire confidence of both Generals, and have been assured by them, that they will take steps to vindicate the character of the Bureau and its officers.

I forward you a copy of the letter, as it contains statements with reference to the condition of the Freedmen and the results of the labors of the Bureau.

Perfect harmony and cordiality exist between the Bureau and the regular military organization. General T.J. Wood takes great interest in all that is done, supervises, approves, and in fact makes himself completely responsible for all my acts. Copies of all my reports, orders &c. are forwarded to Division Head Quarters, at the same time they are forwarded to you.

I have reorganized the State, assigned new Officers to the positions of Sub Commissioners, and issued a Digest of orders and instructions for the government of Sub Commissioners. This pamphlet has been forward for your examination and approval. It has been approved by the Dept. Commander.

General Sewall is here and will be given every opportunity to make a rigid examination of the Bureau in this State.

The General has spoken to me about the charges made by Mr Hawley, and the colored men whom he has induced to write letters to you or Mr Alvord, about the Freedmen's Savings Bank of this place.

I could retort, by charging Mr Hawley with many things of which I know him to be guilty, that make him unfit for the position of Cashier of the Freedmen's Savings Bank. It would look too much like childish spite, for me to take any such course at this time.

I have informed Mr Alvord, and the President of the Bank of my feelings, and have told them, if he is not removed, I cannot assist the Bank.

When he was appointed Cashier, he made an undue use of my name and character, for the purpose of furthering his own financial operations, which he is conducting in connection with the bank. This I would not allow. As soon as he found he could not use the Bureau, he devoted himself to its abuse.

I wold not risk a dollar myself in the Bank, and, as it is now managed of course would not advise the Freedmen

to deposit their money there.

General T.J. Wood told Genl Sewall that he held the same opinion of Mr Hawley and his conduct of business.

If the Committee that has charge of the Freedmen's Savings Bank do no think it proper to make a change, I can say no more.

The objects of the enterprise are good; properly managed the Band would do well.

My object in addressing you personally is to place the matters treated in these letters, directly before you for consideration.

I have the honor to be, General,  
Very respectfully  
Your obedient servant  
Sam'l Thomas  
Colonel and Asst Commissioner  
State of Miss.

[Written sideways on the last page, in a different hand.]

Vicksburg, Miss.

March 27th, 1866

Thomas, Sam. Col & A.C.

Concerning article in Cincinnati Commercial reflecting upon the Bureau.

Enclosed copy of letter to Gen. T.J. Woods [See OOH-3394]

Recd. April 5th, 1866

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3448 3/26/1866

*From:* Saml Thomas

*To:* Major Genl. T.J. Wood

OOH-3394

*Source:* Bowdoin

Bureau Refugees,  
Freedmen and  
Abandoned Lands.  
Office of Assistant  
Commissioner,  
For the State of  
Mississippi  
Vicksburg, Miss.

Commanding Dept. of  
Mississippi

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[199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204]

COPY

[Letterhead]

Bureau Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands.  
Office of Assistant Commissioner,  
For the State of Mississippi  
Vicksburg, Miss.,  
March 26th, 1866.

Major Genl. T.J. Wood,  
Commanding Dept. of Mississippi,  
General,

I beg leave to lay before you a letter published in the Cincinnati Commercial, on the 17th inst; such attacks as this are easily met and refuted when opportunity is afforded; but if unnoticed my superior officers and the public may get the impression that I cannot deny the charges, and people at a distance may take up opinions damaging not only to my character, but also to the Freedmen's Bureau at large, which is of far greater consequence than my personal reputation. I therefore take the liberty to offer the explanations and denials which I beg you will use as you may think most conducive to the public interest.

You will see that the correspondent of the Commercial says that he has personal knowledge of the character and operations of the Bureau officers of whom he speaks.

This cannot be true. I never saw him so far as I know. No one about my office has ever known such a man to come about here. We are certain that he has had no other opportunity to examine my operations than can be got by picking up rumors and inventions among the Southern people whose animosity to the Bureau leads them to receive eagerly, exaggerate freely and communicate joyfully anything that may be said against the Bureau or its individual officers.

He accuses me of keeping "sleek span of horses and a carriage to correspond" His mention of the span and his speaking of an officer at Jackson, lead me to guess that probably he was at that place last year, about the time that the former Surgeon in chief on my staff and myself put each his horse to a buggy and drove to Jackson on business.

This is the only time when for a few weeks, I drove occasionally a span. I mention this minute circumstance that it may be seen on what a very narrow foundation the charge against me is built. Sometimes the best way to meet a grave charge is to expose its trivial source.

As to my driving with the "ay ladies of Vicksburg," I may to your own knowledge of my habits, and to the universal testimony of the town, whether this charge has any foundation at all. I have driven very seldom with any ladies, and it is a cruel slander of them to utter the innuendo contained in the term "ay ladies."

The officer whom he mentions as a popinjay at Jackson, and whose conduct he professes to have seen, was dismissed from the Bureau the moment his misconduct was made known, by an order dated Sept 29, 1865. His reference to this officer last summer induces me to believe that his letter was written from impressions received while in the State about that time, without inquiry as to changes, progress, &c. This is certainly very

unjust, and indicates any thing but fairness of mind in the correspondent.

I am charged with having made 60,000 dollars out of my office. I can oppose to this nothing but a simple denial and a call for investigation before a military tribunal, if there is probable cause for suspicion.

The correspondent attempts to account for the possibility of my making so much money, by saying that the Bureau has approved 75,000 contracts at a dollar fee for each since last Christmas. Now you, General, and every one at all conversant with the affairs of my office, know that we have approved comparatively few contracts, since the Civil officers of the State began operations; - they taking nearly all this work under the State law. The Bureau has not ratified one Contract since Christmas. Whatever fee the magistrates may charge, does not pass through the hands of any Bureau officer. All the fees ever collected for registering contracts, that this correspondent so sneeringly alludes to, would not amount to \$5,000.

Next the correspondent does not hesitate to say that the fines collected in this State during the past year amounted to 200,000 dollars. Since the establishment of Civil tribunals and the abolition of Freedmen's Courts last October, there have been absolutely no fines inflicted; and before that time all that were ever collected would not amount to 5,000 dollars. So the "nug little income of \$275,000" which he mentions fades away "like the baseless fabric of a vision."

The condition of both classes of the people has steadily improved since last November. I do not believe there are 300,000 laborers working any where with less friction than in this State.

This correspondent may hear of individual cases of abuse, and I do not deny that they occur; but he loses sight of the great change of the feeling of the white people towards the Freedmen.

We hear citizens make such remarks, as - "if we had been told one year ago, that a Judge in the State of Mississippi would ever have rendered such a decision, we would not have believed it."

I am working with you, General, to obtain from the Executive and Judiciary the admission of principles, and of the rights of the Freedman that will be his safeguard.

He charges the Bureau Officers with inefficiency; this is the gist of his talk about not securing the negroes justice and the like. In answer to this, I may appeal to the facts concerning our influence in getting proper contracts made between employer and employed; to the influence we have exerted in securing to the colored people the right to buy and lease lands, which the new laws of the State had forbidden; to the regulations of the matter of apprenticeship, by which we have secured to colored parents their right of a guardianship; to our care of orphan children; to our hospitals for the infirm, especially to the growing asylums at Lauderdale; to the schools steadily extending to all parts of the State, and still growing, - not one tenth of which could stand without our presence, or would have been granted the Freedmen without our assistance.

General, I do not wish to weary you with a long statement, but to submit my defence briefly. I court investigation. Such letters as this are doing injury to the Freedmen, and the Citizens of the State, and are slanders upon the officers of the Army. I am laboring to bring about a feeling of harmony between all classes, and secure such a recognition of the Freedmen's rights before the Civil tribunals of the State as will be most conducive to such harmony. In furtherance of these objects, I take care not to harass the white citizens with Bureau officers, when I obtain pledges that the Freedmen will receive justice. I am succeeding in doing this. We are making progress. In many portions of the State the best feeling exists between the Officers of the Bureau and the Civil officers, and in some cases the best and most influential of the white citizens have expressed regret at the withdrawal of my officers.

Sub Commissioners on duty in this State have made reports that have been published over the Country as evidence that the Freedmen are much abused. These reports are exaggerated accounts of outrages that do occur; nothing is said of the thousands of contented laborers who are at work on plantations.

Capt I.M. Matthews has made such a report, that has done the State great injustice. This Captain was on duty at Magnolia for four months before he was relieved in December last; yet he failed to report a single outrage till he was relieved from duty, when he wrote the celebrated report that caused an order to be issued, call him to Washington.

He either failed to discharge his duty as a Bureau Officer, or his report and statements, made since being relieved, are untrue.

I have the honor to be, General,  
Very respectfully  
Your Obedient Servant  
Saml Thomas  
Colonel and Asst Commissioner  
State of Miss.

[Written sideways on the last page, in a different hand.]  
Recd. April 5, 1866

[Note. This letter was appended to OOH-3393, from Col. Thomas to Gen. OO Howard.]

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3450 3/27/1866 *From:* Charles Barrett

*To:* Hon. J.S. Morrill

OOH-3395

Grafton Vt.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[205]

Grafton Vt.  
March 27th 1866

Hon. J.S. Morrill [See Note]  
Dear Sir -

The bearer of this Lieut. George M. Kingsbury, has told me that he was about going to Washington to look after his interests as a member of V.R.C. - now being mustered out or disbanded as an organization.

My personal acquaintance with Mr. K. has been limited and of comparatively recent date. But I have long known friends of his and more or less about him by common report.

Mr. K. has an excellent name – without, so far as I know, any tract of blemish on it.

I have known him particularly only since he began to rally from a wound he rec'd in battle.

A ball paved through his lungs. His recovery, if indeed he is well & strong again – is one of the rare exception cases that we occasionally hear of.

If in any way – in your intervals of leisure – you could be of service to him, I think you could aid one who “deserves well of the Republic”.

Mr. K. is, I believe, a Lieut. in the 23d Regmt V.R.C. - credited to (Chester) Windsor Co.

Yours Very Truly  
Charles Barrett

[Note. Justin Smith Morrill was a U.S. Representative from Vermont, 1856-1866 and then its Senator, 1867-1898.]

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3451 3/27/1866      *From:* L. Deane

*To:* Maj Gen OO Howard

OOH-3396

Wash'n D.C.

Wash'n, D.C.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[206, 207]

Wash'n D.C.  
Mch 27, '66

Dear General,

In compliance with your request I send herewith a list of members of Congress interested in our enterprise: those whose names are marked thus \* worship at home with churches of our order, though not known to be otherwise especially interested with us:

* Lot W. Morrill	Maine
James G Blaine	"
J.W. Patterson	N.H.
Solomon Foot	Vt
Portus Baxter	"
Fred E. Woodbridge	"
Justin S. Morrill	"
Wm B. Washburn	Mass
* L.F.S. Foster	Conn
J.H. Hubbard	"
Burton C. Cook	Ills
Josiah B. Grinnell	Iowa
S.C. Pomeroy	Kansas
Wm. Windom	Minn
Sidney Clark (perhaps)	Kansas

Possibly there may be others but the above comprises all who have given any evidence to my knowledge of interest.

Very Truly yours

L. Deane [Llewellyn Deane, Bowdoin Class of 1849, and a leader in the formation of the 1st Congregational Church of Washington.]

Maj Gen OO Howard  
Wash'n, D.C.

[Written sideways on the last page, in a different hand.]

Washington, Mar 27, /66

Dean, L.

Concerning the Congregational Church

Recd. Mar 28th 1866

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3452 3/27/1866 *From:* J. Marshall

*To:* Dear Genl [OO Howard]

OOH-3397

Balt.

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[203]

Balt. March 27/66

Dear Genl

I would take it very kind if you can make it convenient to accompany Hon. Judge Bond and States Atty Geo. L. <Maimd> to the Pho. Gallery of Hewitt I Foux No 9. Gay St before leaving the City – to sit for your Pho. Many of your friends (especially Colored) desire a copy.

I succeeded in obtaining a very good Pho. Of Gen. Fisk & Col. Whittlesey in Philad'a in June last. I thought to have obtained yours at the same time – but Gen Fisk informed me you were obliged to leave the City on pressing business. I was therefore deprived of the Privilege at that time.

I was at the Convention of the Young Mens Chris. Assn. last year the closing scenes of which were most interesting indeed to me and no doubt to all there. I saw & heard you there for the first time and since then I have not had the privilege of seeing or hearing you until on the anniversary of the Sunday School of the first Cong'l Church in this City.

I honour you Genl. for your Works sake – God bless you in all your laboring in behalf of the poor despised Freedmen.

P.S. Mr Foux the Photographer on Gay St has been a long time with the army taking views &c and has hundreds of very interesting scenes of the army & navy and is considered one of the best operators. If you could make it convenient to call at No 9 Gay St. before leaving the City you would confer a favour on many friends as well as myself.

Very respectfully  
J. Marshall  
In haste

[Written on the back page in a different hand.]

Baltimore Md

Mar 27.

Marshal, J

Desires that Gen. Howard call at his establishment & sit for pictures.

Recd Mar 29, 1866



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3453 3/27/1866 *From:* William Elliott

*To:* Genl [OO Howard]

OOH-3398

Piqua [Ohio]

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[209]

Piqua [Ohio] March 27th 1866.

Genl.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 24th inst, in the midst of my sore affliction and distress, on account of the death of my dear wife, with home I had lived over forty years in the old Homestead. The idea of being dismissed from the position I occupied without knowing the cause, adds greatly to my distress at this particular time. If you will permit me to retain my place during the month of April I will resign the 1st of May –this will give me an opportunity of settling up my business, and of ascertaining what is the cause of my removal. If you should grant my request I will be there at the expiration of any furlough. Please inform me by return mail.

Very respectfully &c  
William Elliott

[Written sideways on the back page, in a different hand.]

Piqua Ohio

March 27th / 66

Wm. Elliott

Acknowledges receipt of the Commissioner's communication of the 24th inst and requests to be retained until 1st of May.

Rec'd Bureau RF&AL Mar 30th / 66

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3454 3/27/1866 *From:* P. Bonesteel

*To:* General [OO Howard]

OOH-3399

No 244. Willards Hotel

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[210, 211]

[ca. March 27, 1866] [The date was written in pencil.]

No 244. Willards Hotel

General

Having a business appointment here with a gentleman & while waiting his appearance it perhaps would facilitate Kentucky business by making the following suggestions for your consideration.

1st. Read my report proper as soon as you have time. There is no haste about the abstract as it is a true compilation of the proof it can be examined when necessary.

2nd. In regard to the President I would suggest that a copy of Report, proper, be made for & handed to him at once. After that if he wishes to see me I will answer any inquiries.

3rd. Genl. Fisk wanted me to have several copies of my report, proper, handed to leading papers N.York, Cincinnati & St. Louis for publication viz. Tribune & Times N.Y Commercial & Gazette Cin. & one or two leading papers at St. Louis – a mere telegram giving extracts I think would not give the public the true situation of Eastern Kentucky – unless followed up by report.

I will have a further interview with you anytime after 7 P.M. or tomorrow morning. Would like to leave for N.Y. tomorrow night but will remain longer if necessary. You will see that Genl Ely has certified to my report, but that need not be published unless assailed.

I am Yours Very Truly  
P. Bonesteel

[Summary written sideways on the last page, in a different.]

Willards Hotel

Bonesteel, P.

Concerning his report on Kentucky affairs.

Recd. Mar 28th 1866

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3455 3/28/1866

*From:* E H Rollins

*To:* Maj. Genl. OO Howard

OOH-3400

*Source:* Bowdoin

Thirty-Ninth Congress,  
U.S.  
House of  
Representatives,  
Washington, D.C.

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[212, 213]

[Letterhead]

Thirty-Ninth Congress, U.S.  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, D.C.

March 28 1866

Maj. Genl. OO Howard

My dear Sir:

Permit me to introduce to you the learned Rev D P Leavitt, Missionary of the Methodist Ep Church of New Hampshire, to organize societies among the colored people of Florida. Will you please give him such information as may be useful to him, and also a letter to the officers of your Bureau in that Department, and oblige

yours with much respect

E H Rollins [Edward Henry Rollins, U.S. Representative from New Hampshire, 1861-1866, Senator, 1877-1882.]

[Summary written sideways on the last page, in a different hand.]

House of Reps.

Washington D.C.

Mch. 28 / 66

Rollins, Hon. E.H. M.C.

Introduces Rev. D.P. Leavitt, Missionary of M.E. Church, N.H. & asks a letter to the officers of the Bureau in Fla.

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3456 3/28/1866 *From:* Y. Warner

*To:* Gen O.O. Howard

OOH-3401

Germantown Pa

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[214]

Germantown 3/28 66

To Genl Howard

Dear Sir -

Further information put doubt on the account given by some of the party called "quakers" as given to Dr C Evans & myself. We find Jonathan Cox & family, so far, the only Friends, known to have removed. And even some doubt exists whether he is the identical man who was known among friends of N.C. by that name. We shall sift the matter to the bottom, & write the result to thee.

I am humiliated at writing the word "give" instead of "sell", in my former letter which went to Col Whittlesey & gave him the trouble of answering what I knew before. We only wanted to know whether Col. W. could do at other places, as he could at Greensboro. P.S. This we know.

Respectfully

Y. Warner

Our business is very heavy and a few of us are workers.

[Written on the back page as an address.]

Gen O.O. Howard

P.S. Dispatch from Col E Whittlesey new recd & satisfactory. Y.M.

[Summary written sideways on the last page, in a different hand.]

Germantown Pa

Mar. 28th 1866

Warner, Yardley

Writes concerning the quakers from N.C.

Recd. Mar. 30th 1866

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3457 3/28/1866 *From:* M. L. Stoever

*To:* My dear General [OO  
Howard]

OOH-3402

Penna College  
Gettysburg

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[215, 216]

Penna College  
Gettysburg, Mch. 28th /66

My dear General,

I cherished the hope, that you would have made me that expected visit before this. I know your time is very much occupied, yet I supposed a day or two of rest, in our quiet town would be of service to you. Can you not run away from your office this coming Saturday and spend Sabbath with us? It is our communion season, and I am confident you would enjoy it with us.

I was in Washington last month at the meeting of the Christian Commission, and was sorry that you were absent from the city. My recollections of you are so pleasant, tht I would like to know you more intimately. I met you for the first time on the Sabbath after the great battle, which is now regarded as the turning point in the history of the Rebellion and with which your name will always be so closely identified. You selected the position, and under God we owe every thing to that fact. I regretted that on the 4th of July you could spend so little of your time with me. Do repeat your visit under more favorable circumstances. Would you not like to spend a Sabbath with us and unite with God's people in this place in commemorating the dying love of our risen Saviour? If you find that you can make your arrangements to come, send me a telegram and I will meet you at the Depot.

I occasionally hear from your brother who spent a couple of weeks in Gettysburg after the Battle. We then became very good friends. I wrote to him the other day, and proposed that if you would <communion> us, I would be glad to spend my Spring vacation in visiting some parts of the South and looking after the interests of the Freedmen in whose cause I feel deeply interested. I used to spend my exertions in efforts connected with the Christian Commission.

I am always disposed to make myself useful. Is there any service I could render your Bureau? I would be willing to go to the South-West, or Charleston, Savannah, on some special errand. My object would be to do good, and to gather information. I want to prepare an article on the Freedmen for a Quarterly of which I am Editor and many of the facts I would want to gather from personal observation. Such an article I prepared on the Christian Commission, designed for reference. If your brother could accompany me on such a tour, I would enjoy it very much. I have not yet had a reply from him to my communication. Perhaps he has written to you on the subject.

With my best wishes and deep sympathy in the important work which has been committed to your charge,

I remain with sincere regard  
Your friend & brother  
M. L. Stoever [Martin Luther Stoever]

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3458 3/28/1866 *From:* Mrs. L. H. Kennedy

*To:* Dear General [OO]  
Howard

OOH-3403

New York

*Source:* Bowdoin

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[265]

New York Mar. 28 / 66

Dear General Howard:

I am making a bouquet of flowers from the hair of prominent Generals and Statesmen. Will you please be kind enough to send me a little lock of your and wife's for it?

With much respect -  
Your Humble Friend  
Mrs. L. H. Kennedy