

**February 20, 1865 - Report on Schools for Contraband Children, Middle and East Tennessee**



Office Chief Superintendent Contrabands

Nashville Tenn. Feby. 20th 1865

Brig. Gen. A. Johnson

Military Governor State of Tennessee Nashville Tenn.

General:

I have the honor to submit the following report of Schools for Colored Children in this District:

*Nashville*

There is a number of small pay Schools here sustained Exclusively by the Colored people of which I cannot at present give any full report. In a week I shall have information as to their number, the terms of tuition &c[.] At present I speak of Schools sustained wholly or chiefly by benevolent Societies. Of these there are four (4)

- (1) One in the 1st Baptist church (colored) on Martin St
- (2) One in Capers Chapel.
- (3) One near Fort Houston.
- (4) One at the Contraband Camp

School No. 1 is under the auspices of the "North Western Freedmens Aid Commission" (Head Quarters Chicago Ill.) under the Superintendence of *Mr. Hubbard*. At this school there are One Hundred (100) pupils Enrolled with an average attendance of about Eighty (80). Two (2) Teachers are Employed. The school is partially self-sustaining.

School No. 2 is under the Auspices of the "United Presbyterian Society" of Southern Ohio. This School was begun in October 1863 in two (2) Churches of this city and has been in operation most of the time since. The number of pupils then varied from 200 to 550. There are present Eight Hundred (800) pupils Enrolled. The attendance varies from 350 to 500. Two Hundred (200) pupils are reading. Fifty Seven (57) writing. Twenty five (25) studying Arithmetic and there is some instruction in Geography &c but no classes as such in these branches for want of sufficient accommodations.

At present there are Six (6) Teachers, and two (2) more are expected shortly. At this School since its Establishment over 550 persons beginning with the Alphabet, have learned to read[.]

Schools Nos. 3 and 4 are under the Auspices of the "Pennsylvania Freedmens Relief Association" *Mr. W. F. Mitchell* Superintendent[.] The average attendance in these Schools is Three Hundred (300). Industrial Schools are connected with both and there are One Hundred (100) children who can sew,



and are making garments from raw materials. Four (4) Teachers are engaged and two (2) more are coming.

Edgefield

A School is to be started here today (Monday the 20th inst.) under the auspices of the "American Millennial Freedmens Commission" (Head Quarters in Boston)[.] Four (4) Teachers are on the ground and two (2) more expected. There are in Edgefield from 500 to 600 Colored families who have agreed to fit up the School-House and furnish fuel &c[.]

There are Schools at,

Murfreesborro' Stevenson and Huntsville

Under the Superintendence of Mr. *W. F. Mitchell* above named.

At *Murfreesborro'* there is an average attendance of Two Hundred (200) pupils with three (3) Teachers[.]

At *Stevenson* there are One Hundreds (100) Scholars and Two (2) Teachers. One (1) more is Expected.

At *Gallatin* there is a school under the Auspices of the "Western Association" of Cincinnati Ohio, and as I understand the same association and one or two other are assisting to keep up a School at *Clarksville*[.]

At *Knoxville* there is a school with One (1) Teacher and an average attendance of One Hundred (100) pupils[.] Preparations are making for the Establishment of Two (2) Schools at Chattanooga. An average attendance is expected of Two Hundred (200) pupils. There is also a school at Murfreesboro under the auspices of an Indiana Association, of which I have no knowledge but what is above stated.

Below is a tabular statement of this Educational Work

\_\_\_\_\_ Pupils \_\_\_\_\_ Teachers\_

Place	Enrolled	Attending	Present	Expected	Remarks
Nashville	1	100	80	2	—
do	2	800	400	6	2
do	3 & 4	?	300	4	2
Murfreesborro	?	200	3	—	
Stevenson	?	100	2	1	
Huntsville	?	100	1	1	
Gallatin	?	100(?)	1	—	



Place	Enrolled	Attending	Present	Expected	Remarks
Clarks-ville	?	150(?)			
Edgefield	—	100(?)	4	2	Opens today
Knoxville	100(?)	1	—		
Chatta-nooga	300(?)	2	Preparing to open		
Totals	2600(?)	2000(?)	26	8	



This does not include the pay schools referred to above nor the schools in the Regiments of Colored Troops. Each regiment having some educational arrangements under the charge of the Chaplain.

From full conversation with the Superintendents of these Free schools and from my own investigations these needs of the schools are developed.

Needs

1st More ample accommodations for pupils and Teachers Especially in Nashville. One of the schools here will have to dismiss Two Hundred (200) pupils soon if they cannot find more room.

2nd Books and stationary. McGuffeys 1st and 2nd Readers<sup>Note 1</sup> are Especially needed.

3d Rations for the Teachers. Rations have been issued to some of the Teachers under an Order of Major General Grant Commanding Military Davison of the Mississippi but the order is not general Enough.

All the Teachers attest the universal desire of these people and their aptitude to receive instruction and it is a significant fact that as soon as they are able to pay for their tuition they leave the free schools and go to pay schools.<sup>Note 2</sup>

I have the honor Governor, to be,

Very Respectfully, Your Obt Srvt.

R. D. Mussey Col. 100th USCI, Chief Supt. Contrabands East and Middle Tenn.

*Papers of Andrew Johnson, Vol. 7, pp. 478-480.*

**Note 1:** Standard reading textbooks of the day.

**Note 2:** According to the editors of *Papers of Andrew Johnson*, Vol. 7, p.482, fn 8: "The same day, Mussey wrote to Secretary Stanton urging that 'the Premises and Farm at Gallatin, Tenn., known at the 'Fairvue Estate' belonging to the

late Isaac Franklin, a notorious slave trader, be turned over to him, that he might there establish a 'Freedmen's Colony for the infirm and destitute Freedmen of East & Middle Tennessee with special reference to the necessities of Colored Ophans.'" As cited from Mussey to Stanton, February 20, 1865, *Johnson Papers*, Library of Congress.

