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A union of church and state: The Freedmen's Bureau and the education of African Americans in Virginia from 1865--1871

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A UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE:
THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU AND THE EDUCATION
OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN VIRGINIA FROM 1865-1871

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Aaron Jason Butler
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A UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE:  
THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU AND THE EDUCATION 
OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN VIRGINIA FROM 1865-1871

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Preface

In 2003, the Virginia Department of Education authorized a committee of 11 teachers, from different counties in the commonwealth, to compile a history of public education for the state of Virginia. The committee drafted a historical document that provided a chronological account of the major events and happenings in public education in Virginia from 1607 to 2003. An examination of the committee's document revealed that the committee provided minimal coverage of the history of Virginia’s African American population, specifically during the Antebellum (1830s-1860s) and Reconstruction (1865-1871) eras. The most dynamic and critical era in the history of public education for Virginia’s African American population, 1865-1870, was completely omitted from the document. The post-Civil-War era was a critical time period in both United States and Virginia educational history because it witnessed the development of the first public grammar, secondary, and higher education institutions for southern African Americans through the efforts of the federal government and Northern religious and secular organizations. While there were private efforts to educate Virginia’s African Americans, most notably through the efforts of the Bray Associates in the mid-to late 1700s and Quaker missionaries from Pennsylvania during the 18th and early 19th centuries, the state of Virginia did not furnish a modern concept of public education for any of its citizens, including African Americans, until after the American Civil War. The story of the people and organizations that worked together to establish the first schools for African Americans in Virginia was left untold.

In addition to understanding the rise of public education for Virginia’s African American citizens, the post-Civil War era is critical for understanding the establishment of a primary and secondary public education system for all of Virginia’s children. Prior to the passage of Virginia’s Underwood Constitution of 1869, a comprehensive public education system did not exist in Virginia. The Literary Fund, first established in 1796, through the efforts of Thomas
Jefferson and expanded by Governor John Tyler in 1809, helped to provide funds for higher education institutions and scholarships for indigent Caucasian children to attend private academies. The Literary Fund was an early attempt at providing educational opportunities for students, but it failed to create a state-wide public education system that was open to all citizens.

This dissertation researches the actions of the federal government, specifically the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands, the work of benevolent and freedmen aid societies of the North, the actions of African American freedmen, and the legislative work of the Virginia General Assembly to establish a public education system for African Americans in Virginia following the American Civil War. This manuscript uses the official governmental reports from the commissioners and officials of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands, the minutes and records from various freedmen benevolent aid societies, minutes from the Virginia Constitution Convention of 1867-1868, and a variety of additional primary and secondary sources to provide an account of how Virginia’s African American population gained access to publicly funded education following the American Civil War.

The story of public education for African Americans in Virginia tends to be incomplete without the documents and voices of Virginia’s Caucasian citizens with regards to their attitudes toward the establishment of freedmen schools. Insight into the views of Caucasian citizens from, 1865-1870, have emerged through the accounts and diary entries of northern missionaries, teachers, former slaves, and the monthly teacher reports submitted to the Freedmen’s Bureau. The written records and reports indicate that the majority of Virginia’s Caucasian population was hostile toward the education movement and used violence and force to intimidate and block the efforts of aid societies and former slaves. It is difficult to recreate the full story of African American education in Virginia without the primary and secondary sources from Virginia’s
Caucasian citizens living during the 1860s-1870s. This dissertation uses the different historical documents available to provide a picture into this part of Virginia's history that was omitted from the official report sanctioned by the Virginia Department of Education in 2003.
ABBREVIATIONS

ABHMS       American Baptist Home Mission Society
AMA         American Missionary Association
NEFAS       New England Freedmen’s Aid Relief Society
NFRA        National Freedmen’s Relief Aid Association of New York
FFA         Friends’ Freedmen Association
CAEF        Committee for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen
HBCUs       Historically Black Colleges and Universities
A UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE:  
THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU AND THE EDUCATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN VIRGINIA FROM 1865-1871

ABSTRACT

In 2003, the Virginia Department of Education authorized a committee of 11 teachers to write a report detailing Virginia’s public education history. The committee drafted a document that provided a chronological account of the major developments in public education in Virginia from 1607 to 2003. The document provided minimal coverage of the history of Virginia’s African American population, specifically during the Antebellum (1830s-1860s) and Reconstruction (1865-1871) eras. The history of public education for Virginia’s African American population, 1865-1870, was completely omitted from the document. The post-Civil-War era was a critical time period in both United States and Virginia educational history because it witnessed the development of the first public grammar, secondary, and higher education institutions for southern African Americans through the efforts of the federal government and Northern religious and secular organizations.

This dissertation researches the actions of the federal government, specifically the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands, the work of benevolent and freedmen aid societies of the North, the actions of African Americans, and the legislative work of the Virginia General Assembly to establish a public education system for African Americans in Virginia following the American Civil War. This manuscript uses governmental reports from the commissioners and officials of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands, the minutes and records from benevolent aid societies, minutes from the Virginia Constitution Convention of 1867-1868, and a variety of primary and secondary sources to provide an account of how Virginia’s African American population gained access to publicly funded education.
An often overlooked and forgotten chapter in the history of American public education concerns the work of the United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands following the American Civil War. In one of his last acts as United States President, Abraham Lincoln signed into law House Resolution 51 on March 3, 1865. The legislation authorized the United States military to have jurisdiction in the former Confederate states to address the social, economic, and political concerns of the newly-freed slaves. The measure was controversial, eliciting paramount debate and discussion in both the United States House of Representatives and Senate. One of the primary issues of controversy concerned the use of federal troops and apparatuses to supersede the authority of state and local governments in addressing the needs of southern African Americans. Supporters of the bill viewed the legislation as a logical and necessary step to ensure the protection and safety of the newly-freed slaves. Opponents considered the measure to be an unconstitutional interference of the federal government in local and state affairs, violating the primary premise of federalism. They further feared the measure would lead to a swath of corruption, greed, tyranny, and abuse.

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly referred to as the Freedmen’s Bureau, was a product of House Resolution 51. Placed under the supervision of the United States War Department, the Bureau was a military operation, using military personnel to carry out the different directives and objectives of Congress.

related to the freedmen of the south. The Freedmen’s Bureau’s primary roles included providing assistance in the redistribution and management of abandoned land, providing humanitarian aid where appropriate, ensuring that southern state governments treated the newly-freed slaves fairly, and overseeing the social and political reconstruction of the war-torn South. The issue of public education was a small component of the legislation, but under the guidance of Bureau Commissioner, General Oliver O. Howard, it would prove to be the most substantial and long lasting legacy of the Freedmen’s Bureau.³

H.R. 51 gave limited expressed powers to the Freedmen’s Bureau to address the educational needs of the newly-freed slaves. However, Bureau Commissioner Howard used the legislation and the financial appropriations from Congress to coordinate and support an intricate system of public schools for the former slaves. Howard’s actions through the Freedmen’s Bureau would be innovative and unprecedented, leading United States Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts to describe the Freedmen Bureau as, “traversing ground never before traveled or explored, without map, chart or landmark...”⁴

Historically, the federal government had taken a very limited role in public education. During the US Constitutional Convention that convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787, the delegates discussed the possibility of creating a national university funded and supported by Congress.⁵ Prominent among the proponents for public education was Dr. Benjamin Rush. Rush was a Philadelphia physician and teacher. He had been elected to serve as one of Pennsylvania’s delegates to the Constitutional
Convention and developed a plan to create a national public education program. Rush argued that the independence and freedoms of the United States could only be sustained through a "uniform system of education, [rendering] the mass of the people more homogeneous." Several of the founding fathers of the United States, George Washington, Noah Webster, and Thomas Jefferson, agreed with Rush's proposal for a uniform educational system and his proposal to establish a federally-funded university. Opponents to Rush's education plan thought it would be unwise to specifically outline public education as a federal duty. They believed that if the need arose for the federal government to directly intervene in public education matters, the new constitution had given Congress necessary and proper powers to address the matter.

Historians have generally agreed that the delegates drafted the Tenth Amendment (1791) to the US Constitution to allow for flexibility in addressing future provisions concerning public education or other unforeseen political matters. The amendment states, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." With the Tenth Amendment, political matters involving citizen rights and governmental duties, not covered in the Constitution were relegated to the purview of state and local governments or to individual citizens. The amendment was in keeping with the concept of federalism, which established a governmental system of shared powers between the national and state governments. Congress did not enact legislation concerning a national university nor addressed public education, choosing instead to allow the states to address this matter.

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6 Ibid, 87.
7 Ibid, 87
8 Ibid, 87
since several states had already made provisions for public education in their state constitutions.\textsuperscript{10}

The US Congress, during the late 1700s and early 1800s encouraged, but did not directly fund or govern public education. The first substantial federal legislation concerning public education was passed in 1785 and 1787 through the enactment of the Northwest Ordinance Acts. In the 1785 act, Congress stated, "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."\textsuperscript{11} Congress stipulated that, "the sixteenth section of each township laid out in the new territories to the north and west of the Ohio River should be set aside for the funding of public schools."\textsuperscript{12} In keeping with the provisions of the Northwest Ordinance legislation, several of the new north-western states included public education as a state responsibility in their state constitutions. Congress allowed public education to remain a state and local function as demonstrated through its policy of non-involvement in educational supervision or regulation.\textsuperscript{13}

Using his congressionally granted powers as Bureau Commissioner, General Howard involved the federal government in public education to an extent not previously witnessed. Howard maintained that the federal government had to take a more active and deliberative approach with public education in the southern states to overcome the economic obstacles and social structures erected by slavery. He argued that only through education could the newly-freed slaves acquire the tools and skills needed to successfully

\textsuperscript{10} Urban and Wagoner, \textit{American Education: A History}, 89.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 88.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 89
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 90.
overcome the inequalities and disadvantages resulting from government sanctioned slavery.14

HR 51 authorized the Freedmen’s Bureau Commissioner to design an educational program to assist the former slaves with citizenship skills and extend educational opportunities.15 With Congressional backing, General Howard developed an educational system that was both innovative and collaborative. Howard forged an intricate partnership between the Freedmen’s Bureau, religious and secular freedmen aid benevolence societies based in the northern United States, sympathetic southerners, and the newly-freed African Americans themselves to create the first public education system for African Americans in Virginia as well as the other southern states. The partnership combined the efforts of religious and governmental agencies to align funds, resources, and personnel. The Freedmen’s Bureau and the northern benevolent societies in Virginia had forged a unique relationship, “for in no other instance was power so completely integrated between church and state in a complex, symbiotic pattern of dual first statewide public education system.”16 Employing the partnership, the number of public schools for Virginia’s former slaves to expand from a handful of benevolent aid society funded schools in 1865 to 90 schools, 195 teachers, and 12,898 students by July of 1866. By July 1870, when the Virginia General Assembly ratified the Underwood Constitution,

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the Freedmen’s Bureau along with its collaborating partners had established 215 schools, supported 412 teachers, and maintained an enrollment of over 18,000 pupils in Virginia.\textsuperscript{17}

Several studies and scholarly works about the Freedmen Bureau’s schools in Virginia significantly explore the role of the federal government in the facilitation of public education for African Americans. A concise listing of the northern benevolence aid organizations responsible for the education of African Americans and their specific contributions to public education in Virginia has not been readily available. Records were scattered between the different aid society’s archives, embedded in lengthy reports from the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, and embedded in larger bodies of academic work.\textsuperscript{18} Several questions emerged from the historical documents and records. What was the relationship between the Freedmen’s Bureau and the northern benevolence aid societies with regards to public education in Virginia? Which aid societies contributed to the establishment of schools for Virginia’s former slave population following the American Civil War, and why did they choose to engage in the work of education? What was the educational state of Virginia’s African Americans prior to the 1860s? To address these questions and understand the dynamics and intricacies of the first public schools in Virginia for African Americans, this historical review and analysis of the people and organizations involved in the endeavor captures and recreates this little known chapter in America’s educational history.

\textsuperscript{17} Alrutheus A Taylor, \textit{Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia}, (Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Press Inc., 1926), 142-144.

\textsuperscript{18} In 1872 Assistant Adjutant General Thomas Vincent was tasked with maintaining and compiling the Freedmen’s Bureau records. He wrote to Secretary of War William W. Belknap that the records were incomplete and in great disorder. General Oliver Howard complained that it was General Vincent who corrupted the records when his men transferred them from Howard University to the War Department. Howard alleged that Vincent burned some of the documents in the basement of the War Department and placed other records helter-skelter in wagons without concern for their specific order. It took a year for the documents to be reassembled and properly arranged for storage. Bentley, \textit{History of the Freedmen’s Bureau}, 213-213
Chapter 2

A Historical Examination of Public Education in Virginia: 1607-1861

Educational historians have traditionally focused on the actions of the Massachusetts Bay colony settlers when exploring the roots of American public education. The colonists of Massachusetts receive primary recognition for brokering public education endeavors in English America due to their passage of the first educational laws in the North American British colonies. In 1642, the Massachusetts colonial government passed a law requiring all parents to ensure that their children could read and understand the principles of the Puritan religion and the laws of the Commonwealth. In 1647 the legislature enacted an additional law, commonly referred to as the “Old Deluder Satan Act,” that required every town of 50 or more families to hire a reading and writing teacher. Towns with 100 or more families were required to hire a Latin teacher to prepare the children for entry into Harvard College. Massachusetts settlers, particularly those in the Boston area, were highly educated with one out of every 250 men being a college graduate, mainly from Cambridge College in England. The settlers shared certain characteristics that reflected the values and experiences of life in Eastern England and made them culturally different from the English settlers in Virginia and the middle colonies.20

Eastern England, also referred to as East Anglia, consisted of several regions and cities: eastern Lincolnshire, eastern Cambridge, and the northernmost fringe of Kent. East

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Anglia was a highly urbanized region of England that was densely populated and settled. Many of the residents were highly skilled craftsmen and artisans with a large percentage of the adult population involved in the cloth trade. Educationally, the region was exceptional, with the highest literacy rates in England. East Anglia had a larger percentage of scientists, scholars, and artists than any other part of England.21

A majority of the Massachusetts colonists were from East Anglia and shared a Protestant religious heritage known as Puritanism. Pursuant with their religious beliefs, one of their main reasons for settling the colony was to establish a bible-based commonwealth in the New World free from persecution.22 The puritans had suffered significant persecution during the reign of Queen Mary Tutor. Queen Mary had attempted to purge Great Britain of all Protestant dissension in order to re-establish the supremacy of the Catholic faith in Great Britain. To accomplish this task, she ordered the execution of a large number of East Anglia Protestants during the English Counter-Reformation. Religious persecution subsided during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I who supported religious tolerance. By the late 1500s, Puritanism was flourishing in East Anglia with 75% of all Puritan ministers in Great Britain hailing from the region. During the British colonization of North America, East Anglia settlers transplanted their faith in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.23

The Puritans of Massachusetts believed that the Church of England was corrupt and filled with ceremonies and rituals that had no religious meaning. A primary goal of the Puritans was to establish a fellowship of believers who were honest and engaged in

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21 Ibid, 42-50.
23 Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 46-47.
simple religious practices similar to those in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. The Puritans believed that every congregant should be able to read the Holy Scriptures and through prayer, discover their own individual truth. They believed that they were God’s elect and chosen people and desired to build a covenant-based society in the New World where they could live out their beliefs.²⁴

To ensure that their religious and social beliefs were maintained, the Puritans of Massachusetts thought it was critical that children were taught to read the scriptures, write, and understand civil affairs. The settlers of Massachusetts wanted to prevent the creation of a large underclass and placed great value in literacy and education. Their early colonial schools were supported by tax dollars levied on its citizens. School attendance was not compulsory but access to education was provided and encouraged by the government.²⁵

The educational actions of the colonists of the Massachusetts colony provided a theoretical and philosophical foundation from which modern American concepts of public education are built. The idea that universal education was in the best interest of the state and should be funded by public revenue was a uniquely New England concept in seventeenth century British America. The actions of the Massachusetts settlers were exceptional and did not mirror other prevailing colonial attitudes. The development of public education in colonial Virginia reflected the traditions and customs of British society. Virginia was culturally, religiously, socially, and economically different from Massachusetts, resulting in a different evolution of public education.²⁶

²⁵ Ornstein and Hunkins, Curriculum: Foundation, Principles, and Issues, 64.
²⁶ Ibid, 64.
Surprisingly, although Virginia was the first permanent English colony in America, limited academic scholarship has been conducted detailing its educational actions and developments. Educational researchers Omstein and Hunkins neglected specific discussion of Virginia’s colonial educational history in their comprehensive work, *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles, and Issues*. Omstein and Hunkins consolidated Virginia’s history with all southern colonies and stated, “Until the end of the eighteenth century, educational decisions in the southern colonies were generally left to the family...the plantation system of landholding, slavery, and gentry created great educational in-equity.” While Omstein and Hunkin’s generalization was accurate, they failed to discuss the actions of the Anglican Church and the Virginia General Assembly concerning in the education of Native Americans, African Americans, and Caucasian children. While the colonial Virginia General Assembly did not enact comprehensive public educational legislation a unique educational situation evolved in the colony where private funding, tax revenue, royal grants, and donations from the Church of England created educational opportunities for Virginia settlers in a manner very different than the structure utilized in Massachusetts.

Socially and economically, Virginia was similar to the other southern colonies of North America by maintaining a rigid class-based society that involved slavery, aristocratic land holding, and agriculture. Educationally, significant events and actions distinguished Virginia from her sister southern colonies. The union of governmental, private, and church-based organizations to provide educational opportunities created a historical legacy in Virginia that would be replicated by the Freedmen’s Bureau.

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27 Ibid, 64.
following the Civil War, to provide educational opportunities for former slaves. The
cultural context, social realities, and Virginia's history posed challenges and obstacles for
the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands with regard to public
education for the former slaves.²⁹

Colonial Virginia

The English settlers who arrived in Virginia in the early 1600s reproduced
English culture and society in British North America. In contrast to the majority of
Massachusetts' settlers, the original Virginia settlers were not social or religious
dissenters, but rather were affiliated with the established Church of England. The settler's
goals were economic; their endeavors were aimed at finding gold and other exportable
goods to generate profits for the English monarchy and the Virginia Company.³⁰ As a
result, the settlers who landed at Jamestown in 1607 were all men, composed of common
labors, blacksmiths, carpenters, and several gentlemen of English society with wealth,
titles, and prominence. A few settlers were married, but their families remained in
England. The condition of the settlers and the goals of the venture did not create a need
for educational instruction or schools.³¹

The unsuccessful attempts to find gold in Virginia resulted in the settlers
transitioning their focus from a temporary economic venture to a more permanent
colonization effort. In 1616, King James I of England instructed the Bishop of London to
collect money for the construction of a college in Virginia. The Bishop of London
collected over £2,000 and received a royal grant of 10,000 acres of land for the

²⁹ Ibid, 63-64.
³⁰ Thomas K. Bullock, "Schools and Schooling in Eighteenth Century Virginia" (PhD diss., Duke
University, 1961), 2-4.
establishment of a university in Henrico, Virginia.\textsuperscript{32} The monetary resources were given to Virginia's Royal Governor George Yardly in 1618 with instructions that he begin construction on the University of Henrico for the training of the children of the Native Americans in the true religion, moral virtue, civility, and godliness. Simultaneously, Sir Edwin Sandys of the Virginia Company was ordered to establish a school for Virginia's English children. By 1620, Sandys had created a small educational system for the colonial children and young adults based on traditional English models of apprenticeship and trade schools. In 1622, all efforts to construct the University of Henrico were halted as a result of an uprising by the Powhatan Indians.\textsuperscript{33}

Beginning in 1608, the Powhatan Indians, the dominant Indian tribe in Eastern Virginia, began developing strategies to remove the English settlers from Jamestown and the surrounding areas. Upon the death of Chief Wahunsenacawh in 1618, his brother Opechancanough assumed the chieftainship of the Powhatan nation and developed plans for the total removal of the English from Powhatan lands. Chief Wahunsenacawh had maintained a strained peace with the colonists due to the influence of his daughter Pocahontas and her marriage to Englishman John Rolfe. With the passing of Chief Wahunsenacawh, Opechancanough renewed the earlier efforts to expel the English from the Virginia colony. In March of 1622, the Powhatans launched an uprising, killing between 347 and 400 colonists in the span of a few hours. The colonists' earlier desire to Christianize and train the children of the Indians was replaced with a spirit of revenge and hatred. The attack caused the Virginia Company of London to instruct the colonists to declare war on the Indians and defeat them. The Powhatan Indians severely

\textsuperscript{32} Oscar S. Chaplain, "The Sources and Distributions of the State Literary Fund" (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1936), 2.

\textsuperscript{33} Dexter, A History of Education in the United States, 3-8.
depopulated the colony and all governmental energy was devoted to survival and defense. From 1622 until 1701, the colonists were engaged in sporadic warfare with the Powhatan and other native tribes for control of the colony. Both the English and Powhatans suffered losses in property and life through the sporadic warfare, but European diseases took a greater toll on the Indians. By 1700, the various native nations had been severely weakened, leaving the English settlers as the dominate force in Virginia.34

With the colony at war, the royal governors of Virginia and the members of the Virginia General Assembly did not focus on public education until the 1700s. The instability of the colony’s population also contributed to slow progress concerning educational reforms. Between 1622 and 1670, the colony continued to experience a high mortality rate preventing the population from growing in a consistent manner.35 Although private donors tried to establish free schools in the colony, these efforts were only short lived experiments.

The earliest experiment began with Dr. Patrick Copeland who was affiliated with the British East India Company. Dr. Copeland was an Anglican minister who had been appointed chaplain for the British East India Company in 1613. In 1621, while traveling aboard the British ship, the Royal James Copeland was able to secure £70 from passengers on their voyage to the New World. Copeland promised the donors that the money would be used for the construction of a church or school in Virginia. A committee, appointed by the East India Company, decided that the funds raised by Dr. Copeland would be used for “the erection of a free school which being for the education of children and grounding of them in the principles of religion, civility of life, and

humane learning." The East India Company committed £400 to the project after Dr. Copeland agreed that a school building should be built first, and an Anglican church second. The free school was scheduled to be constructed in Charles City County. Dr. Copeland and the East India Company's Virginia Committee, made provisions to secure carpenters and builders to begin the work once the governmental bodies had approved the proposal. With Dr. Copeland in England, the Virginia Committee cooperated with the quarter court, Virginia's colonial governing body composed of the royal governor and the colonial council, to construct the school and secure a teacher. Historical documents only refer to the school master as an Englishman named Caroloff. When Caroloff arrived in 1622, the Powhatan uprising had so devastated the colony that the atmosphere was not conducive for an educational movement, and the East India School of Virginia closed.

Dr. Benjamin Symms, the first American plantation owning public education philanthropist, left a bequest to establish a school in Elizabeth City County. He bequeathed 200 acres of land on the Poquoson, a small stream that flowed into the Chesapeake Bay near Yorktown, for the creation of a school for the children of the parish. He also stipulated that milk cows be provided to generate additional revenues for maintenance. Through the efforts of the royal governor, the school opened in 1636.

Thomas Eaton, a physician in Elizabeth City County followed Symms' example and gave 500 acres of land, twenty hogs, twelve cows, and two African American slaves for the creation of a free school in Elizabeth City County. When the school was built is unknown, but the school remained viable throughout the colonial period. The Eaton and

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Symms schools were united in 1805 to form Hampton Academy. Several other free schools were established and endowed by private donors, but the General Assembly did not directly fund or build any free schools in the colony.  

Between 1640 and 1675 few to no efforts to establish schools in Virginia were attempted due to the impact of the English Civil War. In 1642, conflict over the absolute power of the British monarch and the constitutional authority of the British Parliament resulted in the English Civil War. In November of 1640, King Charles I summoned Parliament to session to request the financing of a royal army to subdue rebel forces in Scotland. Parliament had not convened since 1629 when Charles I had dissolved the body, in his attempt to rule England unilaterally. The dissension between Parliament and the King over governmental authority culminated in civil war. Between 1642 and 1649 the forces of King Charles I battled with a Parliament sponsored army under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell defeated Charles I and Parliament ordered the King beheaded in 1649. Oliver Cromwell was named Lord Protector and England became a commonwealth republic. Disputes and dissonance between Cromwell and Parliament led to continued conflict and following Cromwell's death in 1658, the monarch was restored placing Charles I's oldest son Charles II on the English throne. During this period of political instability and military conflict, governmental focus on the English colonies was limited and funds for schools were not readily available.  

In 1661, King Charles II re-instated William Berkeley as royal governor of Virginia. During the rule of Oliver Cromwell, Berkeley had been forced to retire due to his ties to King Charles I and his support of the Stuart Monarchy. His conflict with the

Puritan-controlled Parliament left him without his office.\textsuperscript{42} Berkeley was apathetic toward public education and schools for common citizens, believing it should be reserved for the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{43} Traditional British attitudes reserved public education for the sons of the British nobility, since most British public schools had been established through private endowments. The children of middle class citizens typically attended local grammar schools while the vast majority of poor families sent their children to apprenticeships to receive minimal instruction in reading and writing. This system of education maintained social conformity and traditional power structures.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1671, when the Virginia General Assembly inquired on his position concerning the need for free schools in the colony, Berkeley replied, “The same course that is taken in England out of towns; every man according to his ability instructing his children.... But I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy....”\textsuperscript{45} Berkeley and his successor, Royal Governor Thomas Culpeper deliberately promoted an educational philosophy that reserved formal education for Virginia’s elite and wealthy planters and discouraged public education for the general population. They both feared that education for all colonialists would result in social upheaval. In the late 1600s, a visitor to the colony noted that, “ignorance was widespread, and that formal education did not flourish in the Chesapeake.”\textsuperscript{46} After 1680, few of the privately-funded colonial schools in Virginia were still in operation. A significant educational event occurred in the late 1600s

\textsuperscript{43} Neil, \textit{The History of Education in Virginia during the Seventeenth Century}, 26.
\textsuperscript{45} Urban and Wagoner, Jr. \textit{American Education: A History}, 28.
\textsuperscript{46} Fischer, \textit{Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America}, 347.
when a coalition between Virginia's Church of England clergy, the General Assembly, the English Monarch, and private donors resulted in the establishment of the first government-funded public grammar school and college in Virginia.\textsuperscript{47}

In 1690, Rev. James Blair D.D., the Anglican bishop's commissary in Virginia, called a convocation of the Virginia clergy to discuss a plan for the creation of a grammar school, college, and divinity school for the colony. Blair was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and was deeply concerned about the lack of educational opportunities and institutions in the colony.\textsuperscript{48} The Virginia Convocation of Anglican Clergy was held at Jamestown in 1690, and upon review of Blair's plan, approved his educational proposal. It then sent a petition to the Virginia General Assembly requesting support for the educational proposal. In 1691, the Virginia General Assembly convened and approved Blair's educational plan. The General Assembly wrote a petition to King William and Queen Mary of England that outlined a plan to raise money for the school. The General Assembly authorized Rev. Blair to travel to Great Britain to secure a royal charter for the school, a grant of arms, authority to find private funding and gifts, and power to secure a teacher for the grammar school. Blair traveled to England in 1691, and although he initially experienced difficulties obtaining audiences with key governmental and church officials, by 1692 he was able to secure £2,000, two land grants of 10,000 acres each, and a percentage of tax revenue from tobacco exports, including the profits from the surveyor general's office in Virginia. In 1693, King William and Queen Mary issued a royal

\textsuperscript{47} Neill, \textit{The History of Education in Virginia during the Seventeenth Century}, 26.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 27.
charter making the College of William and Mary the only educational institution in colonial North America to be directly charted by the British monarchy.\textsuperscript{49}

The grammar school opened in 1694 and remained in operation until the American Revolution. The grammar school faced several difficulties due to lapses when the school could not secure a grammar teacher and during periods when the royal governors and General Assembly did not provide adequate funding to the college to maintain all of the designated programs.\textsuperscript{50} In addition to its distinction as the first government-funded grammar school in Virginia, the College of William and Mary would serve as the first sustained site for the education of Native Americans.\textsuperscript{51}

In 1692, Robert Boyle, an English scholar of wealth and prominence, left in his will that £5,400 be contributed to, "pious and charitable uses."\textsuperscript{52} Rev. James Blair, during his 1691-1692 trip to Great Britain, asked the Earl of Burlington, Boyle's nephew and estate executor, if some of the bequest could be used to fund the creation of an Indian school at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. The Earl had already received a similar request from Harvard College in New England, and agreed to establish an endowment of £5,400 for land and the payment of yearly rent. The Earl pledged an annual payment of £45 to the College of William and Mary and £48 to Harvard College. The funds would be secured from the sale of Brafferton Manor in England. Due to the nature of British court proceedings and the length of time required to liquidate and sell the Brafferton estate, the disbursement of funds did not occur rapidly. The funds were

\textsuperscript{49}Tate, \textit{The College of William and Mary: A History, Vol. 1}, 9-12
\textsuperscript{50}Ibid 11-12.
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid, 12.
\textsuperscript{52}Bullock, \textit{Schools and Schooling in Eighteenth Century Virginia}, 44.
finally disbursed in 1697 and the college began construction of the Indian school in 1723.53

Named the Brafferton, the Indian school building was a three story brick building located on the college green, across from the president’s house. The school’s attendance was low in the initial years due to mistrust on the part of the local Indian tribes toward the intentions of the English regarding the education of their children. Attendance and acceptance of the school improved during the rule of Royal Governor Alexander Spotswood. Spotswood brokered a treaty with the Saponi, Nottoway, and Tuscarora tribes where in exchange for a cession of hostility, each Indian town could send two sons to the school at William and Mary to be educated. The tribes complied with the plan and began sending children by December of 1711. The number of children submitted for enrollment began to overburden the income provided through the Boyle endowment. Spotswood appealed to the Virginia General Assembly, the Bishop of London, and the Archbishop of Canterbury for additional funds, but none were provided. The school continued for several years, but its effectiveness was reduced and limited by the lack of financial support from the colonial government and the Church of England. Similar to the Virginia Indian tribes, African Americans were provided formal education opportunities in Williamsburg, but the school was funded by a private religious organization. 54

The formal education of Virginia’s African Americans occurred in Williamsburg as a result of the work of the Bray Associates working in concert with the President of William and Mary and other local officials. Rev. Thomas Bray, an Anglican minister and English philanthropist, was concerned about the religious and educational instruction of

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53 Ibid-45-46
54 Ibid, 46-49.
both Indians and African Americans in the New World. In 1723, Bray formed a group with several associates to design a program for the religious instruction for these two groups. When Bray died in 1730, his will provided funds to establish libraries and schools for the African Americans in Anglican parishes in America. In 1760, the Bray Associates agreed to form a school in Williamsburg, Virginia for African Americans. Benjamin Franklin, a board member for the Bray Association, suggested that Thomas Dawson, the President of the College of William and Mary and rector of Bruton Parish Church, and William Hunter, the printer of the Virginia Gazette and postmaster of Williamsburg, be asked to serve as trustees for the school. On September 29, 1760, the Bray School at Williamsburg, also referred to as the Williamsburg School for Negro Children, opened with an enrollment of 24 students.55

The original target population for the Williamsburg School for Negro Children was African Americans, but half of the initial enrollment consisted of Caucasian children. William Hunter reported to the Bray Associates in 1760 that “Obliged the Mistress that there might be no partiality shewn to white scholars, of which she then had about a dozen, to discharge them all & this at the Risque of the displeasure of their parents.”56 It is unclear if the Caucasian students continued to attend or were withdrawn from the school, for Hunter failed to mention the issue in any other correspondence with the Bray Associates.57

Ann Wager was hired as the school’s first and only teacher at a yearly salary of £30. Wager was a widow who had served as a family tutor to Carter Burwell at Carter’s Grove plantation from 1748-1754. In the early 1760s she was held in high regard in

55 Ibid, 54.
56 Ibid, 55.
57 Ibid, 55.
Williamsburg for her teaching methodology and care of several white pupils in the town. The Treasurer for the Colony of Virginia, Robert Carter Nicholas, asked Wager to serve as the school mistress in September of 1760. She served as school mistress for fourteen years, from 1760, until her death in 1774. Attendance fluctuated depending on the movements of slave holders and free African Americans, but the school remained open until 1774 when Mrs. Wager died. Prior to Wager’s death, Nicholas was concerned about her health and wrote the Bray Associates in September of 1765, “the mistress is pretty much advanced in Years & I fear Labours of the School will shortly be too much for her.” In November of 1774, Nicholas informed the Bray Associates in a letter to Rev. John Waring of the death of Mrs. Wager. He discontinued the school and asked the associates for further instruction. The Bray Associates did not reply in written form to the letter from Nicholas, resulting in the school remaining closed.

The Bray Associates School of Williamsburg was the first documented formal school created for African Americans in Virginia. Similar to the free and private schools established in the 1600s, it was a private venture and ended after conditions in administration changed. Virginia’s laws would remain vague concerning the education of African Americans leaving it a matter for local officials and families until 1831 when the Nat Turner Rebellion resulted in the Virginia General Assembly implementing legislative restrictions on African Americans both slave and free. The education of Virginia’s Caucasian students was also an exhibition of inequality and limited opportunities.

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59 Ibid, 2.
60 Ibid, 2.
61 Bullock, Schools and Schooling, 61.
Virginia after the American Revolution

In 1779, state legislator Thomas Jefferson proposed a public education bill referred to as “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge”, to establish a state system of elementary, secondary, and higher education schools in Virginia.  The bill excluded slaves, but proposed that each county establish, at its own expense, an elementary school where citizens could send their children for free for the first three years. Students who wished to continue their schooling would have to pay for any remaining years of instruction. The leading indigent student at each elementary school would be selected and sent to one of twenty state-supported grammar schools, to receive two more years of grammar-level instruction. The lead students could then continue on to receive secondary instruction. The final component of the bill allowed for three years of higher education support for students who completed grammar school to attend the College of William and Mary at expense to the public treasury. When the Virginia General Assembly passed the bill in 1796, the legislation gave the county judges the authority to initiate a school system tax to support the grammar schools. The county judges, many of whom belonged to local wealthy families, declined to set up the procedures necessary to establish a system for free schools believing that the tax would unfairly require the wealthy to finance the public school system.

In 1809, Virginia Governor John Tyler asked the General Assembly to establish the Literary Fund to address the limitation of the 1796 legislation. In his message to the General Assembly, Tyler stated, “A faint effort was made some years past to establish

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63 Chaplain, “*The Sources and Distributions of the State Literary Fund*” 4-5.
schools in the respective counties throughout the Commonwealth, but even in that solitary instance the courts had a discretionary power to execute the law or not, which completely defeated the object intended; for in no instance had the law been complied with, to the disgrace of the County Court, and to the great disadvantage of the people."

Tyler was concerned that although the General Assembly had voted to provide funding for public education, it had not provided sufficient authority or allocated funds to support and build schools. In response to Governor Tyler's admonishment, the General Assembly created the Literary Fund in January of 1810. The fund was not intended to assist in the construction of schools. It was only established to assist local counties and cities with supplementing existing schools, specifically private, and in providing a grammar level education. In 1811, the General Assembly expanded the purpose of the fund to ensure education across economic class boundaries by stating, "Any future legislation misapplying the Literary Fund to any other purpose than that of "Education of the Poor"...an object equally humane, just and necessary, involving alike the interest of humanity and the preservation of the constitution, laws, and liberty of this commonwealth."

Beginning in 1818, the General Assembly dispersed $45,000 from the Literary Fund for scholarships for indigent children to attend private grammar schools and academies. However, the General Assembly also specified that the money could only be used to educate, "the free white population."

Thus, free blacks and slaves were

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64 Ibid, 1.
65 Ibid, 3.
66 Ibid 12.
excluded from access to the fund. The General Assembly also set aside revenue for the establishment of the University of Virginia. 67

By 1840, 47,320 disadvantaged Caucasian students were attending private primary schools at a state cost of $1.51 per child. 68 The efforts of the General Assembly did not establish a public education system, but it did allow a limited percentage of poor Caucasian students’ access to scholarship money to attend private academies and grammar schools. Virginia would not develop a state-wide public education system until after the American Civil War. 69

African Americans both slave and free were not allowed to receive or benefit from the Literary Fund. Prior to 1831, Virginia laws were vague and did not support or prohibit the education of African Americans. Similar to conditions during the colonial period, private donors and religious organizations intervened to provide educational opportunities for Virginia’s African American population. 70 Anti-slavery groups, in particular the Quakers, had established schools for African Americans in the cities of Alexandria, Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk between 1764 and 1801. The purpose of these schools was to teach African Americans to read the scriptures and to write, as well as to provide instruction in arithmetic. 71 From the American Revolution to the Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831, the Quakers had been the primary religious organization that provided structured school opportunities for African Americans. 72

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67 Ibid, 11.
69 Chaplain, The Sources and Distributions of the State Literary Fund, 11-12.
72 Ibid, 59.
The Society of Friends, more informally referred to as the Quakers, was a Protestant religious group founded in Great Britain during the 1600s. Though Quaker settlers came to colonial America from many different regions of Great Britain, a large segment came from the North Midlands of Britain. The North Midlands had a specific cultural characteristic that was uniquely different from East Anglia and Southern England. The North Midlands had been colonized by Viking Invaders and the Norse language had been spoken in the region throughout the European Middle Ages. Isolation from the core of Great Britain's social and political regions resulted in a rift between the governing families of the region who maintained their Norman-French Catholic origins and the average citizens made up of shepherds and farmers who adhered to a more evangelical Protestant based faith. A large proportion of the average citizens felt isolated from the governmental courts, schools, churches, and political institutions which were dominated by aristocratic families. In this geographic and social context the Quaker faith evolved. Believing in the idea that there was an inner light in all people, the Quakers supported the harmony and fellowship of humanity. A core belief of the Quakers was the concept that God was a Lord of light and love who endeavored to bring harmony throughout all of society. They were hostile to formal religion, rejecting strict religious doctrine and focused more on God’s goodness and the belief that people needed to connect with their inner soul to find salvation. Their beliefs put them at odds with the Church of England and other protestant reformers in England.73

The founder of the Society of Friends was George Fox. Born in 1624, Fox was raised in Fenny Drayton, a village located in Midland England. Fox was raised in a Puritan home, and received religious instruction during his teenage years through the

73 Fischer, Albion's Seed, 426-442.
parish priest, Nathaniel Stephens. At the age of 19, Fox entered into a spiritual wandering period. Caught in a spiritual malaise and depression, he was unsure of his earthly purpose and religious beliefs. Fox believed in the power and presence of God, but wrestled with the Puritan focus on hell, the evils of the devil, and mankind’s sinful nature. Fox studied different Protestant teachings from the English Baptist, religious dissenters in the Church of England, Calvinists Protestant reformers, and Puritan reformers. Through his studies and reflections, Fox experienced a spiritual revelation. In 1647, Fox announced that God had enlightened his spirit and replaced the depressive doctrine of his youth with a, “positive, optimistic, overcoming faith.”74 Fox began declaring his new religious beliefs in the Midland districts of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Mansfield. He found receptive listeners among the different segments of the region who shared his disillusion with both the Church of England and strict Puritanism.

Fox’s religious teachings were based on several core beliefs. Fox maintained that God’s redeeming love could overcome any evil. He stressed that sin and evil existed in the world, but argued that mankind could gain salvation through the divine love of God.75 Fox taught that Christians should live simple and humble lives focusing on pursuits of moral and intellectual welfare of mankind to maintain a society of liberty, order, peace, and temperance. One of his core religious beliefs was that all people should be treated as equals, not only in the church, but also in society and under governmental law.76

With their focus on universal brotherhood, the issue of slavery was a major concern to Fox and the early Quaker leaders. During a tour of the American colonies, in

75 Ibid, 48-50.
the 1670s, Fox was appalled by the brutality of slavery and advocated not only for the abolition of slavery but for the education of African Americans and Indians. Fox believed that education would help enlighten both groups of the Christian gospel and enable their religious salvation. Fox argued that Christ commanded all Christians to care for the conditions of their fellow man and slavery served as an unjust immoral action.\textsuperscript{77}

In the 1600s and 1700s, many British Quakers settled in the colonies of New Jersey and Pennsylvania to escape religious persecution in England. The colony of Pennsylvania had been granted to Quaker nobleman William Penn, who established it as a safe haven for the Society of Friends. Some Quakers also settled in the southern and northern colonies. Quakers, living in the southern colonies, began forming missionary societies in the late 1700s to improve the conditions of slaves. In keeping with Fox’s teachings, the American Quakers thought that slaves could not advance themselves and understand the light and truth of Christ if they could not read the scriptures and study the ways of God. By the early 1800s, the Quakers had established schools in Petersburg, Alexandria, Richmond, and Norfolk for African Americans as well as schools in the District of Columbia and in Maryland.\textsuperscript{78} Little is known about the schools’ enrollments and effectiveness. They provided educational opportunities for African Americans in Virginia in the absence of public funding. However, all private educational efforts were halted and strictly regulated by the state government following the Nat Turner Slave Rebellion of 1831.\textsuperscript{79}

\textit{Nat Turner Rebellion and Public Education}

\textsuperscript{77} Dunlap, \textit{Quaker Education}, 433-438.
\textsuperscript{78} Woodson, \textit{The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861}, 58.
\textsuperscript{79} Cayton, Perry, Reed, and Winkler, \textit{America: Pathways to the Present}, 289.
In 1831, a 31-year old African American slave named Nat Turner, of Southampton, Virginia, led an organized slave rebellion against several plantation owners. During the rebellion more than 50 Caucasian citizens were killed by slave rebels. During his trial, evidence indicated that Turner could read and write and that his religious training and interpretation of the Bible had inspired him to lead the uprising against local plantation owners.\textsuperscript{80} Southerners feared that if other slaves, similar to Turner, learned to read and write they might begin to study abolitionist literature and spread this teaching among other slaves. Southern planters feared that additional slave revolts could lead to mass murder and general insurrection.\textsuperscript{81} The \textit{Richmond Enquirer} published letters from local citizens expressing concern over the large African American population in Virginia and the dangers they represented if not properly regulated. An editorial written on November 25, 1831 by a writer referenced only as “Old Virginia” stated,

Another subject which I presume, will engage the attention of our next Legislature, will be the better assuring the future government and good conduct of our slaves. It is important that they should be kept at home, upon their respective plantations, that they should be prohibited from going to other plantations, without a pass from their master or mistress! That they should be prevented from assembling on Sundays... And some other regulations may be made, which the wisdom of the Legislature acting upon past experience.\textsuperscript{82}

In reaction to the rebellion, the Virginia General Assembly passed Chapter 39, which banned all meetings of free Negroes or mulattoes at any school house, church, meeting house, or other location for the purpose of reading or writing. The act levied a punishment of no more than 20 lashes on any Negro in violation of this law. Any white person who assembled to instruct free Negroes to read or write was to be fined no more

\textsuperscript{80} Henry Tragle, \textit{The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831}. (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1971) 138-145.
\textsuperscript{81} Gillespie, \textit{Church, State, and School}, 3.
\textsuperscript{82} Tragle, \textit{The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831}, 150.
than $50 and be imprisoned for no more than two months. Finally, any white person who
was caught teaching slaves to read or write would be fined, at the discretion of the justice,
between $10 and $100.83 The effect of the law was the termination of structured public
and private education efforts for African Americans in Virginia. Similar restrictive
legislation was passed by the General Assemblies in the states of Georgia, Mississippi,
South Carolina, North Carolina, and Alabama. The general fear among southern planters
and governments was that other African American slaves and freedmen would engage in
insurrection and take bold actions like those used by Toussaint L’Ouverture in Haiti or
Denmark Vesey in South Carolina to overthrow the slavery system and disrupt the social
order.84

In secret, several educated African Americans continued to learn and teach others
to read and write. Examples of this clandestine activity can be found in the personal
diaries of Henry Banks, a slave in Stafford County and John H. Smythe of Richmond.
Both Banks and Smythe wrote that they were taught to read and write by other African
American slaves who were literate. James Sumler, a former slave in Norfolk was
educated as a child by Caucasian children who helped him hide books in a hayloft and
taught him to read and write in secret. Daniel Lockhart, another Virginian slave,
mentioned that he was taught to read and write over several years by his owner’s sons.
Private and individual educational actions continued in secret, but all formal and
structured educational endowments were ceased by law. Violators of the law were
punished by the civil authorities. In Richmond, “a respectable white man and wife, who
kept school for coloured children, were…taken by warrant from school and carried to the

83 June Guild, Black Laws of Virginia. (Lovettsville, VA: Afro-American Historical Association of
84 Woodson, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, 107-108.
The children, being found guilty of learning to spell and read, they were sentenced to twenty lashes each on their bare backs. The sentence was set aside due to the age of the children but the husband and wife were ordered to stop all educational activities among African Americans or face stringent punishment. Virginia’s laws prevented private organizations from providing structured educational opportunities for African Americans until after the American Civil War.

The American Civil War

The American Civil War, lasting from 1861 to 1865, was one of the most traumatic eras in United States History. Over the course of the conflict, 600,000 individuals both Union and Confederate, died as a result of the war. In the southern states (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas), the war destroyed two-thirds of the shipping industry and 9,000 miles of railroads. The value of southern property plunged by 70%. In particular, the state of Virginia was affected very severely by the war.

Due to Virginia’s proximity to Washington DC, the Commonwealth became the major battleground of the war. Between 1861 and 1865 over 200 military engagements occurred on Virginian soil, with approximately 500,000 men wounded, killed, or captured in combat situations. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Virginian soldiers died during the war. In the aftermath, hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed, crops and fields were severely damaged, bridges and waterway crossings were burned or dismantled, and livestock was killed or confiscated by Union forces. Many of the grand

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85 Dunlap, *Quaker Education*, 497.
86 Ibid, 498.
87 Ibid, 107-110.
antebellum plantation homes were destroyed or confiscated, including the home of
Confederate army General Robert E. Lee, which was captured by the federal government
and converted into a national cemetery. ⁸⁹

Virginia’s urban areas were greatly damaged by the war. The state capital of
Richmond and the city of Fredericksburg were reduced to ashes by military bombardment
and fires. Norfolk was described as a, “wasteland whose streets resembled avenues of
potholes.” ⁹⁰ The devastation in Warrenton, Culpepper, Lynchburg, and Danville was of
such magnitude that they were characterized as cities of neglect and filth. A visitor to
Virginia in 1865 lamented the lack of human activity or industry. Land prices plummeted
from $50 an acre in 1860 to two dollars an acre in 1865. ⁹¹

Following the Civil War, poverty was widespread in Virginia. ⁹² The Virginian
economic system and infrastructure was in great distress. Confederate and state issued
bonds and currency were valueless and unredeemable. The federal government estimated
that an average of 25,000 Virginia residents relied on army rations and supplies daily. ⁹³

Prior to the war, Virginia had supported the largest slave population in the United
States. The tumult of the war resulted in thousands of people, in particular former slaves,
becoming homeless refugees, wandering the state looking for work, food, and shelter. To
many former slaves, the Union army was viewed as the only organized and functioning
entity in the war-torn south. Thus former slaves flocked to the coastal cities along the
Hampton Roads peninsula looking for basic humanitarian aid, food, shelter, and

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⁸⁹ James Robertson, Civil War Virginia: Battleground for a Nation, (Charlottesville: University
⁹⁰ Ibid, 174-175.
⁹¹ Ibid, 174-175.
⁹² Mary J Farmer, Because They Are Women: Gender and the Virginia Freedmen’s Bureau’s War
on Dependency, The Freedmen’s Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations, by Paul Cimbala and
⁹³ James Robertson, Civil War Virginia, 175.
protection at the various military bases and camps controlled by the Union. The Union army's presence at Fortress Monroe, located in Hampton, resulted in a doubling of the African American population in the region between 1861 and 1865. African American slaves had started seeking refuge at Fortress Monroe during the war when General Benjamin Butler granted runaway slaves sanctuary at Fortress Monroe.94

On May 23, 1861, three African American slaves appeared at Fortress Monroe informing General Butler that they had been forced to serve the Confederacy as laborers and wished instead to assist the Union Army Butler allowed the slaves to enter the fortress. When Confederate Officers appeared a few days later demanding the return of the slaves under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, Butler declined the request. He informed the officers that Virginia had declared itself a foreign country, along with the other southern states, making the three slaves contrabands of war. Following Butler's action, news of his decision began to spread across the area and by June of 1861 over 500 slaves had escaped to Fortress Monroe to seek sanctuary. At the end of the war, in 1865, hundreds of former slaves were still flocking to "Freedom Fort" and the city of Hampton for assistance from the Union army.95 General Orlando Brown described the situation as, "an ‘unending stream’ of freed people without any visible means of support."96 The freedmen's condition in Virginia was critical and demanded immediate attention.97

In 1861, in response to the flood of refugees at Union military installations, General William Tecumseh Sherman issued a declaration requesting immediate aid from

95 Ibid, 2.
96 Farmer, Because They Are Women, 162.
97 Ibid, 164.
northern philanthropic organizations to provide aid to the freedmen. He wrote, “To relieve the government of a burden that may hereafter become unsupportable and to enable the blacks to support and govern themselves in the absence of their disloyal guardians, a suitable system of cultivation and instruction must be combined with one providing for physical wants.” The result of this declaration would be the proliferation of northern aid societies moving to southern regions to establish schools, hospitals, and humanitarian aid stations for former slaves.

Beginning in 1861, religious and civic organizations in the northern and western United States organized relief aid associations to assist the Union army with humanitarian aid for the former slaves. Many were ad hoc committees that were formed to provide immediate aid and assistance to war victims. Between 1861 and 1875 over 55 freedmen relief societies, both secular and ecclesiastical, were formed. They immediately began working in the southern United States. The original mission of these organizations was to provide clothing, food, money, religious leaders, and teachers for the freedmen. In Virginia, the most significant aid societies consisted of the American Missionary Association (AMA), the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS), the New England Freedmen’s Aid Relief Society (NEFAS), the National Freedmen’s Relief Aid Association (NFRA), the Friends’ Freedmen Association (FFA), the Committee for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen (CAEF), and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As the relief aid societies began working in Union-controlled areas, they soon discovered that their emergency aid was not a solution to the

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social and economic problems facing the refugees. They came to the realization that a more permanent plan was needed to help the former slaves develop self-sufficiency skills and economic independence from the plantation system. Collectively, they believed that education and specific skill training was needed to help the former slaves’ transition from slavery to independence and self-dependency. Using funds from their organizations, field missionaries began establishing schools for the newly-freed slaves.\textsuperscript{101}

The first Civil War era freedmen’s school was established at Fortress Monroe. Located in Hampton, Virginia, the school was opened and operated by the American Missionary Association. In September of 1861, the AMA sent Rev. Lewis C. Lockwood, a Congregationalist minister and abolitionist from New England, to investigate the conditions of the former slaves being sheltered at Fortress Monroe. He was authorized to disperse humanitarian aid where appropriate, construct a church, and establish a school for the former slaves. Rev. Lockwood worked with General Benjamin Butler to secure an appropriate location for instruction and hired Mary Smith Kelsey Peake as the first teacher for the school. Mary Peake was born in Norfolk in 1823 to a free African American mother and a European-born father. At the age of six, she had been sent to a select school for colored children in Alexandria and remained in school for ten years. Following her formal education, she returned to Norfolk, where she founded an organization called, the Daughters of Zion, a society concerned with providing assistance to the poor and ill. In 1851, she married a former slave by the name of Thomas Peake and they moved to Hampton. Prior to the Civil War, Peake had secretly been teaching slaves

\textsuperscript{101}Bullock, \textit{A History of Negro Education}, 21-25.
to read and write. She continued her clandestine work, until the confederate army burned the city of Hampton on August 7, 1861.  

Peake ran the AMA school at Fortress Monroe with a clear emphasis on religious instruction, opening each day with prayer, scriptures, and Bible reading. She also taught her students the ABCs and arithmetic. Originally, the school was operated as a day school for children, but she began offering night classes for adults in 1862. Peake’s work load began to affect her health and by January of 1862 she was strongly urged to reduce her hours of instruction. Peake refused to modify her work schedule and died suddenly in February of 1862 from complications of tuberculosis. Following the death of Peake, Rev. Lockwood secured the services of Mary Bailey, a freed African American woman, to continue operating the school at Fortress Monroe. Rev. Lockwood also opened additional schools in Hampton, one at the house of former United States President John Tyler, one at Hygeria Hospital, and several small schools around Hampton and in the immediate vicinity.  

Between 1861 and 1865, the AMA and the NFRA raised and contributed $440,000 toward the education of freemen in the south. Despite the considerable sums of money raised by freedmen’s aid organizations for schools, Northern benevolence groups faced opposition from southern Caucasian residents who were hostile to the notion of African American education. Segments of the Caucasian population viewed the education of the former slaves as a threat to their supremacy and a scheme to undermine the traditional social and economic system in Virginia. Many of Virginia’s Caucasian citizens were embittered toward the former slaves as they represented significant property

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103 Ibid, 5.
loss. Southerners believed the northern missionaries and teachers were attempting to create a massive social upheaval by granting the former slaves political rights. This fear and hatred manifested in violence against the freedmen during and immediately following the war.\textsuperscript{104}

In response to the creation of black schools by northern missionaries, several southern Caucasian organizations engaged in open terrorism aimed at northern Caucasian teachers and their schools. Reports of teachers being lynched, beaten, and attacked, as well as schools being burned, students threatened, and acts of intimidation were documented between 1862 and 1866.\textsuperscript{105} In his 1866 report to Congress, the Freedmen’s Bureau Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia reported that he had received 72 reports of violence inflicted on freedmen in Virginia from the burning of churches and schools by former confederates to actual harassment, shootings, lynching, and killing of freedmen and northern missionary teachers. Schools and churches for African Americans had been targeted and burned in Nansemond County, Dinwiddie County, Matthews County, and York County. In Rockbridge County a group of Caucasian citizens threw a large stone through the window of a freedmen’s school resulting in property damage and injury to a child who was hit by the stone.\textsuperscript{106} Pat Nichols, an AMA missionary teacher working at the Armstrong School in Onancock, wrote in his 1868 teacher’s report that the local Caucasian population, “was not favorable toward the school and many are bitter toward white teachers.”\textsuperscript{107}

\begin{thebibliography}{100}
\bibitem{Butchart} Butchart, \textit{Northern Schools}, 22.
\bibitem{Records} Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Virginia, 1865-1870, Roll 15.
\end{thebibliography}
Reports from northern missionaries cited incidents in which several planters threatened to put former slaves out of their homes and terminate their employment if they sent their children to “Yankee”-run schools. Lucy Chase, a missionary and teacher for the American Missionary Association, submitted a narrative to the Commonwealth and the Tribune newspaper in 1865 detailing acts of violence levied against the newly-freed men of Norfolk. She cited that returning rebel soldiers roamed the streets and marketplaces saying, “We’ll kill every nigger, or drive ‘em out of town.” Chase recounted incidents in which two freedmen were found hung in Suffolk, another man was shot while leaving church, and numerous attacks were levied against the freedmen by former confederates. She concluded her narrative by stating that the soldiers of the New York 13th Artillery were stationed in Norfolk to maintain peace but they were also attacked by hostile southern whites.

In an 1865 article in The Worcester Daily Spy, Lucy Chase reported that the African American population in Richmond was facing great difficulties at the hand of former confederates. “The case of the colored people in Richmond is a very hard one now. The white people insult and rob and beat them often, and there is small inference on the part of the military there. Indeed our own soldiers too often join in these outrages, and have themselves been shot at by white ruffians in instances where they did protect the colored people from violence.”

African American and Caucasian teachers, both southern and northern, faced ridicule and abuses from local Caucasian citizens who were hostile to the education of blacks. 

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110 Ibid, 1.
movement. The prevailing view held by many Caucasian southerners was that, "learning will spoil the nigger for work...negro education will be the ruin of the south,"\textsuperscript{112} This belief manifested itself in verbal and physical assaults upon teachers. A northern missionary teacher working in Virginia was told by locals, "If you teach niggers, you are no better than a nigger yourself."\textsuperscript{113} In 1865, Margaret E Rhoads, a Southern Baptist of Caucasian descent, agreed to work at a Freedmen's Bureau school in her home town of Richmond. She was called a "Nigger teacher" and socially ostracized by many Caucasian residents. Freedmen's Bureau records indicated that in 1865, 18 teachers were murdered by hostile southerners, four school houses were burned in the state of Maryland, and several teachers and students in Virginia were attacked by angry mobs. It was not until 1866, when the Freedmen's Bureau officials began using military force to quell the violence, that outward aggression and tension toward teachers began to subside, but sporadic incidents of violence continued.\textsuperscript{114}

The 1860 US Census Bureau reported that of Virginia's total 1,596,318 residents, 86,452 white and free colored citizens over 20 years of age could not read or write, not including the 490,865 African American slaves who were banned from learning to read and write by state law.\textsuperscript{115} The census reported that 95% of Virginia's African American population was illiterate and only 2% of the population had ever been enrolled in school.\textsuperscript{116} It was into this political, social, and economic context that the Freedmen's

\textsuperscript{112} Butchart, \textit{Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction}, 185.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, 186.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, 189-190.
Bureau and Northern Freedmen’s relief aid societies were tasked to provide support and assistance to the newly freed slaves, specifically in the area of education.
Chapter 3

The Organization of the Freedmen Bureau's Educational Division in Virginia

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Union Army General Oliver O. Howard as commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau. President Lincoln was assassinated before General Howard could be confirmed into the position. Vice-President Andrew Johnson, who did not fully support the Freedmen's Bureau or General Howard, had argued that both the Bureau and General Howard's position as Bureau Commissioner were unnecessary and unconstitutional. Johnson reluctantly forwarded the appointment to the US Senate, feeling compelled to carry out Lincoln's last wishes and not to anger and upset Republican leaders who were mourning the death of Lincoln. Lincoln and Republican leaders in Congress considered Howard the logical choice for the position due to his unique background in both the military and religious community.\footnote{Hans Trefousse, \textit{Andrew Johnson and the Freedmen's Bureau, The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations}, by Paul Cimbala and Randall Miller (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), 29-31.}

Howard had been raised in the state of Maine. Devout Protestants, Howard's parents embraced the social justice message articulated by the anti-slavery and temperance societies active in New England. Howard's step-father was an abolitionist and was actively involved in organizing protests over the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required northern citizens to assist authorities in the re-capture and return of runaway slaves to their southern masters. Howard attended Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Maine, and was graduated in 1850. Bowdoin offered a classical curriculum with a strong emphasis on Christian piety and morality. The concept of moral
responsibility and the importance of social activism permeated Bowdoin’s curriculum and thus, Howard’s education strongly influenced his political and social views related to national service and his attitudes toward slavery and social justice.  

Howard continued his education at West Point Military Academy and upon graduation began a career in the United States army. Prior to the American Civil War, Howard was stationed in Florida, where he served during the Seminole War. During his military service in Florida, Howard experienced a revelation of faith and became a licensed exhorter. In the Methodist Episcopal Church an exhorter was an entry level preacher who was not ordained but was authorized by the local minister or elder to hold prayer meetings or engage in lay preaching, serving in the role of an evangelist. Howard received his call to the ministry while attending a Methodist camp meeting. He was so moved by the faith testimony of an older disabled woman, that he wrote, “I trembled like a leaf, but my head was clear…. The tugging and burning left me, the choking sensation was gone & for once I enjoyed happiness.”

In September of 1857, following his tour of duty in Florida, Howard began teaching mathematics at West Point Academy. His religious conversion and Methodist teachings led him to conduct Sunday school and prayer meeting sessions for cadets and to serve as an unofficial chaplain at West Point, providing advice and guidance to young Christians. In 1858, while attending commencement exercises at Bowdoin College, Howard was so moved by Rev. Theodore Parker’s address that he decided to be a proponent for slave abolition and contemplated leaving the army to become a full time

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119 Bishop Harris, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Walden and Stowe, 1880), 130.
120 McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather*, 38.
minister of the gospel. However, the Civil War would change Howard’s plans and his place in educational history. 121

During the Civil War, Howard gained a generalship through his leadership and service at the Battle of Gettysburg. He also gained recognition through his involvement with General William T. Sherman’s “March to the Sea” military campaign in Georgia and the Carolinas. During the war, Howard held command in nearly all of the southern states enabling him to develop a keen understanding of Southern race relationships and the conditions of the slaves. His personal views on the abolition of slavery were well known within the Union army ranks and he had earned the respect of several northern philanthropists and religious organizations. He was regarded as religious, upright, gentlemanly, and benevolent, making him a trusted figure in the eyes of army officials, politicians, and northern anti-slavery groups. These characteristics and traits influenced President Lincoln to appoint him to head the Bureau.122

Howard assumed command of the Bureau in 1865 and from the onset walked into a jumbled aggregation of issues “from despotisms, slavery, peonage, organized charity, unorganized alms-giving, business opportunists, and communistic experimenters.”123 Sanctioned by Congress, the Bureau was responsible for a wide array of tasks from distributing abandoned lands, handling disagreements between former slaves and owners, coordinating humanitarian aid, providing educational services, and managing the various northern aid and benevolent societies that were scattered through-out the war torn south. To bring order and structure to the organization, he divided the southern states into 11 districts to be administered by assistant commissioners who were appointed by Howard.

121 Ibid, 37-38.
To conduct the educational work of the Bureau, Howard appointed John W. Alvord Inspector for Schools and Finances, a position that was later changed to General Superintendent of Education.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{124} Peirce, The Freedmen's Bureau: A Chapter in the History of Reconstruction, 48-49.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Assistant Commissioner</th>
<th>Headquarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia (including Maryland, Alexandria, Fairfax, and Loudon County, VA)</td>
<td>Colonel John Eaton, Jr.</td>
<td>Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Colonel Orlando Brown</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
</tr>
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<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Colonel E. Whittleacy</td>
<td>Raleigh</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Carolina and Georgia</td>
<td>General Rufus Saxton</td>
<td>Beaufort, SC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Colonel T.W. Osborne</td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
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<td>Alabama</td>
<td>General Wager Swayne</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Chaplain T. W. Conway</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
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<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Colonel Samuel Thomas</td>
<td>Vicksburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky and Tennessee</td>
<td>General C. B. Flake</td>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
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<td>Missouri and Arkansas</td>
<td>General J. W.Sprague</td>
<td>St. Louis, MI</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>General E. M. Gregory</td>
<td>Galveston</td>
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John Alvord would serve as the first and only General Superintendent of Education and Finances during the duration of the Freedmen's Bureau existence. Alvord was a seasoned abolitionist, Congregationalist minister, and missionary. A graduate of Lane Theological Seminary and Oberlin College, Alvord had been the primary teacher at an African American school in Cincinnati, Ohio during the early 1830s and later served as an agent for the American Anti-slavery Society in Ohio. In the 1840s, he pastored two Congregationalist churches in New England, one in Winsted, Connecticut and the other in South Boston, Massachusetts. When the American Civil War erupted, Alvord served as a missionary among the Union troops in the southern states. During General Sherman's "March to the Sea" campaign, Alvord established a school system for African Americans in Savannah, Georgia, developing a board of trustees to oversee the system and appointing a teaching staff. Alvord's missionary work in Savannah came to the attention of General Howard, who appointed him to the position of General Superintendent in 1865. Alvord would be responsible for compiling and issuing 10 semi-annual reports to Howard and the United States War Department on the number of schools established the enrollment numbers of each school, the general community sentiment toward the schools, and the financial expenditures of the Bureau for schools and for freedmen's relief efforts.\footnote{John W. Alvord. \textit{Fifth Semi-Annual Report: Schools for Freedmen} (Washington, DC.: Government Printing Office, 1868).}

Howard utilized military personnel to conduct Bureau affairs and fill major positions. Howard's staffing decisions were based on the manner in which Congress created the Bureau and the debates related to the Bureau's formation.\footnote{Peirce, \textit{The Freedmen's Bureau}, 35.}
In January of 1863, Congressman Thomas Eliot of Massachusetts introduced a bill for the creation of a Bureau of Emancipation. He had been visited by representatives from the Emancipation League of Boston, Massachusetts who had been lobbying for the creation of a central federal organization to care for the condition of newly-freed slaves. The bill was sent to committee, but citing time constraints, the committee failed to bring the bill forward before the legislative session ended for the year. In December of 1863, Congressman Eliot again introduced his bill for the creation of the Bureau of Emancipation. The bill was sent to committee and following some discussion was brought before the entire house for debate.\textsuperscript{127}

Opponents of the bill thought that Congress did not have the authority to tax citizens of the northern and western states to raise funds to support indigent freedmen in the southern states. They objected to African Americans being singled out for aid while neglecting the needs of the indigent and impoverished southern Caucasian population. Opponents also opposed the outlined structure of the Bureau which gave the Bureau Commissioner and his superintendents' unlimited power to conduct the governmental affairs of each southern state through the power of the United States War Department, virtually placing the American South under martial law. Democratic Congressman Samuel Cox of Ohio argued that if Congress created the bureau, it would “Open up a vast field for corruption, tyranny, greed, and abuse; ...measuring too sweeping and revolutionary for a government of limited and express powers."\textsuperscript{128}

Congressman Eliot defended the bill arguing that as the government had freed the slaves under the Emancipation Proclamation it also possessed the responsibility to use

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 35.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid, 35.
military force to maintain the freedoms of the freedmen. Eliot argued that despite legislative actions, it was the military victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Port Hudson that had resulted in southern respect of Congressional mandates and United States political authority. Finally, Eliot argued that the War Department was the natural location to place the bureau because military power had freed the slaves, and that same power was necessary to protect their freedom. 129

Eliot’s bill for the creation of the Bureau of Emancipation passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 69 to 67. The bill was transferred to the United States Senate, where Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts chaired the Committee on Slavery and Freedom. In the senate committee, the Bureau of Emancipation was renamed the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The committee disagreed with the House of Representatives over the placement of the Bureau in the War Department. The Senate placed the bureau under the jurisdiction of the United States Treasury Department as it would be in charge of abandoned land and tax dollars. The Senate version of the bill passed in June of 1864 by a vote of 21 to 9. 130

The approved senate bill was returned to the House of Representatives for approval in December of 1864. The senate’s change, placing the Bureau under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department, resulted in dissension among members of the House of Representatives, who threatened to remove their support of the bill. A special joint committee was formed to negotiate and resolve the conflicts between the Senate and House versions. On February 2, 1865, the joint committee reported to Congress that they had resolved the issues of disagreement, with two committee members dissenting from

129 Ibid, 36.
130 Taylor, Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, 39-41.
the majority opinion. The committee placed the Bureau under the War Department and created a position called Bureau Commissioner who would be appointed by the President with the consent and advice of the Senate. The bill, House Resolution 51 was passed by a vote of 64 to 62.\textsuperscript{131}

Placing the Bureau under the jurisdiction of the War Department, Congress appropriated regular army pay to compensate the bureau officials. Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, informed Howard that he had to restrict his selection of officials to military personnel due to the nature of employee compensation. After consultation with Stanton, Howard requested that army officers from his former military units in Tennessee be transferred to fill the different Bureau positions.\textsuperscript{132} In addition to the policy issues, Howard preferred using military officers over civilian workers for two reasons. First, he could avoid employing radical abolitionists and office seekers to minimize the chance of political abuses and scandals. Second, he was accustomed to military structure and order; the use of military officers, in particular, his own men, would create an atmosphere of loyalty and respect. The bureau assistant commissioners, whom Howard selected, shared several characteristics that Howard highly valued. All of the Bureau assistant commissioners, including the General Superintendent of Education, were from New England, the Mid-Atlantic, or the Mid-Western states. All were native born Americans except Chaplain Conway, who had been born in Ireland and immigrated to the United States as a child. All, except Generals Thomas, Sprague, and Fisk had been college educated. Most important to General Howard, all of the men were Protestant Christians, belonging to denominations that believed in personal salvation through altruistic acts of

\textsuperscript{131} Taylor, \textit{Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia}, 41-45.
\textsuperscript{132} McFeely, \textit{Yankee Stepfather}, 69.
Christian service. Howard desired that the Freedmen’s Bureau would join with the leaders of the Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Unitarian denominations in the task of “building a Christian commonwealth in America.”

In organizing the educational division of the Bureau, Howard did not have a model or pre-existing framework. The federal government had not directly operated schools nor had the legislative authority to establish a public education system. Howard discovered that schools for freedmen already existed throughout the South. A few of these schools were being operated by the former slaves. In Louisiana, the Union military had already imposed a tax on the local people to cover the expenses for opening public schools for the freedmen. The vast majority of schools were under the control of various benevolent associations from the northern states. These schools typically were organized into one of four types: (1) Day Schools for younger and unemployed children; (2) Night Schools for older children, parents, and working adults; (3) Industrial Schools and (4) Sunday (Sabbath) Schools. Howard decided to partner with the different aid societies to fulfill the bureau’s educational duties.

In 1865, General Howard appointed Ralza Morse Manly as the General Superintendent and Inspector for all Freedmen schools in Virginia. Manly was a Methodist minister who had served as a grammar school principal in Vermont, prior to the war. He had also served as a military chaplain and a teacher at a northern seminary school. With his diverse background and experiences, Howard believed Manly could use

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133 Ibid, 72.
both his religious and educational background to successfully guide the education
program in Virginia.135

Manly’s monthly reports to the Assistant Commissioner of Virginia provide
insight into the accomplishments and problems faced by the Bureau from 1865 through
1870. The reports reveal that the Bureau-affiliated schools helped to educate over 18,000
former slaves through the assistance of 412 teachers and 215 schools.136 Correspondence
letters between Manly and aid society leaders help illustrate the level of involvement and
the relationship between the bureau, the benevolent aid societies, and the freedmen.
Many letters were sent to Manly requesting funds to pay for teachers. Manly stressed, in
his reply letters, that the Bureau was only authorized to provide building supplies,
transport teachers to schools, and make rent payments to the societies operating schools.
Rent payments were Bureau subsidies given to the aid societies to assist in the
maintenance of the school building. Responding to Mr. William Burnett’s 1866 request,
Manly wrote, “The Bureau is not authorized to employ teachers, they being hired and
paid altogether by churches and charitable associations of the North. Neither does the
Bureau furnish books. The only assistance the government has been authorized to give is
in providing school houses and furniture.”137 Another example of this relationship is
found in Manly’s May 1, 1866, letter to Robert Wright, “Your letter of April 25 is
received. You are mistaken in supposing that the Government pays the wages of

135 Richardson, Architects of a Benevolent Empire, 120-121.
136 Taylor, Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, 142-143.
137 Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Land. Records of the Superintendent of
Teachers. It has never done so and is not at liberty to do so by law. Teachers are supported by various churches and charitable societies at the North. “138

Manly coordinated with the leaders of various aid societies to combine Freedmen’s Bureau funds with private funds to help construct larger schools and enlisted the support of the families who would benefit from the schools. In a letter to Rev. Grimes, Manly wrote, “The Bureau will furnish the brick and some lumber for the proposed edifice. The American Freedmen’s Union Commission will contribute $5,000. The colored people here are deeply interested and will contribute liberally according to their means, both of money and labor.” 139

In some cases, however, the bureau maintained monthly records on schools, but did not provide financial support. The January 1869 Monthly Teacher Report, indicates that the Lincoln Valley (Fairfax County) school building was owned by the local freedmen, but that the Freedmen’s Bureau did not provide funds in the form of rent payments. The school was financed by tuition fees paid by the 48 African American students attending. The report did not state how the students and their families afforded the tuition fees, but a total of 10.00 dollars had been collected during January to cover the operational costs for the school and compensation for the teacher.140

In 1869 a few localities began funding schools through local revenue. In the April 1869 Monthly Teacher Report, Colored School No. 1 in Petersburg, had an enrollment of 364 students and five teachers. The school was not funded by the Freedmen’s Bureau or by a northern relief society patron. Apparently, the Petersburg

139 Ibid, Roll-11.
Board of Education was financing the school and students were not charged tuition. The school had been in operation since October of 1868. Of the 364 students, all of the pupils were African Americans. No further explanation for the local support or the compensation of the student was offered.\textsuperscript{141}

Although the Bureau kept school records and supported various schools through either rent payments or direct aid in the form of money for building supplies and teacher transportation costs, it would be unfair to state that the Freedmen’s Bureau operated the school program like a state-wide educational system. Among the different schools, there were great disparities with some schools being well financed through a combination of benevolent society funds and Freedmen Bureau rent payments, while other schools relied solely on the tuition fees paid by the pupils and their families. Manly was successful in the keeping of accurate records and in arranging cooperation between the Bureau and benevolent societies, allowing for the proliferation of educational opportunities for the former slaves. No revenue was forthcoming from the Virginia General Assembly to any of these schools between 1865 and 1870. The entire cost to educate the former slaves was absorbed by the Bureau, the benevolent societies, and the freedmen with exceptions of the few schools supported by local boards of education.\textsuperscript{142}

During the initial stages of the Freedmen Bureau partnership, the nature and parameters of the collaboration with the aid societies resulted in role confusion among teachers and some of the freedmen. Since each school, regardless of the level of Bureau financial support, was required to complete a monthly teacher report, some teachers and parents were not sure if the Bureau had taken complete control of the freedmen schools.

\textsuperscript{141}\textit{Ibid, Roll-15.}  
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Ibid, Roll-15.}
In a June 1865 letter to the Bureau, a teacher at Fortress Monroe asked for clarification:

"Am I to be regarded as in the employ of the Bureau and to look to you for pay, or is my supervision to be more voluntary and nominal with the understanding that I am still in the employ of the A.M. Association and to look to them for pay?"\footnote{Richardson, \textit{Architects of a Benevolent Empire}, 127.}

Through his correspondence letters and clarification memos, Manly attempted to provide clear parameters for the duties and responsibilities of the bureau and the benevolent aid societies. Consistently in all of his correspondence, Manly emphasized that the bureau only funded the construction and repair of school buildings, the payment of rent to school officials, transportation services for teachers to their assigned schools, and the purchase of furniture. Teacher salaries and school supplies were paid almost entirely by the northern relief associations or through tuition fees. For data purposes and accountability of federal funds, the monthly teacher reports required the teachers of each school to provide demographic, financial, academic progress, and public sentiment reports. These reports were collected and assembled to provide information for the General Superintendent of Bureau Schools to issue comprehensive reports every six months.\footnote{Bentley, \textit{A History of the Freedmen's Bureau}, 171-174.}

John Alvord, in his capacity of General Superintendent of Bureau Schools, compiled a comprehensive report on all Freedmen Bureau schools on a semi-annual basis. In the fifth semi-annual report on schools, published in 1868, Alvord reported that Virginia had 207 day and night schools in operation with 252 teachers and 12,450 pupils. The freedmen completely maintained forty-three of the 207 Virginia schools through tuition fees. In 48 schools, aid societies supported the schools, and students paid tuition.
The total cost for operating schools in Virginia in 1868 was $27,392. Tuition payments accounted for $3,784, equaling 13% of the total operating budget. Considering the economic condition of the state following the war, the tuition fee represented a vested commitment on the part of parents to ensure the education of their children. While not a perfect relationship, the partnership among the bureau, the freedmen, and the benevolent aid societies had a positive effect.\textsuperscript{145}

In 1869, the Virginia General Assembly ratified the Underwood Constitution, which organized the first public education system in Virginia. The constitution provided for a state superintendent of public instruction and a state board of education. Further it authorized the General Assembly to adopt compulsory attendance laws and levy taxes to support schools. The General Assembly appointed Dr. William Henry Ruffner to the position of State Superintendent. Ruffner was the son of Dr. Henry Ruffner, the former president of Washington College and had received the support and endorsement of former Confederate army general Robert E. Lee who was serving as the President of Washington and Lee College.\textsuperscript{146} An issue of concern that Ruffner was never able to resolve was the disparity between Caucasian and African American schools in Virginia. The differences in educational spending and the quality of services for African Americans and Caucasian students would continue to be an issue of concern the next 70 years.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} Virginia Department of Education, \textit{A History of Public Education in Virginia}, 5-6.
\textsuperscript{147} Taylor, \textit{Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia}, 166-173
Beginning in 1862, northern citizens organized freedmen's aid and relief associations to provide educational and humanitarian assistance to the former slaves. Reports from Union Army officers and missionaries described a dismal situation in the former slave states where slave refugees suffered from homelessness, hunger, and misery. The war had resulted in the destruction of the plantation system, eliminating the slaves primary source of food, clothing, and shelter. As the Union Army occupied confederate lands, thousands of slaves flocked to the Union Army for protection, food, and safety. Union officers were unable to adequately provide for the needs of both the enlisted soldiers and the refugees. General Tecumseh Sherman described the situation, "Such a company of ragged children I never saw before...Mothers begging and pleading for something to cover their poor shivering little ones. My supply was soon exhausted and I was obliged to turn from them with a sad heart." General John Dix, stationed at Fortress Monroe in Virginia, wrote to the governors of Rhode Island and Massachusetts requesting that they accept former slave refugees and harbor them in their states to ensure their safety and care. Governor William Sprague of Rhode Island agreed to care for a small number of refugees but Governor John Andrews of Massachusetts refused, responding that the former slaves would, “become demoralized, wandering vagabonds in

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In response to the failed relocation plan, the military appealed to the citizens of the North for assistance in handling the refugee situation in the south.150 Northerners responded by forming a diverse amalgamation of organizations to assist the former slaves and refugees. The associations that assisted Virginia’s former slave population can be organized into three general categories: Evangelical Protestants, Liberal Protestants, and secular aid associations. The Evangelical Protestants consisted of aid societies formed by the American Baptist, the Methodist Episcopal, and the American Missionary Association (AMA), which was affiliated with the Congregationalist Church. The Liberal Protestants consisted only of the Society of Friends (Quakers), specifically the societies located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The National Freedmen’s Relief Aid Association of New York (NFRA) and the New England Freedmen’s Aid Relief Society (NEFAS) comprise the secular aid relief associations; these groups maintained religious neutrality, focusing on humanitarian aid based on a belief in civic duty and moral responsibility associated with the abolitionist movement. Initially, all of these aid societies partnered with the Freedmen’s Bureau to provide humanitarian aid. They later transitioned their focus and reallocated resources to provide educational services for the former slaves. They viewed their partnership with the Freedmen’s Bureau as a patriotic duty and an avenue to promote the ideas and beliefs of their organizations.151

Evangelical Protestant Associations

During the 1730s and 1740s a series of religious revivals in British North America altered the views of many colonists toward the role of religion in political and social affairs. Historically identified as the Great Awakening, the religious movement of

149 Ibid, 58
150 Ibid, 58
151 Butchart, Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction, 3-10.
the mid-1700s was characterized by the teaching and preaching of traveling ministers who focused their messages on the importance of spiritual emotionalism and direct communion with God. In contrast to the established British religious tradition of structured church services with elaborate rituals and ceremonies, colonial religious reformers focused on the conversion experience and the need for individual salvation derived from personal confession. Following the American Revolution, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other smaller protestant sects, advanced a new ideology focusing on the cultural transformation of the United States. These denominations aspired to create a Christian nation believing that they were instrumental in carrying out, “God’s plan for America.” They emphasized the importance of individual conversion and the need for a shared vision of social morality. To achieve their vision of a Christian nation, Evangelical Protestants established a variety of social institutions including schools, orphanages, temperance societies, hospitals, and abolitionist societies to change the hearts and minds of Americans.153

When the Civil War began, the northern Methodist and Baptist conferences supplied the Union army was hundreds of military chaplains. These chaplains worked both on the battle field and behind the lines ministering to the sick, the dying, and wounded soldiers. In addition to humanitarian aid, they engaged in preaching and missionary work, resulting in significant numbers of enlisted men becoming Protestant converts. Exposure to the suffering and misery of the former slaves and refugees resulted

153 Ibid, 17
in chaplains and missionaries requesting aid from their denominations to assist in the relief, care, and support of the former slaves.\footnote{Sydney E. Ahlstrom, \textit{A Religious History of the American People}, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1972) 678-680.}

Consistent with their emphasis on social morality the Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians responded to the needs of the former slaves by forming aid relief committees to provide food, clothing, and medicine. As they began working among the refugees, they discovered that relief aid would not permanently address the needs of the former slaves. They quickly transitioned to educational work in 1862 to prevent dependency, encourage self-help and foster independence. For Evangelical Protestants, "Education was to take place in school, church, field, and home, where 'lessons of industry, of domestic management and thrift, lessons of truth and honesty,' would help the freedmen 'to unlearn the teaching of slavery.‘\footnote{Butchart, \textit{Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction}, 4.} As these churches began constructing schools and started providing educational services, they also worked to gain converts and promoted their religious beliefs and doctrines through missionary work.\footnote{Ibid, 8.} Though each organization shared commonalities in religious views, their historical development and organizational characteristics resulted in them making unique contributions in education.

\textit{The American Baptist Church and the American Baptist Home Missions Society}

Originating in 1639, the first American Baptist Church was founded in Providence Rhode Island by Roger Williams. Williams was a dissenter of New England Puritanism who rejected the authority of the established church, and who placed greater emphasis on the importance of individual conversion and the need for confession based,
water-immersion to restore mankind's relationship with God. The Baptist movement remained a small isolated organization, confined primarily to Rhode Island, until the Great Awakening. When the Great Awakening began in the 1740s, only two dozen Baptist churches operated in British North America, the majority housed in Rhode Island, eight in Massachusetts, and four in Connecticut. The revivalist and evangelical nature of the Great Awakening led to an expansion of the American Baptist faith into the middle and southern colonies.  

The emphatic preaching and emotional appeal of camp meetings, led by traveling preachers, resulted in an expansion of the Baptist church movement. The simple, non-hierarchical structure of the Baptist church and its religious focus on confession rather than infant baptism mirrored the religious fervor and spirited sermons delivered by evangelical ministers. By 1752, a strong Baptist community was thriving in the city of Philadelphia, which served as a hub for evangelical work in the south. Characterized by their expressive form of religious preaching and charismatic delivery style, Baptist ministers swept across the Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina country-side calling on citizens to repent, believe, and be born again through water baptism. In 1768, only five Baptist churches could be found in Virginia, but by 1773, the number had grown to 34 churches with a membership of 3,195. During the latter part of the 1700s and into the beginning of the 1800s, the Baptist movement continued to expand in the mid-Atlantic and rural south.  

To expand their missionary work, the American Baptist Association founded the American Baptist Home Missions Society in 1832 at the Temple Street Baptist Church,

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158 Ibid, 314-324
New York City. Devoted to direct evangelical mission work, its initial purpose was to produce gospel tracts and pamphlets to, "disseminate evangelical truth and to inculcate sound morals." In the 1840s, as more African American’s joined the society, the focus shifted from the simple production of gospel literature to the establishment of Sabbath schools for African Americans to teach them how to read the Bible.

The issue of slavery led to a schism in the American Baptist Church, resulting from the increase of free northern African Americans in the denomination and the progressiveness of the abolitionist segment of the Baptist church. During the 1840s, northern Baptists, affiliated with the abolitionist movement, began requesting the General Baptist Convention to take a moral stand against slavery. Slave-holding Southern Baptists and moderate Mid-Atlantic Baptists managed to table the issue for several years, maintaining that the matter was a political rather than religious issue. At the 1844 General Baptist Convention, the abolitionist faction finally gained a voting majority. When the Georgia Baptist Convention delegates submitted the name of James Reeves as their nominee for the national convention missionary, the Home Missions Board refused to appoint him, citing his status as a slave owner was a disqualifying factor. Several southern convention delegates expressed their displeasure with the Home Missions Board for neglecting the southern states in the appointment of missionaries and the assignment of missionary projects in southern territories. The southern convention delegates decided to hold a special meeting in Atlanta, Georgia to respond to the slavery issue and discuss the James Reeves controversy. On May 8, 1845, 293 delegates from nine southern states convened in Atlanta and unanimously agreed to withdraw from the American Baptist

160 Ibid, 10
Association and form a Southern Baptist Church Association. In 1846, the Southern Baptist Convention developed an organizational constitution and officially separated from the General American Baptist Convention.\textsuperscript{161}

After the American Civil War, the American Baptist Home Missions Board sent missionaries and aid workers into the former confederate states to provide aid and relief assistance to the former slaves. They also endeavored to engage in missionary work by establishing schools and proselytizing their faith. The American Baptist Convention raised considerable financial capital and sent missionary teachers to create grammar schools for the freedmen, primarily to help them learn to read the Bible and instill the values of evangelical Christianity. Two Baptist seminaries were opened in 1865, one in Washington, DC and one in Richmond, Virginia. The Washington DC school was named the Wayland Seminary and focused on training African American men to become Baptist ministers and church leaders. The Richmond Theological Seminary found great support and partners among the local African American churches and pastors. In 1899, the American Baptist Convention closed Wayland Seminary and merged it with the Richmond Seminary to form Virginia Union University.\textsuperscript{162}

\textit{The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church}

The Methodist Episcopal Church in America was the product of Rev. John Wesley and the “Holy Club”, a religious study society formed at Christ Church College in Oxford, England. Cynically called the “Methodists” by other ministers, the Holy Club consisted of John Wesley, his brother Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham, William Morgan, and George Whitefield. Besides the study and discussion of the Bible, the club

\textsuperscript{161} Ahlstrom, \textit{A Religious History of the American People}, 663-665.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, 10.
members engaged in social work from visiting near-by prisons to teaching poor children to read and write. Wesley and members of the club believed in using prayer to gain personal purification, collecting and distributing alms, fasting, and engaging in work to support the poor. Wesley argued that Christians should focus on a living faith characterized by immersing themselves in spiritual pursuits of God through active examples of Christian charity.  

During the American Great Awakening, Wesley was urged to send missionaries and lay preachers to North America to help provide religious instruction and spiritual guidance to unsaved colonists. Wesley collected £70 to provide funding for Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor to travel to America and begin the construction of a Methodist Meetinghouse for the small Methodist society in Gloucester Point, Pennsylvania. Boardman and Pilmoor arrived in America in October of 1769 and began preaching from the steps of the old Pennsylvania state house, also known as Independence Hall, until the meetinghouse could be built. This incident has been regarded as the official beginning of Methodism in British North America.  

The Methodists' simple message of how Christ's love and Christian service translated into personal salvation resonated among many colonists, particularly the working and lower middle classes. Methodism quickly spread throughout the middle and southern colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Boardman focused his preaching and missionary work in New York while Pilmoor undertook an extensive preaching tour of Maryland, Virginia, North and South

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164 Ibid, 42.
Carolina, and Georgia. Between 1770 and 1775, the number of American Methodist
increased from 316 members to 3,148.165

At the end of the American Revolution in 1783, the Methodist Society in America
reported a membership of 13,740 members. With the new American republic asserting its
independence from Great Britain, several leaders in the American Conference desired to
form a separate American governed Methodist Church fellowship. At the General
Conference of the American Methodist Society in 1784, the delegates granted upon
Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke the titles of deacon, elder, and superintendent,
installing them as presiding officials over the American Methodist Episcopal Fellowship.
On January 2, 1785, the conference unanimously approved a new discipline book called,
*A Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and other members of the Methodist
Episcopal Church in America*, and established the American Methodist Episcopal
Church as an independent religious fellowship from the British group.166

Beginning in 1810, the Methodist Episcopal Church in America began forming
missionary societies to engage in evangelistic work among African Americans and
Native Americans. Following the formation of the missionary society, the Methodist
gained a membership of 34,724 African Americans.167 Methodism appealed to many
African Americans during the late 1700s and early 1800s due to its simple and plain
message of hope and the focus on the preached word. The early Methodist leaders had
taken Wesley's example and advocated against slavery, branding it a sinful institution.168

166 Ibid, 111.
167 Ibid, 186-188.
168 Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the
Methodist founder John Wesley had been a vocal critic of the international slave trade and vocally promoted an anti-slavery position within the Methodist fellowship. Both American Bishops Coke and Asbury spoke out against slavery and condemned slave holding by church members. When the American Conference adopted the new American Methodist Doctrine and Discipline Manual in 1784, the conference agreed that, "Every slaveholding member was to free every slave between the ages of forty and forty-five immediately, while younger slaves were to be freed within a given time."169

Following the American Revolution, the anti-slavery position of the church began to cause problems in the slave holding southern states. Prior to the invention of the cotton gin, Methodist slave owners had not endorsed abolition, but did support the efforts of the American Colonization Society to transport free African Americans back to Africa. Initially forging a compromise with Asbury and Coke, southern slave-owning Methodists agreed to support the eventual abolition of slavery if the General Conference would advise slaves to obey and listen to their masters. Northern Methodists sympathetic to the abolitionist movement were suspicious of this agreement, but agreed to the compromise until the early 1800s.170

The cotton gin, invented by Eli Whitney in 1792, dramatically changed the profitability of growing cotton. Between 1791 and 1795, the southern states produced a total of 5,200,000 pounds of cotton for export. With the implementation of the cotton gin, production increased to 307,244,400 pounds between 1826 and 1831. Cotton became the primary cash crop for southern states and Methodist slave owners stopped advocating for gradual abolition of slavery due to the profitability of the cotton trade that depended on

169 Sweet, Methodism in American History, 111.
170 Ibid, 234-235.
slave labor. Northern Methodists who were affiliated with the abolitionist movement began passing resolutions in the northern conference condemning slavery and requesting the General Conference to take a more aggressive anti-slavery position. Aggressive abolitionist propaganda produced by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and John G. Whittier began attacking southerners directly for their hypocrisy and sinful support of slavery. Southern Methodists became irritated by abolitionist rhetoric and began fighting back through the use of pro-slavery propaganda and the passing of resolutions requesting the northern conferences to stop their anti-slavery agitation.\(^\text{171}\)

In 1844, a major controversy between the abolitionist and pro-slavery Methodist members split the American General Conference into two separate bodies. At the June General Conference, a resolution was submitted to suspend Francis A Harding of Baltimore, Maryland from the Methodist fellowship until he freed the slaves that he had acquired through marriage. When the issue was brought to a vote, the Conference agreed to affirm the suspension by a 117 to 56 vote. This action disturbed many southerners who realized that they had lost the power at the General Conference to counteract the northern abolitionist faction in the church. Following this action, a resolution was offered to suspend Bishop James O. Andrews of Georgia for refusing to free slaves acquired through his recent marriage. Delegates from the southern conference argued that the General Conference did not have the authority to suspend a bishop who had been selected by one of the Annual Conferences. Despite Southern objections, the General Conference suspended Bishop Andrews by a 111 to 60 vote.\(^\text{172}\)

\(^{171}\) Ibid, 235-237.
\(^{172}\) Ibid, 247-248.
In reaction to the General Conference vote, the southern churches proposed a *Plan of Separation*, splitting the Methodist Episcopal Church into a Northern Conference and Southern Conference. The proposal came before the General Conference delegates on June 8, 1844. Southern delegates were uniformly in favor of the separation to end the controversy over slavery. Many northern delegates were also in favor of the plan believing this was the only way to purify the denomination of the sinful practice of slavery. Delegates from the western and border state conferences were fearful that the passage of the plan would tear American Methodism apart and damage the effectiveness of the entire denomination. When the vote was called, the plan passed with a vote of 136 to 15. The Southern Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held an organizational meeting in New York and agreed to hold their first general convention in Louisville, Kentucky on May 1, 1845. That same month, the Southern Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church declared its independence from the jurisdiction of the General Methodist Conference. The resolution of separation passed by a 95 to 2 vote. The vote established the Methodist Episcopal Church, South as an independent religious body.173

During the Civil War, US Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered US army officers in Missouri, Tennessee, and the Gulf to turn over all Southern Methodist Episcopal churches to the control of Bishop Edward R. Ames.174 Ames was affiliated with the abolitionist movement and prior to the war, he was appointed to serve as an army chaplain with the US military. In his role as a military chaplain, Ames supported the US military establishment while advancing the evangelical goals of the Methodist

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Church. A close friend of Edwin Stanton, Bishop Ames garnered Union army support within the northern religious community through his use of patriotic prayers, speeches, and public worship services. Stanton’s order to place Southern Methodist Episcopal churches under Ames’ control served two purposes; it helped the Union quell confederate rebellions and resistance and it allowed the General Conference to reassert control over the Southern Methodist Church.175

General Benjamin Butler at Fortress Monroe in Virginia requested that the General Conference confiscate and close the Methodist churches in Virginia and the Deep South since southern clergy and parishioners were continuing to rouse a spirit of rebellion through the local churches. Union soldiers were sent to monitor Sunday services and prevent rebellious preaching and praying. Some southern churches were closed to southern whites and used as schools for former slaves or as Union Army headquarters.176

General Butler also appealed to the General Conference to help the former slaves with educational and humanitarian aid. In 1866, the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Cincinnati Ohio. The mission of the society was to, “Reach out and down into the old slave land, to lift and guide the millions….177 Under the direction of Bishop Davis W. Clark, funds were raised and missionaries sent to provide humanitarian aid, gain converts, and provide a rudimentary grammar level education for the former slaves. Churches that were predominately

175 Ibid, 40-42.
176 Sweet, Methodism in American History, 375.
177 Lewis Curts, The General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1792 to 1896, (Cincinnati, OH; Curts & Jennings, 1900.), 376.
African American were used as schools to help teach the freedmen to read and write and train them in the Methodist faith.\textsuperscript{178}

\textit{The American Missionary Association}

The American Missionary Association (AMA) was organized in 1846 through the union of four anti-slavery organizations, the Amistad Committee, the Union Missionary Society, the Committee for West Indian Missions, and the Western Evangelical Missionary Society. The charter members of the AMA were Lewis Tappan, Simeon S. Jocelyn, Gerrit Smith, Joshua Leavitt, George Whipple, and William Jackson. The founders were evangelical Christians affiliated with the abolitionist movement. Collectively, they believed the gospel of Jesus Christ was the most powerful weapon against slavery. They maintained that slavery was a moral evil and required the force of Christian virtue to remove it from American society.\textsuperscript{179}

The Amistad Committee was formed in 1839 in response to the court case involving African slaves who had rebelled against their Spanish captors and taken control of the Amistad, a slave ship, on route to Cuba. When the ship floundered off the coast of New York, a committee of several Congregationalist clergy and anti-slavery proponents formed the Amistad Committee to provide funding and support for the Africans' legal defense. Through their combined efforts and aid from former United States President John Quincy Adams, the Africans were granted their freedom by the United States Supreme Court in its decision in \textit{United States v. the Amistad}. Following the Amistad case, the committee continued its anti-slavery work and joined with other Christian missionary societies to abolish slavery in the United States. The leading members of the

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid, 376-377.
\textsuperscript{179} Richardson, \textit{Christian Reconstruction}, Preface viii.
Amistad Committee who were responsible for the merger that created the AMA were Lewis Tappan, Simeon Jocelyn, and Joshua Leavitt. 180

Lewis Tappan was a northern businessman who in 1841 formed the Mercantile Agency that later became Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. Born in Northampton, Massachusetts, he was raised in a religious household in which the evangelistic beliefs of his parents influenced him to become an abolitionist. Tappan’s business ventures were so successful that he was able to suspend his daily business duties in 1849 and focus his energies on social justice and humanitarian causes. He had been instrumental in the Amistad case by raising money for the legal defense of the Africans and by encouraging his friend, former President John Q. Adams, to assist with the legal defense team. 181 Following the Amistad case, Tappan, along with Simeon Jocelyn and Joshua Leavitt, both New England Congregationalist ministers and abolitionists, worked to help the Amistad Africans return to their homeland in Western Africa and in the process establish a Christian mission for their tribe, known as the Mendi. 182

The Union Missionary Society was organized in August of 1841 in Hartford, Connecticut. The majority of its members were free African Americans from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania. In 1841, Rev. James W. C. Pennington was elected President and Rev. Amos Beman of New Haven, Connecticut was elected to serve as the corresponding secretary. Pennington, a former slave, was serving as the pastor of the Talcott Street Congregationalist Church in

Hartford. He had escaped slavery at the age of 21 by running away from his master. Having been denied a formal education as a slave, Pennington worked as a day laborer in New Haven and learned to read and write by taking night classes. His educational deficits prevented him from entering Yale Seminary to become a licensed minister, but he was allowed to audit courses. He received religious instruction and training at Temple Street Congregationalist Church under the pastorate of Simeon Jocelyn and was licensed as a Congregationalist minister in 1838. With Pennington as its leader, the Society addressed the needs of Africans who were ignorant of the Christian faith and needed instruction in reading, writing, and the rudiments of western society. The society also focused on the abolition of American slavery, hoping that once slavery had been abolished, it could send missionaries into the American South to gain converts and spread the Congregationalist faith.¹⁸³

Little is known about the Western Evangelical Missionary Society and the Committee for West India Mission. Both organizations were affiliated with the Congregationalist church and endeavored to engage in missionary work. The Western Evangelical Missionary Society focused primarily on Native Americans on the western frontier while the Committee for West India Mission focused on foreign missions in the Caribbean, specifically among Africans in the British colony of Jamaica where slavery had been abolished in the early 1800s. Both consisted of evangelical Christians who were abolitionists. They had denominational ties to Tappan and Pennington and saw the union as a means to gain access to additional resources and man power.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 78-80
The AMA opened missions in Hawaii, Siam (Thailand), and Egypt, as well as established support missions for run-away African American slaves in Canada. The AMA operated missions for liberated slaves in Jamaica and for Chinese immigrants settling in the state of California.\textsuperscript{185} During the Civil War, the AMA recognized an opportunity to provide education and Christian instruction to the former slaves. The AMA raised money to establish grammar and Sabbath schools for the former slaves of the south, as well as schools for other minority groups, and Appalachian Whites. The association's primary mission in the south was to provide a Christian education for the former slaves, which included the promotion of evangelical Protestant virtues. AMA teachers and schools espoused a curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic, Christian doctrine, and vocational training. The AMA worked to consolidate its efforts with other benevolent societies and in 1862, the National Freedmen's Relief Aid Association (NFRA) was organized as a secular affiliate of the AMA. The NFRA was established to be a union of religious and secular groups that shared a belief in free-labor ideology, but the influence of the AMA on leading members resulted in a schism, separating the two organizations.\textsuperscript{186}

After 1866, the AMA devoted the majority of its financial resources and personnel to the creation of grammar schools and the establishment of normal schools to educate African American to become teachers. Between 1866 and 1870, the AMA was granted charters for seven higher education institutions: Berea College, Fisk University, Atlanta University, Hampton Institute, Talladega College, Tougaloo University, and

\textsuperscript{186} Richardson, Architects of a Benevolent Empire, 123.
Dillard College. By 1876, the AMA had opened 14 normal and high schools and by 1888, 7,000 African American teachers had been educated by AMA Schools.187

In Virginia, the AMA recruited northern Caucasian and African American women and men as well as the spouses of military and Freedmen Bureau officials to serve as missionary teachers. Most of the teachers recruited had very little formal training as teachers. The AMA believed that the teachers were going to help the freedmen by exposing them to evangelical and free-labor principles and thus foster self-reliance and an appreciation for the value of work. Teachers were provided instruction in Christian virtues that included industry and self-support so they would be able to impart the necessary skills to the freedmen school students. The hope was that the students would be able to create their own profitable businesses or become employable.188

Most AMA teachers were abolitionists and possessed a genuine desire to assist the former slaves of the south. Several teachers volunteered due to their personal religious convictions, believing that the Civil War had been a watershed moment where good had triumphed over evil. H. S. Beal, an AMA teacher stated, “If the country does not make amends for the terrible wrongs of slavery, ‘we shall see darker days & surer judgments than those just past.’”189 A segment of teachers were the children of missionaries, such as General Armstrong in Hampton, who found enjoyment and personal meaning in the hands-on approach to missionary work. In several cases, teachers volunteered to pay tribute to and honor a loved one who had died during the war. Caroline A Briggs agreed to serve as a teacher because both her husband and only brother had been killed during the war and she saw teaching as a means of honoring their

188 Richardson, Architect of the Benevolent Empire, 124.
189 Richardson, J. Christian Reconstruction, 164.
sacrifice. Lydia Montague also volunteered to teach after her three sons had fought for
the Union army and two had been permanently wounded.

The AMA required all teacher candidates to, "furnish credentials of Christian
standing and be of impeccable character." \(^\text{190}\) The AMA accepted applications from all
evangelical Christian denominations. It openly rejected and discriminated against Roman
Catholics and Unitarians, believing they lacked the disposition and Protestant values to
be effective missionary teachers. The association stated, "A teacher...must not only
instruct but also be a Leader – a Social center – a Founder, and a believer that there is no
better sphere." \(^\text{191}\) AMA teacher E. B. Webb, wrote, "If, now, we can provide Christian
schools for all this people, and Gospel as well, how sure and glorious the results! Give us
a decade only of such tuition and of such power, and let the battle of rationalism and
infidelity, and papacy come." \(^\text{192}\) The AMA, while concerned with the education and
uplift of the former slaves, desired to use education as a vehicle to evangelize and
spiritually transform southern African Americans into their vision of an evangelical
Christian society. AMA founders Lewis Tappan and George Whipple articulated that
education would free the former slaves, "of the shackles of ignorance, superstition, and
sin." \(^\text{193}\) The importance of religious transformation was illustrated by an 1868 incident in
Hampton where AMA teacher, Palmer Litts, stopped all evening classes to hold religious
services citing that, "God has been visiting us with a powerful Revival of Religion, and
we have felt quite unlike teaching." \(^\text{194}\)

\(^{190}\) Ibid, 166.
\(^{191}\) Ibid, 166.
\(^{192}\) Ibid, 166
\(^{193}\) Ibid, 20
\(^{194}\) Ibid, 45
The AMA recruited teachers from a variety of ages, ethnicities, and professions. Recruits ranged in age from 80 years down to 15. The majority of teachers were young Caucasian females from professional or farm-based families. Women made up the majority of AMA teachers because they could be paid less money than men and were more available due to the war. The perceived demeanor of women, being gentle and kind-natured, fitted the southern ideal about the role of women, thus creating a level of personal safety that was not extended to male teachers.195

Caucasian and African American men only made up 37% of the AMA teaching staff. Most were ministers or principals and few had taught in a common school. They tended to be older than the female teachers and were typically married. They were also placed in the greatest danger frequently being the target of physical molestation or “midnight bands” where they would be beaten, attacked, or in extreme cases killed by southern Caucasians.196

Liberal Protestantism

Liberal Protestantism is predicated on the belief that the Bible was inspired by God rather being a divine book to be literally interpreted. Liberal Protestants focus more on reflective spiritual development and less on the doctrine of salvation through a born-again conversion. Rather than emotion-laded sermons with images of hell, damnation, and sin, Liberal Protestants focus more on ethical and moral concepts of justice and equity. Liberals tend to embrace social issues, such as poverty, racism, and oppression, and seek to champion social peace and harmony. They share a social gospel ideology that

195 Ibid, 167
196 Ibid, 167-169
holds that Christians should address the injustices of society, not just through individual acts of charity, but through collective actions geared at confronting societal structures.\footnote{Fowler and Hertzke, \textit{Religion and Politics in America}, 40-41}

The Society of Friends (Quakers) of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania epitomized liberal Protestantism in their doctrine and social activism before, during, and after the Civil War. The Philadelphia Quakers had a long history of direct assistance and advocacy for African Americans. The Philadelphia Quakers had been the earliest religious group to argue against slavery in the North American colonies. By the mid-1700s, the Philadelphia General Conference voted to expel any Quaker who continued to own slaves. During the antebellum period, segments of the Quaker society boycotted any goods produced by slave labor and many converted their homes to be used as safe houses and way stations along the Underground Railroad. Some of the Philadelphia societies collaborated together in 1822 to open an orphanage for African American children. Called the “Shelter”, the orphanage served about 70 children at the cost of $10,000 a year. The orphanage stayed in operation until 1914 when it was relocated to a more rural setting in Delaware County.\footnote{Philip S. Benjamin, \textit{The Philadelphia Quakers in the Industrial Age: 1865-1920}, (Philadelphia, PA. Temple University Press, 1976), 126-127.}

In 1827, a rift occurred among the Philadelphia Quakers resulting in the formation of two distinctive groups, the Orthodox Quakers and the Hicksite Friends. Elias Hicks, considered a Quaker mystic, began articulating a dissenting theological opinion among the Society of Friends in Philadelphia. He minimized the importance of the Bible and scriptures arguing that individuals could find salvation by focusing on the inner light God had placed in all humans. Hicks believed Quakers should retreat from the affluence and happenings of contemporary society; through solitude and self-reflection, they would be
able to find God's calling for their lives and connect with God's light inside of them. Hicks found followers among Philadelphia's working classes and tradesmen. The established Quaker families in Philadelphia, characterized as the Orthodox Quakers, disapproved of Hicks' message and in opposition reasserted the importance of the Bible and Christ's redemptive power to access salvation. The Orthodox Quakers tended to be wealthier and more conservative than the Hicksite Quakers.199

During the Civil War, Union Army requests for assistance and aid for refugees and former slaves were sent to communities and cities across the northern and mid-Atlantic states. Both the Orthodox and Hicksite Quaker Societies in Philadelphia responded by forming aid committees. Two separate aid committees were created in 1862 by women affiliated with both societies. Together, the committees collected over 10,000 articles of clothing and $7,000 to purchase food, medical supplies, and basic humanitarian goods. In 1863, the men of the Orthodox Quaker societies convened a meeting and decided to send Marmaduke Cope to the Virginia Peninsula to investigate the conditions of the African American refugees and former slaves living in the Yorktown vicinity. Cope reported that the African Americans on the peninsula needed, "instruction in the rudiments of domestic economy and lacked the most basic of farm implements."200 Additional reports indicated that the refugees housed at military camps were in desperate need of clothing and medical aid. The Yearly Conference of Orthodox Quakers initially hesitated and did not form an action committee to address the situation in Virginia. The older members of the society were not sure if they had the resources and connections to adequately provide direct assistance. Younger members of the Orthodox

199 Ibid, 10.
200 Benjamin, 129.
Conference, John Garrett, Philip Garret, Joel Cadbury, and Edward Betle, Jr., established a committee, the Friends’ Freedmen Association (FFA), to provide direct assistance for Virginia’s refugees.201

The FFA served as the Orthodox Conference’s committee to assist the former slaves of the south. The association was able to raise $53,800 over the course of a few months and in the spring of 1864 began dispersing hospital supplies, crop seeds, agricultural tools, clothing, school books, and slates to the former slaves camped in Hampton, Yorktown, Norfolk, and New Bern, North Carolina. Between 1864 and 1872, the FFA engaged in several projects to assist the former slaves with developing economic independence and self-sufficiency. In 1865 the association purchased an 80 acre parcel of land on the Hampton roads peninsula and granted African Americans low interest ten-year mortgages to allow them to purchase parcels of the land for homesteads. In 1865, the FFA opened a general store in Hampton and Yorktown to prevent price inflation and unfair business practices on the part of the US military and local southern businessmen. Prior to the Quaker run store, African Americans were being forced to pay extremely high prices for supplies and goods due to the monopoly created by US Army contractors and local businessmen. The Quaker stores sold goods at close to production cost and used the surplus income to provide furnishings and house ware items for African American homes in the region.202

In 1865, The FFA began establishing freedmen schools and recruiting teachers. Different from the Evangelical Protestants who focused on religious education, the FFA focused on providing a citizenship-based curriculum infused with work instruction to

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201 Ibid, 129
202 Ibid, 130-131
ensure that the freedmen would be socially stable. The FFA did not endeavor to evangelize or convert the former slaves to Quakerism. Instead the FFA desired to, “offer blacks a chance to gain independence and the means for advancement in a competitive world.”203 The FFA focused on providing the former slaves with lessons on hard work, thrift, and respect for property. They argued that education should empower the former slaves to be, “Citizen rulers of a great republic...full advocates of free schools for all, freedom of worship, equality before the law, and whatever goes to emancipate men from vice and to make a great people powerful for good and not for evil.”204 The FFA, funded by the wealthy Orthodox Quakers of Philadelphia, expended more than half a million dollars for humanitarian aid and public education. The FFA educated 3,700 African American students in southern Virginia and North Carolina, maintaining a total of 37 schools. The Hicksite Quakers also established schools, but did not have the diverse financial resources available to them compared to the Orthodox Quakers.205

*The Hicksite Quaker Committee for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen*

The Hicksite Quakers of Philadelphia did not have the same level of financial resources as the Orthodox Quakers but formed the Committee for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen (CAEF) in 1864.206 Its headquarters was the Quaker Meeting House on Race Street. In April of 1864, The CAEF sent H.W. Ridgway and Josiah Wilson to meet with Union General Benjamin Butler’s Department in Washington, DC to discuss erecting and operating schools for the former slaves. Based on information obtained from

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203Ibid, 133
204Ibid, 132
205Ibid, 133
206Ibid, 130.
General Butler, the CAEF decided to focus their work at Mason Island, Maryland.\(^{207}\) Mason Island was a freedmen’s village created by the federal government as a relocation settlement for former slaves fleeing the Confederacy.\(^{208}\) Referred to as Freedmen’s Village, the military had established a Quartermaster post in the village to hire former slaves to support the war effort and provide basic aid to women and children. The large number of refugees began to overwhelm the military requiring the commanding officer to request assistance from the religious and secular freedmen aid societies in the north.\(^{209}\) Within a few months, the CAEF expended funds for the purchase of food, clothing, blankets, and sanitation supplies for the reported 400 women and children at Mason Island.\(^{210}\)

By the end of 1864, the CAEF had raised $9,667.62 for freedmen relief projects.\(^{211}\) The CAEF began schools in Virginia and on the South Carolina Sea Islands in 1865. John C. Tatum, a trustee on the CAEF board, was sent to Yorktown in December of 1864 to begin the construction of a school house and teacher dwelling at the freedmen’s settlement operated by the Union military. Once the dwelling was built, Tatum hired Rachel Dennis of New Jersey to serve as the first teacher with a salary of $10 a month. Classes were held in an empty room of the teacher’s house until the school could be constructed. In addition to the grammar school, Tatum provided instruction to


\(^{208}\) Ibid, 7-8.


\(^{210}\) First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Association of Friends for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen, 9-10.

\(^{211}\) Ibid, 21.
the freedmen on how to cultivate the soil and secured supplies such as window pane glass and lumber to help the freedmen repair and improve their homes.212

The CAEF merged with the Hicksite Women’s Association of Philadelphia for the Relief of the Freedmen in 1866 to pool resources and personnel. The CAEF continued the work at Mason Island by opening a freedmen’s school and providing several parcels of medical supplies to the Mason Island Hospital. By 1866, the CAEF had established nine schools in Virginia and five schools in South Carolina.213 Margaret Thorpe, CAEF teacher assigned to both the Ft. Magruder School and the Williamsburg Day School wrote, “Our day school hours are from 9 am- to 2 PM- we average about seventy-five scholars, all children. From 3:30 to 5 o’clock we taught some of the older children and a few grown women writing and sewing.”214 Mary K. Brosius, the teacher at the Vienna School, wrote, “I feel sometimes as though I would like or ought to be at home, but I cannot bear the idea of leaving these people. I never spent two happier years in my life. I get almost discouraged sometimes; but when I do, I look back and see where they were when I came here.”215 As expressed through teacher letters, the CAEF schools mirrored the common schools of New England and the mid-Atlantic more closely than the religious based schools established by the Evangelical Protestants.216

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214 Margaret A Thorpe, “Life in Virginia, By a Yankee Teacher”, 1866. Special Collections, the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
215 Second Annual Report of the Friends’ Association of Philadelphia for the Aid and Elevation of the Freedmen, 6
216 Ibid, 7
Secular Freedmen Aid Societies

In response to the devastation of the south, citizens in New York, New England, and Pennsylvania began forming *ad hoc* secular societies to provide assistance and help to the African American slaves and refugees in Union-occupied areas of the south. Union Army reports concerning the pervasiveness of disease, suffering, and death resulted in the formation of action committees and societies to raise funds, secure food rations, provide medical supplies, and gather basic humanitarian aid items to help with the reconstruction and relief of the former slaves. Different from the Evangelical Protestant denominations of the north that sought to win converts and expand their denominations throughout the south, the secular societies originally only desired to provide temporary emergency aid. As relief workers began serving in the south, they realized that the former slaves needed more than just humanitarian aid. The desolate conditions of the south dictated that the former slaves needed the means to be self-sufficient and economically viable. The focus of secular organizations switched from emergency aid to the establishment of grammar and industrial schools to help the former slaves with their transition from servitude to economic independence. In Virginia, two organizations established schools and provided educational opportunities for former slaves, working in concert with the Freedmen’s Bureau: the New England Freedmen’s Aid Society (NEFAS) and the National Freedmen’s Relief Association.

*The New England Freedmen’s Aid Relief Society*

The New England Freedmen’s Aid Relief Society (NEFAS) was organized in 1862 in Boston Massachusetts under the guidance of Rev. Jacob M. Manning. The NEFAS had evolved out of the Boston Education Commission that had formed in
response to the AMA. The Boston Education Commission was influenced by the abolitionist movement and the ethical belief in social justice and equality. The commission believed that former slaves needed educational support, but thought the school program should be nonsectarian as well as non-evangelical. Rev. Manning was affiliated with the Boston Educational Commission and as pastor of Old South Church, one of the oldest Congregationalist churches in America, he coordinated the first organizational meeting of the NEFAS. The members selected Rev. Edward Hale to serve as the chairman for the organization. Hale was a Congregationalist minister who had graduated from Harvard College in 1839. He was a published theologian who had written several essays and books on the abolition of slavery, the need for universal educational reform, and the importance of religious tolerance. He was the great-nephew of American Revolutionary War hero Nathan Hale, who had been executed by the British for serving as a spy. Rev. Hale was married to Emily Perkins, the niece of antebellum-era novelist and slavery abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

The NEFAS wanted to provide the former slaves with an education that, “lead them to appreciate the advantages of civilized life, to relinquish many of the habits and customs of slavery, and to learn the duties and responsibilities of free men.” In the NEFAS constitution, the society articulated a focus on the industrial, social, intellectual, moral, and religious improvement of the former slaves. The NEFAS began work at Port Royal, SC and on the South Carolina Sea Islands in 1862. Initially, the NEFAS only

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217 Morris, Reading, ‘Riting, and Reconstruction, 4-6
220 Morris, Reading, ‘Riting, and Reconstruction, 6
provided medical supplies, food, and clothing. In the latter part of 1862, the NEFAS opened schools on the Sea Islands and provided an allocation of $25-$50 per teacher per month.221

Beginning in 1865, the NEFAS established schools in Virginia and in North Carolina for the former slaves. Describing her work in Virginia, teacher Lucy Chase wrote, "Thirty or forty new scholars came every day. A school that only one with a gift could control, and only one with a body could bear upon her shoulders. It was the school in which we had taught through the summer, giving our extra time to the refugees and to the farms. Difficulties and delays have blocked the path-way to our own special family school-house; but we have one, the doors are open..."222 In a later letter, Chase wrote "Four hundred refugees, released by colored soldiers, have just come, empty handed into our lines.... I have not told you that we present all the refugees with ABC’s and they snatch them greedily, astonishing my sister and myself, long-experienced though we are, with their amazing progress."223 As demonstrated by Chase’s remarks, the NEFAS focused more on providing a common school education for the former slaves in contrast to the religious and labor-based education espoused by the AMA and evangelical Protestant societies. Though Chase and many of the NEFAS teachers were affiliated with the Congregationalist church, they adhered to a more liberal ideology. NEFAS trustee, Henry Ward Beecher stated, "Freedom for the freedmen was imperfect without moral and

223 Ibid.
intellectual education.”224 The need for citizenship training and the development of the mind was considered necessary for the former slaves to be prepared to participate in universal suffrage (voting) and democratic government. The NEFAS did not view the former slaves as capable of being full-fledged citizens, but the NEFAS believed that through a liberal arts education the former slaves would be mentally elevated out of a state of ignorance into a state of enlightenment.225

Beginning in 1868, the AMA viewed all secular aid societies as a threat to their mission and evangelical work. The AMA took several steps to limit support and participation of northerners and international donors toward secular society projects. The NEFAS had a broad base of supporters, particularly former abolitionists and moderate Congregationalist. Although many of the secular aid societies succumbed to the attacks launched by the AMA, the NEFAS remained a viable organization until military reconstruction in the south ended in 1877.226

The National Freedmen's Relief Aid Society of New York

On February 22, 1862, the National Freedmen's Relief Aid Association (NFRA) was organized as an offshoot of the AMA. In the early years of the organization, Evangelical Protestants dominated the leadership of the NFRA and directed the organization’s energies toward the education and training of the former slaves. Instead of focusing on providing a common school education and training the former slaves to be self-sufficient, the NFRA educational program focused on a narrow curriculum of “religious training, a racial division of labor, white control over agricultural production,

224 Butchart, Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction, 14.
226 Ibid, 94-95.
and training in wage labor and rules of private property."227 The NFRA recruited teachers who could provide instruction in industry, mechanical arts, the rudiments of education, and the principles of Christianity. The NFRA appealed to northern citizens, evangelical churches, pastors and governmental agents to secure donations of food, clothing, and money.228 The NFRA focused on providing instruction that married explicit religious instruction with labor.229

In March and April of 1862, the association recruited 74 men and 19 women to serve as teachers, missionaries, and physicians at Port Royal, SC.230 Conflict and corruption created tension within the NFRA as oppressive paternalistic policies concerning African American versus Caucasian control of labor and businesses at Port Royal began to split the NFRA leadership. Incompetent bureaucrats who misused organizational funds and bickering between teachers and NFRA officials over the school curriculum resulted in an internal power struggle. By 1865, a more moderate and secular group of leaders had gained control of the NFRA replacing the evangelical Protestant majority on the executive board. The new executive board officially separated the NFRA from the AMA in mid-1865, reinventing the organization as a secular, non-ecclesiastical society.231 In 1866, the NFRA appointed Francis George Shaw as President. Under Shaw's leadership, the NFRA changed its operational philosophy to advocate for common schools rather than missionary schools. The NFRA issued a statement in Harper

227 Ibid, 79.
229 Butchart, Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction, 79
231 Butchart, Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction , 80-81

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Weekly stating, “It is proposed now to educate all the Negroes and poor whites in the South – as a political necessity; in order that henceforth there may be no other insurrections, the result of ignorance, either on the part of the late slave or that late slaveholder. Ignorance has cost us too much to be suffered to disturb us again.”\textsuperscript{232} Using an aggressive fund-raising campaign, the NFRA raised enough funds to open orphanages in Florida and South Carolina, as well as employ 200 teachers to serve NFRA schools in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida. The educational focus was on reading, writing, and industrial skills, such as sewing and farming.\textsuperscript{233}

The AMA and other evangelical protestant aid societies perceived the NFRA’s success as a threat. In response, AMA officials initiated a campaign to eliminate the NFRA as a viable alternative to their schools and educational philosophy in the South. The AMA began confronting Congregationalist, Methodist, and Baptist pastors and portrayed the NFRA as an anti-Christian and secular organization working at odds with the evangelical mission of the AMA. The AMA intentionally misrepresented itself to British donors to gain a monopoly on international patrons and prevent additional support to the NFRA. In the southern states, the AMA dismissed teachers who were not affiliated with an evangelical church and convinced the Freedmen’s Bureau to give them school buildings that had been set aside for NFRA teachers. In some incidents, AMA officials took funds earmarked for schools and used the funds to construct churches to advance their evangelical mission. The AMA campaign was successful, and by 1868, the NFRA was forced to dissolve due to a lack of financial resources. Several NFRA trustees


\textsuperscript{233} Ibid
continued its grammar and secondary school program until January of 1870 when the remaining schools were taken over by the New England Freedmen's Aid Relief Society.

The Freedmen

The desire and demand for education by African Americans exceeded the availability of teachers and schools. Freedmen school teachers consistently reported being overwhelmed by the number of children and adults applying for school enrollment. In Washington, DC, which had the largest concentration of freedmen's teachers, as late as 1867, schools were turning away students due to space limitations. One teacher for every 50 students was the norm rather than the exception in most schools. Freedmen school teacher Margaret Newbold stated that on her first day of classes the students were, "Cold, dirty, and half naked but eager to learn." The desire for an education compelled African Americans to establish schools without the aid of northern aid societies or the Freedmen's Bureau. Reports indicate that African American communities in Virginia were building schoolhouses even before teachers could be secured.

In the monthly teacher reports of the Freedmen's Bureau, data revealed that a large number of Virginia's schools were maintained entirely by the local African American population. Without documentation and corroborating sources, it is difficult to determine who the local people were and how they supported the schools. The Bureau's records reveal that some of the schools received monthly financial support in the form of rent payments from the Bureau. Several schools did not receive direct aid, but the Freedmen's Bureau covered the cost of transporting school teachers, along with their

\[\text{234 Butchart, Northern Teachers, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction, 169.}\]
\[\text{235 Ibid, 170-171}\]
luggage, to the actual school house and teacher dwelling. Some schools received neither direct nor indirect aid from the Bureau, operating completely self-sufficient. The letters from Superintendent Manly do not provide an explanation for the inconsistency in fund allocations. An illustration of this difference can be found in a comparison between the Smith School of Pungateague and the Front Royal Colored School in Warren County. In January of 1868, the AMA was the patron of the Smith School and supported an enrollment of 50 students. Through the combination of Bureau subsidies and AMA funds, students were not required to pay tuition. In comparison, the Front Royal Colored School was maintained entirely by the local African American population and supported an enrollment of 70 students. The school building was owned by the local community and all students were required to pay tuition. The school did not receive any rent revenue from the Freedmen’s Bureau and did not have a sponsoring benevolent society. The data implies that schools funded by a benevolent aid organization, which had a connection with Manly or bureau officials, tended to receive funding on a consistent basis whereas the schools maintained exclusively by African Americans did not. Without written verification it is impossible to make a clear conclusion concerning the reasons for the financial disparity between schools. It is interesting, that the freedmen, particularly in the economically difficult conditions following the war, were willing to commit tuition payments to enable their children to receive an education.236

Alvord stated in his 1868 semi-annual Freedmen Bureau Report that the freedmen in Virginia contributed $3,784.04 toward the expenses of schools through the payment of tuition. The Freedmen Bureau dispersed $11,930.59 during the same six month interval.

Comparatively, the freedmen contributed 35% of the amount expended for freedmen schools. This figure acknowledges the significant commitment and contributions of the freedmen toward their own education. How the freedmen afforded to support their own schools and how the freedmen were able to start schools independently of the Bureau or benevolent aid societies remains a mystery. In some cases, schools were organized by concerned African Americans with teacher training. An example of this situation was found at the Hanover Court House School where teacher, William Van, moved to Hanover from Caroline County and upon seeing the condition if the local children, opened a day school at the court house. Another example was the New Boston School of Accomack that was founded and funded completely by the freedmen. The school charged tuition and the local population successfully financed the school without a patron. The monthly teacher report of January 1868 indicated that the school building was in desperate need of repair and the local freedmen were working to raise money to erect a new school house. For reasons unknown, the Bureau did not furnish funds to construct a new school nor provided rent payments to assist in its maintenance.

It is difficult to determine how many schools were created and wholly maintained by the local freedmen. The monthly teacher reports indicate that some schools, not supported by a benevolent aid society or receiving rent payments from the Freedmen’s Bureau, closed after a few months due to their failure to cover operating costs. The Kerry Street School in Stanton Virginia was forced to close in 1868 because the 18 pupils were unable to adequately pay enough tuition to support the school. The school did not have a

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239 Ibid, Roll 15.
benevolent aid society sponsor and the Freedmen's Bureau did not provide rent payments to support the school.\textsuperscript{240}

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid, Roll-15.
CHAPTER 5:

Hampton University and Virginia Union University: The Higher Education Legacy of the Freedmen’s Bureau and the Freedmen Aid Relief Associations in Virginia

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a unique place in the history of higher education in the United States. HBCUs are defined as higher education institutions formed after 1865, but prior to 1964, for the specific purpose of educating African Americans. Two universities, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Wilberforce University in Ohio, were founded before the Civil War. Lincoln was founded in 1854 by the Presbyterian Church and was a baccalaureate degree awarding institution. Wilberforce University was founded in 1856 by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and also conferred baccalaureate degrees. Cheyney State College was founded in the early 1830s by the Philadelphia Quaker Society as an elementary and high school for African Americans, and did not become a higher education institution until after the Civil War. With the exception of Lincoln, Wilberforce, and Cheyney State, all HBCUs were established and organized after 1865.\(^\text{241}\)

HBCUs were created in a time when racial segregation either de jure or de facto, was a common practice in most of the United States. Prior to the Civil War, all of the southern states, with the exception of Tennessee, prohibited the formal education of both African American slaves and free individuals. By 1860, it was calculated that 90% of the American South’s African American population was illiterate. During the Postbellum Era, 1865-1895, the northern missionary and benevolent aid societies along with the

Freedmen’s Bureau partnered together to provide schools for the former slaves of the south. The school movement evolved into the establishment of HBCUs in the south.\textsuperscript{242}

The first HBCU established in the post-bellum era was Howard University in Washington, D.C. The school was founded through the collaboration of the Congregationalist Church in Washington DC, the Freedmen’s Bureau, and the US Congress. On November 20, 1866, Congregationalist minister, Rev. F. B. Morris, convened a meeting with US Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, US Senator Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas, US Representative Burton Cook of Illinois, and General Oliver Howard to discuss the founding of a theological school for African Americans. General Howard pledged Freedmen’s Bureau funds to construct the actual building if the other members could secure appropriate land space. Originally named “Howard Theological Seminary,” the founding committee agreed to elevate the institution from a seminary to a college by including a teacher’s training program and law school. Despite a modest protest from General Howard, the committee voted to name the school Howard University, in honor of his work related to the Freedmen’s Bureau.\textsuperscript{243} General Howard served as the first president of Howard University, leading the institution from 1869 to 1873.\textsuperscript{244} On March 2, 1867, Congress granted Howard University an institutional charter.\textsuperscript{245}

The founding of Howard University led to a proliferation of additional higher education institutions throughout the southern states for African Americans. In post-bellum Virginia, two institutions, Hampton University and Virginia Union University

\textsuperscript{242}Ibid, 22
\textsuperscript{243}Bentley, \textit{History of the Freedmen’s Bureau}, 203.
\textsuperscript{245}Bentley, \textit{History of the Freedmen’s Bureau}, 203
were established from the partnership between the Freedmen’s Bureau and benevolent aid societies of the northern United States. Hampton and Virginia Union are uniquely different, reflecting the character and mission of the aid societies that helped to establish them.246

Hampton University

In 1867 the AMA was at a crossroad concerning the education of African Americans in the southern states. By 1868, the initial enthusiasm displayed by northern missionaries and teachers toward freedmen education had started to wane. As missionaries began working with former slaves from the most oppressed and isolated parts of the south, they began to question the intellectual and religious potential of the freedmen. An AMA teacher remarked, “Many Freedmen are ignorant, vicious, and degraded.”247 AMA officials acknowledged that southern whites were not ready for total equality with African Americans. Compared to teacher numbers in 1865 and 1866, fewer northerners were volunteering to teach in the south. The number of AMA missionaries also sharply declined, with the few that did journey to the south, staying for only short intervals. The AMA along with other aid societies realized that southern African Americans would have to be trained as teachers, to create a permanent educated class who could in turn provide the religious and intellectual education needed to help advance southern African Americans. Working with the Freedmen’s Bureau, between 1867 and 1868, the AMA founded eight teacher training schools in the southern United States. The Hampton Normal School, which later became Hampton University was different from the

246 Roe and Murty, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 21-22.
247 Robert F. Engs, Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited, (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 71
other AMA schools due to the influence of its first principal, General Samuel Armstrong.248

General George Chapman Armstrong served as the first principal of Hampton Normal School, remaining in office until his death in 1893. General Armstrong’s background made him a unique selection as Hampton’s first principal. Armstrong was the son of Congregationalist Church missionaries who had been stationed in Hilo, Hawaii during the mid-1800s. Armstrong’s parents operated a missionary school in Hawaii which focused on the merits of manual labor and evangelical Christianity. During the Civil War, Armstrong received distinction through his leadership at the Battle of Gettysburg. In 1863 he volunteered to command the 9th Regiment, USCT, an African American unit. Armstrong and his regiment were stationed at Port Royal, SC and on the South Carolina Sea Islands where he worked with AMA missionaries and officials to assist in the development of the newly-freed African American communities. Armstrong’s experiences in Hawaii and his work on the Sea Islands shaped his beliefs concerning the educational needs of the former slaves.249

Armstrong believed in the evangelical mission and educational goals of the AMA, and saw the benefits of this work among the black population in Virginia. Armstrong believed in a free-labor ideology associated with free-market capitalism. He believed that the former slaves could only gain self-sufficiency and economic independence through a mixture of industrial, elementary, and character-based education. Based on his religious and military experience, the AMA offered him the position of principal in 1867.250

248 Ibid, 71-73
249 Ibid, 48-49
250 Richardson, Architects of a Benevolent Empire, 133.
When Armstrong arrived at the Hampton Normal School, it only consisted of some old Union army barracks, a dilapidated mansion house, and the ruins of the Chesapeake Army Hospital.\textsuperscript{251} Using his military and religious connections, General Armstrong was able to solicit funds from a variety of donors. He secured $10,000 from Judge Josiah King of Pittsburgh, $9,000 from the AMA, and $13,000 from the Freedmen’s Bureau to purchase a 160 acre farm, mansion, and flour mill in Hampton, Virginia near Fortress Monroe. By the end of 1867, Armstrong had collected an additional $2,000 from the Freedmen’s Bureau and $10,000 from private northern donors to total $44,000 for the purchase of the property and began laying the foundation of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute.\textsuperscript{252}

On April 15, 1868, the Hampton Institute was opened with 2 teachers and 15 pupils. By 1870, the institution was granted a charter by the Virginia General Assembly, separating it from the American Missionary Association and Freedmen’s Bureau, allowing it to operate as an independent entity with its own board of trustees. Hampton offered a curriculum of two or three years in length and initially did not grant a bachelor’s degree. Students admitted did not have to complete four-years of secondary school curriculum and many of the first classes of students had a weak elementary level education. The primary purpose of Hampton, as was the case for most normal schools, was to provide the additional training for students seeking common school teaching certification. As a result, the students tended to be less educated, older, and more economically disadvantaged than students attending a traditional four year college in

\textsuperscript{251} Engs, \textit{Educating the Disfranchised}, Introduction, xix.
\textsuperscript{252} Richardson, \textit{Architects of a Benevolent Empire}, 133-134.
nineteenth century America. Of the 723 graduates from Hampton’s first 20 graduating classes, 84% became teachers.\textsuperscript{253}

Influenced by General Armstrong’s influence, the emphasis of the Hampton curriculum was different from the curriculum at the AMA schools of Fisk and Dillard. Based on his experiences in Hawaii, Armstrong incorporated the concept of “self-help” instruction and manual labor into Hampton’s curriculum. Farms and small industrial workshops were constructed on the campus to give the students both an education in agriculture and practical trades to ensure they would have the knowledge and skills to be successful in either the technical or educational fields. The primary goal was to teach the students the value of manual labor and to view technical training as an asset rather than an undesirable liability. The integration of the work component resulted in confusion on the part of some observers who thought Hampton was a trade school rather than a normal school. Graduate statistics in 1900 dispute this view since only 45 of Hampton’s 656 students were enrolled in the trade division and only four were in the agricultural program. Armstrong designed Hampton to be a unique mixture of the New England normal school and a technical-vocational school.\textsuperscript{254}

\textit{Virginia Union University}

Following the American Civil War, the American Baptist Home Mission society sent missionaries to Richmond, Virginia to provide religious and grammar-level education to the newly-freed slaves. The first teacher, Dr. J. G Binney, began teaching night classes in November of 1865. Citing hostility from the local Caucasian population toward his efforts, Binney discontinued his work in 1866 and journeyed to Burma to

\textsuperscript{253} Anderson, \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935}, 34-35.
\textsuperscript{254} Anderson, \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935}, 34-35.
engage in missionary and evangelistic work. The ABHM assigned Dr. Nathaniel Colver, a northern abolitionist and Baptist minister, to Richmond to continue the work begun by Dr. Binney. Colver secured property on 15th and Franklin Street as well as rented a series of buildings and land referred to as Lumpkin’s Jail, to use for instruction and classroom space. The property Colver secured was owned by the widow of Robert Lumpkin. Lumpkin had been a slave dealer and the property had been used as a slave holding pen and still contained the whipping posts that were used for punishment. Despite the property’s connection to slavery, Colver was able to build a partnership with Reverend James H. Holmes, the pastor of First African Baptist Church in Richmond, to garner support from the African American community. Colver gained the trust of Reverend Richard Wells of Ebenezer Baptist Church and Reverend George Jackson from Halifax County, Virginia and together they engaged the African American population in the work and mission of the school. With the support of Wells, Holmes, and Jackson, Colver was able to establish the Richmond Theological School for Freedmen. Classes at the school consisted of Biblical knowledge, geography, grammar, spelling, reading, and arithmetic.\textsuperscript{255}

By 1868, Colver, in his 70s, was beginning to suffer from poor health. He resigned and turned control of the school over to Dr. Charles Henry Corey. Corey had served as a chaplain in the Union Army and currently was serving as the Principal at Augusta Institute in Atlanta, Georgia, which later became Morehouse College. Corey would serve as chief administrator of the school for 31 years. Under Corey’s leadership, the school was able to purchase the former United States Hotel located at 19th and Main

Street and move from the Lumpkins Jail property. In 1876, the Virginia General Assembly granted the school a charter allowing it to establish a board of trustees. Enrollment grew steadily and in 1886, the school was re-organized to become a Seminary College awarding its first degree in 1890. In 1899 the school merged with Wayland Seminary and became Virginia Union University.256

The first historically black colleges in Virginia were begun as extensions of the Bureau's efforts to provide a competent class of African American teachers and leaders to continue the progress begun by the aid societies. They provided basic education at first and then educated instructors for elementary and grammar schools in Virginia. Prior to 1867, almost all of the freedmen bureau teachers were northern Caucasian females. By 1869, one half of all freedmen Bureau school teachers were of African descent. Initially, Hampton University was a normal school, organized in a manner similar to the normal schools of New England.257

*The Normal School Model*

The Normal School was a New England concept that had developed in the 1820s. While there had always been grammar school teachers, little energy had been spent on developing schools specifically designed to train teachers. In 1789, Elisha Ticknor of Massachusetts argued for the need of a grammar school to prepare young men for college and school keeping. Ticknor believed that a board of supervisors should be created to annually examine young men interested in serving as school masters by reviewing their skills at writing, reading, arithmetic, and English grammar. No action was taken on Ticknor's suggestion until 1823 when Samuel R. Hall founded a private school in the

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256 Ibid.
village of Concord dedicated to the preparation of teachers. Hall was a Congregationalist minister who had been assigned to the village by the Missionary Society of Vermont. Hall’s book, *Lectures on School Keeping*, shared the teaching methods and strategies needed to maintain an appropriate school environment. Hall’s school represented the first attempt to provide professional training for teachers in the United States.258

The first public normal schools were opened in Massachusetts, in 1839, comprised of the Lexington School for women and the Barre School, a co-educational school. The schools demanded a minimum course study of one year with a possible two-year completion program. During the first year, students were instructed in orthography, reading, grammar, music, history, arithmetic, bookkeeping, natural history, piety, morality, science, physiology, writing, algebra, and geometry. The school also provided instruction on managing the school and classroom setting through the establishment of uniform routines and procedures. The Normal School movement spread throughout New England and as benevolent aid society missionaries penetrated the American South, during the Reconstruction Era; the concept took root in the southern states. By 1875, seventy state normal schools had sprouted in the United States educating a total of 17,698 students.259

This New England model of teacher training was adopted at the Hampton Institute to help ensure a continuation of trained African American teachers in Virginia. Hampton graduate, Booker T. Washington, transplanted the model to Tuskegee Institute in

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Alabama, where he left his own unique imprint on higher education and African American education.\textsuperscript{260}

\textsuperscript{260} Ibid, 377.
In 1870, two events would correspond to bring to an end the benevolent aid societies and Freedmen's Bureau's educational work in Virginia: the ratification of the Commonwealth's new constitution and the end of federal appropriations for the Freedmen's Bureau. In order to end military reconstruction in Virginia, Congress tasked the Virginia General Assembly with adopting a new state constitution that abided by the 14th and 15th amendments to the US Constitution. Congress passed the 14th and 15th amendments to provide the former slaves with US and state citizenship, guaranteeing them due process rights under law. On December 3, 1867 a Constitutional Convention was held in the Hall of the House of Representatives in Richmond to adopt a new state constitution. The convention met from December 1867 until January 29, 1868. Of the 105 members, 25 members were of African descent, 65 members were considered northern liberals or union sympathizers, and the remaining members were Virginia natives who had aligned with the confederacy. One of the northern liberal delegates, Judge John C. Underwood was elected president of the convention; the constitution developed would historically be referred to as the Underwood Constitution. Among the major issues to be addressed by the convention was the addition of public education to the state constitution²⁶¹

Great debate commenced concerning the issue of mixed versus separate schools for Caucasian and African American children. The majority of delegates of African descent were in favor of mixed schools, but the majority of Republican liberals and confederate sympathizers were opposed to this measure. All African American delegates favored the establishment of mixed race public schools. Thomas Bayne, an African American delegate from Norfolk City, argued that, “The free public schools in this State shall be open to all classes, and no child, pupil, or scholar shall be ejected from said school on account of race.” Delegate Charles H. Porter, affiliated with the liberal Republicans, presented a resolution to establish racially integrated public schools in Virginia. The resolution stated, “The free public schools of the State shall be open and free to all persons and classes, and no one shall be excluded for any cause which does not apply equally to all persons and classes without distinction.” The majority of liberal Republicans and all of the Confederate delegates refused to endorse Porter’s resolution. Porter’s resolution was brought before the floor and was defeated by a 21 to 67 vote. S.F. Kelso, an African American delegate from Campbell County, urged the convention delegates to accept the public education provisions despite the unresolved issue concerning school segregation, highlighting the value of public education over the racial controversy. After a prolonged discussion, the African American delegates joined with the liberal Republican delegates to adopt the educational provisions to the new constitution. The issue of separate or mixed schools was left unresolved. The convention did add a measure to allow the state to delay the establishment of common schools in

262 Taylor, *Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia*, 230
Virginia until 1876 if financial resources dictated that additional years were needed before full implementation.\textsuperscript{264}

The Virginia State Constitution, developed between 1867 and 1868, was not ratified until 1869 due to a controversy over the public education provision and the granting of political rights to African Americans. Conservative members of the state argued that the public education system was too expensive to be maintained by the impoverished state. Others viewed it as a means to expand “Yankee” driven reconstruction era reforms. Eventually in 1869 a compromise between the conservative factions of the state and the Republican liberals allowed for the ratification of the state Constitution. The General Assembly quickly worked to ratify the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} amendments of the US Constitution to meet the requirements for re-admission into the Union. In October of 1869, United States President Ulysses S Grant acknowledged that the Virginia General Assembly had met the requirements for re-admission and issued a proclamation restoring Virginia to the Union. The Virginia General Assembly and Governor regained control of state affairs, effectively ending military-controlled reconstruction in Virginia.\textsuperscript{265}

In the new state constitution, Article 8 was devoted exclusively to public education. Although the article did not address the issue of mixed or separate educational facilities for black and white children, it did authorize the Virginia General Assembly to establish a free public education system. The General Assembly passed the first public education bill on July 11, 1870. The legislation stipulated that the school system was open to all children aged five to twenty-one. While the language of the Constitution did

\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 145-146.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 252-253.
not mandate segregated schools, the General Assembly established a public school system based on racial segregation. The funding process consisted of the implementation of a capitation tax of one dollar to be levied on all males, income from the state Literary Fund, and a property tax levied at 10¢ to 50¢ on every $100 dollars assessed. The General Assembly appointed Dr. W. H. Ruffner as the first Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1870. Under Ruffner’s leadership, the state witnessed the opening of 2,900 schools, 3,000 teachers, and 130,000 students. As southern states regained political control over local affairs, the federal government began dismantling Reconstruction era policies and agencies. 266

Beginning in 1868, Congressional support for the Freedmen’s Bureau was beginning to wane. A major controversy was brewing between President Andrew Johnson, the northern Democrats, and the Radical Republicans 267 over the various reconstruction era policies and the Freedmen’s Bureau. General Howard and the majority of Freedmen Bureau officials supported the Radical Republicans and their reconstruction policies in the southern states. President Johnson saw the Freedmen’s Bureau, its officials, and General Howard, as a threat to his re-election campaign. He also saw the Freedmen’s Bureau as an unconstitutional abuse of federal power. To dismantle the Freedmen’s Bureau, President Johnson began working with Congressional Democrats to remove General Howard as commissioner. In 1867, President Johnson openly labeled Howard a radical fanatic and offered prominent abolitionist and former slaver, Frederick Douglass, the position of Bureau Commissioner. Radical Republicans in Congress

266 Ibid, 146.
267 The Radical Republicans were a segment of the Republican Party characterized for their liberal position on granting African Americans civil rights and expanding reconstruction era legislation to provide land redistribution and direct aid to the former slaves. The leading Radical Republicans were Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania and Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. Bentley, History of the Freedmen’s Bureau, 200-202.
suspected that Johnson’s appointment was a scheme to disrupt the Freedmen’s Bureau and advised Douglass to decline the offer. Both President Johnson and the Radical Republicans knew that racial prejudice was still a reality in the southern and northern states. Vestiges of racial prejudice permeated the bureaucratic structure of the Freedmen’s Bureau and Republicans feared that if Douglass became Bureau Commissioner, racial prejudice on the part of officials and workers would erupt into dissension and sabotage within the Freedmen’s Bureau.²⁶⁸

After his failed attempt to remove General Howard, President Johnson modified his methods and used indirect strategies to weaken the Freedmen’s Bureau. Johnson replaced Howard’s more progressive and radical assistant commissioners with conservative, pro-southern officials. In 1868, President Johnson removed Wager Swayne, Edgar Gregory, and Joseph Mower as assistant commissioners in Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas and replaced them with Democrats Colonel William Wood and General Robert C. Buchanan. Upon Buchanan’s appointment, it was stated that the, “Republicans in Louisiana felt that they were cursed.”²⁶⁹ When Swayne was removed as assistant commissioner of Alabama the Mobile Nationalist, an African American journal, wrote, “The future looks dark and shadowy...It seems, at times, as if we must all be swept away.”²⁷⁰ Despite Johnson’s efforts, he was not seen as a capable leader by the vast majority of Republicans and his policies were not popular. During the election of 1868, Johnson lost the presidency to Republican candidate, Ulysses S. Grant. President Grant

²⁶⁸ Bentley, A History of the Freedmen’s Bureau, 196
²⁶⁹ Ibid, 197
²⁷⁰ Ibid, 197
was supported by the Radical Republicans for his open endorsement of General Howard and support of the Freedmen’s Bureau.  

Despite the election of President Grant, northern and southern Democrats, along with conservative Republicans, worked to end the Freedmen’s Bureau and terminate Reconstruction. In late 1869, General Howard was accused of mismanaging the Freedmen’s Bureau and allowing officials to engage in illegal actions including political activism and embezzlement. On April 6, 1870, Congressman Fernando Wood requested a Congressional investigation into Howard and the Freedmen’s Bureau charging Howard of, “malversation and dereliction of duty.” The US House Committee on Education and Labor convened a hearing to investigate the charges against General Howard. The hearing discussions focused on two main items, the collapse of several buildings at Howard University and allegations of mismanagement of funds at Barry Farm.  

On December 21, 1868, several buildings on the Howard University campus collapsed resulting in the injury of ten workers. General Howard had used Freedmen’s Bureau funds totaling $30,000 for the construction of permanent buildings on the campus. In granting the building contract, Howard stipulated that builder, Thomas Harvey, could only use blocks made from, “sand and lime under pressure.” The blocks were a new material that had not been previously used and only a few companies in the United States manufactured the specific blocks. The manufacturing corporation that received the building supply contract was owned by several Freedmen’s Bureau officials including John W. Alvord, Charles Howard, Eliphalet Whittlesey and General Howard.  

271 Ibid, 198-200  
272 Ibid, 207  
273 Ibid, 207  
274 Ibid, 204
General Howard sold his shares in the company prior to the agreement to prevent allegations of impropriety but he later altered the contract, purchasing the materials at a cost of $45.00 per thousand blocks instead of the initial agreed upon cost of $31.25 per thousand blocks. When the actual construction began, the contractor and laborers reported that they were afraid that the blocks were not strong enough to support the weight of the roof. Three months after completion, one end of a dormitory collapsed and the entire hospital building fell. Congressional Democrats blamed Howard for the incidents citing his poor judgment and conflict of interest.275

Howard was also accused of financial mismanagement related to his handling of the Barry Farm project. In 1867, Howard had allocated $52,000 dollars for the construction of three normal schools in the northern Virginia region. Instead of dispersing the funds, Howard purchased a 375 acre farm in Washington, DC and divided the land into acre lots to provide residential plots and small houses for 266 African American families. Democrats cited this misappropriation of funds as evidence of corruption. Congressman Wood recommended that the committee court marital Howard for his actions in both matters. The House Committee on Education and Labor, comprised of eight Republicans and two Democrats, debated the various allegations and reviewed the different reports. At the end of the proceedings, only the Democrats voted to court marital Howard. All the Republican members of the committee voted to exonerate General Howard and issued a statement of appreciation to Howard for his work.276

The House Committee on Education and Labor’s report was presented before the entire House of Representatives in 1870. Citing the inconclusiveness of the allegations

275 Ibid, 203-204
276 Ibid, 206-208
against Howard, the House of Representatives accepted the committee’s report by a
majority vote. Howard’s Congressional vindication would be a short lived victory. The
Congressional hearing exposed several financial and administrative issues within the
Freedmen’s Bureau. Beginning in late 1869, Congress started reducing the number of
Freedmen’s Bureau programs, agreeing to only support the educational, medical, and
orphan asylum services of the agency. In 1870, northern Democrats and conservative
Republicans argued that the high taxes levied to finance the Freedmen’s Bureau and other
reconstruction era policies were becoming wasteful expenses.\textsuperscript{277} In July of 1870,
Congress ceased expending federal dollars to support Bureau sponsored projects except
for a few school projects that were already in progress. By late 1870, Howard lamented
that the lack of Congressional funds had effectively ended the freedmen school program
in the southern United States.\textsuperscript{278}

Over the span of 1865 and 1870, Congress had increased educational spending
from $27,000 a year to over 1 million. By September of 1871, Congress had given a total
of $5,262,511.26 toward the expenses of freedmen schools in the South. In 1872,
Congress totally abolished the Freedmen’s Bureau, bringing an end to the educational
work of the Freedmen’s Bureau.\textsuperscript{279}

Northern concerns and advocacy for African American educational and political
rights had begun to fade as more pressing national concerns took precedent. In 1873, an
economic depression severely affected the aid societies and their church sponsors. The
Methodist Episcopal Church’s committee for freedmen relief lost 70\% of its operating
budget between 1873 and 1874. The economic depression almost bankrupted the AMA

\textsuperscript{277} Ibid, 200-202.
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid, 210-211
\textsuperscript{279} Peirce, \textit{The Freedmen’s Bureau: A Chapter in the History of Reconstruction}, 82.
as donations slowed to a trickle. The FFA was the only aid society that continued to support freedmen schools during the late 1870s and early 1880s. The FFA later joined the ranks of the other aid societies by transitioning its resources and efforts in support of higher education institutions. With the termination of the Freedmen’s Bureau in 1872, the freedmen school program officially ended in 1877 when President Rutherford Hayes ended military reconstruction in the remaining southern states.  

Chapter 7

Conclusion

According to Historian Alrutheus Taylor, the Freedmen Bureau in partnership with the various benevolence aid societies in Virginia provided instruction to 18,230 students from 1865 to 1870.\textsuperscript{281} Considering that 95% of the African American population in Virginia was recorded as illiterate by the 1860 Census, this represented a tremendous step forward in the direction of universal education. Historian Paul Peirce found that the Freedmen’s Bureau and its aid society partners educated 247,333 pupils in the southern states representing one-tenth of the African American school age population in these states.\textsuperscript{282} Historian W.E.B. DuBois commented that, “the greatest success of the Freedmen’s Bureau lay in the planting of free schools among Negroes, and the idea of free elementary education among all classes in the South.”\textsuperscript{283}

Specifically in Virginia, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. W.H. Ruffner reported in his 1871 report that the Freedmen’s Bureau,

Could not have been designed as anything more than an experiment intended first to test and then to stimulate the appetite of these people for learning. And in this view they were entirely successful in both particulars; for the children flocked to the schools, attended well, made good progress of knowledge and paid a surprising amount of money in tuition.\textsuperscript{284}

Ruffner was an advocate for public education and by the end of 1871 the number of schools for African Americans totaled 706 with an enrollment of 38,554. However a rift

\textsuperscript{281}Taylor, \textit{Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia}, 143.
\textsuperscript{282}Peirce, \textit{The Freedmen’s Bureau: A chapter in the History of Reconstruction}, 83.
\textsuperscript{283}DuBois, \textit{The Souls of Black Folk}, 28.
\textsuperscript{284}Taylor, \textit{Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia}, 144.
occurred for the first four years of public school operation between Caucasians and African Americans regarding the value of the new state-wide school system.285

Due to the economic and social realities caused by the Civil War, the General Assembly argued that the state was poverty stricken, making it extremely difficult to raise the necessary tax dollars to construct schools, purchase necessary equipment, and hire adequate teachers. Initially, children of the former affluent aristocratic families did not attend the public schools due to the historical stigma attached to free public schools aligned to the emergence of charity schools. During the late 1700s and early 1800s, charity schools had emerged in the south to provide basic grammar and math lessons for poor children. The wealthy families of Virginia did not want their children exposed to the lower classes in a general school setting that might be substandard. Virginia’s poor Caucasian citizens, many of whom had not attended schools prior to the Civil War, did not see the value in public education, thus many did not attend school.286

Virginia’s African American population appreciated the public school movement as evidenced by high enrollment numbers. In 1871, a correspondent in James City County wrote in the Dispatch, “The free schools are in full blast in our county and great excitement prevails among the colored race. Young and old, little and big, seem eager to obtain knowledge. The colored schools are brimful....On the other hand the white schools are poorly attended and doubtless will not be a success this season.”287 In a letter sent to the Enquirer on January 3, 1871 the author stated, “The negroes have indicated a

285 Ibid, 146.
286 Taylor, Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, 149
287 Ibid, 149.
commendable zeal for securing the benefits of these public schools. Every colored school is crowded, and instead of the numbers decreasing they have increased."^{288}

Economic conditions resulted in several cities and county’s closing or poorly funding schools in Virginia between 1871 and 1879. Several reports of cities and counties failing to fund schools illustrated the conflict over public education. In the city of Lynchburg, the city council was hostile toward public education and in 1876. After failing to appropriate adequate funds to run the school system, the city council closed all the public schools rather than raise taxes to finance the remaining months of school. The following year, the city council closed the only high school for Caucasian students, the Polk Street School for African Americans, and failed to raise money to repair the lower level grammar schools. The condition did not improve until 1879, when candidates more favorable toward public education won seats on the city council.^{289}

Following the restoration of the Virginian economy in the late 1880s and early 1900s, social and political forces in the Commonwealth resulted in the suppression of the political rights of African Americans and reductions in public education spending. In the post reconstruction era, northern organizations became less interested in directly assisting the less fortunate and focused more on industrial programs. In 1902, the Democratic Party regained control of the General Assembly and disposed the Underwood Constitution of 1869. The new Virginia Constitution of 1902 contained provisions that disenfranchised African Americans by limiting their voting rights through the implementation of intelligence and property tests. The legislative agreement to maintain

^{288} Ibid, 149.
separate but equal schools was also rescinded by the General Assembly with financial contributions being distributed unequally. In a report issued by the United States Department of the Interior in 1916, the Bureau of Education cited that Virginia, on a per capita basis, expended $9.64 for every Caucasian school age child and only $2.74 for every African American school age child.\(^{290}\) The inequality of the educational system would lead to another partnership to address this matter. Unlike the 1860s when the federal government worked with religious and benevolent organizations to provide educational opportunities for African Americans, northern business leaders and benefactors would partner with African American communities and local school leaders to help construct schools and provide additional funding for teacher training and school construction. Julius Rosenwald, Anna T. Jeanes, George Peabody, and John D. Rockefeller would play an instrumental role in the education of Virginia's African Americans from 1910 until 1935 when the New Deal policies implemented by the Federal government began to address some of the inequalities.\(^{291}\)

The union between the Freedmen's Bureau and northern aid societies was significant. It was a unique partnership between the federal government and religious organizations to provide public education services. The union documented the first incident where the federal government was directly involved in the area of public education. The union was not perfect and failed to reach its ambitious goal of educating and lifting the entire African American population from illiteracy to educational independence. However, the union provided the catalyst for the formation of the nation's


Historically Black Colleges and Universities. For Virginia and the other southern states, the greatest impact of the union was the establishment of a state-wide public education system. Although it would take Virginia 80 years to develop an integrated school system in which both Caucasian and African American children would be educated together, the seed for a unified educational system open to all students for their common welfare was planted by the actions of the Freedmen’s Bureau and the benevolent aid societies of the United States.
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### Partial Listing of Freedmen's Bureau School in Virginia, 1865-1870

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<thead>
<tr>
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*Source: Data adapted from Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Virginia, 1865-1870, RG-105, Roll-15.*
Vita

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