SUMMARY:

How's first report as Bureau Superintendent in Staunton sheds light on the early post-war situation of freed blacks. He writes that their new freedom seems tenuous as their former masters threaten to reestablish slavery once Union troops have left. How also notes that he has had trouble hiring military personnel to staff the office, and so has hired civilians.

Bureau R. F. & A. Lands
Hd. Qrs. Sixth District Va

Col O. Brown, Assist Commissioner Va
Richmond, Va Staunton Va

Aug 8th 1865
Colonel

...Thus their former masters are not favorable to the education of the freedmen, and are not willing that they should settle on their lands at any rate...

The presence of military authority is, and for months will be indispensable for the maintenance of the rights of the freedmen in this section of our country.

am Colonel
Very Respectfully Your Obedient Servant

W. Storer How, Capt. & Aqm
Supt Sixth Dist Va
Nelson Irwin writes a very poignant and wrenching letter to General Schofield, the head of the Potomac Military District, pleading for justice and protection for blacks. He refers to an upcoming trial in Staunton and claims that blacks live under a "reign of terror". Irwin asks Schofield to use military power to intervene on the side of the law, writing, "We gave to the rich white man our best years, our strength, our youth, our sweat, and now that we are free, we get in return meanness, tyranny and injustice." Judging from the paper trail, this letter was passed all the way to Orlando Brown.

Staunton

Oct. 8th 1866
General

Living within your military department, I am forced to appeal to you in my own behalf... There is a deep laid organization here that governs and controls every thing by might in defiance of truth and justice. On any, even the least pretense a black man is taken up and imprisoned. His color is his condemnation, and every lawless act committed he is accused of. At present my brethren are living in a reign of terror and many of them are locked up in Stauton Gaol.

An act of theft has been committed here by one or two black men and lo! four are taken up and all of us are accused. Some of us had to fly, who were and are as innocent of the crime as you are. The Freedmen's bureau is ineffective, laughed at and despised.

I am General
Your very humble Srvt

Nelson Irwin

The Commanding Gen'l, Richmond Va

SUMMARY:

Waldo asks for a teacher to be sent to Laurel Hill, a community east of Staunton. He specifically asks for a black teacher, so that he or she will be able to board with a black family, citing white opposition to black schools.

Bureau R.F. and A.L.
4th Division 9th Sub Dist. Va
Capt. J. A. McDonnell  
Sub Asst Comr Staunton  

Nov. 20/68  

The colored people of Laurel Hill [Augusta Co.] are in need of a teacher for a school [which] they are ready to open. They have a comfortable log school house, for the Erection of which this Bureau appropriated $40.00.  

On account of the poverty of the colored people in that vicinity they could pay the board only of a teacher.  

On account of hostility of the white population toward colored schools, the people would prefer a colored teacher, as he or she could then board in a colored family.  

Can the Bureau or Am. Missionary Association send a teacher to this school? There will be about 25 or 30 scholars...  

Very Respectfully  

Roswell Waldo A.S.A.C.