

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands,
WASHINGTON, D. C., May 22d, 1865.

CIRCULAR, }
No. 3. }

Whereas a large amount of land in the State of Virginia, and in other States that have been in insurrection, has been abandoned by disloyal owners and is now being cultivated by Freedmen; and whereas the owners of such lands are attempting to obtain possession of them, and thus deprive the Freedmen of the fruits of their industry: It is ordered that all abandoned lands in said States now under cultivation by the Freedmen be retained in their possession until the crops now growing shall be secured for their benefit, unless full and just compensation be made for their labor and its products, and for expenditures.

The above order will not be so construed as to relieve disloyal persons from the consequences of their disloyalty; and the application for the restoration of their lands, by this class of persons, will in no case be entertained by any military authority.

O. O. HOWARD, Major General,
Commissioner Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, May 22d, 1865.

All military authorities will sustain the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, and aid him in the execution of the above order.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

E. D. TOWNSEND,

Ass't Adj't Gen.

OFFICIAL:

Paubinger
Lieut., Act. Ass't Adjutant General.

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