

A Political Education: George T. Ruby and the Texas Freedmen's Bureau

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George T. Ruby, one of two black state senators who served during Reconstruction in Texas, has received considerable attention from historians of the Lone Star State postwar experience. Much of the focus upon Ruby has been his political career, the characteristics that brought him to the attention of the Republican Party, and a brief explanation of his background. His performance in the Louisiana and Texas Freedmen's Bureau has been ignored, but this interlude in Ruby's life prepared him for his entrance into local and state politics. Ruby's sojourn in the Texas Freedmen's Bureau provided the foundation for his later prominence in state Republican circles.¹

As a Galveston teacher, Ruby became well known in the city and to the Bureau. He brought considerable expertise with him from Louisiana, where he had been employed as a teacher, a principal and as a traveling agent for the Freedmen's Bureau to identify convenient locations for the establishment of new schools. In both states, Ruby made tours that assisted him in presenting his ideas about black freedom and in meeting important local black and white community leaders. This knowledge of education, organization, and an acquaintance with the condition of Texas blacks assisted Ruby in his future endeavors.²

Moreover, Ruby, as a member of the Bureau, evaluated various agents to determine their fitness for their positions and how effective they were in dealing with local black communities. Ruby, one of the few black agents in the entire South, evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of various white agents, informing headquarters whether they were, in fact, serving the various black communities in their subdistricts in a manner which would promote economic well-being and civil rights. Southern blacks had now been enfranchised, so it was important that they

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understand the significance of their political power and how to use it. In short, Ruby used his Bureau position to further black equality.

Much has been written about Ruby's later political tenure in the state senate and of his influence and power in Galveston. However, his early years when he was establishing himself, setting up a political base, and becoming better known throughout the Texas black community have been largely neglected. The focus in this essay is Ruby's connection with the Bureau as educator and traveling agent and how he used the agency as a springboard for his election to the state legislature. Without this initial acquaintance with the Bureau's activities and its problems in dealing with post-war race relations it may have been difficult for Ruby to have made such dramatic strides in the political arena. The Bureau provided a necessary platform to launch that career.

Testifying in March 1880 before a United States Senate select committee on black emigration to Kansas, George T. Ruby declared that his occupation had been that "of journalist as well as that of an educationalist." Queried on whether he had "given special attention to the condition and wants and treatment" of Southern blacks, Ruby claimed that he had "intimate relations with them" and became acquainted with their social, civil, and political situation during and after the war. Throughout his testimony, Ruby said little about his Texas political experience. He did suggest, however, that it was his Bureau activities that prepared him for an entry into the new atmosphere of black political equality surrounding Reconstruction.³

Born in New York City two decades before the outbreak of the Civil War, Ruby later moved to Maine with his family. Almost nothing is known about his formative years, but in 1861 Ruby became involved with James Redpath's Haitian project and traveled to the island as a journalist to observe conditions and promote immigration by United States blacks as an alternative to slavery and restrictions on personal freedom. Redpath's scheme collapsed and Ruby eventually found his way to Louisiana. Exactly when he arrived in Union-occupied New Orleans is unknown, but it may have been at the beginning of 1864. For the next two years he taught school, served as a principal, and sought out new sites for the establishment of schools for black children.⁴

From 1864 until 1867, Ruby labored much of the time for the government organization commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Officially entitled the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, the agency was created by Congress in March 1865 to assist the former slaves in their transition to freedom. A national commissioner directed the Bureau, while an assistant commissioner supervised each former Confederate state. Field agents served in cities, towns, and

villages across the South. A major responsibility was the encouragement of schools for blacks. Well-educated and highly literate, Ruby was well suited to become involved in the advancement of black education.⁵

The specific event that compelled Ruby to migrate to Texas occurred in September 1866, in Jackson, Louisiana. A few months previous to the incident, Ruby had visited East Feliciana Parish as a traveling school agent for the Freedmen's Bureau, with the task of evaluating established schools and teachers and searching for locations on which to found new schools. After he completed his tenure with the Bureau, Ruby returned to Jackson as a teacher, where he immediately encountered white opposition to the renewal of a school for blacks. Ruby proceeded to teach classes where he boarded. One day a white group appeared, seized Ruby, "belabored" him with the "muzzles of their revolvers" and threw him in a creek. It was time to leave Louisiana.⁶

Although their influence is not clearly documented, two men from Ruby's Louisiana Bureau days may have promoted his budding political career. They were Edwin M. Wheelock and B. Rush Plumley. Both would become somewhat important figures in the Texas political arena. Wheelock was superintendent of education in 1866 and earned a reputation for being disputatious and more concerned about religious ideas than promoting black education. Texas Assistant Commissioner Charles Griffin removed him from his post. Plumley had initially been employed by the Bureau in the education department in Louisiana, but like Ruby moved to Texas. He later served as a representative from Galveston in the Twelfth Legislature.⁷

It is not known precisely when Ruby arrived in Texas, but it appears to have been in the fall of 1866. It did not take him long to secure a teaching position with the Freedmen's Bureau in Galveston through his old acquaintances from Louisiana, Wheelock and Plumley. On October 15, 1866, Ruby began teaching at School No. 2, held in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He started with a "small attendance," but by the end of the month he had admitted 10 boys and 21 girls into the day school, two boys and three girls into the night school, and 20 adults and 40 children into his Sunday classes. The majority of students paid tuition, of which he received \$37.54. Ruby believed that prospects were good for increased attendance.⁸

During the period Ruby taught school in Galveston, he instructed over 1,900 students in his day, night, and Sunday school classes. Ruby must have been a particularly effective teacher, as the night school demonstrated spectacular growth in the early months of his tenure. Student tuition became the major source of Ruby's income, which amounted to \$359.19, or an average of about \$44.90 a

month. In January 1867, Ruby informed the superintendent that "for the first time since my labors here as a teacher I hope to pay my expense from money received for my duties as such." In his last report, Ruby believed that the "general progress" of the school had been "commendable and highly creditable to the pupils."⁹

On May 31, 1867, Ruby resigned his position as principal of the freedmen's school at the Colored Methodist Church. His resignation coincided with his appointment by Texas Assistant Commissioner Charles Griffin as an agent in the Bureau itself at a salary of \$1,200 a year. Griffin, in urging Ruby's selection, stated that the black Galvestonian was "a very intelligent mulatto" and had been engaged in freedpeople's education in Louisiana and Texas since June 1864. "He is an energetic man," Griffin informed Howard, "and has great influence among his people."¹⁰

In June, before Ruby joined the Bureau, he briefly assumed a position with the Texas State Council of the Union League. Although roundly condemned for a host of unverified sins, the Union League of America (ULA) was the institutional structure through which the Republican Party organized the Texas black community. Ruby was prominent in establishing various chapters throughout the state and later became president of the ULA. Although the League is often described as a secret society, in fact its major purpose was to imbue black Texans with the Republican philosophy of legal and political equality. Unlike its adversary, the Ku Klux Klan, the League rarely resorted to midnight assassinations and violence.¹¹ In Ruby's initial foray into the internal affairs of the League, he found himself embroiled in controversy. One of the Council's agents, Reverend H. Reedy, encountered "serious opposition" from Brazoria County blacks, who spread what Ruby styled as "malignant falsehoods" (that Reedy was an "emissary of the rebels"). Opponents subsequently threatened Reedy's life. Ruby attempted to mediate the dispute, but with little success. He partially convinced the freedmen of Reedy's "good intentions" but the damage had been irreparable and Reedy failed to establish a League chapter. Highly disappointed over Reedy's failure, Ruby wrote it had retarded the "growth of so important a movement for our people."¹²

In July 1867, Ruby received a promotion from an agent to a Texas Freedmen's Bureau official. Assigned to duty touring the various Bureau subdistricts, Ruby's objective was to evaluate the Bureau's performance. First, Ruby would determine how effectively the local Bureau agent was conducting his responsibilities. Second, Ruby was required to observe how the black communities in the agent's region of operation responded to the Bureau's administration. Third, Ruby was to report on the status of race relations in the particular areas that he

visited and judge how this influenced the work of the Bureau agent - in short, how Reconstruction was progressing at the local level.

Initially, Ruby traveled to Brazos, Robertson, Falls, and Bell counties to investigate conditions in those areas. At Millican in Brazos County, his first destination, which was headquarters for the Bureau's Twentieth Subdistrict, Ruby discovered serious problems. The Bureau agent, Edward Miller, suffered from "bilious fever." Afflicted with chronic rheumatism, nephritis, and acute uremia, Miller's health was poor and he was not in condition to fulfill his responsibilities. In addition, he was almost 40 years old, whereas most other agents were in their mid-to-late twenties. He had lost an arm and received other serious wounds in the war, which left him physically impaired.

Miller, who at this point may have also been infected with yellow fever, complained to Ruby of the "multiplicity of his duties" and wished to be transferred to a position that had "less labor and care." Ruby observed Miller transact business. The agent impressed Ruby "as an earnest officer who would do all he could but who rather lacks the 'savoir faire' in execution." The more "thoughtful" freedmen, Ruby wrote, complained that Miller simply was not active enough in performing his job. This resulted in murder being so "rampant" that he "dared not act as he should." Actually, despite his limitations, Miller had investigated several killings and discovered that some federal soldiers had been paid to "stir up" black laborers.¹³

Ruby believed that the subdistrict that Miller supervised was "an exceedingly rough one" and nearly as bad as he later found in Robertson County. He felt that the "people need a little rough handling." Incapacitated as Miller was for such activity from his various debilities, Ruby suggested that the area needed "an energetic faithful officer who can and will materially aid in the work of 'Reconstruction.'" But Miller was not totally inactive. With Ruby's assistance Miller apparently formed a Union League chapter in Millican, as Ruby rather cryptically notes in a letter dated July 26, 1887.¹⁴

Nevertheless, Ruby's evaluation of Miller suggested that a change in the field officer for the subdistrict was required. Ruby had spoken with the freedpeople about their feelings in relation to the agent and they admitted they had little confidence in his ability. He learned that they did not feel Miller protected their rights to the fullest, and that an individual should be appointed who did not suffer the disabilities that affected him. Ruby concluded that the Bureau was "not happy here in its appointment" of Miller as agent, the complaint being "want of activity and energy" in the *administration of duties* in a subdistrict notorious for the

general lawlessness of its rebel inhabitants."¹⁵ Records do not provide evidence of Miller's fate.

In Robertson County, Ruby visited the town of Sterling, Bureau headquarters for this subdistrict. Here he encountered a "terrible state of affairs" involving freedmen and planters. Ruby believed the agent, Joshua L. Randall, to be "on the right side and determined to do his duty," but the rebels avowed their intention of "shooting the 'Bureau.'" Randall had been trained as a lawyer, so he was legally equipped to challenge the planter elite in behalf of the freedmen who had been cheated out of their wages. The planters attempted to intimidate Randall with violence and even established a reward on his life. Randall, however, would not be deterred. Popular with the black community, he even went so far as to form a posse composed of blacks as a military escort.¹⁶

When Ruby arrived, Randall was "just up" from a severe attack of "bilious fever." While sick, the agent had "sent repeatedly for the doctors, [but] not one would come near him." Ruby was impressed with Randall's efforts and declared that the Bureau field officer was "active and true in the discharge of his duties and exceedingly popular among the freedmen and to the only Union white man known to live in the county," a Mr. Thompson, a bookkeeper for Ranger and Company. Being a Unionist, Thompson was in a precarious political position and could therefore offer no significant assistance to Randall. Ruby left Robertson County believing race and political relations were so disruptive that he feared for the future of long term progress for the freedmen.¹⁷

Ruby could breathe a sigh of relief when he left Brazos and Robertson counties and moved into Falls and Bell counties. In Falls County, Ruby felt comfortable and commented that "everything is quiet and orderly." But this was only on the surface. In fact, tensions were mounting in the county because of the anti-black actions of a previous Bureau agent. Ruby contended that in the appointment of agent F. B. Sturgis the Bureau gained "a judicious firm officer who endeavors to do his duty despite reports to the contrary." But Ruby soon discovered that the freedpeople and the Unionists were not pleased with the assignment of Sturgis to the Bureau post.¹⁸

Sturgis, who was from Pennsylvania, had a lengthy tenure in the Texas Freedmen's Bureau at various stations. In his initial efforts at LaGrange, Sturgis so pleased the white community in his efforts that even conservative Governor James W. Throckmorton wrote a letter of praise to General J. B. Kiddoo, the second assistant commissioner of the Texas Bureau. But when Sturgis replaced A. P. Delano at Marlin in Falls County trouble ensued. Delano, whom a Bureau inspector described as a "general overseer for the planters," had allowed employers

to physically abuse their laborers and engaged in assorted unlawful pursuits. Sturgis, who by now had observed Delano's activities somewhat, participated in Delano's indictment, turning many whites against Sturgis.¹⁹

The leading Union men complained to Ruby that on "several occasions" Sturgis, in denouncing Delano's policies, had been guilty of refusing to listen to freedmen's complaints about planter use of physical abuse ("blows and sticks") to discipline the laborers. Ruby asked the complainants if their county was quiet and did the agent "really do all he can?" After some investigation, Ruby concluded that it was in Sturgis's favor that under him the subdistrict had been "quiet and orderly when disorder and murder have stalked rampant all about him." Nevertheless, there was evidence that during Sturgis's tenure the freedmen were being "unfairly treated." The belief prevailed that violence would soon increase because registration for the fall election had commenced and whites were expected to use intimidation to prevent black registration. Considering the circumstances, only military intervention could preserve peace.²⁰

Ruby attempted to negotiate some kind of compromise between the loyalists and Sturgis. Ruby asked the Unionists why they did not confront the Bureau agent and inform him in unambiguous terms that he was "unwittingly perhaps frightening the freedmen from any action in the work of Reconstruction." The Unionists quickly responded that they had approached Sturgis once to no avail, but that they were willing to try again. Ruby also spoke with Sturgis about how matters stood. Sturgis, Ruby reported, expressed a "warm desire to act in harmony with the party," and Ruby discovered him to be a "very affable courteous gentleman," whom he hoped would settle his differences with the black and white Union men.²¹ Once again Ruby moved on before a resolution could be reached.

After completing his evaluation tour, Ruby took to the road once again in August to organize temperance societies and establish schools among the freedpeople throughout his assigned district of Brazos, Robertson, Falls, McLennan, Hill, Ellis, Navarro, Leon, Freestone, Bosque, and Bell counties. Beginning in Millican, Ruby found the school suspended (probably because of the yellow fever epidemic) but the freedmen expressed an eagerness to revive it. Millican blacks met with Ruby and pledged themselves to maintain 100 or more pupils. The instructor would be Kelsey, the registrar, who was also a "competent teacher." When voter registration ended, the school would open.²²

As Ruby traveled about, observing the workings of the Bureau, and the response to each agent's performance by the black community, he learned of seemingly small matters that in reality were not insignificant. The Bureau did not have an enviable record of paying its obligations quickly. For example, while in

Millican it came to Ruby's attention that Mary and Ella Smith, two teachers, owed a Mr. I. Myers, a freedman, and other black citizens, \$50 for board. Miller, the Bureau agent, had been requested to receive the various vouchers for the amount due. Trying to expedite payment, Ruby told headquarters that Myers was a "hard working man" and in need of the money.²³ Such matters were numerous and time consuming, and in the end it was impossible even for a man of Ruby's energy and interest to settle them all.

For example, in Robertson County, Ruby found the educational situation almost hopeless. He emphasized that no freedmen's school could be established where the freed people did not demonstrate a strong unity. The "fiendish lawlessness of the whites who murder and outrage the free people with the same indifference as displayed in the killing of snakes or other venomous reptiles" would prevent such an undertaking. Local blacks, however, refused to concede total defeat and continued to make plans to educate their children. Such was the case when Ruby visited the Ranger Plantation, where he was told by the laborers that regardless of the opposition, they intended to open a school about the beginning of October.²⁴

In addition to his education concerns and as part of his assignment, Ruby focused upon the subject of drinking or temperance. This was a favorite theme of the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, Oliver Otis Howard, and also of the missionary associations that sent teachers to Texas. The Texas Bureau rarely required that its agents stress the importance of temperance. After all, they had enough other responsibilities. Perhaps being black and educated gave Ruby an advantage in speaking to a black audience, and he felt that he spoke to the freedmen with a "great deal of success on the importance of Temperance." They manifested much interest in the subject and Ruby obtained in Brazos County 200 signers to the "pledge."²⁵

Ruby deemed it neither "wise" nor "expedient" to remain too long in Robertson County. After he induced more than 50 to sign temperance pledges, Ruby quickly moved on to Falls County. The school had been suspended for the summer. In Marlin, the county seat, Ruby proposed that a school be opened as enough freedmen lived in this section to fully warrant its establishment. He thought it might attract 30 or 40 pupils. In addition, several large plantations existed in the county where schools might be opened. On the Stallworth place, Ruby found the owner favorable to the "school movement" and disposed to facilitate its organization, promising that by October a school would be in operation.²⁶

At a "camp meeting," Ruby addressed a large number of laborers and planters, stressing the twin themes of temperance and education. He was "listened

to with a great deal of attention." The 100 people who signed the temperance pledge also agreed to prominently display the certificate in their homes. Others promised to practice temperance in the future and to conduct themselves as befitted "their new condition as citizens." Although some Sunday schools were in operation on area plantations, the freedpeople in the area needed the Bureau's assistance to establish regular schools.²⁷

At Waco in McLennan County, a "prosperous inland town," a school under the direction of a principal and an assistant teacher with over 100 pupils had been organized. At a meeting 300 freedpeople signed temperance pledges and listened attentively to speeches on education and abstinence. In east Waco, freedmen maintained a small private school, but Ruby was unable to gather any additional information. On the Downs plantation, nine miles below Waco, Downs indicated a willingness to educate the freedchildren, who numbered about 30, and promised to give aid and provide a building if a male teacher could be sent. Other black settlements in the county required schools that Ruby thought could be used to "good advantage."²⁸

Ruby found Hill County sparsely settled and the town of Hillsborough was a "squalid affair of a few tumble down houses." Fifty or 60 black children inhabited the place and the freedmen were desirous to establish a school. One or two Union men privately told Ruby that they would contribute "their moral support," no "mean thing," Ruby remarked, "in a rebel community." In Ellis County, the Bureau agent was hampered in his effort to maintain schools by the vast amount of violence aimed at black institutions. In Dresden (Navarro County), 50 children awaited a school but again the "terrorism engendered by the brutal and murderous acts of the inhabitants, mostly rebels," wrote Ruby, prevented a school from being established anywhere.²⁹

Moving on to Spring Hill, also in Navarro County, Ruby characterized the town as "a miserable rebel hole" and a "community of unreconstructed rebels." Despite the prevailing attitude, a Unionist by the name of Richy donated a large lot upon which could be erected a school/church building. Black and white loyalists agreed to cooperate in organizing a school and another "unflinching Unionist" named Charles Winn agreed to be the teacher. To Ruby, this demonstrated "how much and how deeply the Union men of this section feel the importance of education for the freed and newly enfranchised people." He did not visit Leon, Freestone, and Bosque counties because of the numerous outrages that continued to be committed in those sections.³⁰

According to Ruby, Bell County was noted for its lack of murders and "grave outrages" during the war. In its aftermath though, the freedmen were

abused and the Union cause suffered. "Ultra secessionists" and outlaws who promoted constant turmoil had plagued the subdistrict, but by the time of Ruby's arrival affairs had quieted somewhat. At Belton, the county seat, a "poor struggling village rough and uncouth in looks," as were its inhabitants, a freedman had begun a school with about 60 children.

In Salado (southern Bell County), Ruby visited the Bureau agent, Matthew Young. Young had assumed his Bureau agent position only about one month before Ruby arrived.³¹ Apparently, the opposition to the Bureau in this area had not yet marshaled its forces, because when Ruby visited the county, Young told him that all was "generally quiet." One of the major reasons for this peacefulness, Ruby soon discovered, was that only a few freedpeople lived in this vicinity. Ruby found their community "an extremely moral one for this county and Texas." They sold no whiskey, so no temperance lecture was necessary. Perhaps because of the community's moral and temperate tone, violence had rarely occurred. Ruby considered it a success that "but one freedman" had been "taken out and hung within a year." As political tensions began to increase so would the number of outrages, but Ruby was gone by then.³²

Ruby stopped at Georgetown on his return trip to Galveston. The freedpeople had purchased a lot upon which stood a house measuring 20 feet by 30 feet, to be used for school purposes. Unfortunately, the building required \$250 of repairs to make it usable. Local blacks did not possess this amount. They requested the Bureau's financial assistance, as they had approximately 50 children in the area who were anxious to attend school. Even the white former rebels - Ruby called them "unreconstructed" - appeared to be "friendly to the proposed school." The freedpeople manifested "much anxiety" about their school, Ruby wrote, and the Bureau agent had "promised to represent them and their wants."³³

Although Ruby never specifically stated his precise educational philosophy, he did think it significant as a community endeavor, as evident from the number of speeches he gave on the subject. Ruby obviously understood the importance of an education, particularly for a large illiterate people and the challenges that awaited them in a new society. But he also thought schooling valuable for the loyal whites as well. Ruby believed that "schools ought to be established in every interior county of the State" to benefit both the freedpeople and the Unionist whites, who would also send their children. Ruby emphasized that this class of whites who supported the Republican Party were "socially ostracized and debarred even from school privileges by their rebel neighbors."³⁴

Ruby remained with the Bureau through September 1867, but he had begun to focus his energies upon political organization and the Union League. In

late August, Governor E. M. Pease appointed him a notary public for Galveston County, which gave him an official position from which to expand his activities. Active in the Republican Party since early in the year, Ruby had served in a series of minor offices while performing his Bureau duties. This heralded his entrance into the Texas political scramble, and he was elected a delegate to the constitutional convention that met in 1868-69.

His Louisiana and Texas Bureau experience had been an excellent training ground for the political machinations he would encounter.³⁵ Ruby had learned first hand in his county visits the seriousness of the problems that freedmen and their families faced in the basic need for education and fair labor treatment, not to mention political rights.

As a northern born black man and a mulatto, Ruby needed familiarity with southern mores and white attitudes in order to launch a successful political career. His tours of duty with the Bureau in Louisiana and Texas gave him the opportunity to observe, evaluate, and respond to the condition of southern blacks at the close of the war and during Reconstruction. In an educational setting or as a traveling agent and organizer, whether for schools, temperance societies, or the Union League, Ruby gained invaluable experience and cemented his ties with the former slaves in order to understand their wants and needs. He worked long and hard, and suffered indignities, to promote the ideas of the Republican Party and the betterment of his race.

Ruby was one of a handful of black Bureau agents in the entire South. Given the responsibility to evaluate and determine the future status of white agents in both Louisiana and Texas, Ruby received an insider's viewpoint into organizational politics and the tenor of the times. In addition, he came to understand the attitudes and hopes of both urban and rural former slaves. Working among them for three years, Ruby learned a great deal about their commitment to education and civil rights often in the face of overwhelming odds. Ruby's Bureau experience gave him the knowledge, the contacts, and the organization of the Union League to enhance his future as a skillful politician.

NOTES

¹ The best account of Ruby's career is Carl M. Moneyhon, "George T. Ruby and the Politics of Expediency in Texas," *Southern Black Leaders of the Reconstruction Era*, Howard N. Rabinowitz, editor (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 363-92.

Other essays worth consulting are J. Mason Brewer, *Negro Legislators of Texas* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1970 [1912]), 20, 23, 30, 53, 55-57, 61, 63, 75, 81, 115, 125-26; Randall B. Woods, "George T. Ruby: A Black Militant in the White Business Community," *Red River Valley Historical Review* 1 (Autumn 1974), 269-80; Barry A. Crouch, "Self-determination and Local Black Leaders in Texas," *Phylon* 39 (December 1978), 346-48, 354; James Smallwood, "G. T. Ruby: Galveston's Black Carpetbagger in Reconstruction Texas," *Houston Review* 5 (Winter 1983), 24-33; Merline Pitre, "George T. Ruby: The Party Loyalist," in *Through Many Dangers, Toils and Snares: The Black Leadership of Texas, 1868-1900* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1985), 166-173; "The Evolution of Black Political Participation in Reconstruction Texas," *East Texas Historical Journal* 26 (1988), 36-45. Two brief sketches are "G. T. Ruby," *The Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), II 513, and Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 187. Two surveys of Texas black Legislators during this era, with attendant background information, are Alwyn Barr, "Black Legislators of Reconstruction Texas," *Civil War History* 32 (December 1986), 340-352; Crouch, "Hesitant Recognition: Texas Black Politicians, 1865-1900," *East Texas Historical Journal* 31 (Spring 1993), 13-34. It is unfortunate that no Ruby papers exist because he does merit a full-scale biography.

² For Ruby's Louisiana activities see Crouch, "Education and Politics: George T. Ruby and the Louisiana Freedmen's Bureau" (unpublished manuscript).

³ *Report and Testimony of the Select Committee of the United States Senate to Investigate the Causes of the Removal of the Negroes From the Southern States to the Northern States*, 26th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Report No. 693 [Serial 1899] (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), Part II, 37-38. Ruby's involvement in the Kansas exodus is briefly discussed in Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 213, 215-6, 245-46, 254.

⁴ Rodney Carlisle, *The Roots of Black Nationalism* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 75-76; Willis B. Boyd, "James Redpath and American Negro Colonization in Haiti, 1860-1862," *Americas* 12 (December 1955), 169-182.

⁵ There is no satisfactory account of the Bureau but in general see George R. Bentley, *A History of the Freedmen's Bureau* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955); William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Donald G. Nieman, *To Set the Law in Motion: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Legal Rights of Blacks, 1865-1868* (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1979). On the Texas Bureau see two widely divergent studies by William L. Richter, *Overreached on All Sides: The Freedmen's Bureau Administrators in Texas, 1865-1868* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991); Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992).

⁶ Senate, Report No. 693 [Serial 1899], 55; *Weekly State Journal* (Austin), July 28, 1870, 1. George T. Ruby (Traveling Agent, Texas) to Charles Garretson (Acting Assistant Adjutant General [AAAG], Assistant Commissioner (AC), Letters received (LR), R-26, Texas, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105 (National Archives). Hereafter Ruby will be abbreviated GTR and unless otherwise indicated all citations will be to the Texas Bureau records in RG 105.

⁷ Richter, *Overreached on All Sides*, 212-213.

⁸ GTR, School Report for October 1866, Texas, Superintendent of Education (SOE). For background on Galveston during the immediate postwar years see Stephen Franklin Shannon, "Galvestonians and Military Reconstruction, 1865-1867" (Master's thesis, Rice University, 1975).

⁹ GTR School Reports, October 1866-May 1867; School Record, Vol. 21, 4; Records of Schools, Vol. 23, 178, 181, 184, 187, 190, 194, 197; Records of Schools, Vol. 23, 68-75, all in Texas, SOE. Ruby did not explain how he paid the expenses from October to January. The general status of black education after the war can be followed in Alton Hornsby, Jr., "The Freedmen's Bureau Schools in Texas, 1865-1870," *Southwestern Historical*

Quarterly 76 (April 1973), 397-417. It is not based upon manuscript sources, which are voluminous for the Texas Bureau.

¹⁰ GTR (Galveston) to J. T. Kirkman (AAAG), May 25, 1867, AC, LR, R-25; Charles Griffin (AC, Texas) to Oliver Otis Howard (Commissioner), May 24, 1867, 55; Griffin to Howard, May 24, 1867, 55-56, both in Vol. 5, both in AC, LR.

¹¹ For general background see Clement Mario Silvestro, "None But Patriots: The Union Leagues in Civil War and Reconstruction" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1959).

¹² GTR (Galveston) to Griffin, April 10, 1867, AC, LR, R-96; General Orders, Special Orders, Circulars, and Rosters, AC, Texas, 1865-1869, Vol. 9, 374-75, 380-83. On the Union Leagues see Moneyhon, *Republishing in Reconstruction Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

¹³ GTR (Marlin) to Kirkman, July 26, 1867, Texas, AC, LR, R-186; Richter, *Overreached On All Sides*, 241.

¹⁴ GTR (Marlin) to Kirkman, July 26, 1867, Texas, AC, LR, R-186; Ruby also observed that few Union men lived in the county. Ruby's habit of not identifying people, only using their last name, or simply referring to their occupation, makes it difficult, at times, to follow his activities.

¹⁵ GTR (Galveston) to Kirkman, August 12, 1867, Texas, SOE, LR, R-49.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; Richter, *Overreached On All Sides*, 256-257.

¹⁷ GTR (Galveston) to Kirkman, August 12, 1867, Texas, SOE, LR, R-49; GTR (Marlin) to Kirkman, July 27, 1867, Texas, AC, LR, R-187.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Richter, *Overreached On All Sides*, 180-182.

²⁰ GTR (Marlin) to Kirkman, July 27, 1867, AC, LR, R-187.

²¹ *Ibid.* Ruby told headquarters that he wrote on the subject "as the matter may assume proportion." In sum, the political situation and violence could become serious and require attention.

²² GTR (Galveston) to Kirkman, August 12, 1867, SOE, LR, R-49; GTR (Millican) to SOE, July 21, 1867, SOE, LR, R-44; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of the Freedmen in the South, 1861-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 143.

²³ GTR (Millican) to SOE, July 21, 1867, SOE, LR, R-44.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; GTR (Galveston) to SOE, July 28, 1867, SOE, LR, R-44.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; GTR (Galveston) to Kirkman, August 12, 1867, SOE, LR, R-49.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.* A Sunday school did exist close to the Robertson plantation with 40 or 50 pupils, taught by a former Bureau agent. Problems had arisen, however, because of a misunderstanding between the Union men and the agent, who had elicited "considerable feeling" among the loyalists.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.* Ruby also claimed that Winn was an "educated talented gentleman." He further asserted that Charles E. Culver, the Bureau agent, was "winning high encomiums from the Union people" who were pleased with his "efficiency and energy." On Culver, who was later assassinated, see James M. Smallwood, "Charles E. Culver, a Reconstruction Agent in Texas: The Work of Local Freedmen's Bureau Agents and the Black Community," *Civil War History* 27 (December 1981), 350-61.

³¹ *Ibid.*; GTR (Marlin) to Kirkman, July 27, 1867, AC, LR, R-187; Richter, *Overreached On All Sides*, 174-175.

³² GTR (Galveston) to Kirkman, August 12, 1867, SOE, LR, R-49; GTR (Galveston) to Kirkman, August 17, 1867, AC, LR.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ General Orders, Special Orders, Circulars, and Rosters, AC, Texas, 1865-1869, September 1867, Vol. 9, 403, Texas, AC; GTR (Galveston) to E. M. Pease, August 16, 1867, Governor's Letters (Pease), (Texas State Library, Austin); Pease to GTR, August 22, 1867, Executive Record Book, Governor's Papers (Pease), 28, TSL; Moneyhon, "George T. Ruby and the Politics of Expediency in Texas," 364-68. Ruby's application for the notary public position had endorsements from Charles Griffin, Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, and B. Rush Plumley (Ruby's old Louisiana contact) and Oscar F. Hunsaker, prominent in the Galveston and Austin political arenas, respectively.

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