

Industrial School, Roanoke Island

This school was opened November 25, 1865, and closed July 27, 1866. Instruction has been given to 130; most of these were wholly unskilled in the use of the needle and scissors, and their improvement would do credit to any class of Northern apprentices. The class employed has been those who have no other means of clothing themselves or their families, and who have been obliged to struggle hard for food enough to prevent starvation, consequently have been encouraged to engage in any other kind of labor by which they could procure food, thus causing them to be often irregular and inconstant in their attendance. Notwithstanding all these hinderances, they have made 390 garments, repaired 44, sewed 14 straw hats, pieced and quilted 5 large quilts, carding by hand the cotton to stuff them; for all of which there has been paid them \$214. And in all cases where the families connected with the school have been sick, or otherwise suffering, efficient aid has been promptly furnished them as soon as it has become known.

Materials for work have been furnished from the store. Our practice has been to select from goods sent for distribution, such as when received were of very little value, or illy adapted to the wants of the people; but wash, rip, and make over into good serviceable garments, thus accomplishing, as any good frugal housewife may readily see, two very important objects. In connection therewith, we have furnished from the store new materials to be made into shirts for men and boys, sacques and dresses for women and girls, thus supplying the wants of the people. Several suits of custom clothes for gentlemen have been ordered and made in a very acceptable manner, and the popularity of the "Roanoke Sewing School" has been constantly increasing, even in the surrounding counties; and I am now certain that, with efficient, skillful management, such an institution may become, not only a great blessing to the people for whose benefit it was designed, but in time, self-supporting.

In addition to what has been done in the school, I have given employment to another class,—of old worn-out women,—who beg for work to get clothing for themselves and families, preferring to do what they can toward paying for it; and these have so long cultivated the land that they prefer it to any other kind of labor. There have been about twenty in all, of this class employed, to whom I have issued clothing as they have needed in various sums from two to ten dollars each, according to the size and necessity of their various families, amounting in all to \$105. As yet, we have realized but little profit from the avails of this labor, except in furnishing us with garden vegetables. We have a large quantity of sweet potatoes in the ground, some corn, and abundance of melons, and some other products which will, if the season proves favorable, be quite an assistance in the support of teachers another year. Added to this, I have given employment to another class, including some old men, who were unable to earn anything in any other way, but could sit by their fireside and tie a few yards of net, and thus have the satisfaction of feeling that they had paid for a pair of pants or a jacket, and that they are thus living like freemen. The amount thus paid was included in the value of the nets as rendered to Mr. Estes. Thus you will be able to see something of what the Association has done toward developing the industrial resources of the people on this island, while to us here is reserved the pleasure of seeing the blessed results in the good accomplished. Would that I could portray this with the pen, that you might publish it abroad; that those whose contributions had so nobly

sustained the great work might be encouraged to further efforts as the work has just commenced.

The educating and elevating this people must go forward, or they will become a curse to our nation, and their freedom a curse rather than a blessing to themselves. Yours respectfully,

S. P. Freeman

Sunnyside, Roanoke Island,

July 26, 1866

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