

**REPORT OF THE GENERAL
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE PHILADELPHIA
BRANCH OF THE U.S. SANITARY
COMMISSION TO THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE, JANUARY 1ST, 1866**

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Report of the general superintendent of the Philadelphia Branch of the U.S. Sanitary Commission to the executive committee, January 1st, 1866 by Various

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PHILADELPHIA BRANCH
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U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION,
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U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION, PHILADELPHIA AGENCY,
1307 CHESTNUT STREET,
January 1st, 1866.

To the Executive Committee of the
Philadelphia Branch of the U. S. Sanitary Commission.

GENTLEMEN:

I have the honor to submit herewith a report of this Branch of the Commission, from the 1st of January, 1865, to the present time, with a review of the work prior to that period.

The opening of the past year found the Sanitary Commission fully occupied in all its departments, both at home and in the field. The operations of General Grant before Richmond, and the rapid movements of General Sherman through the Southern States, made it necessary for the Commission to be prepared with abundant supplies at every point on the Atlantic coast, where there was a possibility of their being needed. This involved a large expenditure throughout the winter months, a time when it has been usual to contract our issues very considerably. While this extensive work was being performed, the officers of the Commission were preparing largely for the spring and summer campaign. Hospital supplies were collected, and arrange-

ments made for a still more effective corps of Relief Agents for the field. It was fortunate that the generous support of the public enabled us to make these preparations. Although the requirements of the Commission for battle-field relief were comparatively small, it became apparent, immediately after the surrender of the rebel armies, that the Commission would have a large work to do during the passage of the troops from the field to their homes. Before the army of General Sherman had reached Washington, immense requisitions were made upon us for antiscorbutics, etc. Almost simultaneously with this demand came the orders from the War Department to reduce the Army expenses. These orders were at once felt by us in an increased demand for many necessary things, heretofore supplied by the Government. These articles have been freely issued. The Homes and Lodges of the Commission have been open to those needing rest and refreshment on their journey homeward. The Protective War-Claim and Pension Agencies have saved the soldiers hundreds of thousands of dollars, by collecting their dues free of charge and preserving them from sharpers; while the Bureau of Employment has been the means of aiding many in obtaining comfortable and remunerative situations.

It has been thought by many that the great object of our Philadelphia Agency was merely to collect money and supplies, and to forward them to the scene of war, and that the benevolent of our city would amply care for all the suffering and distress which should be found in our midst.

The number of men who passed through this city on their way to join the Army, and on their return home,

in the aggregate amounted to one million two hundred and fifty thousand. The number who were treated in General Hospitals in this Department, during the war, was one hundred and fifty-seven thousand. The number stationed at this post, recruited in the vicinity, or remaining here under orders from the Government, including Provost Marshal's men, drafted men, etc., was not less than one hundred and fifty thousand; making a grand total of fifteen hundred and fifty-seven thousand men, who have passed through or remained for a time in this city, during the war.

From those passing through numbers are constantly left behind, from sickness, straggling, or other causes. A very small per centage of these makes a very large aggregate to be cared for. In our General Hospitals, notwithstanding the unwearied self-sacrificing labors of hundreds of devoted men and women and the most generous support of our fellow-citizens, the cry has come daily to the Sanitary Commission, send us more clothing, more delicacies. But the class which suffered most severely, and had the least attention paid to them, until the Commission undertook their relief, includes the camps of newly-recruited regiments, discharge camps, places of rendezvous for drafted men, barracks, etc. The amount of ignorance frequently displayed by officers just entering the service is perfectly astonishing. Sick men have repeatedly been allowed to lie upon the ground, half cared for, with inadequate food, within a half mile of comfortable hospital accommodation, for no other reason than the ignorance of their officers as to how they should have them admitted. At most of the barracks and camps provided for temporary accommodation very little provision was made for the comfort of

the well men, and less for the sick. It was quite manifest, therefore, that the Commission had no small task to accomplish in this city and its immediate vicinity. It was apparent, too, that the work, to be done well, must be done systematically, under proper departments and officers.

In the early history of the Commission in this city, the collection and dispatch of supplies was the chief object. As necessity arose other provisions were made. Early in the spring of 1863 the Hospital Directory was opened. About the same time the Supply Department was reorganized on a much enlarged and more effective scale, under the direction of the Women's Pennsylvania Branch. Soon the increasing demands called for the appointment of a Special Relief officer, and a system of Hospital visiting; then the Protective War-Claim and Pension Agency; then the Lodge for the accommodation of passers through, and those delayed from a variety of causes; and finally, when the war was over, the Bureau of Employment, for the purpose of assisting discharged soldiers to obtain suitable occupation.

How far the Commission has been able to give relief in these various Departments will be seen from the following reports.

GENERAL OFFICE.

Very soon after the establishment of this Agency the extent and variety of its operations made it necessary to have a General Office, through which all the orders of the General Secretary and of the Executive Committee should pass, and where reports should from

time to time be received from the different Departments.

With the rapid growth of the Commission came a corresponding increase of miscellaneous work, which had not been provided for. All of this was intrusted to the care of the General Office.

Among its most onerous duties were the following:

1st. The reception and care of goods sent from other Branches to this city, to be retained here until required for immediate use.

2d. Providing transportation for all stores shipped from this point. This involved the chartering of steamboats and barges, and sometimes the purchase of horses and wagons.

3d. The employment of suitable persons to act as Relief Agents and nurses.

4th. Informing the public of the wants of the soldier, through newspapers and documents published by the Commission.

5th. Corresponding with other offices of the Commission.

The following is a list of the expenses of the General Office, from October 15, 1861, to December 31, 1865:

Rent of Office.....	\$ 366 56
Salaries of Clerks.....	3,513 62
Books, Stationery and Printing.....	647 92
Advertising	1,099 21
Postages and Telegraphs.....	335 92
Furniture, Repairs, Fuel and Lights.....	690 77
Travelling expenses of Relief Agents.....	1,306 83
Miscellaneous.....	603 47
Total.....	<u>\$8,564 30</u>

THE WOMEN'S PENNSYLVANIA BRANCH.

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.—On the evening of the 24th of February, 1863, the Academy of Music in this city was thronged by an assemblage of citizens, who came to listen to a statement of the claims of the United States Sanitary Commission upon the American people. The President, the Rev. Dr. Bellows, addressed the audience at length, making a clear exhibition of the Commission's objects and work, and ending with a forcible appeal to the sympathies of the assembly. A strong and favorable impression was produced.

On the following morning a large number of ladies met in the foyer of the Academy, upon the invitation of Dr. Bellows, and formed themselves into an auxiliary organization, to which they gave the name of "The Women's Pennsylvania Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission." This organization consisted of an Executive Committee of fifteen, a Committee for Special Relief of Soldiers and their Families, and a Finance Committee; the three Committees, with the addition of a few members at large, composing the Board of Managers.

In forming their Constitution and planning their work the Executive Committee was largely indebted to the presence of Miss Louisa Lee Schuyler, of the Women's Central Association of Relief in the city of New York, whose large experience and valuable suggestions, being made available to the Pennsylvania Branch, were no doubt a prominent cause of the early and large success which attended its efforts. An Agency of the