

New York, June 27, 1863

To the Public:

Four days ago, I was ordered by Major-General Foster, commanding the 18th army corps, to proceed northward as far as this city and Boston, to COLLECT MATERIALS AND IMPLEMENTS FOR COLONIZING THE FAMILIES OF COLORED SOLDIERS UPON ROANOKE ISLAND.

It might have been done through other agencies, but not so quickly. Time is an object with us, that we may save a portion of the present season for crops and gardens, and gather together within a few days, the resources which might not have been secured by correspondence alone, in as many months. This is my apology to the public, if one were necessary, for being here.

The exigency now existing in the department of North Carolina, is this: We hold possession of several important places along the coast, the principal of which are *Beaufort, Newbern, Washington, Plymouth, Roanoke Island, and Hatteras Inlet*. At all these points we have troops, and from them our lines extend back some distance into the country. Within these lines dwell large numbers of loyal colored people, and but few whites. Eight thousand negroes reside at Newbern, and at the other points named several thousands more. It is among these people that Gen. E. A. Wild is now enlisting his African brigade. One regiment is already full, and another is well advanced. As the work goes on, it becomes a question of more and more interest what shall be done with the families of these colored soldiers? How shall we dispose of the aged and infirm, the women and the children, the youth not old enough to enlist in the regiments? In the absence of the able-bodied men to whom they would naturally look for protection and support, it is evident that the government, or benevolent individuals and agencies co-operating with the government, must make temporary provision for them, locate them in places of safety, and teach them, in their ignorance, how to live and support themselves.

The remedy proposed to meet this unique state of things, is to colonize these freed people, not by deportation out of the country, but by giving them facilities for living in it; not by removing them north, were they are not wanted, and could not be happy; nor even by transporting them beyond the limits of their own State; but by giving them land, and implements wherewith to subdue and till it, thus stimulating their exertions by making them proprietors of the soil, and by directing their labor into such channels as promise to be remunerative and self-supporting.

The location decided upon in which to commence this work, in North Carolina, is Roanoke Island. Its insular position favors this design, making it, like the islands around Hilton Head, in South Carolina, comparatively safe against attack, and free from fear of depredation. It is an island ten or twelve miles long, by four or five in breadth, well wooded, having an abundance of good water, a tolerably productive soil, a sufficient amount of cleared land for the commencement of operations, and surrounded by waters abounding in delicious fish.

The time in which to do this work, is the present. It is desirable not to lose a single day. Two months earlier, had circumstances favored, would have been better. That there may be no longer delay in setting the project on foot, and commencing to give it a practical development, an appeal is hereby made to all the friends of the NEW SOCIAL ORDER IN

THE SOUTH, and in particular to those who believe that the solution of the negro question is the turning point of the war, for prompt and efficient help in the prosecution of our designs.

The materials required are the same which any colony, designed to be agricultural and mechanical, must need at the start, viz: boards and shingles, and a *steam-engine*, to saw our own lumber, and grind our own corn after the first few months, cross-cut saws and hand-saws, crow-bars, shovels, picks and spades, hoes, axes, hammers and nails, two or three sets of carpenters' tools, with extra augurs, squares, and gimlets; butt-hinges, screws, and latches; an assortment of garden seeds, padlocks, and door-locks, oil-stones and grindstones, bush scythes, water-buckets, baking-kettles and covers, tin plates, cups, spoons, pans, and basins, knives and forks, files and rasps, coopering and soldering tools, glass and putty, fish-hooks, lines, and lead, and twine for seines, a pair of platform scales, and counter scales, and a quantity of tin and sheet iron, and tools to work it. All these we need this moment. And as the government has few supplies of this sort in the department of North Carolina, and of many of the kinds none at all, we are compelled to appeal to charitable associations, and patriotic individuals, to furnish them.

To clothe and educate these people we need quantities of clothing of all descriptions, particularly for women and children, with shoes of large sizes; primers and first reading books, primary arithmetics and geographies, with slates, pencils, and stationery of all sorts.

To present this subject personally to all interested in it, during the few days of my sojourn at the North, is simply impossible. Will not the ready good sense, and eager philanthropy of thousands of warm-hearted men and women respond to this appeal immediately, and place at my control within a few days all we need and ask for?

To fight the country's battles, is our *first grand duty*. *To lay new foundations* for a just and prosperous peace throughout the recreant South, is our *second*. For some time to come the two processes must be carried on *together*. Let us fight with our right hand, and civilize with our left, till the courage, the enterprise, and the ideas of the North have swept away the barbarism and treason of the South, and made of this country ONE GOODLY AND FREE LAND.

Send contributions in cash, clothing, shoes, instruments, and supplies of every kind needed, to the undersigned at *No. 1 Mercer street, New York*, (rooms of the National Freedman's Relief Association.)

HORACE JAMES,
Supt. of Blacks for the Dept. of N. Carolina

[Horace James to the Public, 27 June 1863, Letters Received, Department of North Carolina, Record Group 393, pt. 1, series 3238, Box 2, National Archives.]