

[Roanoke Island, August 26, 1865]

I have been frequently requested to visit Edenton and open school there. As that was not within my province, I determined to so far comply with their request as to visit them and ascertain their wants, and what they are willing and able to do for themselves. I left last Wednesday, calling at Elizabeth City on the way, and ascertaining the wants and condition of the people there, reached Edenton, Thursday evening. After attending to some other matters of business, I sent round word to the people that all who wished to see me in reference to schools, might call, and I would talk with them on the matter. Quite a number of the prominent colored men called to see me; the population generally is of the better class of colored people. I stated to them the plan of operation of our Association, and their desire to do all they can for the benefit of the colored people, but their inability to meet all their wants. I told them that they would do much more for those that were willing to help themselves. I then appealed to them to know what they were able and willing to do for themselves. After conferring one with another, on the following morning they brought me their report, the substance of which they desire me to draw up and forward to the Association. As I was taken very sick during the night, I was unable to complete the business till since my return home. I drew up the inclosed petition and pledge, a copy of which I am to forward to them for signature, which, when I receive, I shall immediately transmit to you. I send the inclosed, that the Association may act upon it at their next meeting. There are some six or eight hundred people; many of them are in good circumstances; they own a church, a very good one, large size, in pretty good condition, and under their control, in which they have sustained the only regular religious services that have been sustained in the town during the war; they give willingly and freely the use of that for the use of a school. Agree to rent a house for a teacher's home, if none can be procured without; furnish both school and teacher's home with fuel and provisions for the comfortable support of three teachers, which will be the number needed for that place. Now will the Association furnish the teachers and send them forth? They will need to be very careful in their selection of teachers for that place, as they will meet with much opposition from the citizens; they should be well and strong physically, mentally, and morally; good, thorough practical education; those who have had experience in teaching will be better; they need to be possessed with discretion, wise to discern, in fact, possessing good common sense, and not afraid or ashamed to labor, and not expecting the most luxurious living, and capable of making themselves comfortable and happy under all circumstances; willing to enter the field to labor for the good of the human race, rather than for honor or profit pecuniarily; so much for the qualification of teachers. The people wish to purchase a stove for their church, a large box stove, and with the Association to send them one, with a large quantity of funnel and four elbows; also want primers, slates, and pencils, which they are willing to purchase. Our wants begin to show themselves, on the Island, in the form of stoves. For our Industrial school we want two large box stoves and one small one. For the new store, one large box stove, with 115 feet of funnel and five elbows, of size to fit the large stoves. For the small one, 35 feet, with three elbows. The goods have arrived, except those at Norfolk, and those I have sent for by an officer. Every thing, so far as the prosperity of our mission is concerned, looks favorably; only give us help. We feel that the obstacles that have so long hindered our onward course have been removed. My own health is not as good

as I wish, but it is fast improving, so that I sat up some to day. Miss Roper, I am sorry to say, is sick, but I hope she will be up soon. Kate is very well again. I will no longer tax your patience at present. Please receive the kindest regards of your obedient servant.

S. P. Freeman

["Roanoke Island," *The National Freedman* 1 (15 September 1865): 259-60.]