

**BELIEFS OF THE NATIONAL FREEDMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION,  
AS STATED IN ITS FIRST ANNUAL REPORT**

This Association originated at a meeting held in the hall of the Cooper Institute, on the 20th February, 1862, in response to an appeal from Gen. Sherman and Commodore DuPont, representing in a General Order, dated the 6th of that month, the helpless condition of the blacks within the vast area occupied by the forces under their command, and calling upon the benevolent and philanthropic of the land for aid.

At that meeting the following gentlemen:

Wm. C. Bryant	Wm. Allen Butler
Stephen H. Tyng	George C. Ward
Charles C. Leigh	Mansfield French
Charles Gould	Joseph B. Collins
Francis G. Shaw	Edgar Ketchum
John Edmonds,	

were appointed to organize an Association, to make a special appeal to the public, to appoint suitable teachers to instruct the Freedmen in industrial and mechanical arts, in the rudiments of education, the principles of Christianity, their accountability to the laws of God and man, their relation to each other as social beings, and all that might be necessary to render them competent to sustain themselves as members of a civilized society:—

In pursuance of this appointment and of these institutions, the Committee met on the 22nd day of February, 1862, and organized the NATIONAL FREEDMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, declaring its objects to be as above stated, and requesting the co-operation and aid of Societies formed or to be formed in other cities, having the like purpose in view.

To attain the end proposed, so far as might be within the reach of the Association, the following plan, with regard to the treatment of the blacks, was adopted:

- I. They must be treated as Freemen.
- II. As such they must earn their livelihood as we do, and not be dependent on charity.
- III. Their labor must be performed under a well-organized superintendence.
- IV. They will receive compensation for their labor, in the shape of daily wages, reserving thereout a sufficient percentage to defray the cost of superintendence.

V. As soon as their labor shall be organized, they will be required to provide their own support.

VI. In the meanwhile, and until their earnings shall provide the means of their support, they will be aided with food, clothing, and shelter, but such supplies shall be charged to them as advances, to be paid by the receiver, without interest.

VII. They may erect tenements on the land, and occupy them, free of charge, but when they occupy tenements erected or supplied by the Association, they shall pay rent.

VIII. Schools and churches shall be established among them, and the sick be cared for.

IX. No idlers will be allowed among them, but all must work who can.

X. Each one will be encouraged to raise on his own ground such articles of food as his family may require, and be so taught gardening as to raise quantities for the army and navy and other markets.

XI. To guard against imposition upon their ignorance and inexperience, no stores will be allowed among them except those licensed by the Association.

[“First Annual Report of the National Freedman’s Relief Association,” New York, February 19th, 1863.]