

Henry Bram, Ishmael Moultrie, Yates Sampson, Committee to The President of these United States.  
Edisto Island, [SC] 28 Oct. 1865. (National Archives Microfilm, M 752, r 23, 0435-41).

We the freedmen of Edisto Island South Carolina have learned From you through Major General O O Howard commissioner of the Freedmans Bureau with deep sorrow and Painful hearts of the possibility of government restoring These lands to the former owners. We are well aware of the many perplexing and trying questions that burden Your mind and do therefore pray to god (the preserver of all. and who has through our Late and beloved President (Lincoln) proclamation and the war made Us A free people) that he may guide you in making Your decisions. and give you that widsom that Cometh from above to settle these great and Important Questions for the best interests of the Colored race. Here is where secession was born and Nurtured Here is w[h]ere we have toiled nearly all Our lives as slaves and were treated like dumb Driven cattle, This is our home, we have made These lands what they are. we were the only true and Loyal people that were found in possession of these Lands. we have been always ready to strike for Liberty and humanity yea to fight if needs be To preserve this glorious union. Shall not we who Are freedman and have been always true to this Union have the same rights as are enjoyed by Others?...are not our rights as A free people and good citizens of these United States To be considered before the rights of those who were Found in rebellion against this good and just Goverment... are these rebellious Spirits to be reinstated in thier possessions And we who have been abused and oppressed For many long years not to be allowed the Privilige of purchasing land But be subject To the will of these large Land owners? God forbid, Land monopoly is injurious to the advancement of the course of freedom, and if government Does not make some provision by which we as Freedmen can obtain A Homestead, we have Not bettered our condition....