As soon as the war ended — even before, in areas controlled by Union troops — former slaves took advantage of their freedom. Helped by the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands — known as the Freedmen's Bureau — they searched for lost family members, made their marriages legal, learned to read and write, and organized to fight for their civil rights. In this chapter we'll explore the expectations that African Americans had for freedom and their priorities once they had it.