

Freedmen's Bureau Records on Ancestry®

[Video Link](#)

Background

Ancestry has announced the addition of the Freedmen's Bureau and Freedman Bank Records available for free! This is 3.5 million records that is a huge benefit for those researching their African American and poor or indigent white ancestors in the post-Civil War era (1865-1872).

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (a.k.a. Freedmen's Bureau) created numerous records in many subsets from land, bank, school, correspondence, hospital, labor contracts, and more. The cool part is that these records are now searchable and hint-able on Ancestry.



Freedmen's School in New Bern NC - Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture



Issuing Rations - LOC.gov

“On March 3, 1865, Congress passed “An Act to establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees” to **provide food, shelter, clothing, medical services, and land** to displaced Southerners, including newly freed African Americans.” Senate.gov

Keep in mind that these records not only have a great opportunity for you to find your African American ancestors, but also researchers looking for their white ancestors may find their ancestors in these records as well.



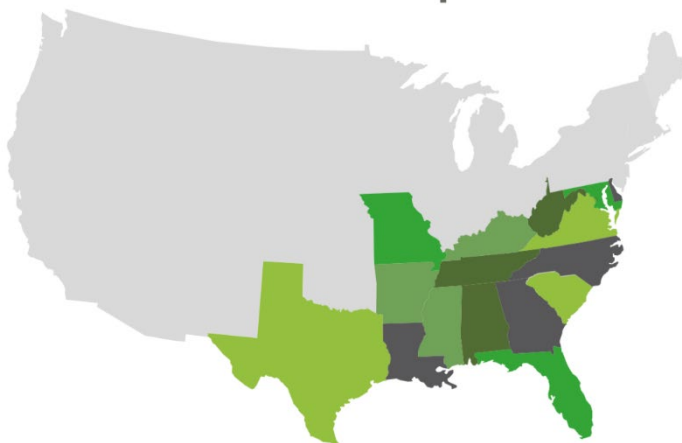
GenealogyTV.org



YouTube.com/GenealogyTV

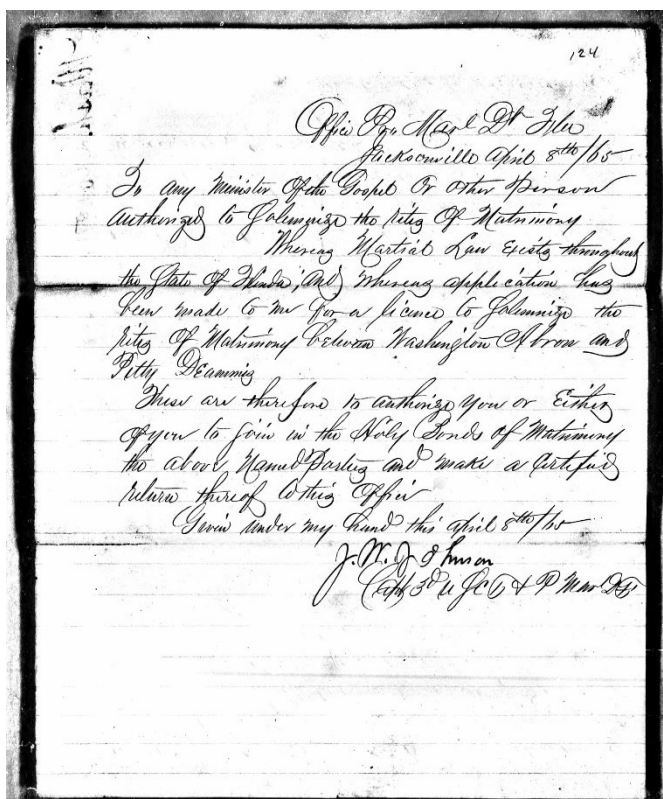
Here's a list of states for which there were Freedmen's Bureau offices, and thus records you may find for your ancestors.

- Virginia
- Louisiana
- Georgia
- South Carolina
- Kentucky
- North Carolina
- Tennessee
- Mississippi
- Arkansas
- Texas
- District of Columbia
- Alabama
- Missouri
- Florida



Here is a list of the type of records you may find under the umbrella of the Freedmen's Bureau. While this is an excellent resource for black ancestry, may find people of all ethnicities in some of these records.

- Abandoned Lands
- Correspondence
- Miscellaneous, Schools, Food, & Housing
- Marriage records and Cohabitation Bonds*
- Ration Records
- Established Schools
- Hospitals
- Apprenticed Children
- Labor Contracts
- U.S. Colored Troops
- Those Hired by the Freedmen's Bureau
- Freedman's Bank Records
- Contrabands
- Bureau of Refugees (poor whites)



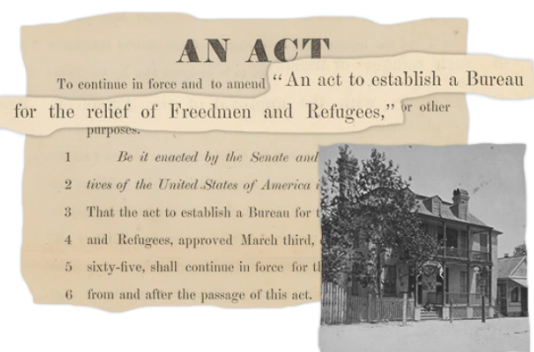
*"Cohabitation records were created to identify and legitimize marriages and children born to those in slavery. The information may include names of individuals, ages, places where born, last known slave holders, and approximate year of marriage or cohabitation." – FamilySearch.org

Note: You may find Cohabitation Records by state at on FamilySearch [here](#).

Access to the Records on Ancestry is Free

See the first time your ancestors' names appeared in records after Emancipation.

With this free collection, you can discover the names of your African American ancestors, read their personal letters, see where they settled after the Civil War, and much more.



Explore these records, for free.

First & Middle Name(s) Last Name

Day Month Year Location

Lived In

Any Event

Search

A free Ancestry® account is required to access records.

There are two ways I recommend accessing the Freedmen's Bureau Records on Ancestry. The fast way is to go to [this link](#) and then scroll down and search for your ancestor (shown above).

My favorite way to research these records is to go to the Card Catalog from the Search tab at the top of the screen. Search the keyword "Freedmen" and see the record sets for all record sets for that keyword

(shown below). This gives you a more detailed look at what record sets are available. Notice that some of the record sets are prior to 1865. For example, the US Freedmen's Bureau Marriage Records 1846 to 1867, Are long before the Civil War.

Change "Freedmen" to "Freedman" (with an "a" in man) and do the search again. Now you'll get the Freedman's Bank Records, 1865 to 1874.

Card Catalog
Searchable listing of all record collections

Results 1-9 of 9 Sort By Date Added

Title	Category	Records	Activity
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S., Freedmen's Bureau Records, 1865-1878	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	2,972,438	NEW
<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina, U.S., Freedmen's Bureau Assistant Commissioner Records, 1862-1870	Directories & Member Lists	127,316	
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S., Freedmen's Bureau Records of Field Offices, 1863-1878	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	27,526	
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S., Native American Citizens and Freedmen of Five Civilized Tribes, 1895-1914	Census & Voter Lists	104,657	
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S., Freedmen's Bureau Marriage Records, 1846-1867	Birth, Marriage & Death	27,953	UPDATED
<input type="checkbox"/> Report of the executive board of the Friends' Association of Philadelphia and Its Vicinity, for the Relief of Colored Freedmen	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	32	
<input type="checkbox"/> Autobiography of James L. Smith	Stories, Memories & Histories	165	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ancestors and descendants of Samuel French, the joiner, of Stratford, Connecticut	Stories, Memories & Histories	445	
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S., Wallace Roll of Cherokee Freedmen, 1890-1893	Census & Voter Lists	3,806	

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Keyword(s)

Freedman

Search or Clear All

Title	Category	Records	Activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Russia, Jewish Families in Russian Empire Census, 1897	Census & Voter Lists	13,465	
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S., Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1874	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	621,797	UPDATED

Open each record set in a new tab (right click) and search each set individually for a comprehensive search.

Learn More About the Freedmen's Bureau Records

FamilySearch Has Freedmen Bureau Records Too

If you are not finding what you are looking for in the Freedmen's Bureau records on Ancestry, FamilySearch also has these records. For searching on FamilySearch follow these steps.

- Sign in to FamilySearch.org
- Click Search > Records
- Under the world map type Freedmen
- Scroll the auto fill dropdown menu to the state you wish to search.

Note: On FamilySearch there is no index, so you'll have to search the microfilm manually. On Ancestry, it is an every-name index. That's what makes this such big news... is Ancestry has indexed these records.

- More about the Freedmen's Bureau Records at the [National Museum of African American History & Culture](#).
- More about the Freedmen's Bureau Records at the [National Archives and Records Administration](#).
- Free Brochure from the National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau/brochure.pdf>. This is where you'll find a free brochure, and if you Scroll down, you'll find some state-by-state guides to specific records and microfilm.
- Nicka Smith (the professional genealogist who presented in [this video](#) is at:
 - On YouTube - [YouTube.com/WholsNickSmith](https://www.youtube.com/WholsNickSmith)
 - On the Web – [WholsNickSmith.com](https://www.wholsnicksmith.com)
- Freedmen's Bureau Guide <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau>

More Videos about the Freedmen's Bureau and the Civil War on Genealogy TV

- [Freedmen Bureau - African American & Poor Whites - Post Civil War](#)
- [Researching Persons of Color: African American Genealogy](#)
- [Civil War Records - Southern Claims Commission](#)