Freedmen’s Bureau Records

- What was the Freedmen’s Bureau
  - The official name was: *The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*.
  - It was established by Congress on 3 March 1865.
  - It was responsible for all things related to refugees, freedmen and abandoned lands or other property.
- Among its activities were:
  - Issuing rations, clothing, overseeing labor contracts, managing hospitals, refugee camps, resolving disputes, regularizing marriages, providing transportation, insuring back pay for “colored” soldiers & sailors.
- These records include information on all people in the former confederacy, regardless of race.
- How was the Freedmen’s Bureau Organized?
  - The Bureau was organized into Field Offices.
    - To find the Field Office closest to where you believe your family was living at the end of the War you can go to the following on-line sites:
  - Freedmen’s Bureau Field Offices: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=11kGBhLi6tJ9jtvxqF912X47uHAgk&hl=en_US&ll=32.47155077708247%2C-88.26405249999999&z=5
  - Mapping the Freedmen’s Bureau: http://mappingthefreedmensbureau.com
- Many records can be accessed from state collections within the Bureau.
  - Digitized collections and microfilm collections are primarily by state or type.
- Additional Related Records
  - Freedmen’s Savings and Trust Company functioned from 1865-1874.
    - These records were part of the Records of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.
    - Included are the Registers of Signatures of Depositions in Branches of the Freeman’s Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874.
    - Available at: https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1417695
    - Records also available on Ancestry.com.
  - The locations of these branches can also be found at “Mapping the Freedmen’s Bureau.” http://mappingthefreedmensbureau.com
    - Available from Familysearch.org.
      https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2427894
  - Additional Records
    - Marriage and Cohabitation Records
      - One of most useful collections are those related to marriages.
      - They are organized by state.
      - However, in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina & Texas took the position that they would inform freedmen of state laws regarding marriage but there is no evidence the Bureau registered marriages or issued certificates.
      - At least some counties in North Carolina did register marriages.
For more information read:

**African American Freedmen's Bureau Records (Familysearch.org)**

- Most records found here have been indexed or are in the process of being indexed.
  - To participate in indexing, go to: http://www.discoverfreedmen.org
  - To see the full list of records available that have been indexed go to:
  - Searching is primarily by first & last name and can be narrowed here on the Familysearch interface.

**Searchable Collections on FamilySearch**

- **Index and Image Collections**
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States Freedmen's Bureau, Records of Freedmen, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Claim Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States Freedmen's Bureau Labor Contracts Indenture and Apprenticeship Records 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau, Records of Freedmen's Complaints, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau, Freedmen's Court Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1861 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Marriages, 1861-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Hospital and Medical Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Records of Persons and Articles Hired, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Ration Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1863 - 1872 - District of Columbia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1863-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1862 - 1870 - North Carolina, Freedmen's Bureau Assistant Commissioner Records, 1862-1870 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1872 - Virginia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — index and images
  - 1865 - 1874 - United States, Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1874 at FamilySearch — index and images

- **Image Browse Collections**
  - 1865-1872 - Alabama Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
  - 1864-1872 - Arkansas Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1864-1872
• 1865-1872 - Georgia Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
• 1865-1872 - Kentucky Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
• 1865-1872 - Louisiana Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
• 1865-1872 - Maryland and Delaware, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch —
• 1863-1866 - Mississippi Freedmen's Department, 1863-1866
• 1865-1872 - Mississippi Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
• 1865-1872 - Missouri Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
• 1863-1872 - North Carolina, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1863-1872 at FamilySearch — images
• 1865-1872 - South Carolina, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872 at FamilySearch — images
• 1865-1872 - Tennessee Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872
• 1865-1870 - Texas, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1870 at FamilySearch — images
• 1865-1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Records of the Commissioner, 1865-1872
• 1865-1872 - United States, Freedmen's Bureau Records of the Assistant Commissioner, 1865-1872
• 1872-1878 - United States Freedmen's Branch Records, 1872-1878

Mapping the Freedmen’s Bureau

• Website: http://mappingthefreedmensbureau.com
• Mapping includes
  o Where Freedman's Bureau offices were located
  o Branches of the Freedman’s Saving Bank,
  o Freedmen's Bureau Hospitals
  o Freedmen's Schools
  o Contraband Camps
  o Battle sites where US Colored Troops fought.

Freedmen and Southern Society Project

• Website: http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/index.html
• A project of the History Department of the University of Maryland.
• Mission: The Freedmen and Southern Society Project was established in 1976 to capture the essence of that revolution by depicting the drama of emancipation in the words of the participants: liberated slaves and defeated slaveholders, soldiers and civilians, common folk and the elite, Northerners and Southerners.
  o …the project's editors pored over millions of documents, selecting some 50,000. They are presently transcribing, organizing, and annotating them to explain how black people traversed the bloody ground from slavery to freedom between the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 and the beginning of Radical Reconstruction in 1867.
• Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867
  o A total of nine volumes of Freedom is projected; six have been published to date.
    ▪ The Destruction of Slavery (series 1, volume 1)
    ▪ The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South (series 1, volume 2)
    ▪ The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Lower South (series 1, volume 3)
The Black Military Experience (series 2)
- Land and Labor, 1865 (series 3, volume 1)
- Land and Labor, 1866–1867 (series 3, volume 2)

- Four volumes were prepared for general readers and classroom use are also available.
  - Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War
  - Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War
  - Families and Freedom: A Documentary History of African-American Kinship in the Civil War Era
  - Freedom's Soldiers: The Black Military Experience in the Civil War

Related Web Sites
  - This database contains about 102,010 personal names from field office records for Washington, D.C., Florida, Georgia, New Orleans, and North Carolina. Information available in the database includes: name, record type, year, and field office location. Family History Centers and the Family History Library have limited access to this index. There is a subscription fee for home use.