



# THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU RECORDS



## What is the Freedmen's Bureau?

The United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was created by Congress in 1865 to assist in the political and social reconstruction of post-war Southern states and to help formerly enslaved people make the transition from slavery to freedom and citizenship. In the process, the Bureau created millions of records that contain the names of hundreds of thousands of formerly enslaved individuals and Southern white refugees.

## Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project

In 2016, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Smithsonian Transcription Center began a collaborative project to transcribe more than 1.5 million image files from the Freedmen's Bureau records - the largest crowdsourcing project ever undertaken at the Smithsonian. Once completed, the Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project will allow full text searches of the original records, providing online access to family historians, genealogists, students, and scholars around the world. Transcribing these original documents will increase our understanding of the post-Civil War era and our knowledge of post-Emancipation family life.

## Join In

**Step 1:** Register for a Digital Volunteer Account

<https://transcription.si.edu/user/login>

**Step 2:** Review Instructions and Resources

<https://transcription.si.edu/instructions-freedmens-bureau>

**Step 3:** Find projects

<https://transcription.si.edu/freedmensbureau>

**Step 4:** Transcribe (type the contents of the original material) or Review (compare completed transcriptions with original documents)