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RECORDS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES
IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1862-63



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On the 6 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced three bound volumes and a number of unbound records of the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia, 1862-63. The records were transmitted to the First Auditor of the Treasury Department in 1866 by F. E. Spinner, Treasurer of the United States who, on the recommendation of the First Comptroller of the Treasury Department, had been designated as the agent for payment of monies awarded by the Board of Commissioners.

An act of April 16, 1862 (12 Stat. 376), abolished slavery in the District of Columbia. Under section 3 of the act the President was authorized to appoint a board of three commissioners, who were residents of the District, to examine petitions for compensation from former owners of freed slaves in the District. Pursuant to this act, Daniel R. Goodloe, Horatio King, and Samuel F. Vinton were appointed; in June 1862, however, John M. Broadhead was appointed to replace Mr. Vinton. A clerk of the circuit court served as clerk of the Board.

An act of July 12, 1862 (12 Stat. 538), provided that petitions could be received from slaves whose owners had not presented petitions for compensation. The petitions received under this act were filed separately from those received under the act of April 16 and are reproduced on Roll 6 of this microcopy.

The records of the Board include the following items:

(1) A bound volume comprising the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Commissioners, dated April 28, 1862 - January 14, 1863, containing the official summary of the activities of the Board, arranged chronologically by date of session. A name and subject index is at the front of the volume.

(2) A bound volume containing a record of petitions filed under the act of April 16, 1862, dated April 29-July 15, 1862, showing the date the petition was filed, the number of the petition, name of petitioner, names of slaves, and value of slaves as claimed in the petition. Arranged chronologically and thereunder by petition number. An index by name of petitioner is at the front of the volume.

(3) A bound docket book kept by the Board, dated April-December 1862, relating to the petitions filed under the act of April 16, 1862, showing the number of the petition, name of claimant, and a summary of action taken. Arranged by petition number. An index is at the front of the volume.

(4) An unbound summary list of amounts awarded to claimants who filed petitions under the act of April 16, 1862, showing the number of the petition, name of claimant, number of servants, amount awarded by the Board, and the signature of the claimant. Arranged by petition number.

(5) An unbound final report by the Board of Commissioners to the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 14, 1863. Accompanying this narrative report are three tabular statements: Table A, a list of petitions presented to the Board under the act of April 16, 1862, arranged chronologically, and an alphabetical index to the list; Table B, a list of petitions received under the act of July 12, 1862, arranged chronologically; and Table C, an alphabetical list of claimants who would have been eligible for awards if their petitions had been filed before the deadline.

(6) Unbound petitions filed with the Board of Commissioners pursuant to acts of April 16, 1862, and July 12, 1862. The petitions filed under the first act were numbered consecutively as they were received by the Board and are arranged numerically. Those filed under the second act were not numbered and are arranged chronologically.

All records of the Board that are listed above, except the petitions, are reproduced on Roll 1 of this microcopy. The petitions are reproduced on Rolls 2-6.

Because the accounting papers relating to the activities of the Board provide no additional information of value, they have not been included in this microfilm publication.

The records reproduced in this microcopy are part of the records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 217, Records of the U. S. General Accounting Office. Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Columbia that relate to slaves are in Record Group 21, Records of District Courts of the United States, and are reproduced in Microcopy 433.

Powers of attorney for receiving monies awarded by the Commission for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia are in Record Group 50, Records of the Treasurer of the United States.

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