

Slave Marriages

Slave marriages had neither legal standing nor protection from the abuses and restrictions imposed on them by slave-owners. Slave husbands and wives, without legal recourse, could be separated or sold at their master's will.

When freedom came, tens of thousands of former slave men and women—seeking to solemnize long-standing relationships—came forward. Between 1866 to 1898, the state allowed couples to come to the county courthouse and legalize their union. The children of such marriages were recognized as legitimate.

Following is a copy of the document that legitimized the marriages and a list of those former slaves who came forward from 1866-1898 in Franklin County, Kentucky.*

Source: Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
Microfilm Roll 7002275
Franklin County Clerk Records
Freedmen's Declaration of Marriage Book (1866-1898)

*Declaration of Marriage
Of
Negroes and Mulattoes*

Commonwealth of Kentucky

*This day the undersigned _____
and _____ both of color,
personally appeared before the Clerk of the _____
County Court, and declared that they have lived together as
husband and wife for the past _____ years,
and still desire to continue living together as such, and make this
declaration, that the same may be made a matter of record, and
that a certificate to that effect may be granted them.*

This _____ day of _____ 18__

Signature or mark

Attest:

(Signature of Clerk)

Freedmen's Declaration of Marriage Book (1866-1898)
Franklin County, Kentucky

Page #	Husband Name	Wife Name	Years Together	Declaration Date
1	Smith, Tab	Smith, Martha	12	18 May 1866
3	Williams, Jacob	Williams, Ellen	14	11 Jun 1866
5	Woods, David	Woods, Mahala	45	11 Aug 1866
7	Dobson, Abraham	Dobson, Margaret	4	30 Aug 1866
9	Lee, Thomas	Lee, Anna	33	12 Jun 1867
11	Williams, Abraham	Williams, Sally	12	30 May 1867
13	Morton, Henry	Morton, Nancy	30	8 Jun 1868
15	Allen, Jefferson	Allen, Florida	20	22 Oct 1868
17	Williams, Henry H	Williams, Mattie T	1 month	3 Dec 1868
19	Straws, Stradford	Straws, Francis Ann	10	15 Dec 1868
21	Morehead, Alfred	Morehead, Mary	14	20 Feb 1869
23	Taylor, Granville	Taylor, Harriett	25	6 Mar 1869
25	Martin, Sandy	Martin, Martha	15	26 Jun 1869
27	Johnson, George	Johnson, America	10	14 Sep 1869
29	Payne, James	Payne, Mary Jane	41	8 May 1906?
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43	Martin, Horace	Martin, Margaret	23	28 Dec 1868
45	McIntosh, Joseph	McIntosh	21	23 Jan 1869
47	Green, Warren	Green, Marian	17	13 Feb 1869
49	Trueheart, Peter	Trueheart, Ann Maria	18	30 Jul 1869
51	Caldwell, John	Caldwell, Betsey Jane	26	26 Aug 1869
53	Jones, Edward A	Jones, Caroline Frances	36	25 Jan 1870
55	Wright, Gabriel	Wright, America	22	28 Mar 1870
57	Caldwell, George	Caldwell, Emeline	5	2 Apr 1870
59	Lowry, Alexander	Lowry, Cynthia	5	9 Jun 1870
61	Busey, Luke	Busey, Martha	8	21 Sep 1870
63	Bryant, Isaac	Bryant, Caroline	30	5 Aug 1870
65	Dickerson, Nelson	Dickerson, Marshia	30	22 Aug 1870
67	Romans, Joseph	Romans, Margaret	13	23 Jan 1871
69	Trueheart, Samuel	Trueheart, Mary	7	23 Nov 1871
71	Fletcher, Wesley	Fletcher, Agnes	20	16 Dec 1871
73	Lynn, Henry	Lynn, Mary E	10	7 Feb 1872
75	Smith, Thomas	Smith, Julia Ann	35	10 Feb 1872
77	Beasley, Jerry	Beasley, Harriett	21	13 Feb 1872
79	Johnson, Alexander	Johnson, Huldah	30	6 May 1872
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83	Dotson, Henry	Dotson, Lucy	20	28 Jul 1873
85	Patterson, Frank	Patterson, Louisa	15	7 Oct 1873

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87	Blue, Henry	Blue, Mary	10	25 Aug 1874
89	Minor, Hiram	Minor, Margaret	13	10 Jul 1875
91	Read, Daniel	Read, Martha	17	30 Dec 1875
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95	Clay, Henry	Clay, Nancy	16	5 Jun 1876
97	Rodgers, Benjamin	Rodgers, Mary	12	5 Jun 1876
99	Morton, Jack	Morton, Sarah Price	15	14 Apr 1877
101	Howard, John	Howard, Jane	10	8 Feb 1878
103	Condy, Robert	Condy, Kitty	25	9 Jun 1882
105	Hawkins, Winston	Hawkins, Eela (Esla)	36	18 Apr 1898
107	Brightwell, Benjamin	Brightwell, Martha	45	15 Mar 1896

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