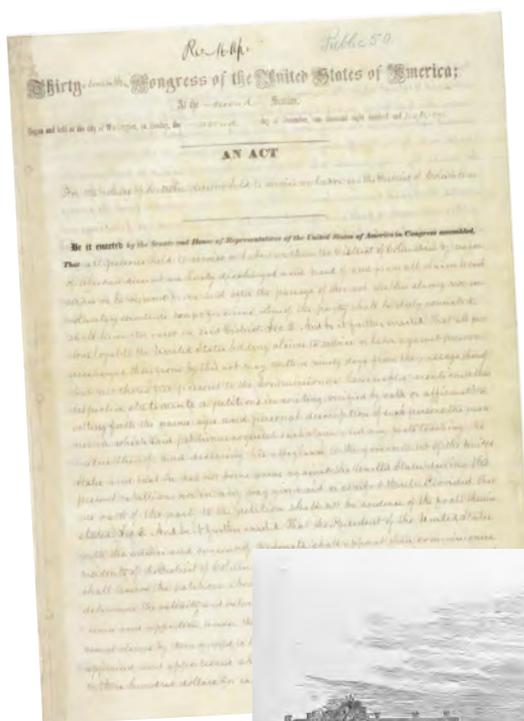


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

EMANCIPATION DAY

One year after the start of the Civil War, Congress ended slavery in the District of Columbia. On April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed an act for the immediate release of approximately 3,000 enslaved persons who resided in the District. Today, Washington, DC celebrates April 16 as Emancipation Day.



An Act for the Release of Certain Persons from Service or Labor in the District of Columbia (DC Emancipation Act), April 16, 1862

The Constitution grants Congress exclusive authority over the District of Columbia. As the Civil War continued, Congress used this power to end slavery there, approximately nine months before President Abraham Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation and nearly four years before the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery in the United States. The act of Congress freed approximately 3,000 enslaved persons, compensated former slaveholders who were loyal to the Union, and created for former slaves a system of voluntary emigration outside the United States.

General Records of the United States Government, National Archives and Records Administration



“Celebration of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, . . . April 19, 1866,”

wood engraving by Frank Dielman, *Harper’s Weekly*, May 12, 1866

African Americans in Washington, DC, turned out in celebration of the fourth anniversary of emancipation in 1866. Emancipation Day is still celebrated every April in the District.

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

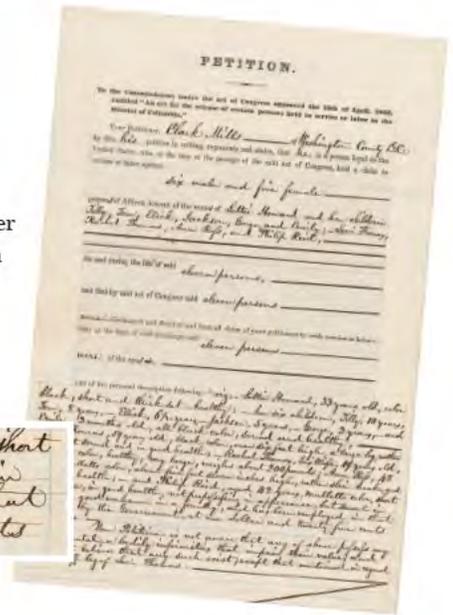
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CLARK MILLS, PHILIP REID, AND THE STATUE OF FREEDOM

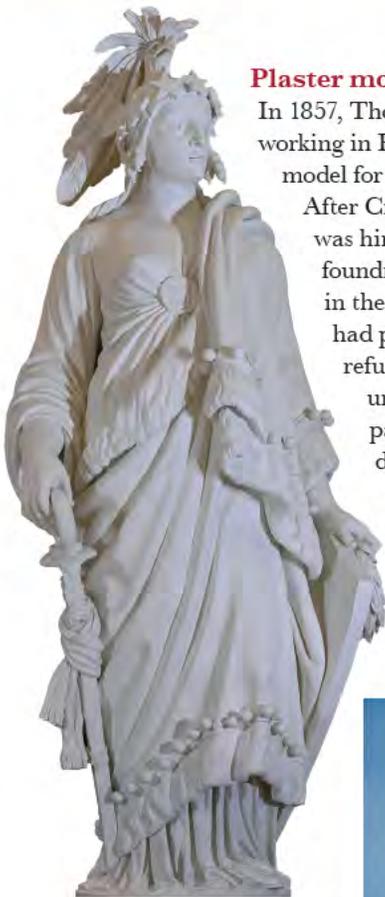
Petition from Clark Mills

One former slaveholder who petitioned the government to receive financial compensation under the DC Emancipation Act was Clark Mills, whose foundry cast the bronze Statue of Freedom atop the Capitol Dome. Mills requested compensation of \$1,500 for Philip Reid, a highly skilled craftsman who was instrumental in casting the statue. Mills later received \$350.40.

Records of the Department of the Treasury, National Archives and Records Administration



his good health; and Philip Reid, aged 42 years, mulatto color, short in stature, in good health, not prepossessing in appearance, but smart in mind, a good workman in a foundry, and has been employed in that capacity by the Government, at one dollar and twenty five cents



Plaster model for the Statue of Freedom

In 1857, Thomas Crawford, an American sculptor working in Rome, completed the plaster model for the Statue of Freedom.

After Crawford's death, Clark Mills was hired to cast the statue at his foundry on Bladensburg Road, NE in the District. The worker who had put the plaster model together refused to disassemble it unless his unreasonable demands for extra pay were met. Philip Reid determined how to separate the sections so that they could be moved to the foundry for casting.

Photographs by Architect of the Capitol



Statue of Freedom

Philip Reid was released from slavery by the DC Emancipation Act shortly before the completed bronze statue was moved to the Capitol Grounds in 1862, and he was a free man when the last piece was put in place on the Dome on December 2, 1863.



Clark Mills' foundry, where Philip Reid worked on the Statue of Freedom

At the foundry, Reid was put in charge of keeping the fire going under the molds, and he worked with other craftsmen as the sections of the plaster model were cast into bronze.

Photograph by Mathew Brady, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.