

Indiana Jones and the Freedman's Bank Records

THERE REALLY WAS AN INDIANA JONES. Far from the fictional character, she was a woman, born in the slave South in 1834. Through the Freedman's records, census data, death records, and on the ground research, Dr. James Rose, co-author of *Black Genesis*, tracked a wide range of her descendants, including her great-nephew, a World War II veteran and successful owner of a funeral home, and to her great-great niece, who is alive today. ■ In 1864, the Union Army created a depository to support black soldiers stationed in New Orleans, South Carolina, and Virginia. After the war, hundreds of thousands of dollars went unclaimed because depositors had died, changed names, or disappeared without withdrawing their funds.

The U.S. Congress, with the persuasion of several Christian philanthropists, used the unclaimed funds to charter the *Freedman's Saving and Trust Company* in 1865. The bank primarily assisted black soldiers and freed slaves with their new financial responsibilities. The bank operated from 1865–1874, with 37 branches across the U.S., and over \$57 million deposited during the bank's lifetime. ■ Overexpansion, speculation, mismanagement, and the Panic of 1873 left the bank vulnerable and contributed to its demise in 1874. Though an undoubtedly tragic turn, the bank records left an indispensable legacy for African-American genealogical research. HeritageQuest Online includes all of the surviving records from 29 of the 37 branches—more than 489,000 names in all, including Indiana Jones.

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—*Library Journal*, February 2009

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Rated **★★★★** 1/4 (Composite Score)

—*The Charleston Advisor*, *Advisor Reviews*, April 2006, p. 22

"The HeritageQuest Online book collection is currently the highest-quality large digital genealogy book collection available online."

—*Everton's Genealogical Helper Magazine*

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- **Search Freedman's Bank** Search for individuals in Freedman's Bank (1865-1874), which was founded to serve African Americans.
- **Search U.S. Serial Set** Search the Memorials, Petitions, and Private Relief Actions of the U.S. Congress in the LexisNexis® U.S. Serial Set.

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