

Freedom Bond of Dred Scott

1858

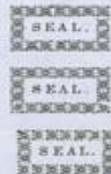
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Know all Men by these Presents, That We:
Dred Scott as principal; and
Taylor Snow as securities,
are held and firmly bound unto the State of Missouri, in the just and
full sum of *200* hundred Dollars, lawful money of the
United States, for the payment of which we bind ourselves, our heirs,
executors and administrators, firmly by these presents, sealed with our seals,
and dated this *4* day of *May* A.D. 18*58*

The condition of the above Obligation is such, that whereas the said
Dred has applied to the County Court
of St. Louis County for, and obtained a license to reside in the State of
Missouri, during good behavior: Now, if the said applicant shall be of
good character and behavior during his residence in the State of
Missouri, then this obligation to be void, else of full force and virtue.

Witness
J. Thompson }

Dred Scott
Taylor Snow



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Porter

Dred Scott and his wife, Harriet, filed petitions in 1846 to obtain their freedom. The Scotts had a strong case; slaves before them had sued and won their freedom on numerous occasions. Yet when the suit finally came to trial the following year the St. Louis Circuit Court disallowed some testimony based on a technicality, and the Scotts remained enslaved. Appeals and court reversals continued for the next ten years until Dred Scott's case finally reached the U.S. Supreme Court. In a stunning decision, the highest court ruled that no person of African descent ever could be considered a citizen under the context of the Constitution, and therefore the Scotts were not entitled to file a lawsuit in the first place. The Scotts would ultimately gain their freedom--not from the courts, but from their friend Taylor Blow, who bought them and then granted them their freedom. However, free African Americans living in Missouri were required to have a license. In order for the Scotts to obtain licenses, Blow posted these \$1,000 bonds stating his obligation to pay if Dred or Harriet was not "of good character and behavior." © 2011 The Missouri History Museum. All rights reserved.