

CHAP. 316. of registers of wills, county commissioners and clerk of Circuit court. New bonds to be taken.

ments of writing, of whatever kind or nature, lost or destroyed, appertaining to the offices of the register of wills, county commissioners, and clerk of the Circuit court of said county, and report the same to the Circuit court, the Orphans' court or the commissioners of the county, as the case may be; and the said courts and the county commissioners shall, and may require all officers and others, who, by law, are required to bond, to give new bond or bonds, when lost or destroyed, in such penalties as are hereinbefore provided in relation to executors, administrators or guardians, said penalties to be prescribed, and bonds approved by the authority having the power under the laws of this State to appoint such officers and approve their bonds; and that all new bonds which shall be taken under the provisions of this section, shall be good and pleadable in any court of law or equity in this State without stamp.

Decision of Orphans' court and Circuit court final.

SEC. 14. *And be it enacted*, That the decision of the Orphans' court and Circuit court, upon all questions by this act referred to them, shall be final and conclusive upon the parties, unless appealed from within the time prescribed by law to prosecute appeals from the decisions of said courts; and all deeds, wills, bonds, or other instruments of writing, or papers, of whatever kind or nature, proper to be recorded, may, upon the establishing of them by said courts as aforesaid, be recorded in the proper office for the record thereof, and the same, when recorded, shall have the same effect and operation in law, to all intents and purposes, as if the records aforesaid, in which the same were heretofore enrolled, had never been lost or destroyed.

Testimony in regard to free negroes.

SEC. 15. *And be it enacted*, That the said commissioner shall, upon the written application of any free negro or negroes residing in the said county of Dorchester, the evidence of whose freedom has been lost or destroyed by the burning of the court house of said county of Dorchester, take and receive testimony in the same manner herein provided for, the proof of the return and accounts of executors, and so forth, in regard to the freedom of such negro or negroes, and the evidence so taken shall by the said commissioner be reported to the Circuit court, who shall decide upon the validity and effect thereof, subject, however, to appeal as in cases of petition for freedom.

Authority to summon witnesses.

SEC. 16. *And be it enacted*, That the said commissioner shall have full power and authority to summon witnesses before him at the instance of any of the parties interested, or whenever he may deem their testimony important to a fair and impartial decision in any matter