

The following documents were found in the Widow's Pension File for Hester Tuckson, widow of Abraham Tuckson of the 23rd USCT. Both Hester and Abraham were slaves of Dr. John R. Taylor of "Fall Hill" in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. Original documents located at the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Typescripts produced by Eric J. Mink.

01/11

Deposition A

Case Hester Tuckson, No. 163009

On this 13th day of Nov., 1902, at Washington, county of X State of D.C., before me, ----
-----, a special examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared Hester Tuckson pensioner, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogations propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says: I am about sixty years of age (not positive); my post office address is # ----- K. st. SW. -----

I am the identical Hester Tuckson, now drawing \$12 pr. mo. pension as widow of Abraham Tuckson, late of Co. G, 23 U.S.C. Vol. Inf. who was killed during service. I was married to above named soldier in Dec. 1857. I am not good at dates, but know it was near Christmas. We were both slaves on plantation of Dr. Taylor, right near Fredericksburg Va. It was a slave marriage, and the only time either of us were ever married. We had been married for five years and lived right along together until Dr. Taylor sent my husband to haul commissary stuff for the Confederates, and while hauling this stuff, soldier ran away and came to Washington. I never saw my husband again. I heard through friends at home that he was in Washington. I did see him once again. He came over about a year after running away to see me. He hadn't gone in Army yet. Dr. Taylor's son ran soldier away with a gun because he thought soldier was trying to get me to leave. I next heard sometime afterwards that he had gone in army and next that he had been killed at Petersburg Va. I have not remarried since his death. I had altogether four children by soldier, one Emma, born a short time a year or so before soldier + I were married, then Nannie born in Sept. 1858, and ----- who died and Leonia the youngest, born in Aug. 1862. She was our last baby. We were married on plantation by Murray Taylor Dr. Taylor's son. I don't know where Murray Taylor is now. Ennis Taylor lives near old place at Fredericksburg and would know about our marriage. We were never divorced. Q. Who else can you refer to in Fredericksburg who would know about your marriage. A. Caroline Burrell Rev. Geo. Dixon Colored Minister are the only ones I can think of. Wm. Burrell Griffin Henry Franklin Burrell and Mrs. ----- Russell who formerly testified for me are all dead. Caroline Burrell and Rev. Mr.

Dixon would also know that I haven't remarried. Everyone in Fredericksburg would know that I haven't remarried. Spencer Lewis and John Berry the latter a white man, both of Fredericksburg would know that I haven't remarried.

My right name is Hester but I couldn't read any ----- all the time that my pension papers were right until I came to Washington four months ago, when I carried my papers to Notary, to be executed I carried these papers to Pension agency and there told them that my name was Hester Tuckson and they told me that the pension Ctf. was Esther Tuckson. This was the first time that I knew the name was wrong. I lived in Fredericksburg up to four months ago. I used to visit children here occasionally but have now come here to live. I don't know any of soldier's comrades. No body in Washington knows anything about me, all the people know me live in Fredericksburg, Everybody in Fredericksburg knows me as soldier's widow. I have understood your questions, and my answers are correctly recorded.

Hester "X" Tuckson
Deponent

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day Nov, 1902, and I certify that the contents were fully known to deponent before signing.

Special Examiner

Deposition A

Case of Widow of Abraham Tuckson, No. 163009

On this 5th day of December, 1902, at Fredericksburg, county of Spottsylvania State of Virginia, before me, -----, a special examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared R. Innes Taylor, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogations propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

Age 56 years. Residence Fredericksburg Spottsylvania Co., Virginia. Occupation Farmer. I knew Hester or Esther Tuckson as a slave on my father's place. My father's name was Dr. John R. Taylor. I have known her all my life in fact. Ques. Do you know whether she was properly married to husband. Ans. Yes she was according to a slave marriage. Ques. You are positive as to the marriage? Ans. Yes sir. Ques. What was her husbands name? Ans. Abraham, and he was a bad rascal. Ques. Did they live together up until the time her husband enlisted? Ans. No sir. When the army came here in 1862 I think they got here in April of that year, or it might have been a little earlier, – they were stationed at first across the river and didn't cross for ten or twelve days after they got here, and as soon as ----- they reached the other side of the river Abraham with two other young negroes went across to the Federal troops – ran away. One day not long after I saw some one out by the lane and called to my father and told him that Abraham was coming up the lane. Now his wife was laying in her cabin at the point of death at the time – was not expected to live from one day to another, and my father asked Abraham what he wanted. He said he was after his clothes and said he was going to get them. My father told him he could not go near the cabin and for him to get off the place. Abraham said he was going to get them and my father said he would see whether he would or not and with that he wheeled his horse and went to the house and got a double barreled gun and gave it to me and told me to shoot Abram if he went near the cabin. He then wheeled his horse and went down to the picket, right down the hill here with the intention of having the officer put Abraham under arrest but Abram got there by the time my father did and they with the picket all went to Patrick's headquarters – where the National Bank is.

My father told his story – told the General what kind of a negro Abraham was and all about the condition his wife was in and then offered Abram to Patrick with a clean bill of sale if he would only keep him off the place, with the understanding that he never comes around again. The General turned him over to one of his officers to take across the river and told him if he was ever caught around again, he would be tied to an artillery wheel and cut to pieces. I have never seen Abraham from that day to this but heard that he was killed down near Petersburg during the war.

My brother Murray Taylor lives at San Simeon, San Luis Co. California, Her right name is Hester she stayed on my father's place until sometime after the war. She had three children

living when she left. They were born on my father's place. No sir she was never married before she married Abraham, nor since either, not since to my knowledge.

I have understood your questions and my answers have been correct. I have heard you read this deposition over and it is properly recorded.

R. Innes Taylor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 5 day of December, 1902, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent before signing.

Special Examiner.

Deposition B

Case of Widow of Abraham Tuckson, No. 163009

On this 5th day of December, 1902, at Fredericksburg, county of Spottsylvania State of Virginia, before me, -----, a special examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared Frank T. Forbes, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogations propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

My age is about 77. Residence, Fredericksburg, Spottsylvania Co., Va. Occupation, Retired gentleman. I have lived here all my life. Ques. Do you or did you know a colored woman by the name of Tucson? Ans. I knew one by the name of Hester or Esther Tucson, who was a slave owned by Dr. Taylor, my brother-in-law and I knew her husband too. His name was Abraham Tucson, and he was a hard one to manage. I can tell you all about them from my recollection and from facts that came to my knowledge. Yes they were married, that is there was a slave marriage. I can't say as to the date but should judge it was along in the late fifties. Of course I can't give the circumstances of the marriage but I cam positive they were husband and wife. She was a good slave but he was a bad one. Let me tell you about him: Along the first part of the war he ran away from Dr. Taylor, and went across the river somewhere don't know whether to enlist or what. Anyway along in the following spring or winter, in the early part of 1862, I believe it was, he came back to Dr. Taylor's place and was making for his cabin when Doc saw him and hallowed to him: "Where are going there." Abram answered back that he was going to the cabin to get his clothes. The Doctor told him not to go to the cabin and then told his son Ennis to get the gun and if he went near that cabin to shoot him and said "I'll go across here to the picket and see about this." The yankee pickets were stationed along here at the time. When the Dr. started for the pickets Abraham started too, and told his story to the picket who marched him to headquarters to General Patrick, where Doc Taylor had preceded them. However Abram told General Patrick how Doc Taylor had threatened to shoot him when he went after his clothes, etc., and then Patrick turned to the Doctor and asked him what he had to say. The Doctor said this nigger ran away and left his wife pregnant, he cares nothing for her and now he comes back when his wife is confined to her cabin in childbirth and wants to kick up things and I told him if he went to that cabin my son would shoot him and he would too, and he added, "General I have tried to raise that slave right but I just can't do anything with him and will give you a clear bill of sale if you will only keep him off my place. The General then turned to Abraham and told him to get across the pontoons and stay over there and then turned to his officers and told them if they ever caught him around there to bring him to headquarters and if the Doctor was unable to manage him that he would take a try at it.

Now of course I was not present and heard all this but everyone around here at the time had knowledge of this incident just as I have given it. I don't know where Hester is now. I think she is dead. Her name is Hester I am sure but the names Hester, Esther, and Easter are all the

same with colored folks and it may be that she was called Esther. I don't know anything about the army service of her husband Abraham. No indeed I have no interest in the claim, I did not even know Hester was alive yet. Your enquiry just brought that incident to mind.

Frank T. Forbes

I have thoroughly understood your questions and my answers have been correct. I have heard you read this deposition over and it is correct. Yes sir you have got it all right so far as my knowledge goes.

Frank T. Forbes

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 5 day of December, 1902, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent before signing.

Special Examiner.

Deposition C

Case of Widow of Abraham Tuckson, No. 163009

On this 5th day of December, 1902, at Fredericksburg, county of Spottsylvania State of Virginia, before me, -----, a special examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared George L. Dixon, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogations propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

Age 85th year. Residence Fredericksburg Spottsylvania Co., Virginia. Occupation Minister of the Gospel. Yes sir I know Hester Tuckson. I knew her from a child. She was born a slave on Dr. Taylor's place and lived on his place until sometime after the war. I baptized her and all three of her children. Ques. Under what name was she baptized. Ans. Under the name of Hester Tuckson, but she had been often called Esther. Her name, however, is Hester. I don't know when she was married. I have always believed that she was properly married to Abraham Tuckson according to slave marriage. I was in the war as a guide to Gen'l McDowell and do not know the circumstances of her husband leaving her. I know that he ran away from her and his master early in the war. Her children were all born up here at Dr. Taylor's I do not know whether you can find the records at the church or not, there have been two or three pastors there since I was and I don't know whether you can find them or not.

No sir I have no interest in this claim. No sir she has never been married since her husband ran away.

I have heard you read this deposition over, have understood your questions and my answers have been correctly recorded.

George L. Dixon

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 5 day of December, 1902, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent before signing.

Special Examiner.