

The following documents were found in the Pension File for Peter Churchville of Company H, 23rd USCT. Peter was a slave of Reuben Lindsay Gordon of Orange County, Virginia. Original documents located at the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Typescripts produced by Eric J. Mink.

01/11

District of Columbia
County of Washington

On this 18 day of September 1868, personally appeared before me, a Notary Public in and for the County and District above named William Robinson and Maria Ashton, residents of Washington City D.C. who, being by me, duly sworn according to law, depose and say that they were personally acquainted with Peter Churchill, who was a Private in Company "H" of the 23^d Regiment United States Colored Infantry, and were also acquainted with his wife Maria Churchill, and were present at the house of Reuben Gordon, their then master in Orange County Virginia, and eye witnesses to the marriage of the said Peter Churchill and the said Maria Churchill, nee Maria Beal, which marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. Daveney Micky, a colored minister of the Gospel, on or about the 25th day of December, 1857. They, deponents, further depose and say, that there was no record of said marriage kept, nor did the minister give a marriage certificate, for the reason that no record of the marriage of slaves was allowed to be kept in Virginia at that time, nor was a marriage certificate allowed to be given to slaves, neither can the affidavit of the minister who performed the marriage ceremony be obtained for the reason that he be dead, having died some time in the year 1859. They, deponents, further depose and say that the aforesaid Peter Churchill and Maria Churchill lived together as husband and wife, and were so regarded by the community in which they resided and by all who knew them, up to the time of the death of the said Maria Churchill, which occurred on or about the 7th day of Sept. 1859, while giving birth to their child Harriet Churchill.

They, deponents, further depose and say that to their personal knowledge the said Peter Churchill did not marry again after the death of his wife the said Maria Churchill; and that their knowledge of the facts above set forth is derived from an intimate personal acquaintance with the parties above named of 25 years standing, having belonged to the same master and lived on the same plantation with them all their lives, and that they have no interest in the claim to which this is supplementary.

Signed in the presence of

Tho. J. Myers
W.G. -----

William Robinson
Maria "X" Ashton

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 18th day of September 1868; and I hereby certify that the foregoing affidavit was carefully made.

Exhibit _____
Case of Minor of Peter Churchill, No. 119.367

On this fifth day of March, 1874, at Cor. of M + 4 st Washington, County of Washington Dist of Columbia, before me Thomas P. Kane a Special Agent of the Pension Office, personally appeared Julia Churchill wife of Peter Churchill, who being by me duly sworn according to law, declares that her age is about 40 years, that she resides at Cor. of M + 4 st Wash. County of Washington, Dist of Columbia, and that that she was never married to Peter Churchill but that she has lived with him as his wife since 1861.

Peter Churchill's first wife died in Virginia before I ever lived with him. He had other children by his first wife but none of them are now living except Harriet, who is now about 19 years old, and lives with her Grandmother Dicey Churchill on T St. in this District. She also declares that her husband has no other wife living but her and that he lives with no other woman as his wife that he works in Georgetown and comes home to Washington every night, that she has had one child by her husband which is now dead. Peter Churchill's mother is not willing that a marriage ceremony should be performed or that he should have or recognize her as his wife for the reason that she claims support from him. He never knew until this week that a pension was being drawn on account of his death, he learned it from the neighbors and others, he has asked his mother where she got so much money but she would not tell him.

and she further declares that he has no interest, direct or indirect, in the claim of the minor of Peter Churchill for a Pension; and further saith not.

Attest { William A. Austin
Francis Geby Austin

Julia "X" Churchill

Sworn to and subscribed before me this fifth day of March 1874, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to affiant before signing.

Thomas P. Kane
Special Agent.

Exhibit _____
Case of Minor of Peter Churchill, No. _____

On this seventh day of March, 1874, at Washington, County of Washington D.C., before me Tolbert Lanston, a Special Agent of the Pension Office, personally appeared T.D. Yeager, who being by my duly sworn according to law, declares that his age is 28 years, that he resides at Washington County of Washington, D.C., and that upon information received at the Pension Office he called upon Dicey Churchill, guardian of the above minor, who admitted that the soldier was still alive and has been in Washington for nearly one year.

That she had seen him frequently during that time and told him she was drawing pension on his account and that he told her that was right. Millie Hacket, who is living with Dicey's son as his wife, also acknowledged that the soldier Peter Churchill was live and that she has seen and spoken to him frequently since his return to Washington. Upon their arrest for conspiracy the soldier Peter Churchill was subpoenaed as a witness and upon being called up by the bailiff, a colored man arose and acknowledged that he was Peter Churchill.

and he further declares that he has no interest, direct or indirect, in the claim of the Minor of Peter Churchill for a Pension; and further saith not.

T.D. Yeager

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7 day of March 1874, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to affiant before signing.

Tolbert Lanston
Chief ----- and Special Agent.

General Affidavit.

In the matter of Peter Churchville late Co. H 23rd Regt. USCT, No. 971,164

On this 13th day of Sept., A.D. 1893, personally appeared before me a justice of the Peace in and for the aforesaid County, duly authorized to administer oaths Peter Churchville aged about 65 years, a resident of Washington, in the County of Washington, and of D.C., whose Post-Office address is #908, 27th St. N.W. City

I am the claimant in the above named claim. I am disabled from manual labor on account of my disabilities for which I claim pension. The said disabilities are the result of my service in the US Army while serving as private in Co H 23rd regt. USCT, being first wounded in the head by a gun, by a rebel soldier while in the line of my duty as a soldier and from the effect of said wound my left eye is affected and also my head. And also I was injured in the right leg about July 30th 1864 while in battle in front of Petersburg Va. Therefore I ask that I may be re-examined in order that I may have the benefit of the Act of June 27th 1890. This is my own statement made Sept 13th 1893 to Walter Middleton at 503 ½ D St. N.W. and that in making the same I did not use and was not aided by any written or printed statements or recital prepared or dictated by any other person, as are exhibit to my testimony

E.M. Hewlett

Matlida King

[if Affiants sign by mark, two witnesses
who can write sign here.]

Peter "X" Churchville

Deposition A

Case of Peter Churchwell Ctf. No. 957.639

On this 4th day of October, 1900, at Washington, county of _____ State of D.C., before me, A.W. Roome, a special examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared Peter Churchwell, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogatories propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

I am about 74 years of age; my post-office address is 1808, 24 St. N.W. this city. Shoemaker. I was born + raised in Albermarle Co. Va. near Gordonsville. My father was William + my mother was Dicey Churchwell – dead. I was a slave of Reuben Gordon. I was married when a slave to Maria Grey, she died before the war. No children living by this marriage. I also married Julia Weaver, a year or so after the war, in this city, got a license, + I was married by Rev. Sandy Alexander Pastor Little Baptist Church Geotown D.C. She died about ten years ago in this city. No children by her. I have never married since – I have no children now living by any wife. I got acquainted with Julia Weaver at Fredericksburg Va. before the war. She was at that time the wife of Tom Weaver, + she had a son Andrew Weaver whom I knew when a boy, and he enlisted in same company + regiment and at the same time and place. During the war, Julia Weavers husband died, and she came to Wash D.C. and after my return from the army, I again met and married her. I came to Washington D.C. in August 1862 and I was a coachman for Mrs. Barber, in Geotown D.C. + I worked for her about 2 years. She was the widow of Jno. Barber – dead. I then enlisted in July 1864, at Capt. Sheets Office in Co. H 23^d Reg. USCT. I gave the officer at that time the name Peter Churchwell which is my right name and I always answered roll call by that name + was so called by my comrades and I was discharged from the service by that name. They then saw how high I was – I am now 5 ft. 3 in. high (OK AWR) I was next examined by the Doctors. I got a uniform + was sent to Camp Casey Va. + was there about 30 days. My Capt. Fessenden, Burrell Mitchell Robert Green and Andrew Weaver are the only comrades that I can now remember. After we left Camp Casey Va we took boat for City Point Va, then up James River + marched towards Petersburg Va. + was at Bermuda Hundred when we had a fight + we next had the fight at Petersburg Va. July 64 and in the charge on the Rebel lines I was captured + put towards burying the dead soldiers on the battle field for 4 days, the prisoners, my self included were then taken under guard to Danville prison on Roanoke Island, and I was kept there until Major Reuben Gordon, my old Master, heard I was in prison, and he came there and claimed me as his slave + sold me to a Mr. Shedrick Lee, a slave dealer at Richmond, Va., and he sold me to Luke Powell a slave dealer who took me to Wilmington N.C. + I was there 8 days working in a shoe shop of Geo. French's store, + then sold to Patrick Murphy who took me on his farm near Raleigh N.C., and worked at making boot + shoes for him, + he sold them. I worked for him for 6 months on his place. I ran away from him + came to Wilmington N.C. and

I had a little shop of my own + I made boots and shoes there for my own profit. I sold the boots + shoes + kept the money. The Union troops had by this time captured Wilmington N.C. and I remained in Wilmington N.C. I continued to keep this little shoe shop, cor. 7th and Chestnut Streets in Wilmington N.C. Simon Lanton and Henry Dudley both worked with me in the show shop for two or three years. I taught them both the trade. Susannah Dean lived with me but I was not married to her, we lived together in the same house where the shoe shop was + we lived together for two or three years, had three children by her, Nancy Ann – Hetty Ann, they were the only children born by this Susannah Dean. Yes she called herself Susannah Churchwell and the two girls always went by the name of Churchwell. This woman and my two daughters were alive when I left Wilmington N.C., while she was living with me we had a fight and she cut me on third finger of my right hand – with a knife + I have the scar now (shown Examnr.) + my finger is bent + cannot straighten it out, its all drawn up. I had her arrested by the police, she was taken to Court + she was fined \$5.00 + they made me as her husband – pay the fine. She was living in Wilmington N.C. 3 or 4 years ago. Henry Hare storekeeper Wash Lewis, shoe shop on C St. near River, Ephraim Bishop bricklayer + Ned Hill bricklayer. David Statu, drove cart + was well off – these men all new me well when I lived in Wilmington N.C. I remained in Wilmington N.C. for 4 or 5 years after the war. I then went to Gordonsville Va. + was there two months with my sister, Keziah Robinson dead – and then came to Washington D.C. I then went to live with my father + mother + sister, all dead – on R St. btwn 18 + 19, + I opened a shoe shop in Georgetown on Water St btwn High + Congress, down on Water, south side, ----- this shop in my own name – from Sam Smith dead. George Naylor came to work with me, he worked with me about 2 or 3 months, + then went to work for himself. Where my shoe shop was a Cooper shop now stands. After I came to Wash DC after the war, I hunted up Julia Weaver, whom I afterwards married. I found her in this City after I had been here about one year + a half, and about 6 or 7 months after I found here, we were married, and I first met Andrew Weaver about 1 ½ years after I had returned to this City after the war. I got a license from the City Hall for my marriage to Julia Weaver and I lived with her until her death + after that I continued to love with her son Andrew Weaver.

Julia Weaver my wife was married first to Tom Weaver before the war, he died. She next married Henry Parker when both were slaves. Henry Parker died, then when I Married her after the war, she went by the name of Julia Weaver + by that name we were married, as our certificate shows. In 1892 I applied through Walter Middleton Atty for my back pay and after some delay I was paid by the Treasury Dept or War Dept \$134.53 by check, which I got cashed + got the money, and I was given this certificate of discharge (shown to Examiner) Burrell Mitchell + Robert Green were both in my company, and they both identified me at the War Dept and made affidavits in my claim for pension as to my identity.

I first made a claim for a pension through Walter Middleton Atty about ten years ago, and I have paid him nothing for his services in the prosecution of my claim, + I paid my witnesses nothing. I did not serve in the military or in the Naval service of the United States except as stated. I have my pension certificate + my blank voucher at home. Have never borrowed money on my pension

certificate + I have never signed nor sworn to my quarterly voucher before the 4th day of the month that it is due.

I was taken prisoner at the battle of Petersburg Va, July 1864, + was a prisoner of war – after I had been sold to Patrick Murphy + went with him to his farm I ran away from him and came to Wilmington N.C. Genl Lee had not surrendered – the war was still going on, and when I got to Wilmington N.C. the City was full of Union troops, and the river was full of Union gun boats. The rebel troops were then at Raleigh N.C. and the Union troops remained at Wilmington N.C. from the time that I got there until the close of the war.

The 26 Reg. U.S. Col. Troops were encamped on Nigger head road – about the boundary of the City of Wilmington N.C. while I was in that place they were there when I got to the city + they remained there until the close of the war. When I got to Wilmington N.C. I did not report to the Union forces, that I had been a soldier + a prisoner of war. When I made up my mind to apply for a pension, I went with a colored man that I was talking to about it, don't know his name – to Walter Middleton's Office + I told him my name and my company and my Regiment + I told him I had been a prisoner – and he took my claim + got it through.

I have heard you read to me the foregoing deposition and it is correct. I have thoroughly understood your questions and my answers are correctly recorded.

Witness.

Peter "X" Churchwell

R.R. -----

W.M. B-----

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of October, 1900, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent before signing.

A.W. Roome
Special Examiner

Deposition C

Case of Peter Churchwell Cert. No. 957,639

On this 3^d day of October, 1900, at Washington, county of _____ State of D.C., before me, A.W. Roome, a special examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared Andrew Weaver, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogatories propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

I am 54 years of age; my post-office is 819 24 St NW this city. I am the identical Andrew Weaver who enlisted at Capt Sheetz Office in this city July 8, 1864 in Capt. W.H. Hurds Company B – 23^d Reg. United States Cold Troops, and served as a private, and was transferred to Co B from Co H at Fort Harris, and I was discharged from the service November 30, 1865, and I have now in my possession my original certificate of discharge (shown to Examiner).

The colored man here present I have known since my boyhood . I first knew him at Fredericksburg Va. and he is the same Peter Churchwell that enlisted at the same time that I did, and I know that he served as a private in Co H – 23 Regt U.S.C.T. and that he was taken prisoner at the battle of Petersburg Va July 30, 1864, and I never saw him again in the service, but saw him about 5 years after the war in this City + often since.

I have heard you read to me the foregoing and it is correct.

Attest

H.R. Stewart

M. McLaughlin

Andrew "X" Weaver

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 3^d day of October, 1900, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent before signing.

A.W. Roome
Special Examiner