

Affidavit of Elijah Graves
Regarding 1789 Petition of Cesar and Lowis Peters and their Family
To Connecticut Legislature for Emancipation

Original Document On File at Connecticut State Library
Hartford, CT
RG 1, Early General Records
Connecticut Archives, 1629-1820
Revolutionary War, Series I, II, III
Volume XXXVII, doc. 260A-260B

The Deposition of Elijah Graves of Lawfull age is as follows who Says he has Lived more than fifteen years a near Neighbor to Cezar and Lois his Wife. Dureing which Time he has observed but few if any of the common Vices of Mankind in them but that they have ever Maintained an honest and Sober Character, also been Diligent and Laborious in their calling and a Degree of Frugality much beyond what is common People of their Colour – Just at the eve of the American War the Rev. Saml. Peters, who then Considered Cezar and Lois as his Property Left them and the Rest of his Estate and Took Refuge among the British; whose Lands was Soon after Taken by the State's attorney and Rented out for Publick Use. Cezar and Lois with Three Children was Turned out to Procure a Living for themselves without Much help from their Masters Property. However by good Economy and Close application to business Did Procure a very Comfortable Liveing some years and in the Mean Time had Two or Three Children – about four years Since Mr. Peters's Estate being Relinquished by the Publick, Cezar moved himself and Family again into one of Mr. Peter's Houses where he enjoyed himself but for a short Season. Mr. Peters sending over from London a Power of Attorney appointing John Man and his Son his agents who not Long after made Cezar acquainted that it was their Intention to Sell him and his Family into foreign Parts which threw them into Great Consternation and Concern, which in fact not Long after they really Did to one David Prior, an Inhabitant of South Carolina who Came with a Waggon and an armed force of Seven or Eight Men, toward the Close of the Day in the month of September a Little more than a year Since, and Laid violent hands on sd Family bound Some of themn in Irons and threw them into a Waggon and Drove of [sic] with Great Precipitation whilest their Cries and Shreiks were Shocking to humane Nature, as your Deponent was an Eye Witness to this Scene it Left Such an Impression on his mind as is not worn out to this Day. The Minds of People in general appeared to be Much agitated and filld with Indignation at Such Cruelties a Number of Persons movd with compasion under the Colour of Lawfull authority Pursued and over Took them 20 Miles from this Place and within one Mile of a Vessel Bound to the sd. Carolina which was to Receive them on Board, as I afterward heard to carry them hence – and reTook them and Brought them Back to the Place from whence they Taken – yet still the sd. agents of Mr. Peters manifest a Determination to Sell and Disperce the aforesd. Family which Renders their condition very Miserable and unhappy and further your Deponent Saith not.

- Elijah Graves

Tolland County SS Hebron January 5th 1789

Then personly appeared Elijah Graves the Subscriber to the foregoing Deposition and made Solemn oath to the Truth of the Same before me.

- Benjm. Buell Justice Peace