

# Antebellum Experiences of the Men and Women of the 1st SCVAD

Grayce Boozer, Aidan de la Torre, Thomas Grygowski, Madeline Jones

HISTB492: Atlantic Slavery and Antislavery  
Dr. James Shinn



INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE  
RECONSTRUCTION ERA

# Matilda Williams's Life

Matilda was born on  
April 9, 1833

While Matilda wasn't part of the  
military herself, her husband  
was a U.S.C.T. musician,  
named Joseph Williams.

Matilda worked as a washer  
once her husband died. But she  
did own the house she lived in.

Matilda died on December 15th,  
1920, in Savannah, GA





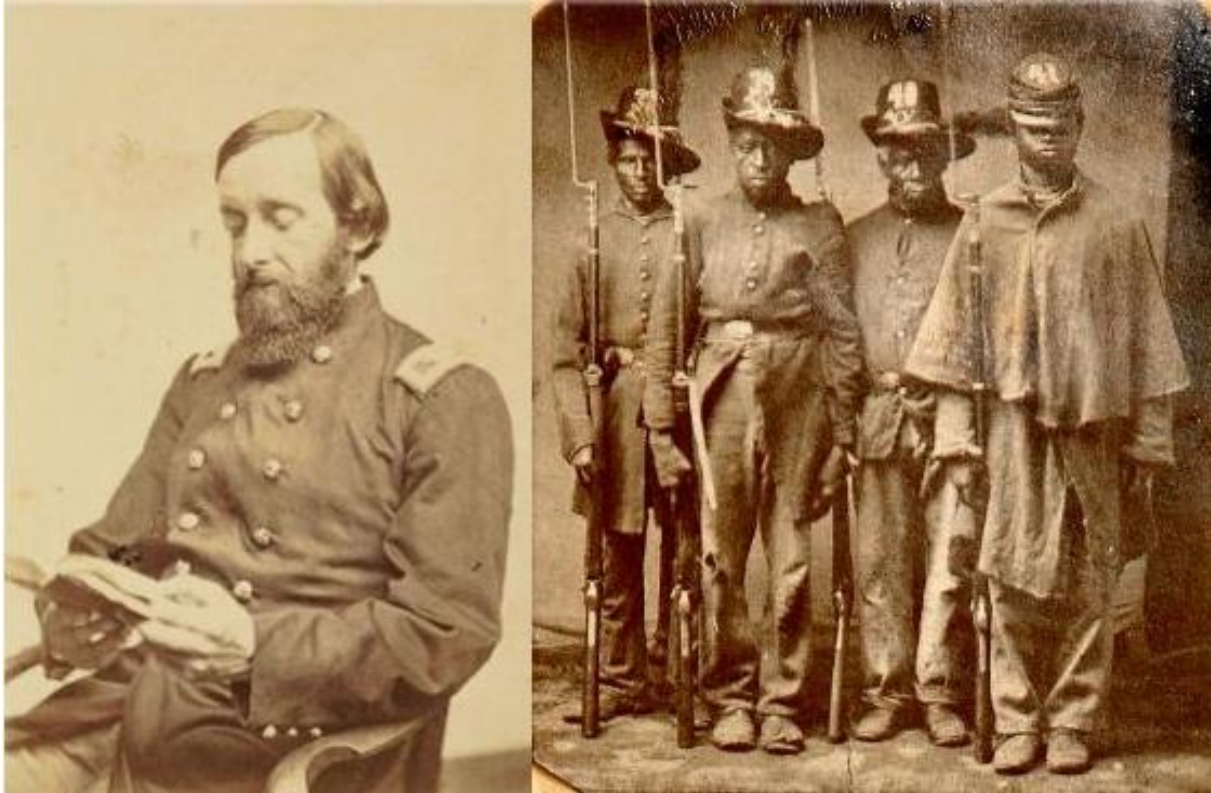
On this 20 day of May, 1897,  
Savannah, County of Chatham  
State of Ga, before me, J. G. Gibbes, Jr.  
Special Examiner of the Pension Office, personally appeared  
Reuben Gibbes, who, being by me first duly sworn to  
truly all interrogatories propounded to him during this Special Examination of a  
pension claim, deposes and says: My age is 65. I live  
Grove St., Lovers Lane Savannah Ga  
P.O. the same. I served in Co E 33 US  
I have know Matilda Williams for  
24 years. She was then the wife of J.  
Williams who was drum major of my  
regiment. I knew him in service and in  
service. He and I worked together <sup>before the war</sup> on  
same steamer. It ran from Jacksonville  
Florida to Charleston S.C. I was a  
fireman and he was a Stewardess  
the steamer. I did not know anything  
at all about any wife he had in  
Florida. I have heard since then  
he had had a wife and that she died.  
I have only lived in lovers lane about

# Paul Jones (1830-1905)

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- Paul Jones was born in Ladies Island as a slave owned by one John Porteus
  - One of 50 slaves
  - Lived on Ladies Island until passing away in 1905
- He enlisted in the Union Army in 1862, serving in the 33rd United States Colored Infantry until being discharged in 1865
  - Formed in 1862 in South Carolina, was the first black regiment formally organized by the Union (under Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson)
  - Saw action in Charleston, Savannah, and Augusta, was mustered out in 1866
- He went on to serve in the 1st Regiment South Carolina Infantry after the Civil War
- Was a farmer after his military retirement, starting a family in Beaufort/Ladies Island
  - Got married to Fannie Jones in April of 1865
  - Had four children: Rinah Lee, Lizzie Brown, Lexinder Singleton, Morris Jones
  - Had rheumatoid arthritis in both knees from military service, suffered rheumatoid arthritis in right shoulder and breathing problems (accompanied by heart flutters) after his service





Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson (left) & Unidentified Troops (right)

(3-156.)

**DEPOSITION**

Case of Paul Jones, No. 557278

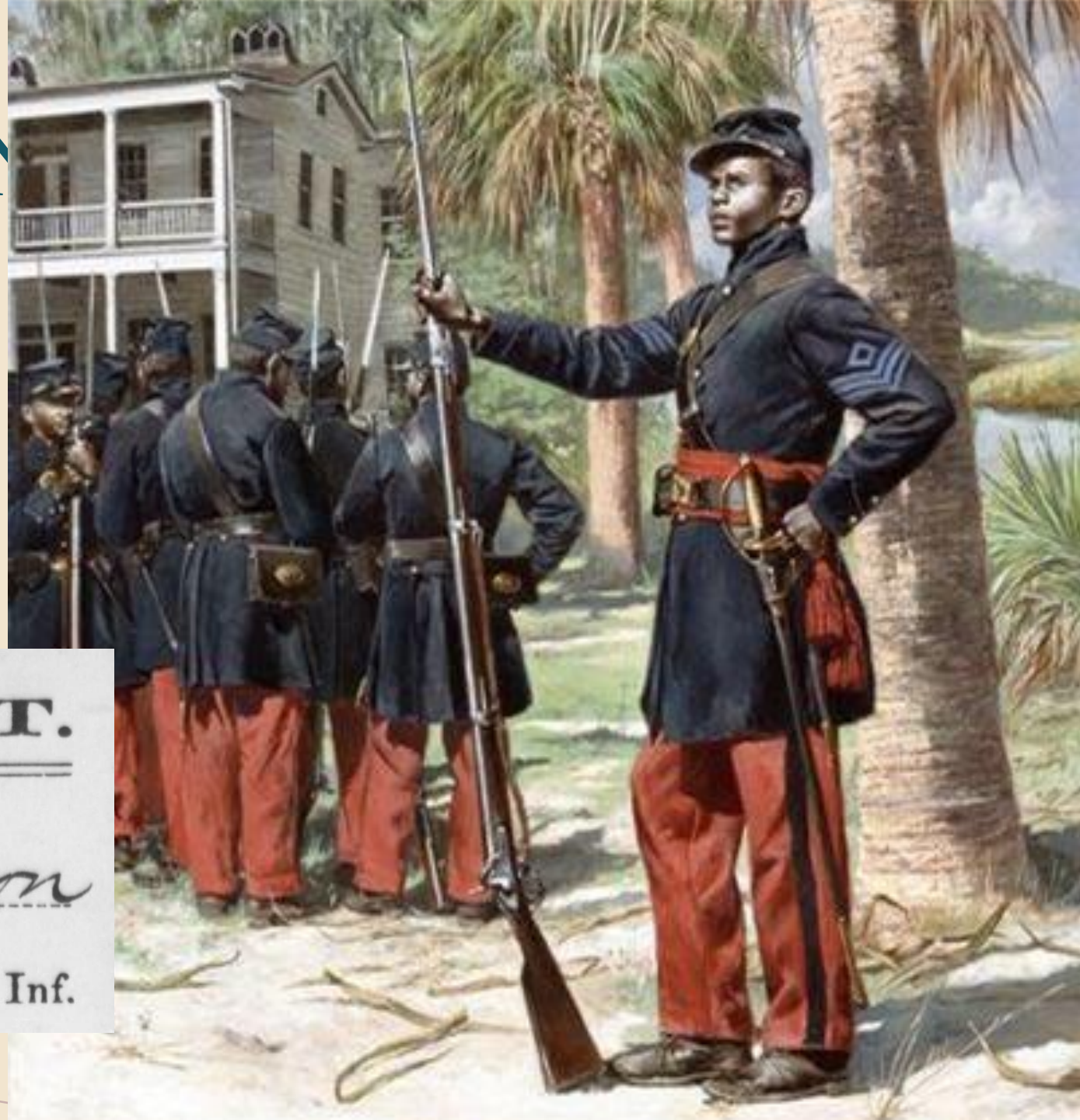
On this thirty-first day of March, 1888, at  
Beaufort, County of Beaufort  
 State of North Carolina, before me, Amos W. W. W., a  
 Special Examiner of the Pension Office, personally appeared  
Paul Jones, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer  
 truly all interrogatories propounded to him during this Special Examination of afore-  
 said pension claim, deposes and says he as he does not know - thinks  
he lost much that of 60, farmer, N.C. (Cobb's  
Island, Beaufort Co. N.C.  
I am the identical Paul Jones who enlisted  
as private in Co "A" 33<sup>rd</sup> Regt U.S. C. I,  
enlisted in 1862 - in July I think - but he was  
not recognized by the State until Aug. in 1863. I  
was discharged from hospital after wound was healed  
in April 1865.  
I claim pension for rheumatism in both knees,  
and for rheumatism in my right shoulder and arm,  
sometimes I can hardly catch my breath and there  
will be a fluttering at my heart. That occurs  
sometimes when I don't feel well.  
On the post <sup>for a time</sup> I haven't been able to do  
any work at all.  
I had the small pox about a year after  
I came out of the army and that laid me  
up about two months. I had no other disease  
during my army service, except this rheumatism.  
That was about the same, after I got up  
from the small pox that it was before I was  
taken down.  
When I enlisted I was a round  
man, as round as a dollar. I was a  
slave, owned by John Patton (dead) at office  
called Old School on Fort (Royal) Island, about  
10 miles from Beaufort, N.C.

Page \_\_\_\_\_ Deposition \_\_\_\_\_  
 405, (26)



DANIEL GRAYSON

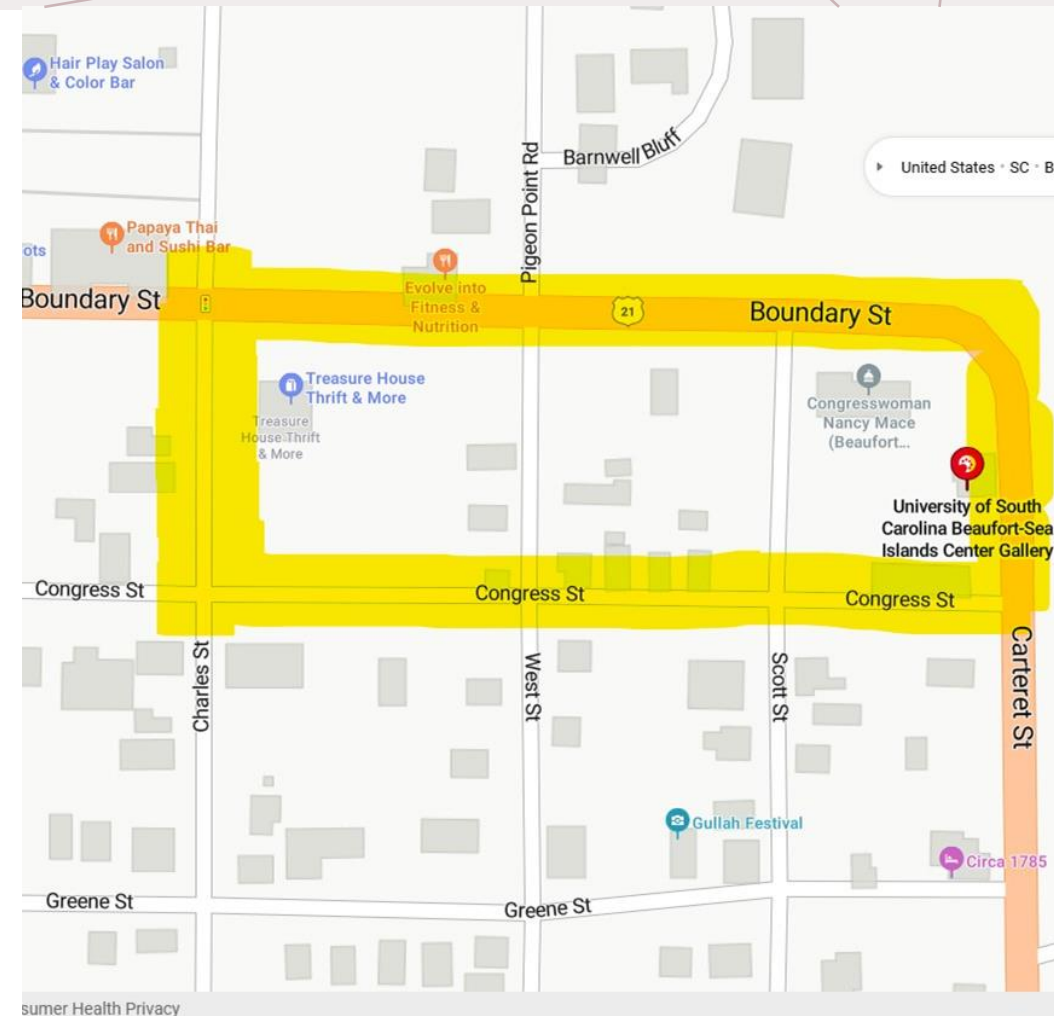
*33<sup>RD</sup> UNITED  
STATES COLORED  
INFANTRY*



L | 33 | U.S.C.T.  
Daniel Grayson  
Pr., Co. B, 33 Reg't U. S. Colored Inf.

# *WAS ENSLAVED 3 STREETS AWAY*

- Born in Beaufort approx. 1833, Died 1894
- House Servant during antebellum period, enlisted as a soldier in Oct 1862
- Originally known as 1<sup>st</sup> South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, the unit later changed its name to 33<sup>rd</sup> United States Colored Infantry (aka "USCT")
- He had numerous infractions of being absent without leave during his enlistment. Yet, stayed within high standing in the unit.
- He saw service as a Teamster on Folly Island outside of Charleston. He had a cataract removed from his eye there.





AWARDED A  
PENSION  
-FOR-  
"DISEASE OF EYES"

6 DOLLARS PER  
MONTH IN 1890

Original

ACT OF JUNE 27, 1890.

No. 799941

UNITED STATES AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF PENSIONS

It is hereby certified That in conformity with the laws of the United States, Quinn Grayson who was a Private Co "B" 33 Regiment United States Colored Volunteer Infantry is entitled to a pension under the provisions of the Act of June 27, 1890. at the rate of Six dollars per month to commence on the fourteenth day of July one thousand eight hundred and ninety two. This pension being for: Disease of eyes

Given at the Department of the Interior this fourteenth day of July one thousand eight hundred and ninety two and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventeenth

John W. Noble.  
Secretary of the Interior.

Counter-signed:  
James B. Freeman  
Commissioner of Pensions.



# Biographical Overview

- **Name:** Elizabeth McKnight
- **Date of Birth:** Circa 1844
- **Place of Birth:** South Carolina
- **Race:** Black
- **Spouse:** Toby McKnight (Veteran, 34th USCT)
- **Children:** Sarah Ann, Caesar, Lulu, Ella
- **Occupation:** Housekeeper
- **Residence (1880):** Duke Street, Beaufort, South Carolina
- **Literacy:** Could not read or write
- **Military Connection:** Testified in her husband's Civil War pension case
- **Place of Death / Date of Death:** Unknown

# Historical Significance

- Reconstruction family stability
- Legal recognition of Black marriages
- Black women as civic participants
- Federal pension testimony as empowerment
- Post-emancipation agency through legal systems

