

Petition

To the Honorable Commissioners of Claims

Under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1871, Washington, D.C.

The petition of Dicey Couch

Respectfully represents:

1. That she is a citizen of the United States and reside at present: near Durhams in Orange County, North Carolina
2. That she has a claim against the United States for: Property taken from her premises by soldiers Belonging to Kilpatrick's Cavalry on the 24th & 25th days of April 1865 for the use of a portion of service command then stationed at Durhams, North Carolina

As follows:

1865

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------|----------|
| April 24 | One bay horse 7 years old | 175 |
| | One bay mule 8 years old | 150 |
| 25 | 100 lbs. bacon | 20 |
| | Total value of Property | \$345.00 |

State of North Carolina

County of Orange

Dicey Couch being duly sworn deposes and says that she is the petitioner named in the foregoing petition, and who signed the same; that the matters therein stated are true, of the deponent's own knowledge, except as to those matters which are stated on information and belief, and as to those matters she believes them to be true; and deponent further says that she did not voluntarily serve in the Confederate army or navy, either as an officer, soldier, or sailor, or in any other capacity, at any time during the late rebellion; that she never voluntarily furnished any stores, supplies, or other material aid to said Confederate army or navy, or to the Confederate government, or to any officer, department or adherent of the same in support thereof, and that she never voluntarily accepted or exercised the functions of any office whatsoever under, or yielded voluntary support to, the said Confederate government.

Witnesses:

Samuel Couch

Dicy x Couch (her mark)

J N Pendergrass

Sworn and subscribed in my presence, the 14th day of September 1871

C. W. Johnston, J P

Names and residences of witnesses who will be relied upon to prove loyalty.

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| R W Cole | Durham, NC |
| Abner Copeland | Hillsboro, NC |
| J W Robson | Chapel Hill, NC |

Names and residences of witnesses who will be relied upon to prove the other facts alleged in the foregoing petition:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>John Couch</u> | <u>Durham, NC</u> |
| <u>Strudwick Rhew</u> | <u>Durham, NC</u> |
| <u>John Couch, col</u> | <u>Durham, NC</u> |

Post office address of claimant Durhams Orange Co North Carolina

In the matter of the claim of Dicey Couch, of Durham Township in the county of Orange in the state of North Carolina for Property taken for the use of the armies of the United States at her farm in said township in the month of April 1865 At Chapel Hill Orange County North Carolina on the twenty third day of January 1872 before Elmore W Norris Special Commissioner and Notary Public Present Dicey Couch Claimant and James Watson of counsel for claimant.

Testimony

Dicey Couch, the above named claimant being first duly sworn on such her solemn oath answering questions asked by counsel deposes and says:

My name is Dicey Couch. I am seventy five years old. I live eight miles from Chapel Hill, in Orange County, North Carolina. I am having a farm carried on.

A little while after the United States Army came to Durham's, I believe it was the second or third day after, I was at home where I live now and saw the United States soldiers come to my house and take my property. One of them rode up to the door and asked me if I had ever seen a Yankee. I told him no, and he said "well, you will see one now." I saw them catch the Mule they took from me right in my yard, before my door, and I saw them run the Horse down in the field a piece and catch him. I had to go and unlock the smokehouse door for them. They said if I didn't unlock it they would bust it down. After I unlocked it I stood by the side of the door all the time and saw them take the Bacon. The account I have made out against the Government is correct and just—if anything it is a little under—I had rather be under than over, you know.

I was present and saw all of the property specified in my petition taken. I don't remember the date. It was five or six years ago when the United States Army first came. I don't know what regiment or brigade the soldiers taking of any of my property [belonged to]. An officer came to my house after it had been taken but it was too late then to say anything about it to do any good. I did complain to the officer but I don't remember what I said or what he said.

I never got a cent, nor paper nor nothing—not a cent for them horses and Bacon—not a cent.

All the property was taken in the day time, about the same time of the day—about nine or ten o'clock. They didn't take any of it secretly at all—They took it boldly—yes they did.

There was a whole camp of them at Durhams, about eight miles from my house, and they staid [sic] there about three weeks. I never was there, but I heard there was a whole regiment of 'em there. I did hear the names of some of the officers at Durhams-but I have forgot them—I don't know but I believe Kilpatrick was one of them. I believe it was Kilpatrick's army. There had been no fighting anywhere near my house.

As to the condition, quantity and value of the property specified in the petition:

The Horse (Item 1) was called "Charley". He was what I call a red—I don't know what you call it. He was a nice common size horse certain. The horse was about six or seven years old. He was a well, sound horse, he never was sick in the world, that ever I knowed [sic] of—Good eyes as could be. He was in good order. He would work anywhere you put him I don't care where—He wasn't skinny and had no faults—not one. I can't tell you what he was worth but I wouldn't have took a hundred and fifty dollars cash in my lap. Folks did say he was worth a hundred and seventy five dollars, but I don't know—I don't know the worth of him.

The Mule (item 2) was called "Fan". She was rather darker color than the horse, and she was large—larger than the common mules. She was about eight years old. She was sound—had good eyes—wouldn't kick—there was no kicking in her. She was in good order—They were in just as good order as they need to be both of 'em. She was just as good a work mule as ever was—I don't care where you put her-to the carriage, plow, wagon. No matter where. I can't tell how much she was worth. She was worth a hundred and fifty dollars I know, if no more. If they had come and offered it to me I wouldn't have took it for her, I know.

The bacon (item 3) was good cured bacon—smoked good. It was in the smoke house hanging up. The soldiers took I know as many as ten large hams—I know because I was there and counted 'em—I see 'em takin 'em and I couldn't help but know. I didn't weigh 'em but I suppose a large ham would go over ten pounds. You may say ten anyhow—because I had rather be under than over. I declare I don't know anything about the price of bacon in them times-whether it was twenty or twenty-five cents a pound—I don't know what hams were worth, for I never bought any in my life.

The Horse and Mule and Bacon were taken for the actual use of the army I know because it was them that took it and they went off to Durhams or went off that way—I saw 'em.

I can't tell whether the Government supplied the soldiers with such things as they needed there, or not. But I shouldn't suppose they did, for if it had they wouldn't have come upon me.

I dare say they needed the bacon because there was a large army there and they had to get their support somehow. But I don't see what need they had for horses.

I believe the Government would be justified in paying me for the property—I think it would—because I am a poor woman and I need it.

I know the Horse and Mule and Bacon were taken from me, but I can't tell you whether they were taken by the order of an officer, or not—I can't tell you.

I don't know the size of my farm—I forget whether it is two hundred acres or what—I have not sold any of the land or added any to it since my property was taken by the soldiers. I don't know what it was valued at then, or what it is valued at now. You see the men folks see to that—I never had anything to do with it.

Dacey x Couch

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of January 1872

Elmore W Woods

Special Commissioner and Notary Public

Questions as to Loyalty

1. Answer—About eight miles from Chapel Hill in Orange County North Carolina where I live now. I have lived at the same place for thirty years. I was at home—in person—My son lived with me and he carried on a farm for me.
5. No I don't know that I did, but I was for the United States altogether.
6. No I never was. I didn't do a thing for the Confederacy—not a thing—After my children went off into the war I went to Raleigh for the third time to try to get them out of it.
- 11.No—I never furnished anything, not even a pair of socks, or a mouthful of victuals—I never even sent anything to my own sons.
- 17.No—The United States soldiers took just about all I had, but they didn't take me—They didn't want an old thing like I was.
33. My feelings were with the United States.....I told 'em I wanted it to stay like old Washington had it fixed—that I wanted it to stay that way.

Testimony

John Couch, the above named witness being first duly sworn on such his solemn oath answering questions asked by counsel deposes and says:

My name is John Couch. I reside in Durham Township in the county of Orange in the state of North Carolina. I am twenty-five years old. Am a farmer. I was present at claimants house in the month of April a few days before the surrender and saw the United States soldiers take therefrom the mule and bacon mentioned...but I did not see them take the horse. A Negro man named Jack, my brother Nathan Couch, and my mother, the claimant were present at the taking the Negro man Ches who saw the horse taken. It is about 75 or one hundred mile from here. He would be produced as a witness but cannot be reached. The horse was hid in a thicket and it was said that this man Ches showed the soldiers where the horse was. I saw them take some clothing a jug of brandy some fodder the quantity not recollect. They also took some corn for which they gave me a voucher and the money was paid in Raleigh to me for my mother that was for the corn and the amount [*sic*] aid was fifty dollars. I came to Chapel Hill to try and get a voucher and I found they were so enraged about Johnson [*sic*] not having surrendered that I only got a voucher for the corn. I think Johnson [*sic*] surrendered the next day but I never appeared for another voucher.....My mother begged them not to take the property. They pretended they had need of it. My mother unlocked the door for them and they went in the smoke house...

I think they called him Charley. I think he was about seven years old.....he was raised on the plantation.

Verdict.

Upon that evidence (her four Confederate sons had an interest in the property and the hearsay evidence of her loyalty) alone we cannot allow the claim.