

Elijah Graves testified that he had been a neighbor of the Peters' for more than 15 years, "during which time [I] have observ'd but few if any of the common Vices of Mankind in them." Graves went on to testify that he had eye-witnessed the original capture of Cesar and the family: "An armed force of seven or eight men laid Violent hands on said Family, bound some of them in irons and threw them into a wagon ... whilst [sic] their Cries and Shreiks [sic] were shocking to humane Nature; it left such an impression on [my] mind as is not worn out to this day."

Joseph Wain Case testified that he had known Cesar and his family for 30 years, and attested to Cesar's morals. He stated that he was also an eyewitness to the seizure of the family: "It exhibited such a scene of Cruelty as was unparallel to anything I had ever seen... Deponent Further says that [I have] often conversed with Mrs. Mary Peters the former owner of said Negroes that she had a note against her son Samuel Peters of a Hundred and Ten pounds for said Negroes and that she should never to receive anything thereon as she intended that the Negroes should be free and agreed with her son at the time of their sale to the same purpose as she always said."

It was not only men who offered testimony in support of Cesar and Lowis' emancipation. Patience Graves testified that she too was an eyewitness to the seizure, "and that Nathaniel Mann [Peters' attorney] was then Present and held a Drawn Sword in his hand and as I attempted to go into the house from whence the Negroes was [sic] taken, he shook the Sword over my head and Charged me with great anger in his countenance not to go in upon my peril."

In addition to all the personal testimony, the town officially took action on the emancipation request. Selectmen Elijah Kellogg, Silvester Gilbert, John H. Buell, and Joel Jones issued a "Selectman's Certificate" stating "Know all whom it may concern that we the Subscribers, Selectmen for the Town of Hebron, well acquainted with Cesar, Servant to the Rev. Saml. Peters, and cannot say anything respecting his Morrels but that they are good, and that he has the Character of being a sober, honest, industrious fellow."

In reviewing several other petitions for emancipation by Connecticut slaves in the late 1700's available at the Connecticut State Library, there are no where near as many depositions from local residents in support of a particular request. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the Connecticut General Assembly, in the face of such overwhelming testimony as to the cruelty of Cesar and Lowis' seizure by Prior and his gang of men, and the support of the Hebron community, declared them and their eight children emancipated from slavery and forever free.

Interestingly, the Peters family moved to Colchester following their emancipation, where Cesar sued David Prior (by then a resident of Lebanon) for £1000 in damages for Prior's unlawful seizure of the family. Cesar eventually withdrew the lawsuit, and the family moved to Tolland, where Lowis died on December 18, 1793. Shortly thereafter, Cesar married the widow Sim, and they moved to Coventry, where they are listed in the 1800 census, with five in their household.

By 1803, Cesar and Sim had moved back to Hebron, where Cesar died on July 4, 1814. Three of his grandchildren enrolled in Hebron Center School in 1824, and the Peters family remained a vibrant part of the community for the next century. In 1958, a Peters step-descendant, Bill Johnson, and his wife, Connie, played the roles of Cesar and Lowis in Burton Moore's play, "Quest for Home" in celebration of Hebron's 250th birthday. Bill has passed away, and Connie now lives in Hartford. Their daughter still resides in Hebron.