

Pvt. Jerry Cheers
1849-1925
Enslaved at Rippavilla

- 1848 (abt) July: Jerry Cheers was born to Martha, a slave owned by Susan McKissack Cheairs. Martha had been previously owned by William McKissack, Susan's father. When Susan married Nathaniel Cheairs, Martha was given to Susan. Martha then took on the last name of Cheers (Cheairs.)¹ Jerry's father was William Cheers.² Because his mother was owned by Susan McKissack Cheairs, Jerry would have been owned by Susan.
- 1864 January 6: Jerry enlisted in the U.S. Army in Pulaski, TN. He mustered into Co. F, 111th Colored Infantry. Jerry was listed as being 16 years old at enlistment and a month later at first muster he was listed as being 18 years old. Later census records indicate that both of these ages were most likely not accurate. Jerry was probably closer to the age of 14 when he enlisted in U.S. Army. His size in his description, 5ft 4inches, also indicated he was an adolescent. His enlistment officer was Lt. Barnes. Lt. Barnes was the officer in charge of Vale Mills in Pulaski. Vale Mills was owned by James McKissack, Susan McKissack Cheairs' brother.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 6 | 111 | U.S.C.T. |
| Jerry Cheers | | |
| Co. F, 111 Reg't U. S. Col'd Inf. | | |
| Appears on | | |
| Company Descriptive Book | | |
| of the organization named above. | | |
| DESCRIPTION. | | |
| Age | 16 | years; height 5 feet 4 inches. |
| Complexion | Blk | |
| Eyes | Blk | ; hair Blk |
| Where born | Warr Co. Tenn. | |
| Occupation | Slave | |

¹ U.S. Pension Application of John Archibald Cheers, NARA

² Cheers, Jerry, Tennessee, U.S. Death Certificates, 1908-1965 (accessed newspapers.com)

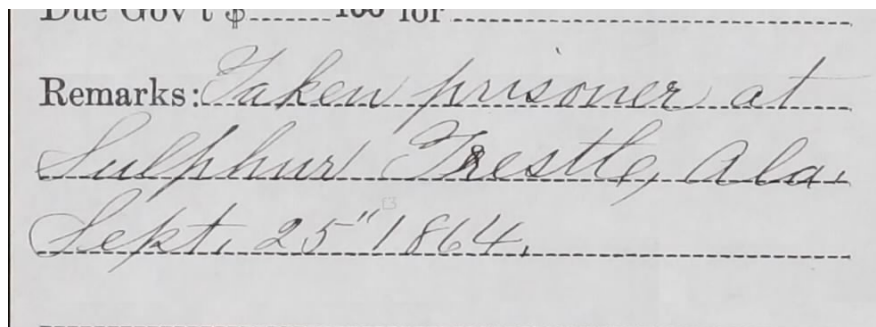
³ Cheers, Jerry, CSR, pg 3 (accessed fold3.com)

February 1: Jerry's uncle, John Archibald Cheers, enlisted in the U.S. Army in Columbia, TN and mustered into Co. I, 111th Colored Infantry.

February thru June: Company Muster Rolls. Present.

September 25: Jerry and uncle John Archibald were both captured at Sulphur Creek Trestle in AL.

"On September 25, 1864, Confederate cavalry under Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest surrounded Sulphur Creek Trestle. Forrest posted his artillery at various points on high ground overlooking the fortifications. He then sent Col. Thomas Kelley's brigade in a dismounted advance to engage the garrison. Once Kelley assumed a new position closer to the fort, the Confederate artillery opened fire. After a two hour bombardment Forrest sent a demand through the lines for the garrison to capitulate. The garrison's commander, Lt. Col. John Minnis met briefly with Forrest and decided to surrender."⁴



Jerry was held in a Confederate Prison under inhumane conditions for nine months. While he was imprisoned Jerry was bayoneted in the left arm by a prison guard, this wound would plague him for the rest of his life.⁶

1865 June 18: Jerry was released from prison.

July thru December: Company Muster Rolls. Present.

1866 January & February: Company Muster Roll. Present.

April 30: Company Muster Out Roll. Jerry mustered out of the U.S. Army in Nashville, TN.

1869 January 21: Jerry applied for and was granted a pension for his military service.

⁴ <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/sulphur-creek-trestle>

⁵ Cheers, Jerry, CSR, pg 9 (accessed fold3.com)

⁶ Cheers, Jerry, Federal Pension file, NARA

- 1870 August 2: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in District 13, Rutherford County, TN showed twenty-one-year-old Jerry Cheers living with a Blackman family and working as a farm laborer. The census indicated that he could not read or write.
- 1879 By 1879 Jerry married, and he and his wife had a son named John. His wife died within that year.
- 1880 June 30: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in District 13, Rutherford County, showed a widowed Jerry, a farm laborer, living with his infant son John, 1 yr. The dwelling he was living in was a multi family unit. Living in the unit with Jerry and John were three lodgers: Frank Harwell, 23 yrs and Ellen Killingham, 20 and her son William, 4. Ellen was single.
- 1881 February 12: Jerry married Ellen Smith (Killingham) in Rutherford County, TN and their family's were combined. Her son William took the name of Cheers and Jerry raised him as his own.
- 1887 July: Ellen gave birth to daughter Francis Cheers.



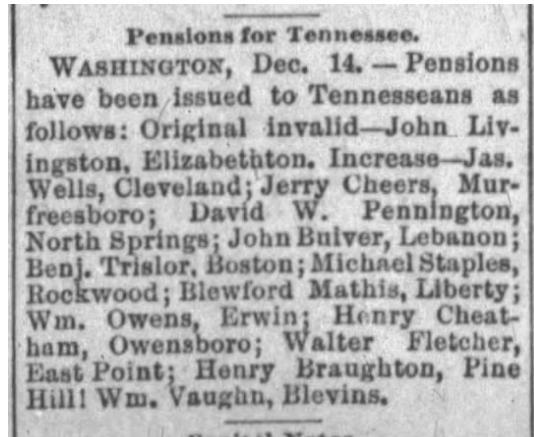
- 1888 Jerry Cheers was granted a U.S. Pension for his military service.

The following ^{**}Tennesseans have been granted pensions: Original invalid—Benj. F. Doughty, Ebenezer; Jerry Cheers, Murfreesboro. Original Widows, etc.—Paulina A., widow of Saml. Lee, Coahulla.

- 1889 Jerry was listed in the newspaper as receiving a U.S. Military pension.

⁷ Photo retrieved from Ancestry.com user hisgodswoman

⁸ The Daily American, Nashville, TN



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- 1890 The Veterans Schedule of the U.S. Federal Census enumerated in Rutherford County, TN listed Jerry Cheers as a veteran of the U.S. Army. He served as a private in Co. F, 111th Regiment Colored Infantry. He served from Jan 1864 till May of 1866. The schedule indicated that he was wounded during the war. A later pension record listed his wound as “bayonet wound v res. dis. of left arm.”¹⁰
- 1900 June 8: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in District 13, Rutherford County, TN showed Jerry, a farmer, and Ellen living with their children: John, 21 yrs, Lillie, 19, Francis, 17, Lucy, 15, Minnie, 14, Emmet, 9 and Annie, 7. Jerry owned his own home, free from mortgage. Ellen was listed as having given birth to nine children, with eight of those children surviving. The Cheers family owned their own homes, free from mortgage.
- ***Wife, Ellen, died before 1909.***
- 1909 Jerry married third wife Lizzie Alexander.
- 1910 May 9: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in District 13, Rutherford County, TN showed Jerry, a farmer, and his second wife Lizzie living with two of Jerry’s daughters: Minnie Marie, 22 yrs and Annie, 16. Jerry owned his own home, free from mortgage.
- 1913 May: Jerry’s son John was murdered in Nashville. The death certificate listed cause of death as “*severing of main blood valve of throat. (Homicidal)*” The murder took place near the Nashville Chattanooga Railroad btwn 17th and 18th Aves. N.. John, like his father, was a veteran of the U.S. Army. He served in Co. E,

⁹ The Daily American, Nashville, TN, Sunday, 15 Dec 1889, pg. 1 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁰ Cheers, Jerry, US Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards (accessed fold3.com)

8th U.S. Colored Infantry during the Spanish American war. John was buried at Benevolent Cemetery in Murfreesboro, TN.

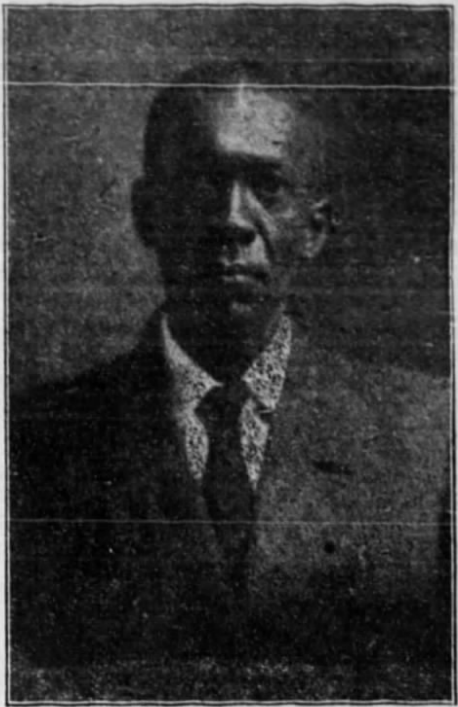
street.
John Cheers, 34 years, N. C. Ry,
17th and 18th avenues. 11

home on East State street. Murfrees-
boro regrets to hear of the untimely
end of Mr. John Cheers, who was
killed in Nashville Saturday night.
His remains were brought to Mur-
freesboro for burial. 12

1917 October: *“Mr. Jerry Cheers is on the sick list this week, and is improving under the care of Dr. G.C. Harden.”*¹³

1918 Son William was a minister at the first Baptist Church in Murfreesboro.

REV. W. C. CHEERS AS SUPPLY
PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAP-
TIST CHURCH.



REV. WM. C. CHEERS.

Murfreesboro, Tenn., Aug. 23, 1918.
—Rev. William C. Cheers, supply pas-
tor of the First Baptist Church of
which Dr. A. C. Kennon is pastor,
proper, will use as his theme Sunday,
August 25, “Life.” Dr. Kennon is
now on his vacation and during his
absence, Rev. Cheers will have
charge. 14

¹¹ The Nashville Globe, Nashville, TN, Friday, 16 May 1913, pg. 5 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹² The Nashville Globe, Nashville, TN, Friday, 16 May 1913, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹³ The Nashville Globe, Nashville, TN, Friday, 19 Oct 1917, pg. 2 (accessed newspapers.com)

¹⁴ The Nashville Globe, Nashville, TN, Friday, 23 Aug 1918, pg. 6 (accessed newspapers.com)

1920 January 13: The U.S. Federal Census enumerated in District 13, Rutherford County, TN showed Jerry, a farmer, and Lizzie living next door to two of his children and their families, William's family and Francis' family. Jerry owned his own home free from mortgage.

1925 July 3: Jerry Cheers died. He was buried in Benevolent Cemetery in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, TN.

July 7: William Cheers applied to be administrator of his father's estate, as Jerry had died with no will in place.¹⁵

July 27: Lizzie Cheers applied for a widow's pension for her husband's military service.

1929 May 30: William Cheers applied for a military headstone for his father

WAR DEPARTMENT
O. Q. M. C. Form No. 693
Approved Aug. 12, 1913
Revised May 12, 1928

ORIGINAL

PLEASE MAKE OUT AND RETURN IN DUPLICATE
42286

APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| NAME <i>Jerry Cheers</i> | | RANK <i>Pvt.</i> | COMPANY <i>F. F. #111</i> | U. S. Regiment, State Organization or Vessel <i>U.S.V.R.</i> | DATE OF DEATH <i>July 3, 1925</i> |
| If World War veteran— | | NAME OF CEMETERY <i>Benevolent</i> | | Located in or near— | |
| Division | State | Emblem | CITY <i>Murfreesboro</i> | STATE <i>Tenn.</i> | |
| TO BE SHIPPED TO <i>William C. Cheers</i> (Name of consignee) | | | PERMANENT ADDRESS <i>Rt 1 Murfreesboro Tenn</i> | | |
| at <i>Murfreesboro</i> <i>Rutherford County Tenn.</i> (Give town, county, and State) | | | DATE <i>May 30 - 1929</i> I hereby agree to accept the headstone at above destination, freight prepaid, and properly place same at decedent's grave. <i>William C. Cheers, Consignee.</i> | | |
| DO NOT WRITE HERE | | | Address <i>Rt 1 Murfreesboro Tenn</i> Date <i>May 30 - 1929</i> | | |
| Verified | | | This application is for the UNMARKED* grave of a <i>Soldier</i> . It is understood the stone will be furnished and delivered at the railroad station or steamboat landing above indicated, at Government expense, freight prepaid, and agreed it will be promptly removed and set up at private expense. | | |
| Ordered <i>JAN 14 1930</i> | | | State whether soldier, sailor, marine, Army nurse, etc. <i>1925 R 2 William C. Cheers, Applicant.</i> | | |
| From <i>TATE, GEORGIA</i> | | | Shipped <i>MAR 25 1930</i> | | |

*Stones must not be requested for any grave at which a private stone, monument, or other permanent marker is already erected or is to be erected. 3-3654

¹⁵ Cheers, Jerry, Tennessee, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1779-2008, Image 143 (accessed ancestry.com)

¹⁶ Cheers, Jerry, U.S., Headstone Applications for Militar Veterans, 1925-1970, Image663 (accessed ancestry.com)