



HANNAH & OLLIE WEAVER

A Petition to Name a Stretch of SR 124, Between Snellville and Rock Chapel Road, in Their Honor

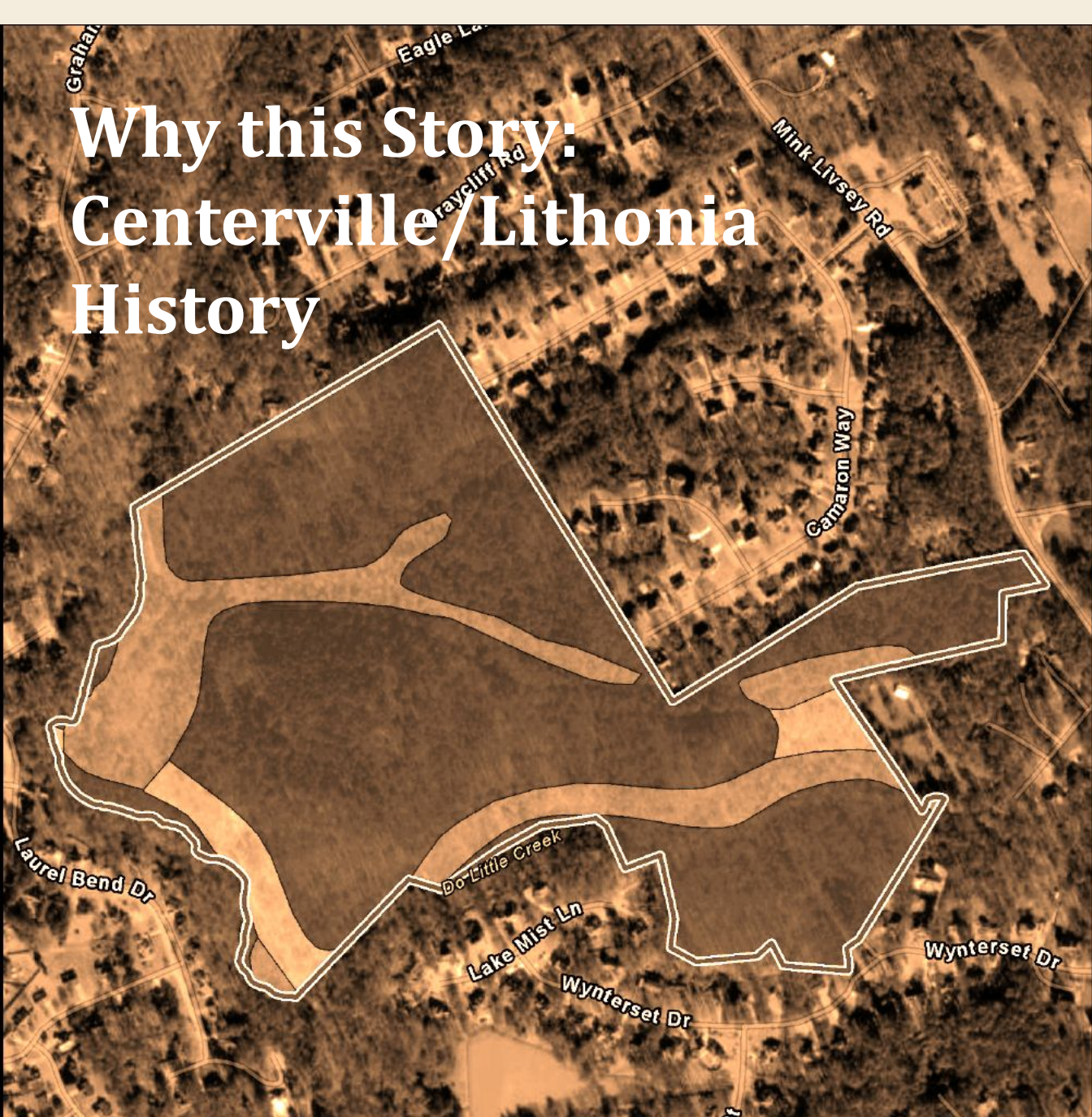
DEK-397-85

Compiled by Donna Sammader — neighbor and resident of State District 95.

Note: Disturbing Content

Some of this content may be harmful or difficult to view as it reflects biases from another day and time. Some biases have never left. Some are actively being revived.

By telling the stories of people who triumphed over discriminatory laws in a segregated and prejudiced society, our hope is in changing the narrative — to celebrate the strength in the struggle.



Why this Story: Centerville/Lithonia History

In June of 2024, backhoes and bulldozers moved into an undeveloped parcel of land near my home on Mink Livsey road, in the Ocmulgee Watershed. There were no permits. The work crews said the rock features, the walls, the standing stones were just old farm rock piles and chimneys.

Through two years of contact with federal, state and county agencies, historical and archaeological firms and societies, we've learned that there has been continuous settlement on this piece of land for a few thousand years... hints of stories still remain on this land.

The one story that has gripped me, though, is about a man who was enslaved on this property during the 1860s. His wife, Hannah, and their children lived apart and worked on plantations nearby. Based on genealogical data, they were able to stay a family throughout slavery, Emancipation, Reconstruction and onwards.

Who Were Hannah and Ollie?

There are no known biographical records of Ollie Weaver before his life on the Maguire and Weaver plantations.

Before the war, Hannah was recorded as **“Lee’s Hannah”** — she was enslaved by the Lee family in Centerville. “Lee Road” is named after their family.

She was part of the Rock Chapel Methodist Church community in Lithonia. The church's own roll shows that in 1858 the congregation counted 61 enslaved members.

ROCK CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH	
CHURCH ROLL - 1846 (continued)	
MALE MEMBERS	FEMALE MEMBERS
James Swan	Sarah Watts
Charles W. Griffin	Elizabeth Watts
H. H. Hudgens	Mary E. Watts
William Rutledge	Mary Ann Wright
Marion Mize (Hize)	Malinda Goddard
Jacob Samples	
David Flore	
Matthew(?) Harmon	
John Diamond	
William M. Watts	
John W. Watts	
James New	
SLAVES	
CHURCH ROLL - 1846 ROCK CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH	
Slaves joined the church also with their white masters. The following were members in 1846:	
Lee's Ransom	
Harbut's Calebe	
Maguire's William	
Thomason's Daniel	
Turner's Nancy	
Turner's Henry	
Lee's Dorcas	
Chupp's Rebecca	
Thomason's Luizy	
Harbut's Jane	
Diamond's Chanle	
In the year 1858 there were 61 slaves who belonged to the church. Among them was Hannah Weaver, who remained a member until her death in 1903.	
Note: This was transcribed from an original list on which was written the following note: "This paper was read at the Centennial July 29, 1925 by Rev. F. A. Ragsdale."	
This is from the papers of Mr. Joe Bond (1872-1952), courtesy of Rachel S. Sheppard.	

Hannah Weaver

● Hannah's maiden name

● Family ties

● Zachry & Emily Lee

“Sewell” — confirmed on her son Thomas Jack Weaver's 1932 death certificate. Census records show her birthplace as Virginia.

Held in bondage by Rebekah Brock Lee or her son, Zachry Lee, of the Rockbridge district

Married December 24, 1848; Zachry served in the Confederate Army and died August 24, 1865. Emily Wideman Lee’s mother was **Millie Sewell Wideman**. The Sewell family lived in Virginia and North Carolina before they moved to Georgia.

Number (No.).....(Street).....Ward.....	
DEATH.....Thomas Jack Weaver.....(If death occurred in a hospital, give its name instead of street and ward)	
(City or Town).....Hawery Branch Ga R 20 #2.....(State).....	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS	
4. COLOR or RACE.....Black.....	5. Single, Married, Widowed, Divorced (write the word).....Widowed.....
BIRTH (month, day, year).....Don't Know.....	
Years.....57.....	Months.....Days.....
If less than one day.....Hours.....Minutes.....	
profession or particular work done, as splanner, bookkeeper, etc.....Farmer.....	
ry or business in which was done, as cotton mill, bank, etc.....	
Deceased last worked at occupation (month and year).....	(d) Total years spent in this occupation.....
PLACE OF BIRTH.....Georgia.....	
Name of Mother.....Ollie Weaver.....	
Name of Father.....Hannah Sewell.....	
Address.....Georgia.....	
Name of Informant.....Alberta Smith.....	
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
16. DATE OF DEATH.....2-8-1932 3:30PM.....(Month, Day, Year).....	
17. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended the deceased.....19....., to.....	
I last saw him alive on..... is said to have occurred on the date and hour stated above. The principal cause of death and related causes of order of onset and duration of each:.....	
Dropsy.....	
No Doctor.....	
Other contributory causes of importance:.....	
What test confirmed diagnosis?.....(Specify whether autopsy, operation, laboratory, or clinic).....	
If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in a.....	
Was injury an accident, suicide, or homicide?.....	
Where did injury occur.....(Specify city or town, if outside of limits, the county, and a.....	
Did injury occur in a home, public place or industry?.....	
Manner of injury.....	

Ollie Weaver: Thomas Maguire's Farm Journals

Thomas Maguire kept a farm journal from 1859 to 1866. Ollie appears in it by name, twice, in the winter of 1862–63. Ollie worked on Maguire's Promised Land Plantation before he went to work for his daughter and son-in-law, Mary Jane and Benjamin Weaver.

"Olly here learning to make pegs."

November 28, 1862

"Olly Weaver with cart and one Bale."

January 5, 1863



Civil War in Centerville - Yellow River Bridge Burns

Decades later, Benjamin Weaver's niece Eudora Weaver Stephenson recalled a Union raid on the family's Gwinnett County farm. Union cavalry rode up and shot a young Confederate scout named John Davis who stood on the family's porch on **July 21, 1864**. He died two days later and was buried in the Weaver family cemetery.

Ollie isn't mentioned by name, but he would have been one of the two men caring for Davis:

"...two negro men carefully and gently lifted the dying man upon it [a mattress on the veranda]... He called names of some of his comrades, but soon lapsed into unconsciousness."

Eudora Weaver Stephenson, "Refugeeing in War Time," Confederate Veteran, 1931

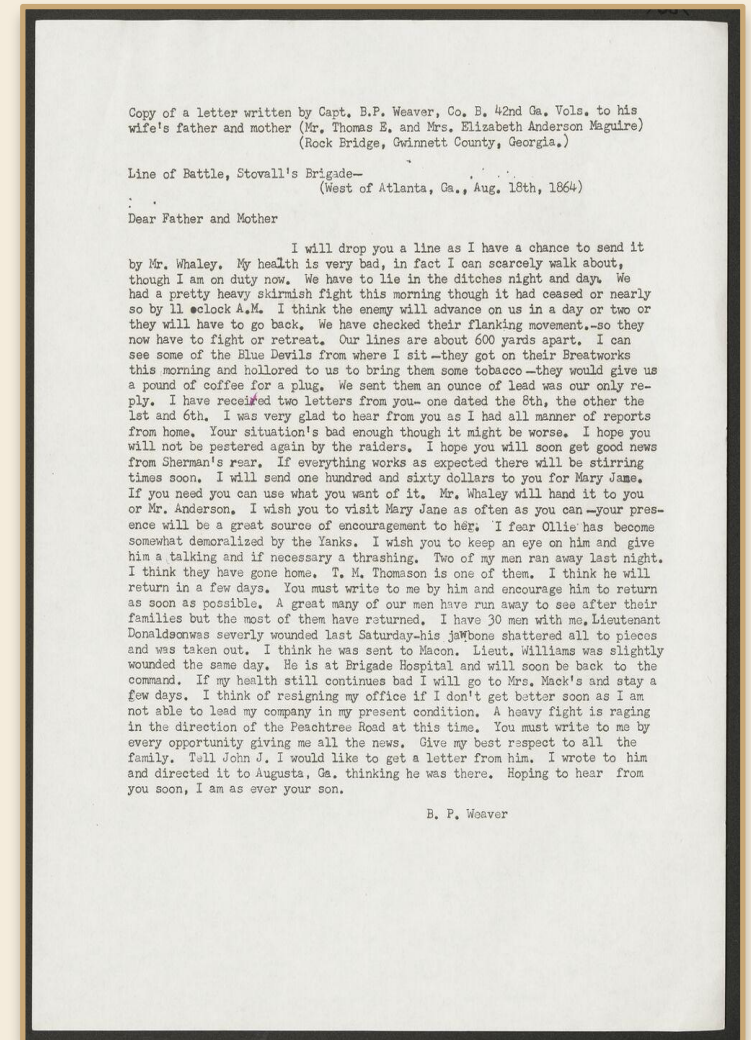
One Month Later: A Letter From the Front Lines

On **August 18, 1864**, Benjamin Putnam Weaver wrote home from the front lines west of Atlanta.

Ollie was, by this point, effectively protecting the Weaver household — while his own wife and children lived apart from him, on other homesteads.

Benjamin Weaver writes:

"I fear Ollie has become somewhat demoralized by the Yanks. I wish you to keep an eye on him and give him a talking and if necessary a thrashing."



Letter of Capt. B. P. Weaver, August 18, 1864



1867

After Emancipation...

Georgia's Reconstruction Registration Oath Books show that “**Oliver Weaver**” took the voter's oath on **July 24, 1867**, and was issued certificate number 42.

One of the earliest civic acts available to a formerly enslaved man in Georgia — just two years after the war's end.

Building a Life: The Census Years

A photograph of a handwritten 1870 U.S. Census record. The document is a census form with columns for name, age, sex, marital status, occupation, and value. The entries are for Oliver Weaver (45, M, Farmer), Hannah (45, F, Keeping house), John (11, M, Farmer), Mary (8, F), and Duncan George (21, M, Farmer). The names are written in cursive, and there are checkmarks in the 'Value' column for each entry.

Line	Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Occupation	Value
10	Weaver Oliver	45	M	B	Farmer	✓
11	Hannah	45	F	B	Keeping house	✓
12	John	11	M	B	Farmer	✓
13	Mary	8	F	B		✓
14	Duncan George	21	M	B	Farmer	✓

1870 U.S. Census, Diamond District, DeKalb County, Georgia

1870

A household of their own: Oliver, Hannah, and their children John and Mary.

1880

Still together but with son, O. Jackson, and farming the same plot in Diamond District, a decade later.

1900

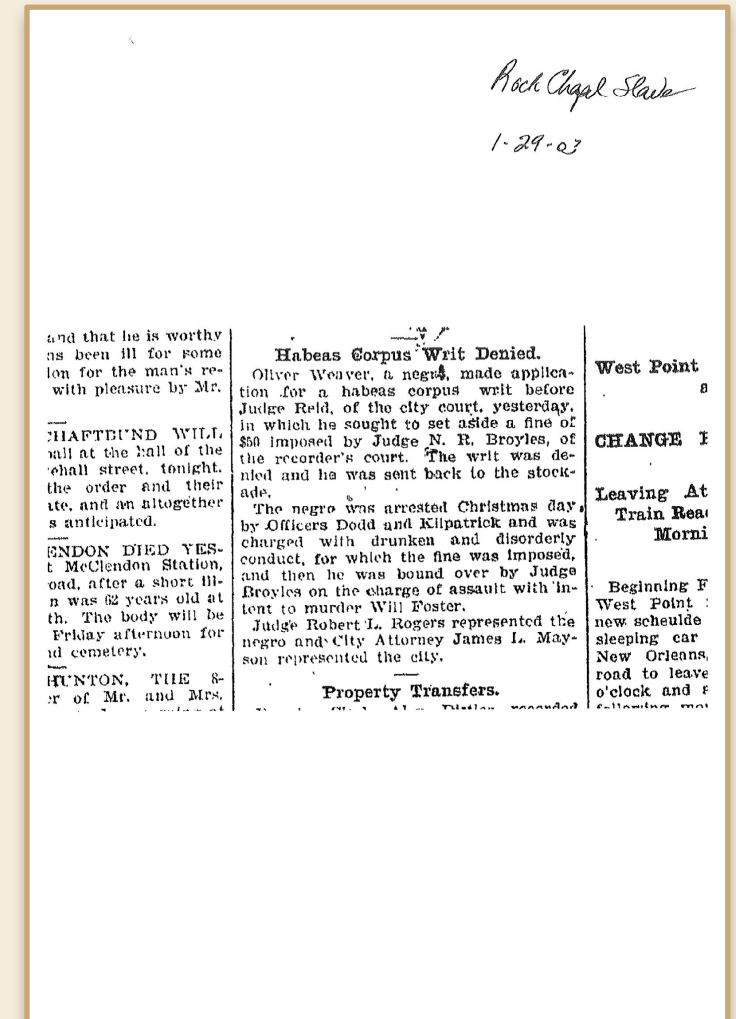
The clearest evidence in the file: their farm, owned free of mortgage.

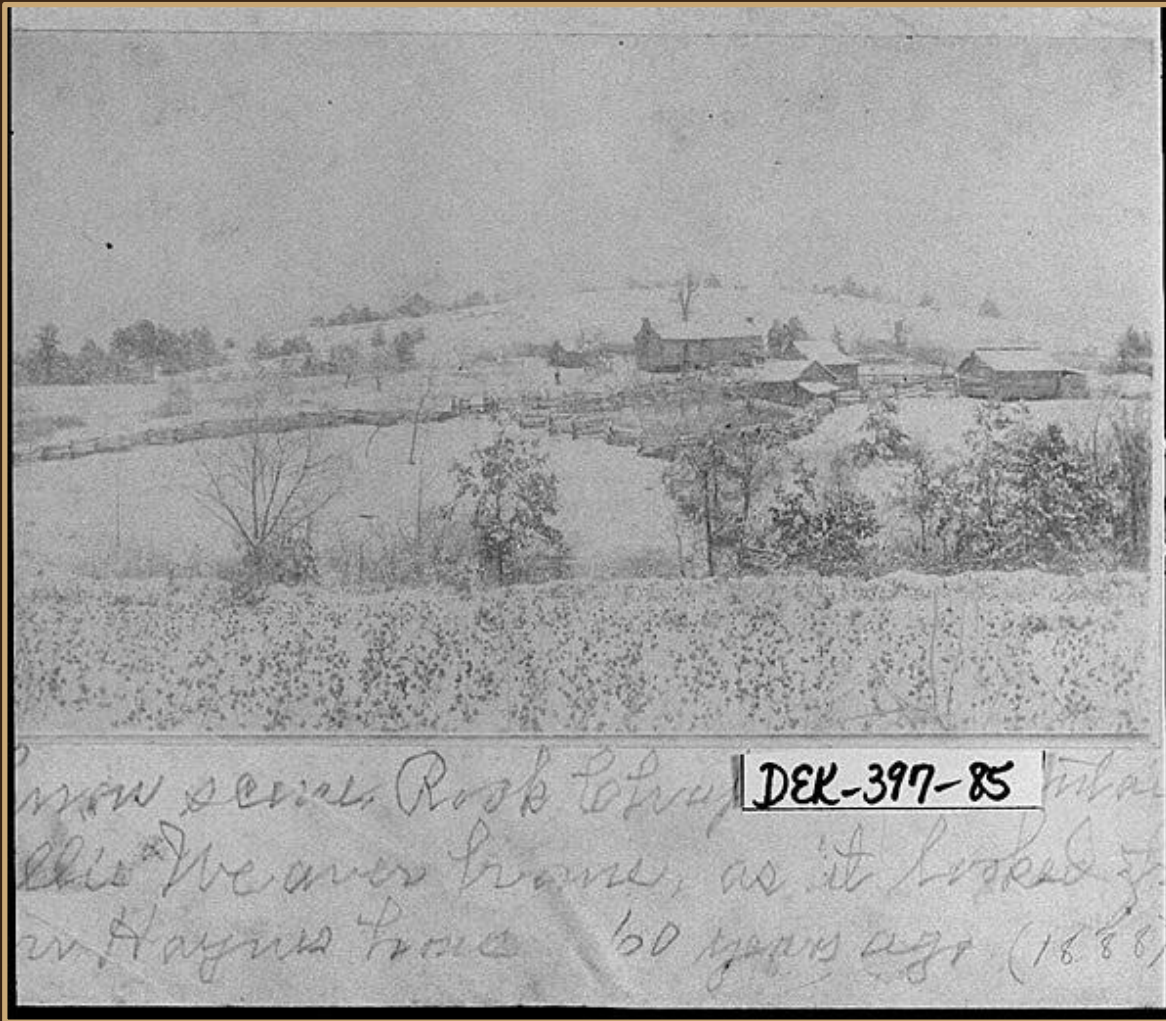
Post-Reconstruction Laws - Unjustly Applied

A clipping records the arrest of an “Oliver Weaver” on charges of drunkenness and assault. It cannot be confirmed with certainty this was the same man — but it sits in the same research file.

If so: a landowner, a married man of 40+ years, a father, a voter, a farmer, a member of the same congregation for decades — arrested, in one day, for alleged drunkenness and attempted murder.

Given the times in which Ollie lived, a Black man's prosperity could draw hostility rather than respect.





Ollie Weaver's Farm, 1888

Photographers J. B. and I. A. Bond took this picture on Rock Chapel Mountain, between Lithonia and Snellville. Their own field notes name this ground as Ollie Weaver's farm.

"...A black man his wife (Hannah) belonged to Rock Chapel (white) Church as a slave... She went to the church after the war."

— original photographer's caption, 1888

Life in Community: Rock Chapel Methodist Church

MEMBERS OF ROCK CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH JANUARY 1, 1893

1. Eason J. Bond	51. James R. Still
2. David B. Chupp	52. John Lee
3. Sarah Lee	53. Annie Beaucham
4. Thomas L. St. John	54. A. C. Beaucham
5. Mollie E. Bond	55. Emma Beaucham
6. Smitha E. Bond	56. Sallie Chupp
7. Mary J. Chupp	57. Jane Mitchell
8. Pleasant G. Ragsdale	58. Tom Mitchell
9. Francis Ragsdale	59. Wesley Mitchell
10. Tandy Y. Nash	60. Nancy Mitchell
11. Mollie Nash	61. Malinda Marbut
12. James Howell	62. Ella Mauldin
13. Penelope Howell	63. Elizabeth Nash
14. Martha Johnson	64. R. L. White
15. Eliza Braswell	65. Sara White
16. Melima Baker	66. Danial Venable
17. Demarius Bailey	67. Roan Venable
18. Francis Corley	68. Mary Jane Wesley
19. Lucinda Chupp	69. James Weeks
20. Joseph Starnes	70. Eugenia Weeks
21. Nathaniel Patch	71. Joe Whidby
22. Elizabeth Patch	72. Mary Whidby
23. Lucy Phipps	73. Mary Waldrop
24. Francis A. Ragsdale	74. Mary Weaver
25. Charles Sexton	75. Walter Weaver
26. Mary Sexton	76. N. A. Weaver
27. George St. John	77. Sallie Turner
28. Atticus Y. Bond	78. Mercia Wade
29. George R. Bond	79. E. H. Wade
30. L. T. Y. Nash	80. Mrs. E. H. Wade
31. Lundie Nash	81. William Coggins
32. James E. Bond	82. Sara Coggins
33. L. E. Hicks	83. Martin Ethridge
34. Susie Hannah	84. John Hammock
35. Hannah Weaver, Colored	85. Thomas Lee
36. Gessie Hunt	86. Willie Lee

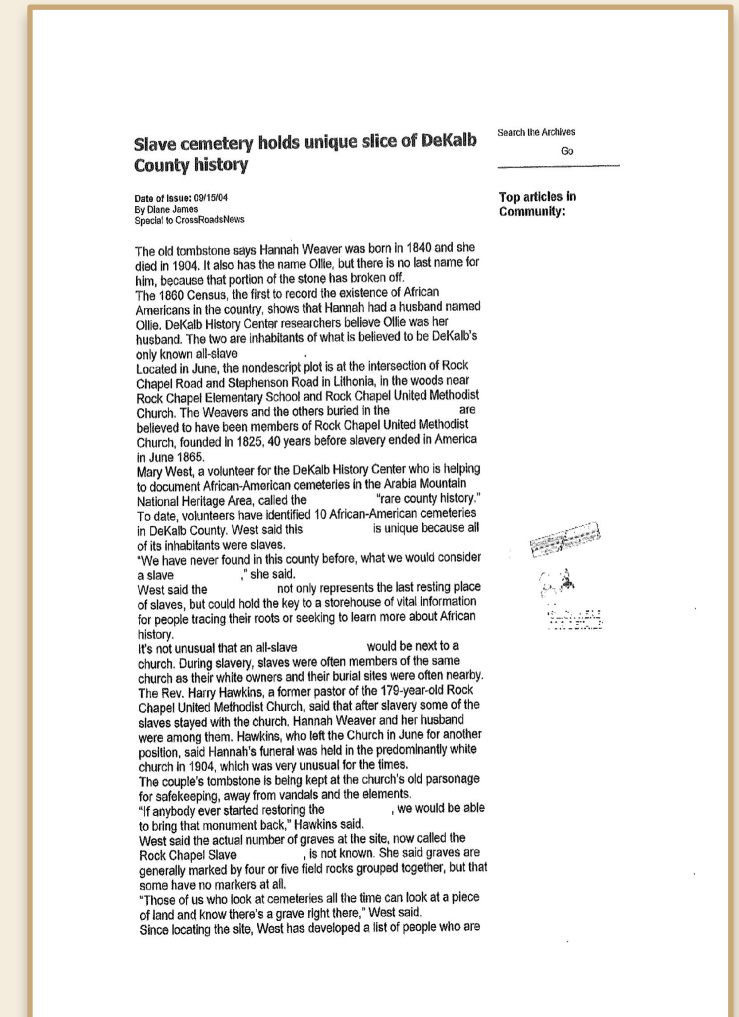
1893

Rock Chapel Methodist Church membership rolls. The church was an all-white church. Hannah is listed as its only non-white member in 1893.

A Lifetime at Rock Chapel

Hannah's death is recorded three ways across the sources — 1902, 1903, and 1904. What is consistent: her funeral was held inside the white Rock Chapel church building, “very unusual for the times.”

The couple's headstone — itself uncommon for people who had been enslaved — was kept at the church's old parsonage to protect it from vandalism and weather.



Descendants

The Weaver family remained in the Rockbridge district of Gwinnett County well into the twentieth century.

1910 Census

J. J. Weaver and his wife Anna E. Weaver — sons Ollie, age 12, and Manuel, age 7.

Shiloh Baptist Church

Graves bearing these same names rest near one another in Snellville: “Mr. Ollie Weaver” and “Mr. Manuel Weaver.”



Why This Road Should Carry Their Names

Hannah and Ollie Weaver's lives ran the length of ground between Snellville and Lithonia: enslaved, separated from each other and their children for years at a time, and then, after 1865, farmers, a registered voter, and lifelong members of the very congregation that had once held them in bondage.

They were able to raise their family and own a farm in spite of the unjust system, the prejudice and the laws that governed their lives.

Their story should be known, and their memories, though incomplete, should be preserved as an inspiration for future generations.

Have more information on either Hannah or Olliver "Ollie" Weaver?

Please contact me: donna.sammander@gmail.com

Full documentation, footnotes, and source images are available on request.

now seen Rock to Day DEK-397-85 *Willa*
Ollie Weaver home, as it looked
in Haynes home 50 years ago (1888)

Hannah and Ollie Weaver

A Petition to Name a Stretch of SR 124 Between Snellville and Rock Chapel Road, Lithonia, in Their Honor

Document compiled by Donna Sammender (donna.sammender@gmail.com/ 404-725-2058)

I am a resident of this community who set out to learn who lived on this land before us, and that inquiry led me through church rolls, wartime letters, newspaper clippings, and census records for the better part of a year. What emerged was the documented history of Hannah and Ollie Weaver: a husband and wife enslaved on properties along this same corridor between Snellville and Lithonia, who built a life here after emancipation, and who remain here still — buried a short distance from where this road runs today.

What follows is presented as plainly and as precisely as I can manage. Some of it rests on official records with names and dates attached. Some of it is more anecdotal. I have marked that distinction throughout with footnotes, and where I could not locate the underlying source, I have left a placeholder footnote rather than imply a citation that I do not have at this time.

Hannah and Ollie: Who Were They?

Before the war, Hannah was recorded as “Lee’s Hannah” — enslaved people were routinely identified by the surname of the person who enslaved them. She was part of the Rock Chapel Methodist Church community in Centerville, near Lithonia. The church’s own roll shows that in 1858 the congregation counted 61 enslaved members, and that Hannah “remained a member after freedom, until her death”¹. A second copy of that same church roll, held by the DeKalb History Center, gives her death year as 1903 rather than 1902².

Family research holds that Hannah was enslaved by Rebeckah Brock Lee or her son, Zachry Lee. Zachry James Lee married Emily Harris Wideman, of Meriwether County, Georgia, on December 24, 1848³. Emily’s mother was Mildred “Millie” Sewell, who married Henry Wideman in 1829 and died shortly after Emily was born in March

¹Rock Chapel Methodist Church, “A Brief History of Rock Chapel Methodist Church,” Homecoming pamphlet, October 7, 1984, p. 2, compiled from the papers of Joseph Bryan Bond (1872–1952), courtesy of Rachel S. Sheppard: “In the year 1858 there were 61 slaves who belonged to the church... Lee’s Hannah, who married Ollie Weaver, remained a member after freedom, until her death in 1902.” (Copy in GHS research files.)

²DeKalb History Center, “Church Roll – 1846, Rock Chapel Methodist Church” (transcription of a list read at the church’s Centennial, July 29, 1925, by Rev. F. A. Ragsdale, from the papers of Joe Bond, courtesy of Rachel S. Sheppard): “Among them was Hannah Weaver, who remained a member until her death in 1903.” See Documentation, Exhibit C.

³“Zachry James and Emily Harris Lee,” family history compiled by descendant William (Bill) Cudlipp, drawing on Zachry J. Lee’s will (dated November 14, 1862, Gwinnett County, Georgia, Georgia Archives), his Confederate pension and regimental file, and a February 23, 1865 letter of Thomas Maguire held by Maguire descendant and historian Penny Nash of Atlanta: “Zachry James married Emily Harris Wideman of Meriwether County, Georgia on December 24, 1848.” The same account states Zachry was conscripted in March 1863 and served as a private in Company E (“The Warren Akin Guards”), 64th Georgia Infantry Regiment, citing Lake G. Ray, “History of the 64th Regiment Georgia Volunteers” (Georgia Archives, June 1984), and the 1850 slave schedule showing one enslaved male, age 14, in Zachry Lee’s household. Zachry Lee died August 24, 1865, in the Rockbridge District, Gwinnett County, and is buried in the Rock Chapel Cemetery, Lithonia, DeKalb County; Emily Harris Wideman Lee died April 10, 1876, at Lone Oak, Meriwether County, and is buried in the Allen-Lee Cemetery there.

1832⁴⁵. Hannah's maiden name is confirmed as "Sewell" on the 1932 death certificate of her son, Thomas Jack Weaver, which lists his father as "Ollie Weaver" and his mother's maiden name as "Hannah Sewell," both born in Georgia⁶. The certificate does not itself establish how Hannah was connected to the white Sewell family who intermarried with the Widemans; that link remains a matter of family tradition rather than documented record.

It is hard to pin down Hannah's age. The 1860 slave schedule for Zachry P. Lee lists five enslaved people in his household, all unnamed as was standard for that record, aged 40, 17, 13, 10, and 9⁷. An earlier, 1850 slave schedule for the same household lists a single enslaved man, age 14⁸. If Hannah was born around 1840, as her tombstone is reported to say, she would have been about twenty years old in 1860 — an age absent from Lee's list. This does not rule him out as her enslaver; these schedules were frequently incomplete. Zachry Lee's Confederate service is given two ways across the sources included in this sketch: a FamilySearch index entry lists him as a private in Company B, 20th Georgia Infantry⁹, while a more detailed family history, drawing on his 1862 will and Confederate pension file, places him instead in Company E, 64th Georgia Infantry Regiment, conscripted in March 1863¹⁰. The two records may describe different men of a common name; the more detailed account, anchored to a named will and pension file, is judged the more likely to be accurate.

The War Years

Thomas Maguire's farm journal, kept from 1859 to 1866 and held today by the [Digital Library of Georgia](#), names Ollie twice, in the winter of 1862–63. On November 28, 1862, Maguire wrote, "hands employed as yesterday, Olly here learning to make pegs." A little over a month later, on January 5, 1863, he wrote, "Peter + Dick gon to Hudsons with waggon and 4 Bales of cotton, Olly Weaver with cart and one Bale"¹¹. Both entries show Ollie working under Maguire's direction, on tasks tied to the farm's operation.

⁴⁵"Emily Harris Wideman (1832–1876)," FamilySearch Family Tree, person ID L41H-6BN: "Her parents were Henry Wideman and Mildred Sewell."

⁶Sewell/Wideman family history manuscript (unpublished genealogical narrative, GHS research files): Henry Wideman married Millie Sewell on 3 September 1829; their third child, Emily, was born March 1832; Millie died shortly after.

⁷Georgia Certificate of Death, Thomas Jack Weaver, State File No. 32-3361, Registered No. 99, Hall County, Georgia, filed by local registrar D. C. Mooney. Date of death: February 8, 1932; age 57; occupation: farmer; birthplace: Georgia. Father: "Ollie Weaver" (birthplace Georgia). Mother: maiden name "Hannah Sewell" (birthplace Georgia). Informant: Alberta Smith, 299 Ellis Street, Atlanta, Georgia. Burial: "Shiloh" cemetery, Luxomni, Georgia, February 14, 1932; undertaker G. Rapp, Buford, Georgia. FamilySearch, "Georgia, United States records," <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939F-M13D-43>.

⁸"Zachry P Lee," United States Census (Slave Schedule), 1860, District 253, Jackson, Georgia [enumerated as Newton County], FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:WKV8-BT2M>. Lists five enslaved people, all unnamed, aged 40 (f), 17 (m), 13 (f), 10 (f), and 9 (f).

⁹*Ibid.* (see note 3).

¹⁰"Zachariah Lee," United States Civil War Soldiers Index, 1861–1865, Private, Co. B, 20th Regiment Georgia Infantry, FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F9XF-L4S>.

¹¹*Ibid.* (see note 3).

¹¹Thomas Maguire, Farm Journal (1859–1866), Digital Library of Georgia (Galileo), <https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu>. Entry for November 28, 1862: "hands employed as yesterday[,] Olly here learning to make pegs." Entry for January 5, 1863: "Peter + Dick gon to Hudsons with waggon and 4 Bales of cotton[,] Olly Weaver with cart and one Bale."

A letter survives from Benjamin Putnam Weaver to his wife's parents, written on August 18, 1864, while he served on the front lines west of Atlanta with the 42nd Georgia Volunteers¹². The letter itself identifies its recipients as Thomas E. and Elizabeth Anderson Maguire — and identifies their daughter, Mary Jane, who was B. P. Weaver's wife: Weaver asks his in-laws to visit her and see to her comfort while he is away. Read together with the journal, the letter indicates Ollie was enslaved by Mary Jane and B. P. Weaver, and that their household's affairs were closely tied to her father Maguire's farm, where Ollie is separately recorded at work. By the date of the letter, Ollie could have been effectively running the Weaver homestead in B. P.'s absence; Hannah and their children were living apart from him, on other holdings, as was common practice. The letter was written amid active combat — “we have to lie in the ditches night and day,” Weaver reports — and it addresses Ollie directly:

"I fear Ollie has become somewhat demoralized by the Yanks. I wish you to keep an eye on him and give him a talking and if necessary a thrashing."

The passage is transcribed exactly as it appears in the copy of the letter held in the research file (see Exhibit B). It documents Ollie holding real responsibility for a household not his own, at a time when his own wife and children were separated from him during a time when their homes became the frontlines of the Civil War.

A separate account, written decades later by Benjamin Weaver's niece Eudora Weaver Stephenson, describes a raid on the Weaver family's Gwinnett County farm during this same period. Her family had taken shelter at “Uncle Putnam's” home when Union troops approached, and the bridge over the Yellow River was burned behind roughly five hundred Union soldiers camped nearby¹³. While the family sheltered there, Union cavalry rode up and shot a young Confederate soldier standing on the porch. In Stephenson's words:

"...two negro men carefully and gently lifted the dying man upon it [a mattress on the veranda]... He called names of some of his comrades, but soon lapsed into unconsciousness."

The soldier died roughly two days later and was buried in the family cemetery¹⁴. The article is titled “Refugeeing in War Time,” by Eudora Weaver Stephenson, published in *Confederate Veteran*, volume 39 (1931), pages 136–138. The article itself does not name the two enslaved men who carried the wounded soldier, nor the commanding officer of the raiding force. Maguire's own journal records a Union raid that same summer: his entry for July 21, 1864, notes troops arriving “in force” at his home after midnight and stripping it of nearly everything they could carry¹⁵. The journal entry does not identify the unit or its commander. It does not, on its own, place Ollie at the scene of the shooting; that remains a reasonable assumption from the August letter rather than a documented fact, and it is presented here as such.

¹²Typed copy of a letter written by Capt. B. P. Weaver, Co. B, 42nd Ga. Vols., Stovall's Brigade, to his wife's father and mother, Thomas E. and Elizabeth Anderson Maguire (Rock Bridge, Gwinnett County, Georgia), dated Aug. 18, 1864. See Documentation, Exhibit B.

¹³Eudora Weaver Stephenson, "Refugeeing in War Time," *Confederate Veteran* 39 (1931): 136–138.

¹⁴*Ibid.* (see note 13).

¹⁵Thomas Maguire, *Farm Journal* (1859–1866), Digital Library of Georgia (Galileo), <https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu>. Entry for July 21, 1864: "at 12 or 1 o'clock at night the Yankees came here in force... robbed [sic] us of nearly everything they could carry off."

Free Life in Lithonia

The documentary record resumes clearly after the war. Georgia's Reconstruction Registration Oath Books show that “Oliver Weaver” took the voter's oath on July 24, 1867, and was issued certificate number 42¹⁶ — one of the earliest civic acts available to a formerly enslaved man in Georgia, just two years after the war's end.

The 1870 census — the first taken after emancipation — finds Oliver and Hannah Weaver together as a household in the Diamond District, with a post office address of Lithonia. Oliver, recorded there as a farmer, and Hannah, keeping house, are both listed as forty-five years old, with two children in the household: John, eleven, working as a farm laborer, and Mary, eight¹⁷. This record does not by itself establish that Hannah and Ollie owned land as of 1870. Both Oliver and Hannah are also recorded as unable to write.

Ten years later, the 1880 census again finds them in the same district: Ollie, thirty-seven, farmer and head of household; Hannah, his wife, fifty-six, keeping house; and a son recorded as “O. Jackson,” eighteen, working as a farm hand¹⁸. The ages given here do not line up neatly with those recorded in 1870, which was common for the period — ages were self-reported estimates rather than verified against any document, particularly for people born enslaved, whose exact birthdates were frequently never recorded at all. This 1880 entry also gives Hannah's birthplace as Virginia rather than Georgia.

The strongest evidence in this file is a photograph. In 1888, commercial photographers J. B. and I. A. Bond took a picture on Rock Chapel Mountain, between Lithonia and Snellville, now held by the Georgia Archives as part of its Vanishing Georgia collection¹⁹. The photographers' own field notes identify it as Ollie Weaver's farm and describe who he and Hannah were. The photograph and its full original caption follow:

¹⁶“Georgia, Reconstruction Registration Oath Books, 1867–1868,” entry for Oliver Weaver, Voter Registration, Event Date 24 July 1867, Certificate No. 42, FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QGLZ-TD3Z>. (No image of the original register page was available for this file; the FamilySearch index entry is cited here.)

¹⁷“United States Census, 1870,” population schedule, Diamond District, Post Office Lithonia, DeKalb County, Georgia, page 91, dwelling/family 706, enumerated July 25, 1870, by Asst. Marshal Joseph Walker: Oliver Weaver (45, farmer), Hannah (45, keeping house), John (11, farm laborer), Mary (8). Both Oliver and Hannah are marked unable to write. The real estate column for Oliver's entry carries only an affirmative checkmark, not a dollar figure, matching the pattern used elsewhere on this page for dependents rather than the explicit values recorded for the white heads of household on the same page. “DeKalb, Georgia, United States records,” images, FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6DMQ-W37?view=index>, image 139 of 798; United States National Archives and Records Administration, Image Group Number 004263443. See Documentation, Exhibit G.

¹⁸“United States Census, 1880,” population schedule, Diamond District (563rd G.M.), DeKalb County, Georgia, page 35, dwelling 289, family 298, enumerated June 24-25, 1880: Ollie Weaver (37, farmer, head), Hannah (56, wife, keeping house, birthplace recorded as Virginia), O. Jackson (18, son, farm hand, birthplace Georgia). “Georgia, United States records,” images, FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYB9-9FBD?view=index>, image 640 of 820; United States National Archives and Records Administration, Image Group Number 005157367.

¹⁹“[Photograph of Rock Chapel Mountain, DeKalb County, Georgia, 1888],” J. B. and I. A. Bond Photographers (Lithonia, Ga.), Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives, Digital Library of Georgia, https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_vang_dek397-85. See Documentation, Exhibit A.



"DeKalb County, 1888. Rock Chapel Mountain, between Lithonia and Snellville... Ollie Weaver's farm. A black man his wife (Hannah) belonged to Rock Chapel (white) Church as a slave and is buried in slave cemetery and funeral (1903), in the church. She went to the church after the war. Snow." — J. B. and I. A. Bond, 1888, Georgia Archives / Digital Library of Georgia

This is not family memory or a researcher's inference. It is a caption written by the photographers themselves, in 1888, naming this ground as Ollie Weaver's farm and confirming, independently of the church records, that Hannah had been enslaved by the Rock Chapel congregation and continued worshipping there after the war.

Later Years, Death, and Burial

By 1900, Oliver and Hannah were in their seventies and eighties, still in the same district, and still married — forty years, by that census's count. The enumerator recorded Oliver's age as seventy-one and Hannah's as eighty-two, and entered her given name as "Anna" rather than "Hannah"; a son, Samuel, is recorded nearby in the same enumeration, on a page of the schedule not included among the images available for this sketch²⁰. This 1900 schedule also records that Oliver owned the farm they lived on, free of mortgage — the clearest documentary confirmation in this file that the family held land in their own name.

The sources consulted for this sketch do not agree on the year Hannah died: the 1984 church history pamphlet says 1902²¹, the DeKalb History Center's copy of the same church roll says 1903²², and the 1888 photograph's caption

²⁰"Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900," population schedule, Diamond's (Diamond No. 563), DeKalb County, Georgia, Supervisor's District 5, Enumeration District 16, Sheet 2, dwelling 36, family 36, enumerated June 5, 1900, by Philip Lynch Hampton: Oliver Weaver (head, Black, male, born February 1829, age 71, married 40 years, farmer, home owned free of mortgage, farm schedule no. 27) and Anna Weaver (wife, Black, female, born about 1818, age 82, married 40 years, birthplace recorded as Virginia, no children recorded as ever born). "DeKalb, Georgia, United States records," images, FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-63TD-LK?view=index>, image 203 of 952; United States National Archives and Records Administration, Image Group Number 004119715.

²¹*Ibid.* (see note 1).

²²*Ibid.* (see note 2).

also says 1903²³ (that note was necessarily added after the fact, since it references a death that had not occurred when the photograph was taken). A 2004 newspaper article on the rediscovery of the Rock Chapel slave cemetery reports that the tombstone itself — reportedly preserved at the church's old parsonage — reads that Hannah was born in 1840 and died in 1904, and that the stone also carries the name “Ollie,” though the portion that would have shown a surname for him has broken off²⁴. This document does not attempt to adjudicate between 1902, 1903, and 1904. The tombstone, if it survives, remains the most authoritative source and warrants direct examination.

That 2004 article, by Diane James for CrossRoadsNews, provides the fullest account of Hannah and Ollie's final resting place. It describes the Rock Chapel slave cemetery — at the intersection of Rock Chapel Road and Stephenson Road in Lithonia, near Rock Chapel Elementary School and Rock Chapel United Methodist Church — as DeKalb County's only known cemetery composed entirely of formerly enslaved people. DeKalb History Center volunteer Mary West, who located it while documenting African American cemeteries in the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, called it a rare piece of county history. Former Rock Chapel pastor Rev. Harry Hawkins confirmed that Hannah's funeral was held inside the white church building in 1904 — “very unusual for the times” — and that the couple's headstone, itself uncommon for people who had been enslaved, was being kept at the church's old parsonage to protect it from vandalism and weather²⁵.

One further record belongs in this account: A newspaper clipping in the same DeKalb History Center research file, dated by hand to January 29, 1903, reports that an “Oliver Weaver” was arrested on Christmas Day, charged with drunken and disorderly conduct and fined fifty dollars, and separately bound over on a charge of assault with intent to murder a man named Will Foster; a subsequent petition to overturn the fine was denied²⁶. Whether this is the same Oliver Weaver cannot be confirmed with certainty — the clipping does not state the connection, and the newspaper of publication is not identified. Its presence in the Rock Chapel cemetery research file suggests the DeKalb History Center researcher believed it was the same man. If so, it stands in conflict with what we know about Ollie Weaver: a landowner, a married man of 40+ years, a father, a voter, a farmer, a member of the same congregation for decades is one day arrested for drunkenness and attempted murder. Given the times in which Ollie lived, a Black man's prosperity could draw suspicion and hostility rather than respect.

Descendants

The Weaver family remained in the Rockbridge district of Gwinnett County well into the twentieth century. The 1910 census for J. J. Weaver and his wife Anna E. Weaver lists a son named Ollie, age 12, and a son named Manuel, age 7²⁷. Graves bearing these same names are located near one another at Shiloh Baptist Church cemetery in

²³*Ibid.* (see note 19).

²⁴Diane James, “Slave Cemetery Holds Unique Slice of DeKalb County History,” CrossRoadsNews, September 15, 2004. See Documentation, Exhibit E.

²⁵*Ibid.* (see note 24).

²⁶Untitled newspaper clipping, “Habeas Corpus Writ Denied,” DeKalb History Center, Rock Chapel research files compiled by volunteer Mary West, annotated by hand “Rock Chapel Slave[ry], 1-29-03” (January 29, 1903). Publishing newspaper not identified on the clipping. See Documentation, Exhibit D.

²⁷“Jj Weaver” household, United States Census, 1910, Rockbridge, Gwinnett County, Georgia (Enum. Dist. 66, Sheet 10A), FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:ML24-9VH>. Sons Ollie (12) and Manuel (7) listed among the children.

Snellville, with headstones reading “[Mr. Ollie Weaver](#)” and “[Mr. Manuel Weaver](#).” Find A Grave memorial pages exist for both men²⁸.

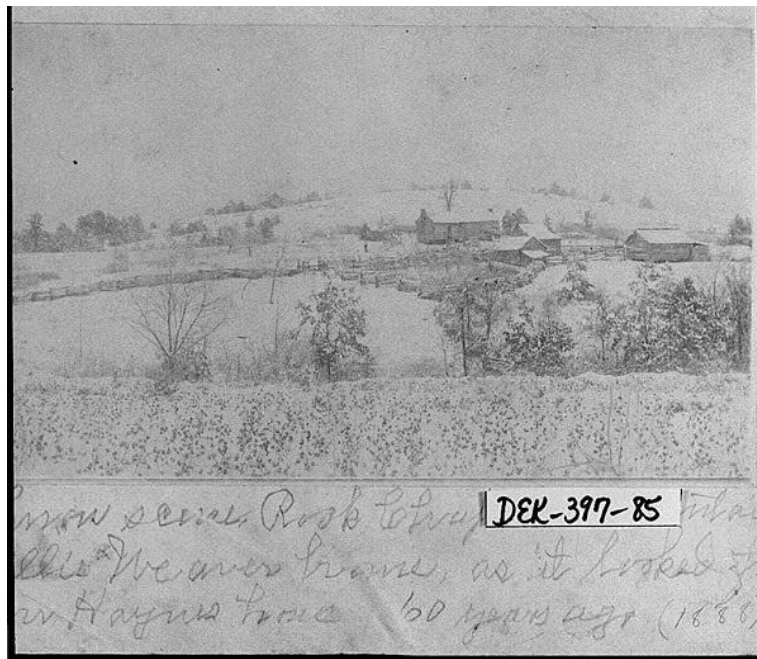
Why This Road Should Carry Their Names

Hannah and Ollie Weaver's lives, as documented here, ran the length of ground between Snellville and Lithonia: enslaved, at different times and by different families, along this same corridor; separated from each other and their children for years at a time; and then, after 1865, farmers, a registered voter, and lifelong members of the very congregation that had once held them in bondage. They were able to raise their family and build a home in spite of the unjust system and laws that governed their lives. Their story should be known, and their memories, though incomplete, should be preserved as an inspiration for future generations.

Documentation

The images below are the primary documents this sketch relies on most heavily, included so a reviewer need not take the transcriptions on faith. Full citations for each appear in the footnotes above.

Exhibit A — Ollie Weaver's farm, Rock Chapel Mountain, 1888



J. B. and I. A. Bond, photographers, 1888. Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives / Digital Library of Georgia.

Exhibit B — Letter of Capt. B. P. Weaver, August 18, 1864

²⁸Find A Grave memorial pages for Manuel N. Weaver (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98738370/manuel-n-weaver>) and Ollie Weaver (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98738286/ollie-weaver>) by the tools available for this draft.

Copy of a letter written by Capt. B.P. Weaver, Co. B, 42nd Ga. Vols. to his
wife's father and mother (Mr. Thomas E. and Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson Maguire)
(Rock Bridge, Gwinnett County, Georgia.)

Line of Battle, Stovall's Brigade—
(West of Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 18th, 1864)

Dear Father and Mother

I will drop you a line as I have a chance to send it
by Mr. Whaley. My health is very bad, in fact I can scarcely walk about,
though I am on duty now. We have to lie in the ditches night and day. We
had a pretty heavy skirmish fight this morning though it had ceased or nearly
so by 11 o'clock A.M. I think the enemy will advance on us in a day or two or
they will have to go back. We have checked their flanking movement--so they
now have to fight or retreat. Our lines are about 600 yards apart. I can
see some of the Blue Devils from where I sit--they got on their breastworks
this morning and hollered to us to bring them some tobacco--they would give us
a pound of coffee for a plug. We sent them an ounce of lead was our only re-
ply. I have received two letters from you-- one dated the 6th, the other the
1st and 6th. I was very glad to hear from you as I had all manner of reports
from home. Your situation's bad enough though it might be worse. I hope you
will not be pestered again by the raiders. I hope you will soon get good news
from Sherman's rear. If everything works as expected there will be stirring
times soon. I will send one hundred and sixty dollars to you for Mary Jane.
If you need you can use what you want of it. Mr. Whaley will hand it to you
or Mr. Anderson. I wish you to visit Mary Jane as often as you can--your pres-
ence will be a great source of encouragement to her. I fear Ollie has become
somewhat demoralized by the Yanks. I wish you to keep an eye on him and give
him a talking and if necessary a thrashing. Two of my men ran away last night.
I think they have gone home. T. M. Thomason is one of them. I think he will
return in a few days. You must write to me by him and encourage him to return
as soon as possible. A great many of our men have run away to see after their
families but the most of them have returned. I have 30 men with me, Lieutenant
Donaldson was severely wounded last Saturday--his leg bone shattered all to pieces
and was taken out. I think he was sent to Macon. Lieut. Williams was slightly
wounded the same day. He is at Brigade Hospital and will soon be back to the
command. If my health still continues bad I will go to Mrs. Mack's and stay a
few days. I think of resigning my office if I don't get better soon as I am
not able to lead my company in my present condition. A heavy fight is raging
in the direction of the Peachtree Road at this time. You must write to me by
every opportunity giving me all the news. Give my best respect to all the
family. Tell John J. I would like to get a letter from him. I wrote to him
and directed it to Augusta, Ga. thinking he was there. Hoping to hear from
you soon, I am as ever your son.

B. P. Weaver

Typed copy of Weaver's letter to his wife's parents, Thomas E. and Elizabeth Anderson Maguire, mentioning Ollie by name.

Exhibit C — Rock Chapel Methodist Church Roll, 1846 (with 1858/1903 note on Hannah Weaver)

ROCK CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

CHURCH ROLL - 1846
(continued)

MALE MEMBERS

James Swan
Charles W. Griffin
H. H. Hudgens
William Rutledge
Marion Rise (Rize)
Jacob Samples
David Flore
Matthew(?) Harmon
John Diamond
William M. Watts
John W. Watts
James New

FEMALE MEMBERS

Sarah Watts
Elizabeth Watts
Mary E. Watts
Mary Ann Wright
Malinda Goddard

SLAVES

CHURCH ROLL - 1846
ROCK CHAPEL METHODIST CHURCH

Slaves joined the church also with their white masters. The following were members in 1846:

Lee's Ransom
Marbut's Calebe
Maguire's William
Thomason's Daniel
Turner's Nancy
Turner's Henry
Lee's Dorcas
Chupp's Rebecca
Thomason's Lulzy
Marbut's Jane
Diamond's Charlie

In the year 1858 there were 61 slaves who belonged to the church. Among them was Hannah Weaver, who remained a member until her death in 1903.

Note: This was transcribed from an original list on which was written the following note: "This paper was read at the Centennial July 29, 1925 by Rev. F. A. Ragsdale."

This is from the papers of Mr. Joe Bond (1872-1952), courtesy of Rachel S. Sheppard.

DeKalb History Center, from the papers of Joe Bond (1872-1952), courtesy of Rachel S. Sheppard.

Exhibit D — "Habeas Corpus Writ Denied," newspaper clipping, January 29, 1903

Rock Chapel Slave

1-29-03

and that he is worthy
as been ill for some
lon for the man's re-
with pleasure by Mr.

CHAFEBUND WILL.
all at the hall of the
chall street, tonight.
the order and their
ite, and an altogether
s anticipated.

ENDON DIED YES-
t McClendon Station,
oad, after a short ill-
n was 62 years old at
th. The body will be
Friday afternoon for
id cemetery.

HUNTON, THE 8-
r of Mr. and Mrs.

Habeas Corpus Writ Denied.

Oliver Weaver, a negro, made applica-
tion for a habeas corpus writ before
Judge Reid, of the city court, yesterday,
in which he sought to set aside a fine of
\$50 imposed by Judge N. R. Broyles, of
the recorder's court. The writ was de-
nied and he was sent back to the stock-
ade.

The negro was arrested Christmas day,
by Officers Dodd and Kilpatrick and was
charged with drunken and disorderly
conduct, for which the fine was imposed,
and then he was bound over by Judge
Broyles on the charge of assault with in-
tent to murder Will Foster.

Judge Robert L. Rogers represented the
negro and City Attorney James L. May-
son represented the city.

Property Transfers.

West Point

CHANGE F

Leaving At
Train Rea
Morni

Beginning F
West Point
new scheulde
sleeping car
New Orleans,
road to leave
o'clock and

DeKalb History Center, Rock Chapel research files (Mary West collection). Publishing newspaper not identified on the clipping.

Exhibit E — "Slave Cemetery Holds Unique Slice of DeKalb County History," CrossRoadsNews, September 15, 2004

Slave cemetery holds unique slice of DeKalb County history

Search the Archives
Go

Date of Issue: 09/19/04
By Diane James
Special to CrossRoadsNews

Top articles in Community:

The old tombstone says Hannah Weaver was born in 1840 and she died in 1904. It also has the name Ollie, but there is no last name for him, because that portion of the stone has broken off.

The 1860 Census, the first to record the existence of African Americans in the country, shows that Hannah had a husband named Ollie. DeKalb History Center researchers believe Ollie was her husband. The two are inhabitants of what is believed to be DeKalb's only known all-slave

Located in June, the nondescript plot is at the intersection of Rock Chapel Road and Stephenson Road in Lithonia, in the woods near Rock Chapel Elementary School and Rock Chapel United Methodist Church. The Weavers and the others buried in the are believed to have been members of Rock Chapel United Methodist Church, founded in 1825, 40 years before slavery ended in America in June 1865.

Mary West, a volunteer for the DeKalb History Center who is helping to document African-American cemeteries in the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, called the "rare county history."

To date, volunteers have identified 10 African-American cemeteries in DeKalb County. West said this is unique because all of its inhabitants were slaves.

"We have never found in this county before, what we would consider a slave," she said.

West said the not only represents the last resting place of slaves, but could hold the key to a storehouse of vital information for people tracing their roots or seeking to learn more about African history.

It's not unusual that an all-slave would be next to a church. During slavery, slaves were often members of the same church as their white owners and their burial sites were often nearby.

The Rev. Harry Hawkins, a former pastor of the 179-year-old Rock Chapel United Methodist Church, said that after slavery some of the slaves stayed with the church. Hannah Weaver and her husband were among them. Hawkins, who left the Church in June for another position, said Hannah's funeral was held in the predominantly white church in 1904, which was very unusual for the times.

The couple's tombstone is being kept at the church's old parsonage for safekeeping, away from vandals and the elements.

"If anybody ever started restoring the, we would be able to bring that monument back," Hawkins said.

West said the actual number of graves at the site, now called the Rock Chapel Slave, is not known. She said graves are generally marked by four or five field rocks grouped together, but that some have no markers at all.

"Those of us who look at cemeteries all the time can look at a piece of land and know there's a grave right there," West said.

Since locating the site, West has developed a list of people who are



By Diane James, Special to CrossRoadsNews.

Exhibit F — Certificate of Death, Thomas Jack Weaver, February 8, 1932

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH
GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
Bureau of Vital Statistics

8-2
32- 3361
Registered No. 99

1. PLACE OF DEATH
County... Hall ...Militia District (Number and Name)... 1270th ...State of Georgia
City or Town... Lowery Branch ...Length of residence in this city or town: Yrs. ... Mo. ... Da. ... NON-RESIDENT (Yes or No) No
Street and Number (No.) ... (Street) ... Ward ...
(If death occurred in a hospital, give its name instead of street and number)

2. FULL NAME... Thomas Jack Weaver ...
Residence (City or Town)... Lowery Branch Ga. Rtd #2 ... (State)...

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3. SEX... Male ...4. COLOR or RACE... Black ...5. Single, Married, Widowed, Divorced (write the word)... Widowed

6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, year)... Don't know

7. AGE... Yrs. 59 ...Months ... Days ... If less than one day ... Hours ... Minutes ...

8. OCCUPATION
(a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work done, as spinner, Sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. ... Farmer
(b) Industry or business in which work was done, as cotton mill, sawmill, bank, etc. ...
(c) Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year) ... (d) Total years spent in this occupation ...

9. BIRTHPLACE... Georgia ... (P. O. Address) ...

10. NAME... Ollie Weaver ...
11. BIRTHPLACE... Georgia ... (P. O. Address) ...

12. MAIDEN NAME... Hannah Sewell ...
13. BIRTHPLACE... Georgia ... (P. O. Address) ...

14. INFORMANT... Alberta Smith ... (Address)... 299 Ellis Street Atlanta Ga ...
15. BURIAL PLACE... Shiloh ... (Cemetery) ...
16. UNDERSTAKER... Luxonini ... (Postoffice) ... 2-14-1932 ... (Signed) GA App ... (Address) ... Buena Ga ...

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

16. DATE OF DEATH... 2-8-1932 3:30PM ... at ... (Signed) DR Mooney ...
17. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended the deceased from ... to ...
I last saw him ... alive on ... death is said to have occurred on the date and hour stated above.
The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in the order of onset and duration of each:
Dropsy
No Doctor
Other contributory causes of importance:
What test confirmed diagnosis?
(Specify whether autopsy, question, laboratory, or clinical)
If death was due to external causes (violence) list if also the following:
Was there an accident, suicide, or homicide?
Where did injury occur? (Specify city or town, if outside of county, state, and also the cause)
Did injury occur in a home, public place or industry?
Manner of injury
Nature of injury
(Signed) DR Mooney ...
(Address) Lowery Branch Ga ...
18. FILED... Jan 9 ... 1932
(Signed) DR Mooney ... (Local Registrar)

Georgia State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics. Lists father "Ollie Weaver" and mother's maiden name "Hannah Sewell."

Exhibit G — 1870 U.S. Census, Diamond District, DeKalb County, Georgia

10	Oliver	45	11	Farmer	✓	George
11	Hannah	45	2	(keeping house)	✓	George
12	John	11	10	Farmer	✓	George
13	Mary	8	4		✓	George
14	Duncan	21	10	Farmer	✓	George

Household of Oliver Weaver, dwelling/family 706, enumerated July 25, 1870. FamilySearch / United States National Archives and Records Administration.

Notes on Sources and Remaining Gaps

- Hannah's death year is given three different ways across the sources consulted — 1902, 1903, and 1904. All three are recorded here rather than resolved by choosing one. The tombstone, if it survives at the church parsonage, would settle the question.
- Thomas Maguire's farm journal names Ollie twice, in November 1862 and January 1863, working under Maguire's direction. Read together with B. P. Weaver's August 1864 letter — which identifies Weaver's wife, Mary Jane, as the daughter of Thomas E. and Elizabeth Anderson Maguire — this indicates Ollie was held in bondage by the Weaver household, closely tied to Maguire's farm. The journal separately records a Union raid on the night of July 21, 1864; it does not name the unit or commander involved, and this document draws no further conclusion from that entry beyond noting it as a second, independent record of a Union incursion into the area that summer, roughly consistent with the raid Eudora Stephenson describes in her 1931 memoir.
- Thomas Jack Weaver's 1932 death certificate confirms Hannah's maiden name as "Sewell" and names Ollie Weaver as his father (Exhibit F). A detailed family history of Zachry and Emily Lee, compiled by descendant Bill Cudlipp from Zachry's will, pension file, and regimental history, documents their marriage on December 24, 1848, and the couple's later lives and deaths.
- Zachry Lee's Confederate unit is given two ways across the sources consulted: a FamilySearch index entry lists Company B, 20th Georgia Infantry; a more detailed, will- and pension-sourced family history lists Company E, 64th Georgia Infantry Regiment. Both are recorded here rather than silently reconciled; the latter is judged more likely accurate given its supporting documentation, but this has not been independently confirmed.
- The 1870, 1880, and 1900 federal censuses located for this household (Exhibit G and the accompanying footnotes) show real inconsistencies from one enumeration to the next: recorded ages that do not track evenly across the decades, Hannah's birthplace given as Virginia in 1880 and 1900 rather than Georgia, her given name recorded as "Anna" in 1900, and a count of zero children ever born in that same 1900 entry, which does not match the family's documented children.
- The January 1903 arrest of an "Oliver Weaver" is included because it is part of the documentary record connected to this family's research file, not because the identification can be confirmed with certainty. That uncertainty is stated plainly rather than resolved by omission.