

## Letter from Peter Kiteredge to the Selectmen of the Town of Medfield, April 6, 1806

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Gentlemen

I beg leave to state to you my necessitous circumstances, that through your intervention I may obtain that succour, which suffering humanity ever requires. Borne of African parents & as I apprehend in Boston, from whence while an infant I was removed to Rowley and from thence again to Andover into the family of Doct. Thom Kiteridge, with whom, as was then the lot of my unfortunate race, I passed the best part of my life as a slave. In the year of our Lord 1775 or 6 & in the twenty fifth of my age I entered into the service of the U.S. as a private soldier where I continued five years and where I contracted a complaint from which I have suffered in a greater or less degree ever since & with which I am now afflicted. After leaving the army to become a sailor for two years; when I quited the sea & resided for some time in Newtown, from whence I went to Natick where I remained for a short time & then removed to Dover where I carried as a day labourer during the period of seven years. Eight years past I removed to the place where I now live, & have untill this time, by my labor, assisted by the kindness of the neighbouring inhabitants been enabled to support myself and family. At present having arrived at the fifty eight year of my life and afflicted with severe and as I apprehend with incurable diseases whereby the labour of my hands is wholly cut off, and with it the only means of my support. – My family at this time consists of a wife and four children, three of whome are so young as to be unable to support themselves and the time of their mother is wholly occupied in taking cair of myself & our little ones – thus gentlemen, in this my extremity I am induced to call on you for assistance; not in the character of an inhabitant of the town of Westfield, for I have no such claim. but as a stranger accidently fallen within your borders, one who has not the means of subsistence, & in fact, one, who must fail through want & disease unless sustained by the fostering hand of your care.

I am Gentlemen your mos obedient, most humble servant.

Peter Kiteredge

His X Mark

Attent. Ebenezer Clark  
Paul Hifner

Document Source: The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History