

George Ashby was born in Burlington, New Jersey, on January 25, 1844. In 1864, Ashby, an African-American then living in Crosswicks, enlisted as a private in the 45th United States Colored Infantry, organized at Camp William Penn outside of Philadelphia between June and August of 1864. He served in Virginia during the siege of Petersburg and was present for the Confederate surrender at Appomattox Court House in April 1865. At the end of hostilities, the 45th, with a large number of other federal troops, was transferred to Texas on occupation duty. While serving with his regiment, Ashby was promoted several times until he reached the rank of first sergeant of Company H.

Sergeant Ashby was mustered out of the service at Philadelphia with the 45th in November 1865 and returned to his life as a New Jersey small farmer. After the war, he married Phoebe Cole of Crosswicks, who predeceased him at their Waker Avenue home in Allentown. In January 1944, a reporter interviewed the old veteran, who predicted an allied victory in World War II and stated that if he could, he would "enlist all over again." When George Ashby died in Allentown on April 26, 1946, he was the last surviving New Jersey Civil War veteran. He had 9 children, 16 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great-grandchildren at the time of his death at the age of 102. Ashby received a military funeral complete with color guard and firing squad provided by Hamilton Township American Legion Post #31 and was buried in the Allentown A. M. E. church cemetery.