



Black History Makers in Burlington County, New Jersey: Revolutionary War Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century

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ABSTRACT

Antebellum Black history in Burlington County, New Jersey, has several fascinating historic figures that can become interesting classroom lessons. These include soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War, a clockmaker born before the Revolutionary war who owned a successful clockmaking business, a man who became so fascinated with Quakerdom that he pleaded throughout his life to become a member of the group, only to be rebuffed until he was seventy-nine, two settlers from an antebellum free Black community called Timbuctoo who were influential in their community's development, a physician, a prominent Underground Railroad operative, and others. Most were born enslaved, but some were born free. Many were assisted by Quakers, who clearly facilitated emancipation in many cases, even while clearly limiting their association with Black people in some cases. This article describes the lives of eight men whose lives contribute to our understanding of Burlington County during enslavement and emancipation.

KEYWORDS

free Black people; free Black communities; Black Revolutionary War soldiers; Underground Railroad; Quakers

In the Winter 2023 edition of *AAHGS Journal*, we featured an article entitled “Teaching Timbuctoo: Raising the Profile of Antebellum Free Black People in New Jersey History,” which highlighted the Timbuctoo Historical Society’s curriculum development work and provided resources to educators wishing to enhance their teaching of antebellum African American history. In addition to providing a summary of the lessons and providing links to those resources, we described some basic foundational facts of that period of history that frequently elude public school classrooms such as:

- ▣ Free Black people comprised 11–14 percent of Black people enumerated in each US census¹ between 1800 and 1860 and accounted for nearly a half million people in 1860.
- ▣ Free Black people in the North established institutions, were covered in “white” newspapers, and sometimes owned their homes.²
- ▣ Legal documents such as wills and probate documents, antebellum corporation certificates for schools and churches, and newspaper coverage provide further evidence of free Black

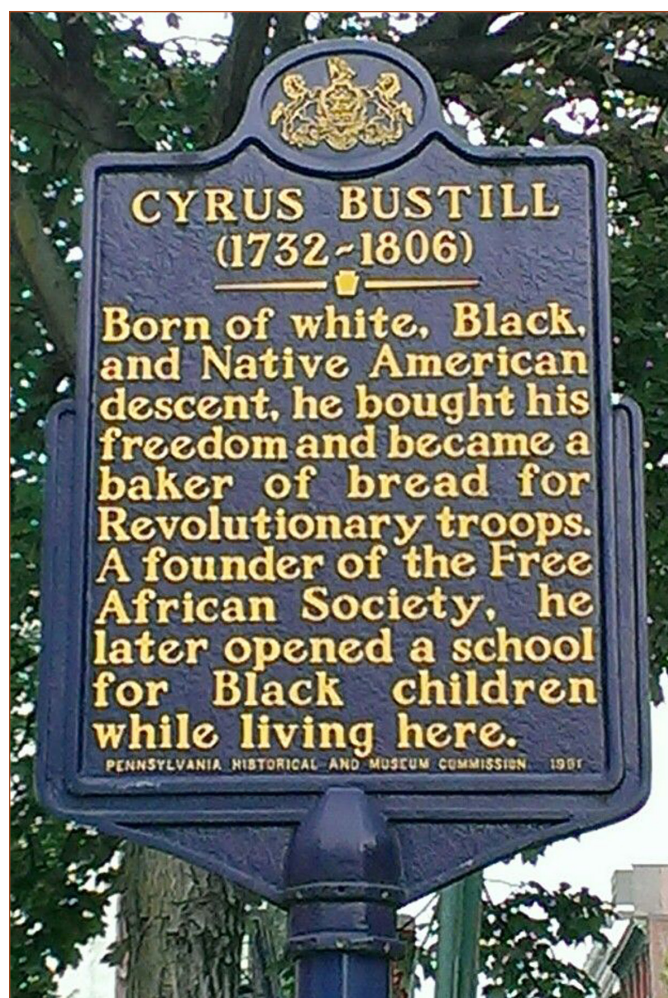
communities, notwithstanding the limitations of census data.³

This article continues that theme by highlighting Black history makers in Burlington County, New Jersey, beginning with the Revolutionary War period. These include Black men that participated in the Revolutionary War, formerly enslaved men who became entrepreneurs after gaining their freedom, rank-and-file landowners whose most substantial claim to fame is a remarkably detailed obituary in the local newspaper, a physician, and a Philadelphia Underground Railroad operative. In highlighting these men, I wish to emphasize strength, resilience and achievements in a discourse that is typically dominated by defeat, captivity, and ongoing struggle for freedom. This is not to diminish the reality that these ugly phenomena were dominant in the Black experience of the period in question, nor to diminish the limitations of the freedom afforded to Black people, but rather to acknowledge our ancestors' achievements and their resilience in the context of the relative freedom they experienced. Eight prominent men were selected to profile as follows.

Cyrus Bustill (1732–1806)

Cyrus Bustill was born in Burlington, New Jersey, on February 2, 1732.⁴ He was the child of a Quaker lawyer by the name of Samuel Bustill and a woman named Parthenia who was also enslaved in the Bustill household. After Samuel died in 1742, Cyrus was purchased by another Quaker named Thomas Prior, who was a baker.⁵ Cyrus learned baking from Prior. Some sources say Cyrus was allowed to save the money he earned baking to purchase his freedom in 1774; others indicate he was emancipated by Prior at that time. While it is difficult to evaluate sources sufficiently to make a definitive conclusion, we do know that Quakers' stance on enslavement took a turn during this period after a long and passionate debate.⁶ The official position of the Society of Friends⁷ became

that enslavers should play no role in their Society, because “enslavement of Africans was incompatible with the Christian golden rule, and liberty was the birthright of Blacks people as well as White people.”⁸ Enslavement was prohibited by Pennsylvania and New Jersey Quakers in 1776. As a result, some members left the Society of Friends, while others manumitted the people they enslaved.⁹ A total of 104 enslaved Africans were freed by members of Burlington Quarterly Meeting between 1763 and 1796.¹⁰ In addition, Quakers, a majority of whom lived in Burlington County and other nearby southern New Jersey counties, had been leaders in advocacy to end enslavement beginning around 1775. The gradual manumission law “ending” enslavement in New Jersey in 1804 has been attributed largely to advocacy by Quakers.¹¹ Based on the foregoing, it is reasonable to conclude that Bustill may have been emancipated by



Prior, as many of Prior's peers in his Meeting were doing likewise during this period. However, many sources say he purchased his freedom.

We know that Cyrus Bustill went on to be a successful brewer and baker. At the start of the Revolutionary War, he was one of 5,000 Blacks who served behind the scenes as a baker who supplied bread to George Washington's troops. After the War, Bustill was a prominent community leader who was active in abolitionist causes. He was also a co-founder of the Free African Society¹² in 1787 along with Richard Allen and Absalom Jones.

Bustill's success in business facilitated a comfortable retirement, such that he was able to build a house new at 3rd and Green Streets in Philadelphia. Then he opened a school for Black children and became a teacher. By 1791, he owned twelve acres in the Black settlement called Guineatown near Cheltenham Township in Montgomery County, just north of Philadelphia. Bustill married Elizabeth Morey (1746–1827), who was of Native American and European descent. They had at least three children. Prominent descendants of Cyrus Bustill are numerous; they include David Bustill Bowser (1820–1900) an artist who painted renowned portraits of John Brown and Abraham Lincoln, as well as battle flags for eleven African American regiments during the Civil War. Bustill Bowser's works were "the first widely viewed, positive images of African Americans painted by an African American" according to historians at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission." Paul Robeson (1898–1976) also descends from Cyrus Bustill, and is well known a political activist, lawyer, concert artist, actor, and professional football player.

Very clearly, there is substantial African American history to be learned from the life of Cyrus Bustill and his descendants. Boen made history as the progenitor of a famous family, as well as a prominent Black businessman in an era when owning a business was out of the reach of most of his peers. However, we will see through other businessmen featured here, it is not as uncommon

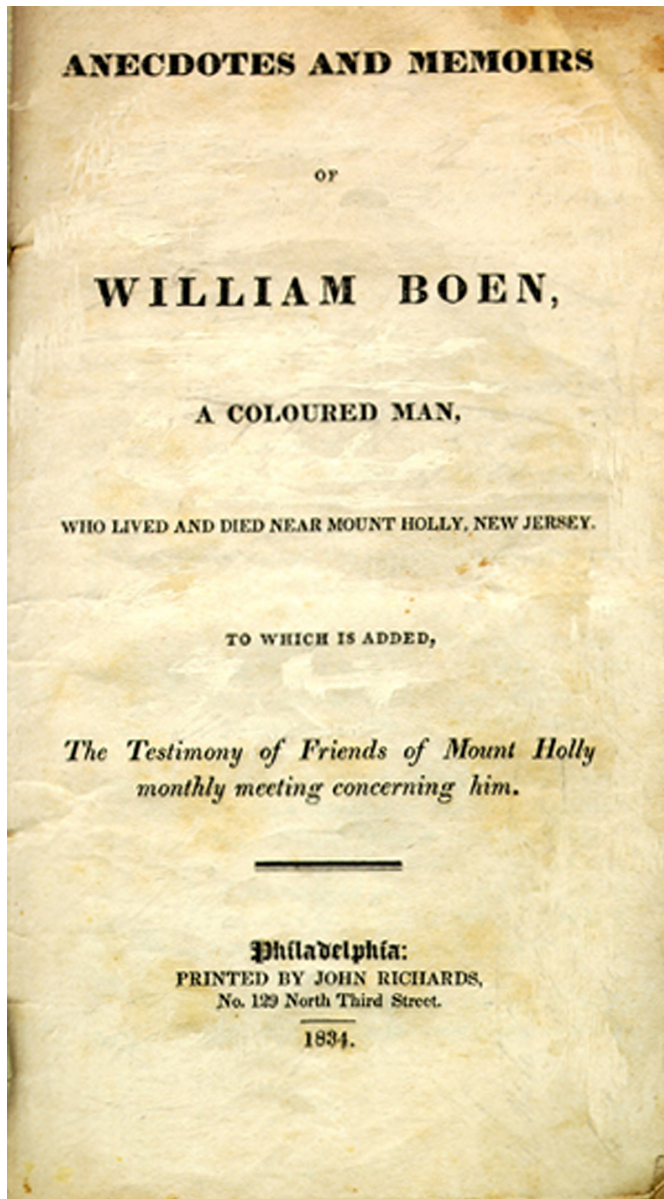
as we often conclude based on the dearth of non-enslaved Black people in our educational experiences. Bustill's family has been characterized as one of the best documented families of his era, yet his name is largely unknown outside of specialized history circles. Joyce Mosley, who is a sixth great-grandchild of Cyrus Bustill, has written a book entitled *Gram's Gift* to teach her grandchildren and other young people about their storied ancestry. Information about the book and related educational efforts can be found at www.joycemosley.com.

William Boen (1735–1824)

Much of what is known about Boen comes from his biography entitled *Anecdotes and Memoirs of William Boen, a Colored Man, Who Lived and Died Near Mount Holly, New Jersey*, which is available here: <https://www.friendslibrary.com/william-boen/life>. On its cover, the book is described as "The Testimony of Friends of Mount Holly Monthly Meeting Concerning Him." Boen is introduced with the following summary:

William Boen was a coloured man, who resided near Mount Holly, New Jersey. Like many of his brethren of the African race, in those days, he was from his birth held as a slave. But though poor and ignorant, in his early days, he was cared for, as all others are, by the universal Parent of the human family. He became a pious, sober, temperate, honest, and industrious man; and by this means, he obtained the friendship, esteem, and respect of all classes of his fellow-men, and the approbation and peace of his heavenly Father.

His industry, temperance, and cleanliness, no doubt, contributed much to his health and comfort; so that he lived to be a very old man, with having but little sickness through the course of his life. His character being so remarkable for sobriety, honesty, and peace—that it induced some younger people to inquire by



what means he had arrived to such a state, and attained such a standing in the neighbourhood where he lived. Ever willing to instruct, counsel, and admonish the youth, he could relate his own experience of the work of grace in his heart, which led him into such uprightness of life and conduct. For his memory did not appear to be much impaired by reason of old age.

As seen in the excerpt above, William Boen was a highly esteemed member of the Society of Friends. The Society of Friends had a very strong influence on Boen's life, even after he was manumitted. Boen had learned about Quakerism from his enslaver,

who frequently took him to Meeting for Worship¹³ while he was enslaved. Boen was impressed enough to petition Mount Holly Monthly Meeting¹⁴ for membership on his wedding day at age twenty-eight, and repeatedly petitioned throughout his life. He was refused repeatedly, notwithstanding advocacy from John Woolman, who was arguably the most influential Quaker abolitionist of the era. Finally, in 1814, when Boen was seventy-nine, he was admitted to the Mount Holly Meeting. In another case, Woolman recommended a Black man to be an elder, (likely Boen) and the Meeting responded that they would rather have no elder at all, than to have a Black elder.¹⁵

Here we have the juxtaposition of highly esteemed, as described in the biography written after Boen's death with "don't get to[o] close," we are not equals. What does this say about the true relationship between Quakers and Boen? Was the affection described in the excerpt genuine?

Was there any value in this affection with specific limits? Do Quakers get any credit for being a stark contrast from enslavers that fought against efforts to end enslavement in New Jersey, given Quaker petitions to the state legislature? To what extent was either position (affection as described in the excerpt, or I don't believe in enslavement, but that doesn't mean I want you coming to church with me) more, or less reflective of the majority? Does it depend on whether the question is asked in 1763 or 1834?

These are all inquiries that make the cases of Bustill, Boen, and Quakers captivating subject matter for classroom educational settings. Boen makes history for finally succeeding in his quest to become a Quaker, as well as by raising questions as to why he was so driven to join a group that repeatedly rejected him.

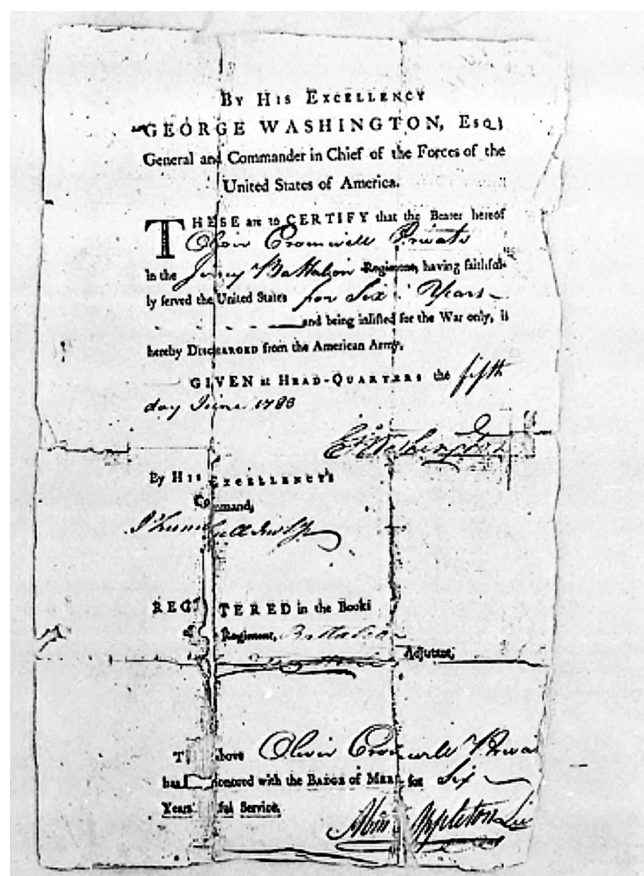
Oliver Cromwell (1752–1853)

Our discussion of Oliver Cromwell begins with his obituary, published in the *New Jersey Mirror* on February 3, 1853:

Oliver Cromwell, (a colored man) a Soldier of the Revolution, died in Burlington, on January 24, 1853, aged about 100 years. He had lived in Burlington a long time and was much respected by the citizens. The pension of ninety-six dollars a year, allowed him by the Government, was barely sufficient to support him, but being so highly esteemed, he was not permitted to suffer when his funds failed him.¹⁶

The mere fact that a newspaper obituary is available for a Black man in a “white” newspaper during this era is contrary to frequent “advice” on African American genealogical research, suggesting information on antebellum Black people is limited to records of enslavement.¹⁷ In fact, the *New Jersey Mirror*, published from 1818-1947, was the major regional newspaper during much of that period, and contains obituary notices of rank-and-file Black people as early as 1851.¹⁸ Beyond the newspaper information, we know that Cromwell was born free in what is now Columbus, New Jersey, on the farm of tavernkeeper John Hutchin, who was his uncle via his white ancestry, and that he was raised as a farmer. He participated in “nearly every major battle of the Revolutionary War’s northern campaign,”¹⁹ serving in several companies of the 2nd New Jersey Regiment between 1777 and 1783 and seeing action at the battles of Trenton (1776), Princeton (1777), Short Hills (1777), Brandywine (1777), Monmouth (1778), and at the final siege of Yorktown (1781).²⁰ Washington “personally signed his discharge papers and awarded him the newly issued Badge of Military Merit, citing his military discipline, his superior personal conduct, and his dedication and sacrifice.”²¹

After the war, Cromwell applied for a pension. While he was initially denied, the pension was eventually awarded after appeal, at \$96 per month as noted above. Mid-nineteenth century historian William C. Nell, who was the first to acknowledge participation of Black soldiers in this war effort, said in his publications that “had Cromwell been



Oliver Cromwell’s discharge certificate. National Archives (United States), Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant. Application Files (National Archives Microfilm Publication M804), Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, Washington, D.C., reel 695, Oliver Cromwell (S34613).

of a lighter complexion, every newspaper in the land would have been eloquent in praise of his many virtues.”²²

In a renowned 1851 painting by Emmanuel Leutze of George Washington crossing the Delaware River prior to the Battle of Trenton, two Black soldiers appear in the bow of the boat. These men have been identified as Oliver Cromwell and Peter Whipple. While not all historians agree, a stamp issued in a series of bicentennial commemorations in 1976 by the US Postal Service identifies the soldiers as Cromwell and Whipple. The stamp is called “Washington Crossing the Delaware.” Whipple is the one with a foot over the side, and Oliver Cromwell is on the right behind him. Cromwell is wearing a dark hat and is holding an oar.

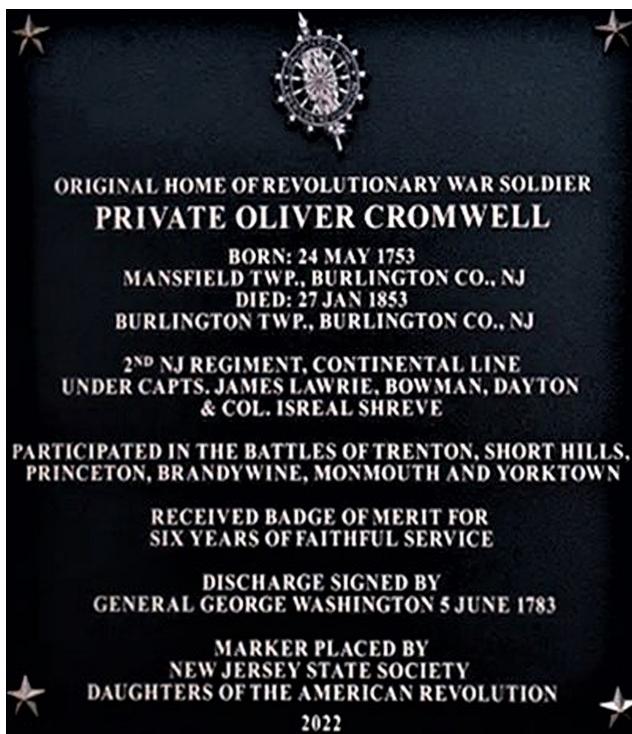


Emmanuel Leutze, *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851

Cromwell makes history for the distinction of his service in the Revolutionary War, particularly since the participation of Black people in the Revolutionary War is still not widely appreciated, although there has been much more publicity in this regard in recent years.

In 1984, the Oliver Cromwell Black History Society, Inc. was founded. It is dedicated to

preserving, protecting, and information sharing about the legacy of Cromwell and other related information. In 2020, The Daughters of the American Revolution began a project called “E Pluribus Unum” to step up efforts and commitment to research and honor Revolutionary soldiers who were African American or Native American. Two years later they erected a marker to honor Cromwell depicted below left.



Peter Hill (1767–1820)

Peter Hill was born on July 19, 1767, in Burlington Township, New Jersey, in the household of a Quaker clockmaker named Joseph Hollinshead Jr., who enslaved his parents.²³ At age fourteen, he began an apprenticeship with Hollinshead to assist in the family’s clockmaking business.²⁴ Hill did so well that Hollinshead helped him set up his own clockmaking business before Hill paid Hollinshead to manumit him in 1894.²⁵ The following year, he married Tina Lewis who was renowned in her own right for her writing skills and efforts to provide schooling in African American communities with assistance from Quakers.²⁶

Hill operated his own clock shop in Burlington for about twenty years. Eventually, he was



A rare Peter Hill tall-case clock

successful enough to own cattle, horses, and several acres of land. Hill moved his business to nearby Mount Holly in 1814.²⁷ In 1820, he bought a large brick house in Mount Holly, but he passed away later that year. He is buried in the Friends Cemetery in Burlington City. His grave had been unmarked, but a gravestone was placed to honor him through an effort facilitated by Burlington Quaker Meeting House and Conference Center.

As many as five Peter Hill clocks survive today.²⁸ One was made for his neighbor, Rowland Jones, in 1812; it is now located in Westtown School, which is a Quaker School in Westtown, Pennsylvania. The second one a tall-case clock. This one is

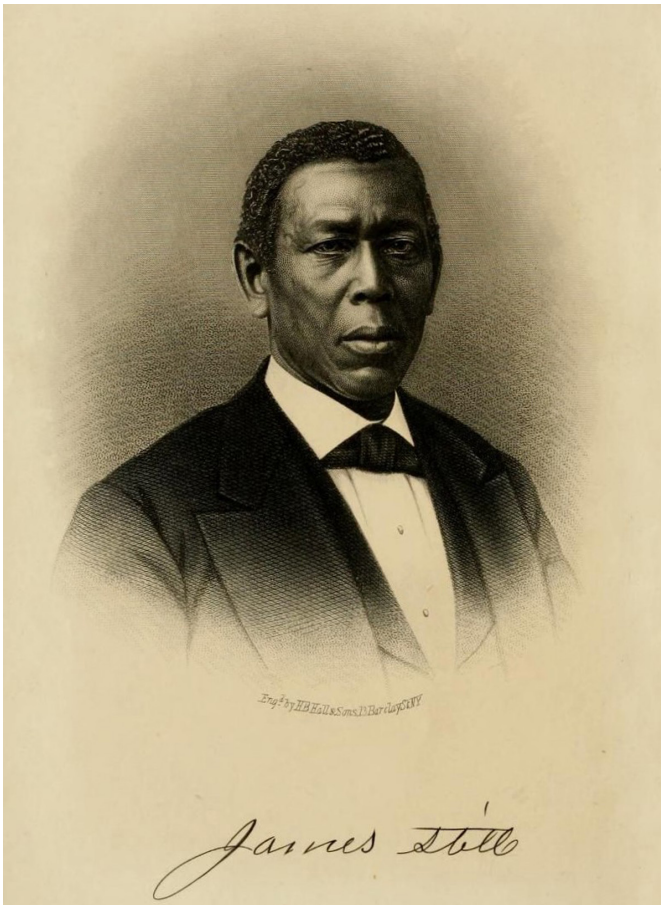
located at the Smithsonian National Museum of History and Technology in Washington.²⁹

Peter Hill makes history as a skilled entrepreneur and landowner who was born prior to the Revolutionary War, and artifacts attesting to his skill and business success are the very tangible and visible clocks that remain today. While he is not widely known, there is a fair amount of information about him available via Google search, such that his story should be a prime candidate for research assignments for students of Black history. It is noteworthy that while he is regarded as the first known Black clockmaker and watchmaker, such designations frequently do not consider the possibility of clockmaking in Africa, where command of scientific disciplines has been documented in ancient manuscripts as early as the fifteenth century.³⁰

James Still (1812–1882)

James Still was one of eighteen children of Levin and Sidney Steel, who were born enslaved in Maryland. His parents escaped separately to New Jersey, where they changed their name to Still to avoid capture. James and most of his siblings were born as free people in New Jersey where the legislature had passed a gradual manumission law in 1804.³¹

According to his autobiography, *Early Recollections and Life of Dr. James Still in 1877*,³² his curiosity about medicine was sparked by his experience of being vaccinated as a young child. He had limited formal education, having attended school only sporadically due to his obligation to work to help support his family. He was even hired out voluntarily³³ by his father as an indentured servant. During this period and after his release from indenture, he read as much as he could to learn about natural remedies. Although he was prohibited from attending medical school because he was Black, he persisted in his informal studies. Eventually, he created “cough balm” from plants and herbs grown on his farm. It was very effective for the first patient who used it. As a result, two Philadelphia pharmacists became



Portrait of James Still

regular customers who purchased the balm as fast as he could produce it. This business arrangement enabled him to purchase a home and establish himself in business. He had substantial numbers of white and Black patients, and became known as Doctor of the Pines, referring to the New Jersey's Pine Barrens region.

James Still was married twice. His first wife, Angelina Willow died from tuberculosis in 1838, three years after their marriage. Soon thereafter, he married Henrietta Thomas and the couple had two sons, James and Joseph. His son James Thomas Still also became a physician and was the third Black person to graduate from Harvard Medical School in 1871. James Still died of a stroke at his home in 1882.

Like Peter Hill, James Still made history as a Black person who managed to obtain substantial career success in spite of the discrimination and

disenfranchisement of his day, even to the point of sending his son to Harvard Medical School. He also made history because of the intellect that allowed him to gain command of medicine and pharmacy by teaching himself. James Still is most certainly an example of resilience and success that began during the antebellum period that should be taught in school.

Present-day Still descendants established the Dr. James Still Office Site and Education Center at the location of his home and office. Although his home was torn down in the 1920s, the office site remains and has been renovated for use in interpretive as well as educational outreach activities. Further information is available on the organization's website (<http://www.drjamesstillcenter.org/>).

William Still (1821–1902)

William Still was the youngest sibling of the Still family described above under James Still. He was born free under the same conditions as his brother. William Still is by far the most widely known of the men featured in this article. Relocating to Philadelphia as a young man, he became known as an abolitionist movement leader, businessman, and writer.³⁴ He was born in 1821 in Shamong Township, Burlington County, New Jersey.

William Still married Letitia George in Philadelphia, with whom he had four children.³⁵ Soon



Portrait of William Still

after he married, he became the clerk of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery. In this capacity, he became a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad. His July 15th, 1902, obituary in the *New York Times*³⁶ described him as “The Father of the Underground Railroad,” having helped as many as eight hundred former captives in their escape to freedom.

William Still’s kept detailed records of the escapees he helped but kept them well hidden to protect his “clients.” These records provided substantial documentation for his self-published book, called *The Underground Railroad*, which he published in 1872. William Still also helped organize the Social, Civil, and Statistical Association of the Colored People of Pennsylvania in 1861. This organization worked for the abolition of enslavement as well as for equality in general. Among other important accomplishments, this group wrote and obtained signatures for the “Petition for the Colored People of Philadelphia to Ride in the Cars”³⁷ in 1861–62, as well as collecting demographic data on free and freed Black populations.

His highly successful business included real estate investments, a coal and stove business, and a coal yard.³⁸ He was also appointed as peddler for the provisions of black soldiers at Camp William Penn during the Civil War, was appointed to the Philadelphia Board of Trade in 1864, and he supported universal suffrage.³⁹ William Still died in 1902 and was buried in Eden Cemetery near Philadelphia.

William Still was a successful businessman who also sat on the Philadelphia Board of Trade. In addition to his activism in abolitionist activities for which he was renowned, it would be insightful to examine William Still as a businessman. Since he is described as a supporter of universal suffrage, that is a second line of inquiry that would make an interesting research project, i.e.: what is known about male proponents of universal suffrage from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. These are research questions that a high school or university student could pursue about this important history maker.

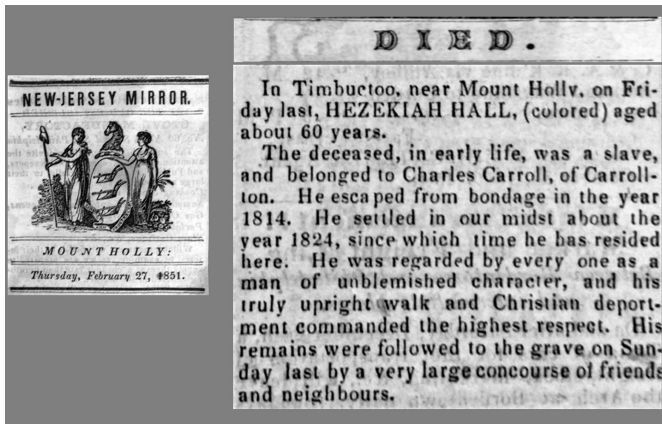
Hezekiah Hall (ca. 1791–1851)

Hezekiah Hall passed away in 1851 and was born around 1791, according to this *New Jersey Mirror* obituary from February 27, 1851:

In Timbuctoo, near Mount Holly, HEZEKIAH HALL, (colored), aged about 60 years. The deceased, early in life, was a slave, and belonged to Charles Carol of Carrollton. He escaped from bondage in the year 1814. He settled in our midst in about the year 1824, since which time he has resided here. He was regarded by everyone as a man of unblemished character, and his truly upright walk and Christian deportment commanded the highest respect. His remains were followed to the grave on Sunday last by a very large concourse of friends and neighbours.

This is the earliest obituary found thus far for a resident of Timbuctoo, one of multiple free Black settlements established in New Jersey during the antebellum period. While Hall is not noteworthy outside the context of the small free Black settlement where he lived, he made history merely by having his life so well documented. He had been enslaved by Charles Carol of Carrollton,⁴⁰ who had been a signer of the Declaration of Independence and was the first elected US senator from Maryland. He was a community leader in Timbuctoo, as evidenced by his name on legal documents for the African Union School⁴¹ and the Schoolhouse and Place of Divine Worship.⁴²

The September 26, 1826, date of deed to Hall’s property⁴³ in the context of his 1851 death at about sixty years old tells us he was about thirty-five when he came to Timbuctoo, and the deed tells us he lived in nearby Mount Holly. This substantial obituary provides details about his earlier life that are not readily available for his peers.⁴⁴ The obituary reports he had escaped bondage in Maryland in 1814 and that he settled in the area around 1824. The 1850 census, which was the first to record additional personal details such as



occupation, says he was a laborer. His will⁴⁵ refers to rents and profits from real estate holdings that his wife is to be responsible for, and the inventory of his estate includes a balance of \$84.25 for rent due, bonds, and mortgage interest. To put \$84.25 in perspective, entire parcels of land were selling for less than half that much in that era. Hall leaves his movable estate and management of his business affairs to his wife, while his real estate is devised to his children. His wife is this author's 4x great-grandmother, reminding us that in some cases, school children in the area of Burlington County might be motivated to research their own family trees as a history project.

David Parker (1802–1877)

We also have a *New Jersey Mirror* obituary for David Parker,⁴⁶ who made history by being the most prominent community leader in Timbuctoo, referred to as King David in multiple newspaper accounts.⁴⁷ He is also identified as the leader of the Battle of Pine Swamp, a uniquely historic event in which Timbuctoo residents came to the aid of their neighbor, Perry Simmons, who was sought by a “kidnapper,” (as described in the article) acting on behalf of Simmons’s former Maryland

enslaver. According to an 1100-word account in the *New Jersey Mirror*⁴⁸ on December 6, 1860, the kidnappers “hastily retreating to the carriages, left the scene of their brilliant achievement as though Old Satan was after them,” under the command of “King” David Parker. The obituary below describes Parker with more detail:

David Parker, an aged colored man who for perhaps one-half century has occupied a prominent position with his race in this vicinity and has commanded the respect and esteem of many white friends, died at his residence in Timbuctoo on Sunday, aged about 75 years. “King David,” as he had been known in other years, was possessed of more than ordinary intelligence, and a determined will, which made him a natural leader as long as his physical strength lasted, and he was general at the head of any movement among them. David was an ardent Republican, no effort availing to seduce him from the support of the party that gave him the ballot, and he allowed none

EXCITEMENT AT TIMBUCTOO

THE BATTLE OF PINE SWAMP—THE INVADERS FORCED TO RETREAT

The kidnappers hearing the unearthly noise, turned their eyes in the direction from whence it proceeded, and saw the negroes rapidly approaching, – “terrible as an army with banners” – looking more infuriated and determined than a battalion of Zouaves, making a charge. They once concluded that “discretion was the better part of valor,” and hastily retreating to the carriages, left the scene of their *brilliant* achievement as though Old Satan was after them.

They undoubtedly had a great horror of the Timbuctoo warriors, for they went down the road at a rapid rate, and when they passed through Rancocas, the horses were even then being urged to their utmost speed.

This midnight attack upon the Pine Swamp Fortress will long be remembered. The heroic party came—they saw – but didn’t conquer. The foe was driven to his last extremity, within the Fort, but not one of the plucky invaders dare close in upon him. He held them all at bay, until Timbuctoo’s Fusiliers, Reserve Guard, and Petticoat Rangers, under the command of King David, on “Old Shanks” high-mettled charger, came up, with shout and song, swept the field, and set the captives free.

The New Jersey Mirror, December 6, 1860. Excerpted from 1,100-word article on page 3. Full text at <https://timbuctoonj.com/battle-of-pine-swamp>.

of his followers to be caught by the enemy. The deceased will be missed by citizens of both races, and much sincere regret felt that his light has gone out.

From his September 1826 deed,⁴⁹ we know Parker was a resident of nearby Evesham at the time of his first land purchase in Timbuctoo in 1826, when he would have been about twenty-five years old. He was by far the most prominent Timbuctoo resident for decades, and he outlived his fellow early settlers by several years. He also outlived two wives. In 1871, when he would have been about seventy years old, David married thirty-six-year-old Clarissa Cole of Philadelphia “after a long and tedious courtship,”⁵⁰ according to the *New Jersey Mirror*. Having had children with Clarissa Cole at this advanced age, he has grandchildren born in the 1920s that have multiple descendants in Burlington County today. Many still have the last name Parker.

David Parker was also associated with multiple land transactions and was the most financially successful of his peers. It is noteworthy that the only three remaining civilian grave markers in the Timbuctoo Cemetery are Eliza Parker, Matilda Parker, and Frisby Parker.⁵¹ Eliza and Matilda were his first two wives and Frisby was his son. Having stone grave markers is an indicator of financial resources in an era where rank-and-file citizens frequently had wooden markers that did not survive time. David Parker was the president of the Beneficial Society of the United Sons of Daughters of Timbuctoo and Vicinity,⁵² and the first listed trustee on the deed and corporation certificate for the Zion Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal African Church of Timbuctoo.⁵³ This church established the Timbuctoo Cemetery, which has been described as the only remaining above ground evidence of Timbuctoo’s historic past.

Conclusion

The mission of the Timbuctoo Historical Society includes emphasis on raising the profile of ante-

bellum free Black people in the teaching of New Jersey history, in the teaching Black history, and the differences between the antebellum Black experience in Northern states as compared to the South into public consciousness. We hope that the material expounded here will pique curiosity, encourage new research projects, and provide new teaching material for those who had not been familiar before. The Winter 2024 edition of *AAHGS Journal* will continue this theme with an article on US Colored Troops from Timbuctoo that fought in the Civil War. Although detailed references to women in the data sources utilized here are limited, we will also seek to implement a research project that can highlight contributions of women during this period of our history and produce a publishable narrative.

Guy Weston is a descendant of an early Timbuctoo, New Jersey, settler. Timbuctoo is an antebellum free Black community settled in 1826. His current work encompasses research and public history initiatives to raise the profile of Timbuctoo and antebellum free Black people in New Jersey history. These have included interpretive signage in Timbuctoo, coordination of a curriculum development project in collaboration with local teachers, and preservation efforts for the Timbuctoo cemetery, where the oldest gravestone is dated 1847.



Guy currently serves as managing director of the Timbuctoo Historical Society, is the editor of *AAHGS Journal*, and is a visiting scholar at Rutgers University. He has contributed articles about his research to *AAHGS Journal*, *AAHGS News*, *National Genealogical Society Magazine*, and *New Jersey Studies*. He maintains a website at www.timbuctoonj.com. Guy has a master’s degree in bicultural studies from LaSalle University. In 2022, he received a scholarship from the Board for Certification of Genealogists to complete the coursework needed to receive this credential.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Weston, Guy. 2022. "Timbuctoo and the First Emancipation of the Nineteenth Century." *New Jersey Studies* 8 (1). <https://njs.libraries.rutgers.edu/index.php/njs/article/view/268>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Buxbaum, Melvin. "Cyrus Bustill Addresses the Blacks of Philadelphia." *The William & Mary Quarterly* 29 (1): 99–108.
- 5 Buxbaum, 99.
- 6 Cooley, Henry Scofield. *A Study of Slavery in New Jersey*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1896): 17–19.
- 7 The Society of Friends is an official name for Quakers as a denomination.
- 8 Cooley, 18.
- 9 Wright, Giles R. *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1989): 25–26.
- 10 Scott Sr., Donald. *Remembering Cheltenham Township* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2009).
- 11 Wright, 25–26.
- 12 The Free African Society (FAS) was formed in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by American preachers Richard Allen and Absalom Jones and other free African Americans. The mission of the group was to provide fellowship, a place of worship, and monetary support for members and their families in case of sickness or death. The FAS constituted the first African American mutual aid society in Philadelphia and was one of the first such organizations for African Americans. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)
- 13 Meeting for Worship is what Quakers call their Sunday (or any day) worship service.
- 14 In Quakerdom, "Monthly Meeting" and "Yearly Meeting" refer both to regional assemblies of Quakers and the frequency of their business gatherings. A Monthly Meeting is typically a local congregation, whereas a Yearly Meeting is a regional grouping that meets annually.
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