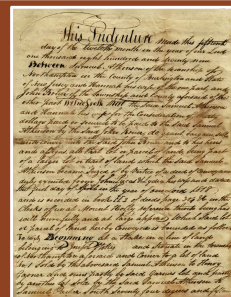
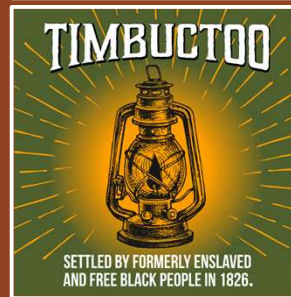


Preserving, Protecting, and Promoting Timbuctoo

*Prepared for
Cherry Hill Public Library
February 25, 2025*

**Guy Weston, MA
Timbuctoo Historical Society**

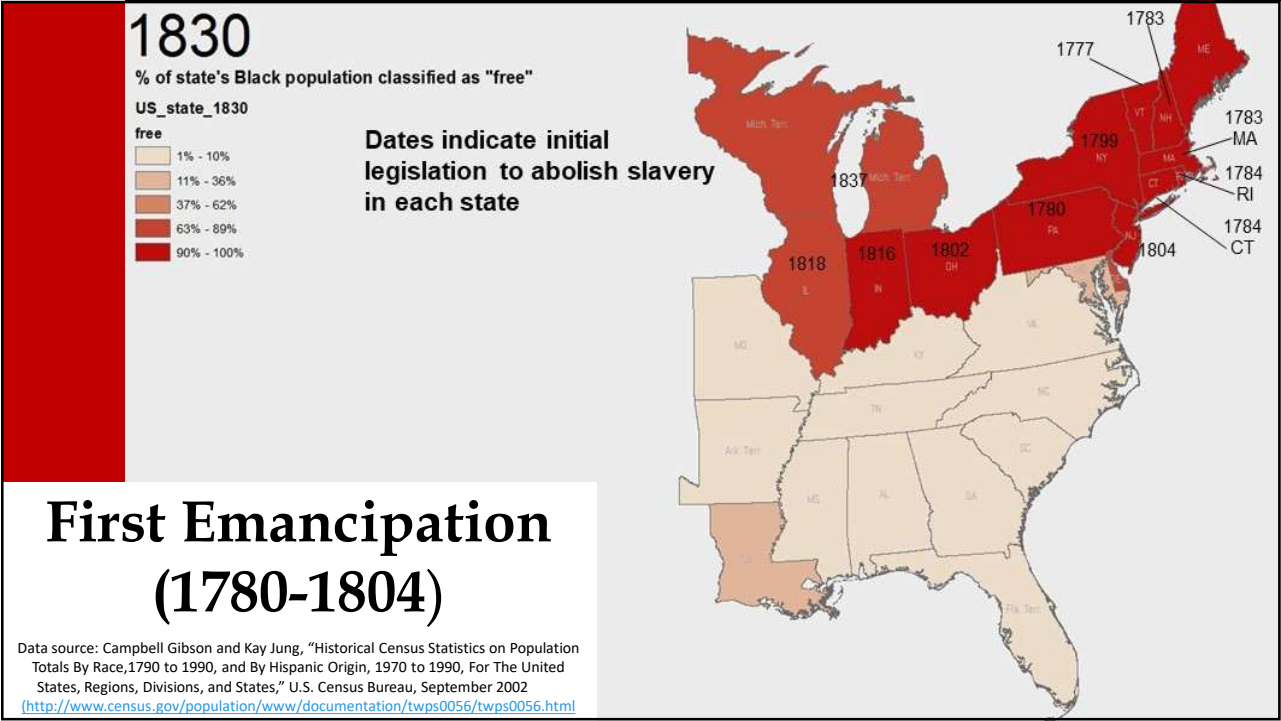


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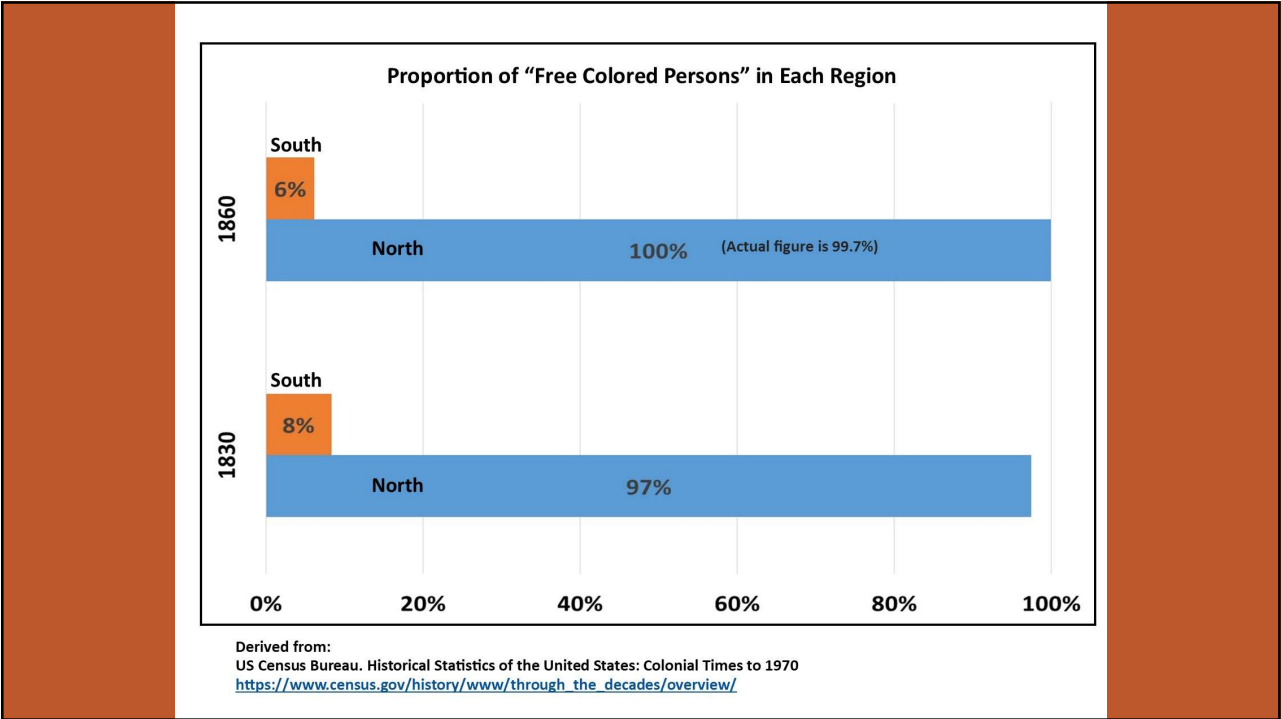
Points of Discussion

- Brief background on historical context of Timbuctoo's development
- Key points of Timbuctoo history
- Current preservation and outreach efforts
- Future plans

2



3



4

Gradual Manumission in New Jersey

- In 1804, the State Legislature passed "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery" (P.L. 1804, chap. 103, p. 251).
- This monumental law required the registration of births of the children of enslaved people born after 4 July 1804 and declared such children to be "free," but bound as servants to the owners of their mothers for a period of twenty-five years for males and twenty-one years for females.
- It wasn't all cozy and comfortable! Gigantino¹ recounts cases of New Jersey Blacks being sold as enslaved after their indentures should have been completed, including the case of a woman who was listed as a free in the 1850 census but was sold as enslaved in 1856.

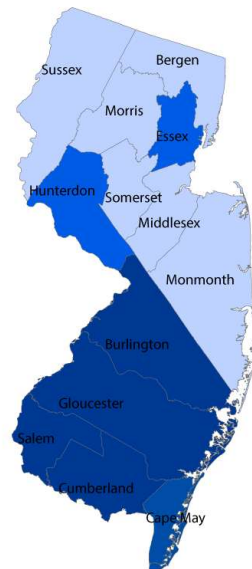
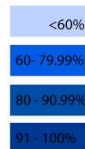
¹James J. Gigantino, *The Ragged Road to Abolition Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775-1865* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015)

5

1820

Percent of Black population recorded as "free," by New Jersey county

1820	Free
	%
Bergen	38.6%
Essex	67.8%
Hunterdon	70.1%
Middlesex	50.5%
Monmouth	44.0%
Morris	41.0%
Somerset	57.0%
Sussex	55.6%
TOTAL NORTHERN	53.0%
Burlington	93.9%
Cape May	88.0%
Cumberland	97.1%
Gloucester	96.5%
Salem	98.5%
TOTAL SOUTHERN	95.8%



Cartography: Eric Rhodes

6

Timbuctoo, New Jersey

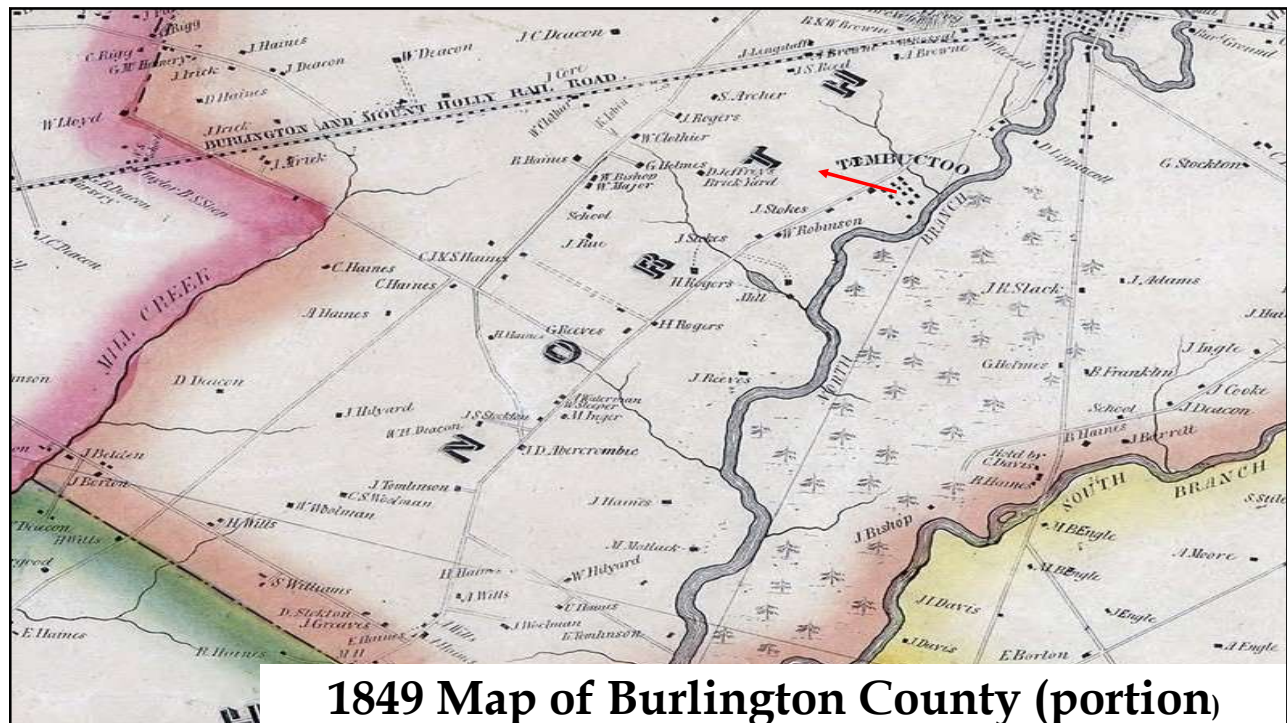
Settled beginning in 1826 by formerly enslaved and free Black people with the assistance of Quakers

Was one of several antebellum free Black settlements in New Jersey, most of which were in the southern part of the state

Timbuctoo residents owned land, established schools and churches, and sometimes read about themselves in the local paper

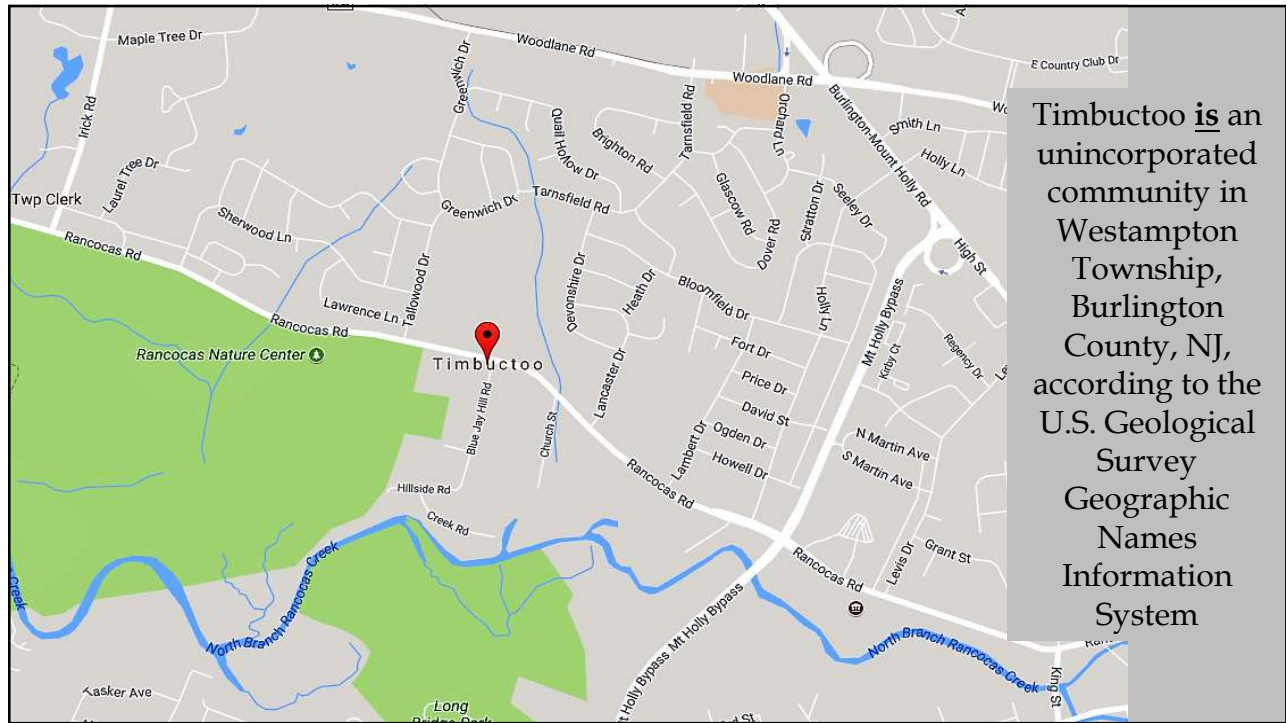
Timbuctoo, like many of the settlements, was a stop on the Underground Railroad

7



1849 Map of Burlington County (portion)

8



9



10

What are the boundaries of Timbuctoo?

Earlier area consisted of about 15 acres

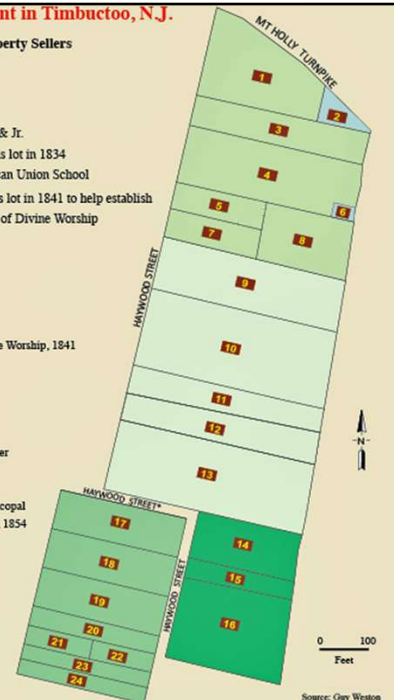
What's known as Timbuctoo today is about 52 acres

Early Settlement in Timbuctoo, N.J.

Original Property Sellers

- 1st-William Hilyard
- 2nd-Samuel Atkinson
- 3rd-Abigail Haywood
- 4th-Thomas Grissom Sr. & Jr.
- Peter Quire subdivided his lot in 1834 to help establish the African Union School
- John Bruer subdivided his lot in 1841 to help establish the Schoolhouse & Place of Divine Worship

- 1 Peter Quire, 1831
- 2 African Union School, 1834
- 3 Major Mitchel, 1830
- 4 John Bruer, 1829
- 5 John Bruer, 1831
- 6 Schoolhouse & Place of Divine Worship, 1841
- 7 David Parker, 1831
- 8 Samuel Parker, 1831
- 9 David Parker, 1826
- 10 Wardell Parker, 1826
- 11 Hezekiah Hall, 1826
- 12 George Wilmore, 1826 or earlier
- 13 Ezekiel Parker, 1826
- 14 Mary Hugg, 1838
- 15 Zion Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal African Church (& Cemetery), 1854
- 16 Joseph Hargrove, 1834
- 17 Henry Simmons, 1834
- 18 William Hill, 1839
- 19 Joseph Parker, 1833
- 20 David Parker, 1842
- 21 Levi Griffin, 1840
- 22 Gillis Parker, 1842
- 23 Joseph Hargrove, 1834
- 24 Alexander Armstrong, 1842



*note: prior to 1834, this section of Haywood St was a part of a parcel owned by Edward Giles.

Source: Guy Weston
Rutgers Cartography 2018

11

Who were the first inhabitants of Timbuctoo?

*The first land sales to African Americans in the area now known as Timbuctoo occurred in 1826, when four parcels of land are sold by a Quaker businessman by the name of **William Hilyard**.*

- The buyers were:
- **David Parker** (1 acre for \$15.40)
- **Ezekiel Parker** (1.4 acres for \$22.16)
- **Wardell Parker** (1.5 acres for \$24.05)
- **Hezekiah Hall** (.5 acre for \$8.33)

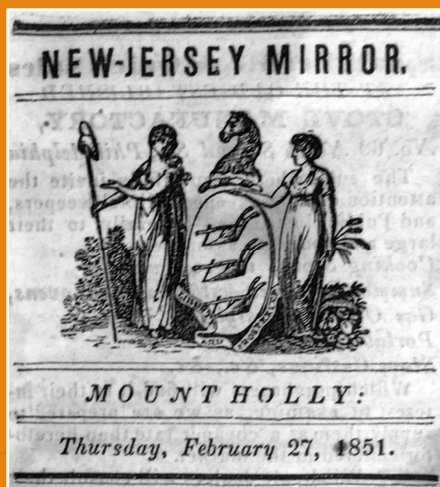
The fifth recorded sale was in 1829, when **John Bruer** purchased **1 acre** from Quaker farmer **Samuel Atkinson** for **\$30**

12

What we know about Timbuctoo Residents

*and how this information
is made available to the public*

13



Obituary of Hezekiah Hall

DIED.

In this town, on Friday the 14th inst., MARY BUDD, infant daughter of James B. and Rebecca S. Coppuck, aged 12 days.

In this town, on Friday last, JOB BISHOP, in the 82d year of his age.


In Camden, on Saturday last, Mr. RICHARD C. CAKE.

In Bordentown, on Sunday last, GEORGE W., Son of Daniel Deacon, aged about five years.

In Timbuctoo, near Mount Holly, on Friday last, HEZEKIAH HALL, (colored) aged about 60 years.

The deceased, in early life, was a slave, and belonged to Charles Carroll, of Carrollton. He escaped from bondage in the year 1814. He settled in our midst about the year 1824, since which time he has resided here. He was regarded by every one 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.

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NEW JERSEY MIRROR.

Mt. Holly, Thursday, April 22, 1875


LOCAL AFFAIRS.

FOUND DEAD.—Lambert Giles, a well known colored man, long a resident of this vicinity, was found lying dead by the side of the road from Mount Holly to Rancocas, near the barn of the late Caleb A. Woodward, on Monday evening about 7½ o'clock. He had been at work at his usual occupation, white-washing, in Mount Holly during the day and left here for his home at 'Bucto about 7 o'clock. Deceased was subject to attacks of an epileptic nature and doubtless died in a fit of this kind. Coroner Lam-master viewed the body in company with Dr. R. E. Brown, and no doubt being entertained of the cause of his death, an inquest was deemed unnecessary. Lambert was an industrious and worthy man and noted for his courtesy of man-ner. He was about 60 years of age.



—The sudden demise of the old colored whitewasher, Lambert Giles, last week, put a number of housekeepers on the wing to find some body to fill his engagements. Lambert followed an humble calling, but was regarded as about perfect in his art, and will be more missed than would many of our more pretentious citizens. He was often engaged weeks in advance.

15



NEW JERSEY MIRROR.

Mount Holly, Thursday, June 28, 1877.

LOCAL AFFAIRS.

"THE KING" HATH DEPARTED.—David Parker, an aged colored man who for perhaps a half century has occupied a prominent position with his race in this vicinity, and who has commanded the respect and esteem of a large number of white friends, died at his residence in Timbuctoo on Sunday afternoon, 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 among his people so long as his physical strength lasted, and he was generally at the head of any movement among them. For a few years past, however, his health has been poor, which, added to his advancing years, gave the younger and more vigorous sons of his race a chance to contest his rule, until the sceptre had well nigh passed from his hand. 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 of his followers to be caught by the enemy. The deceased will be missed by our citizens of both races, and much sincere regret felt that his light has gone out. The funeral takes place this (Wednesday) afternoon at 1 o'clock.

Obituary of David Parker

16

Community Development in Timbuctoo

17

Land purchased for:
**African Union
School**¹
January 4, 1834

Peter Quire is the seller. **Edward Giles, Hezekiah Hall, and Major Mitchell** are identified as Trustees in the deed, which states:

“whereas, in the Settlement of Tombuctoo...and in the vicinity thereof, there are many people of Colour (so called) who seem sensible of the advantages of a suitable school education and are destitute for a house for that purpose.

And the said Peter Quire and Maria, his wife in consideration of the premises and the affection they bear to the people of Colour and the desire they have to promote their true and best interests are minded to settle, give, grant and convey...said premises to the uses and intents hereinafter pointed out and described.”

The deed further describes some rules of operation, such as the **requirement that any future Trustees be people of Colour who live within ten miles of the premises.**

¹Burlington County, NJ, Deeds, G3:389, Peter Quire to Edward Giles, et al, January 4, 1834; Burlington County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly

18

Land purchased for:

Zion
Wesleyan
Methodist
Episcopal
African
Church of
Timbuctoo¹

December 17, 1854

The seller is **Peter V. Coppuck**. Trustees acting on behalf of the church are **David Parker, Noble L. Johns, Adam Gibson, Jacob Colwell, James Pinion, Richard Christie, and William Chase**.

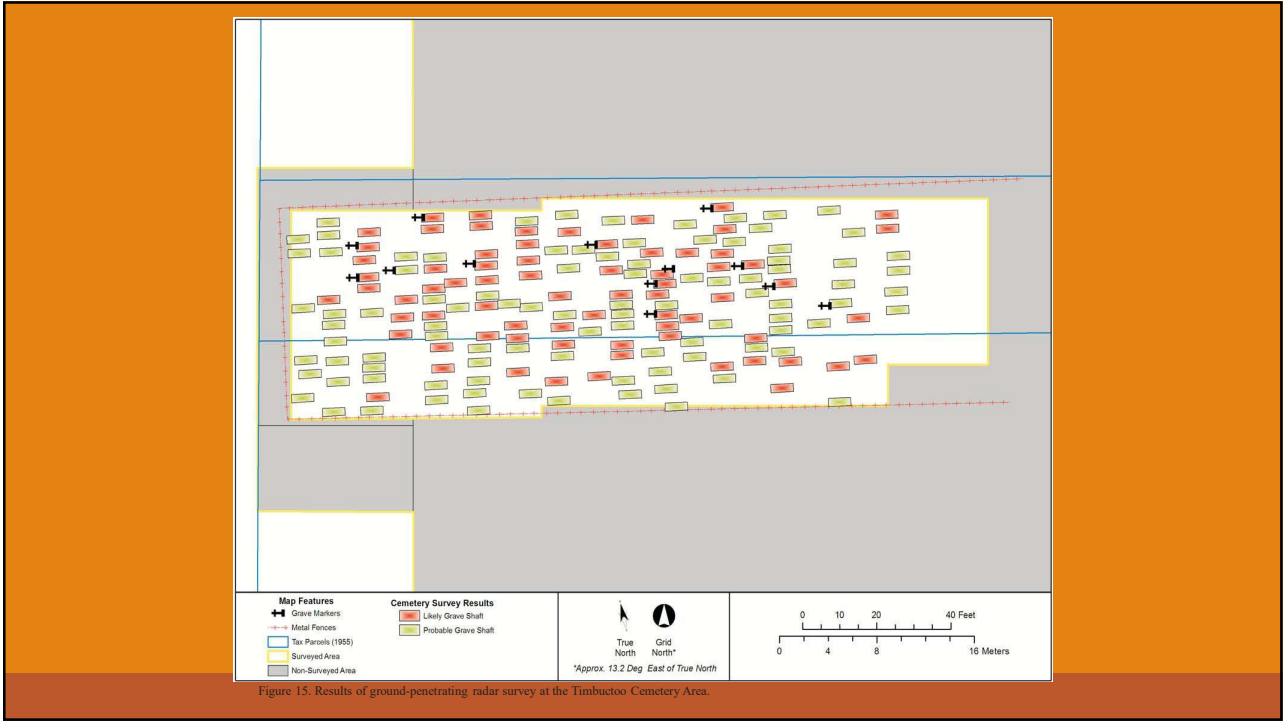
The deed says that the premises are to be used “**as a place of religious worship and a place to bury the dead.**”....”**rules and discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in America.” (AME Zion Church)**

Most gravestones are US Colored Troops that fought in the Civil War.

- Ground penetrating radar found many unmarked graves

¹Burlington County, NJ, Deeds, E6:256, Peter Coppuck to David Parker, et al, 2 May 1854; Burlington County Clerk’s Office, Mount Holly

19



20



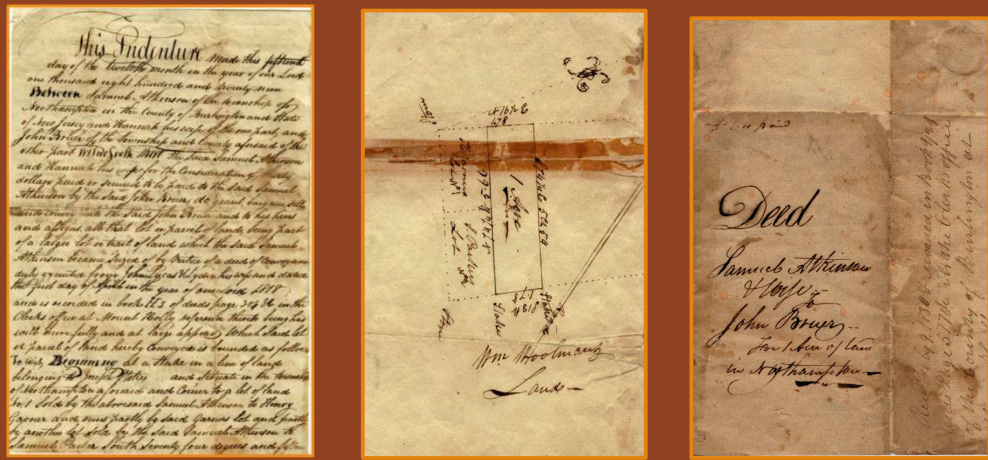
21



How did I get here?

- My cousin Lillian gave me a parcel of land purchased by my 4th great grandfather in 1829
- Included with the gift were original handwritten deeds and other legal documents as early as 1829
- The notion of land ownership by Black people in 1829 was contrary to my understanding of antebellum US history as taught in my high school
- Researching my own family history shed light on a missing chapter in the history books that I wanted to provide

22



The first document on the left is a deed from Samuel Atkinson to John Bruere, dated December 15, 1829. It describes a lot of land in the Township of Northampton, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey. The second document in the middle is a survey map showing a rectangular lot with dimensions and bearings. The third document on the right is another deed, also dated December 15, 1829, from Samuel Atkinson to John Bruere, describing the same lot of land.

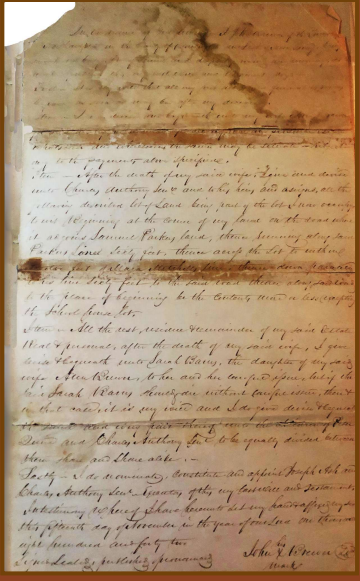
Sale to John Bruere: December 15, 1829¹

¹Burlington County, New Jersey, Deeds, Y-2:577, Samuel Atkinson and wife to John Bruere 15 December 1829; Burlington County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly.

23

Last Will and Testament of John Brewer

15 November 1842



The image shows a photograph of the original handwritten will of John Brewer. The document is written in cursive and is dated 15 November 1842. It is a legal document that outlines the distribution of John Brewer's estate after his death.

In the name of God, Amen. I John Brewer of the Township of Northampton in the County of Burlington and State of New Jersey being weak in body but of sound and disposing mind and memory do make and publish this my last will and testament viz.:

First- It is my will that all my just debts and funeral expenses be paid as soon as may be after my decease.

Item- I give devise and bequeath unto my wife, Anne Brewer for and during her natural life all my real and personal estate whatsoever and wheresoever the said may be situate- subject only to the payment above specified.

Item- after the death of my said wife, I give and devise unto Charles Anthony, Sr., and to his heirs and assigns all the following described lot of land being part of the lot I now occupy, to wit. Beginning at the corner of my land on the road where it adjoins Samuel Parker's land, thence running along said Parker's line 60 ft, thence across the lot to within 12 ft of Major Mitchell's line, thence down parallel to his line 60 ft to the said road, thence along said road to the place of beginning be the contents more or less (excepting the schoolhouse lot)

Item- All the rest, residue, and remainder of my said estate, Real and personal, after the death of my said wife, I give devise and bequeath unto Sarah Barnes, the daughter of my said wife, Ann Bruer to her and her lawful issue, but if the said Sarah should die without lawful issue, then and in that case, it is my will, and I do give devise and bequeath the same and every part thereof unto the children of Peter Quire and Charles Anthony, Sr., to be equally divided between them and share alike. Lastly, I do nominate, constitute, and appoint Joseph Ash and Charles Anthony, Sr., Executors of this my last will and testament.

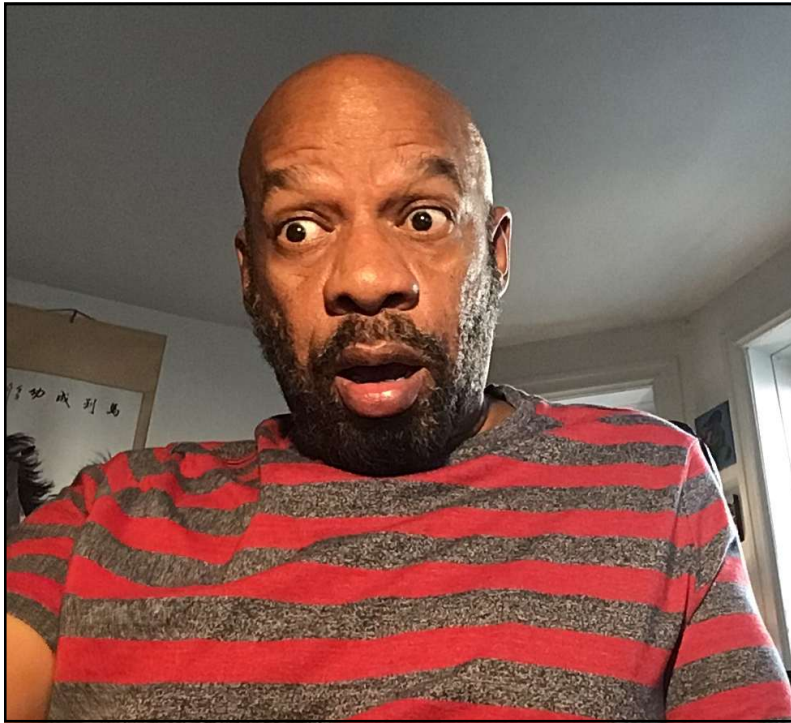
Witnesses: Amos Bullock, John R. Stack

24

[illegible]

IN E. p.41

§ One entry reads “received of John
Giles, 2000 bricks @\$12.00 a
thousand to pay the interest on the
within bond for 1875 and 1876...”




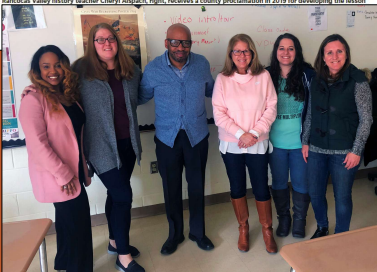



My ancestors
owned land
before the
Civil War?

27

Promoting, Preserving
and Protecting
Timbuctoo Today

28

		<h1>Timbuctoo Curriculum Development</h1>	
<h2>Lesson plan</h2>			
		<p>RV history teachers win award for developing lesson about local community of former slaves</p> <p>Jarrad Daniel Saffren Burlington County Times Published 1:43 PM ET December 8, 2020 Updated 4:56 PM ET December 16, 2020</p> <p>MOUNT HOLLY — JoAnn Donnelly, a social studies teacher at Westampton Middle School with over 25 years of experience, always used to get frustrated when she had to teach the history of 19th century America.</p> <p>Donnelly felt that using the textbook she could only focus on slavery and the horrors of the American South, she said. Those lessons were of course necessary, but also simplistic and limited in scope, the teacher added. She wanted to find a way to paint a more detailed portrait.</p>	
		 <p>Group works to bring Westampton's Timbuctoo history to students</p>	
		<p>Rancocas Valley HS Cheryl Alspach Neshea Thomas</p> <p>Westampton MS JoAnn Donnelly Jennifer Perry Cristina Burroughs</p> <p>Columbia University Kevin Risley</p>	

29

<h2>Why this history is important</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The history of enslavement and degradation is widely appreciated and should not be ignored. ■ The history of Black achievement, not withstanding the roadblocks we faced, is so underappreciated, it is often questioned as if suspect. ■ We need to acknowledge both!
	<p>Inspiration</p> <p>New role models</p> <p>New sense of pride</p> <p>More realistic picture</p> <p>Acknowledgement of cooperation and achievement</p>

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Archaeology

31



Photo Credit: Dennis McDonald
Burlington County Times

32

Digging up Timbuctoo

- From 2009 -2011 David Orr and Christopher Barton conducted archaeological work in Timbuctoo, focusing on a 20 x 100-foot parcel purchased by a William Davis in 1879.
- Historical records indicate that Davis and his wife Rachel raised their five children in a 12x16 ft. home constructed on the site.
- Between the 1920s to the 1940s the foundation of the Davis home was used as a community trash midden.

33

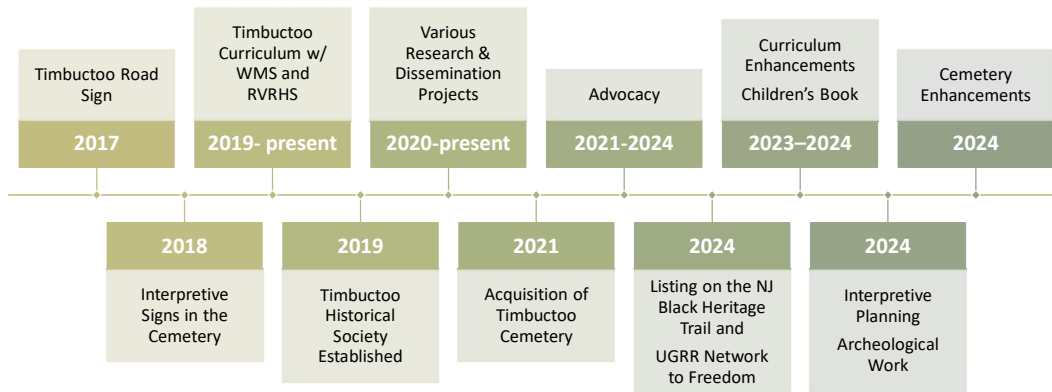


34

- Their work resulted in the excavation and analysis of 15,042 artifacts recovered from the site, as well as bricks used for construction. Artifacts included lots of tableware, glassware, pottery, clay pipe, shoe fragments, etc.
- By analyzing and interpreting these artifacts, archaeologists learn things about social class, material consumption, access to consumer goods, home canning, consumption of commercially processed foods.
- These findings contribute to our understanding of the lives of Timbuctoo residents for the time period in question.



Preservation and Promotional Activities



37

Upcoming

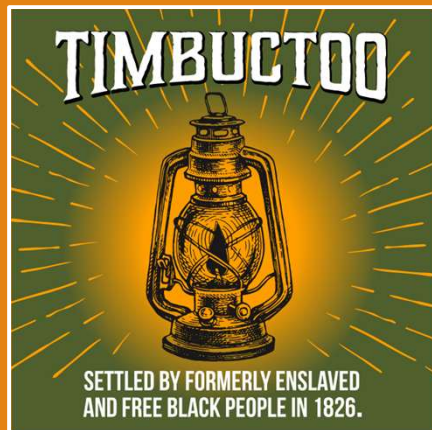
- CBS broadcast on today's evening news (February 25)
- Fox broadcast on February 18
- Major exhibit at Temple University opens on March 14
- Cemetery enhancements, including new signage
- Completion of children's book
- Virtual student exchange with school in Timbuktu, Mali
- Listing on New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places
- Newspaper Digitization and Indexing Project
- Archeological excavation at ancestral home site

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DISCUSSION AND VIDEO

<https://www.cbsnews.com/philadelphia/news/timbuctoo-cemetery-new-jersey-high-school-black-history/>

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guyweston@TimbuctooNJ.com

www.TimbuctooNJ.com

<https://timbuctoonj.com/support-our-work>

40