

Points of Discussion

- Brief review of Timbuctoo and preservation efforts
- Why archaeology is important in African American history
- Past archaeology efforts in Timbuctoo
- Current and future archaeology efforts in Timbuctoo
- Audience feedback: how can we make Timbuctoo more engaging for visitors?



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

Timbuctoo, New Jersey

First settled in September 1826 by 4 formerly enslaved men from Maryland with 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

Never large; had reached about 125 residents by 1860, most of whom owned their land; also established institutions

“Second wave” of settlement began in the 1920s; associated with the great migration

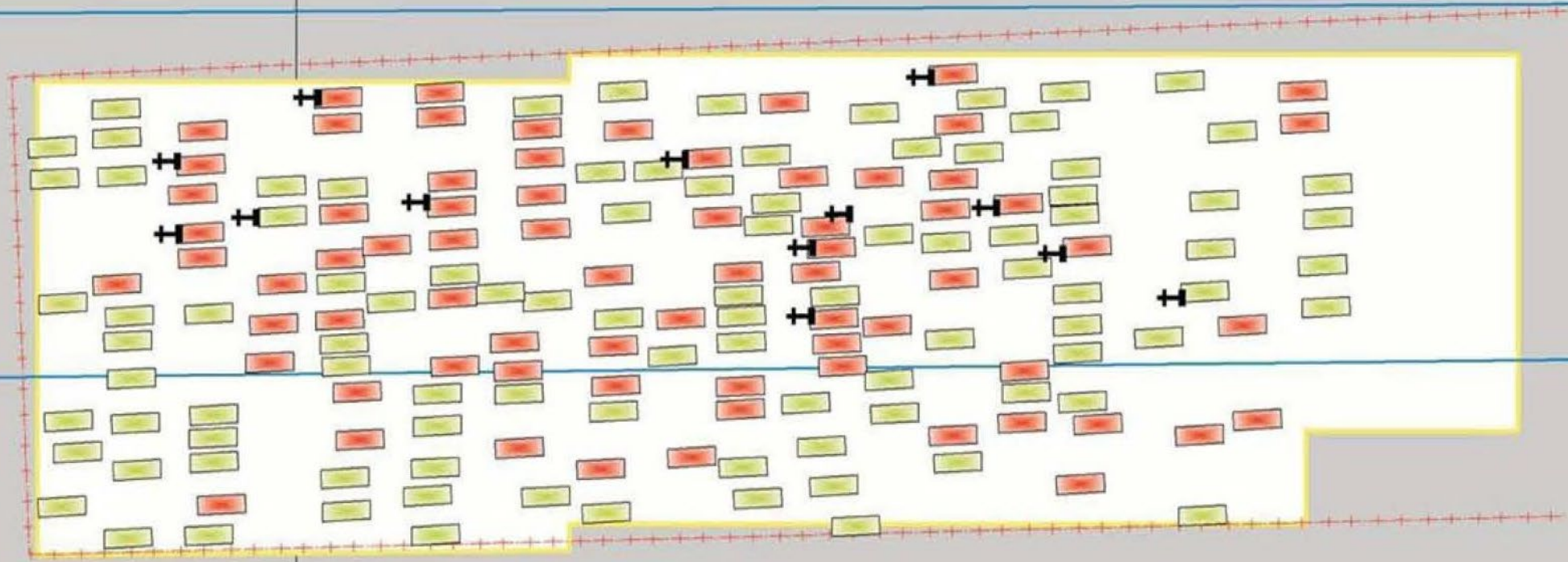
Definitions

Archaeology: The study of human history through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains.

Community Archaeology insists on meaningful participation of descendant communities in planning, implementation and interpretation.






Timbuctoo Today

- “Black” section of Westampton; knowledge of any remarkable history and heritage was limited
- c. 2009 Temple University and National Park Service met with Westampton mayor to point out historical and archaeological significance.
- Westampton Township invested in archaeological work and public awareness; convened advisory committees
- Tangible outcomes included a geophysical survey, which identifies subsurface features of archeological interest, (2009) as well as two field seasons of archeological excavation (2010-2011)





Results of ground-penetrating radar survey at the Timbuctoo Cemetery Area.

Map Features

-  Grave Markers
-  Metal Fences
-  Tax Parcels (1955)
-  Surveyed Area
-  Non-Surveyed Area

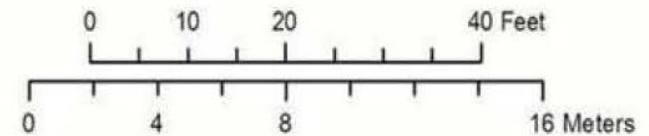
Cemetery Survey Results

-  Likely Grave Shaft
-  Probable Grave Shaft



True North Grid North*

*Approx. 13.2 Deg East of True North



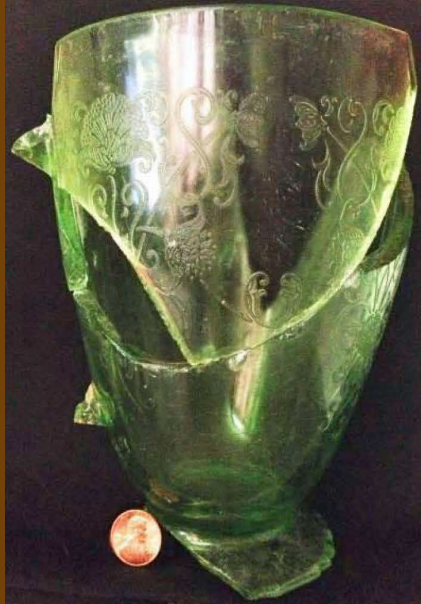
Timbuctoo Today

- In 2010 and 2011, Temple University archeologists David Orr, Christopher Barton and colleagues excavated 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.
- 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 culture, social class, material consumption, access to consumer goods, home canning, consumption of commercially processed foods. For example, multiple “Dixie Peach” hair pomade jars would have suggested the site was populated by Black people if this were not already known.







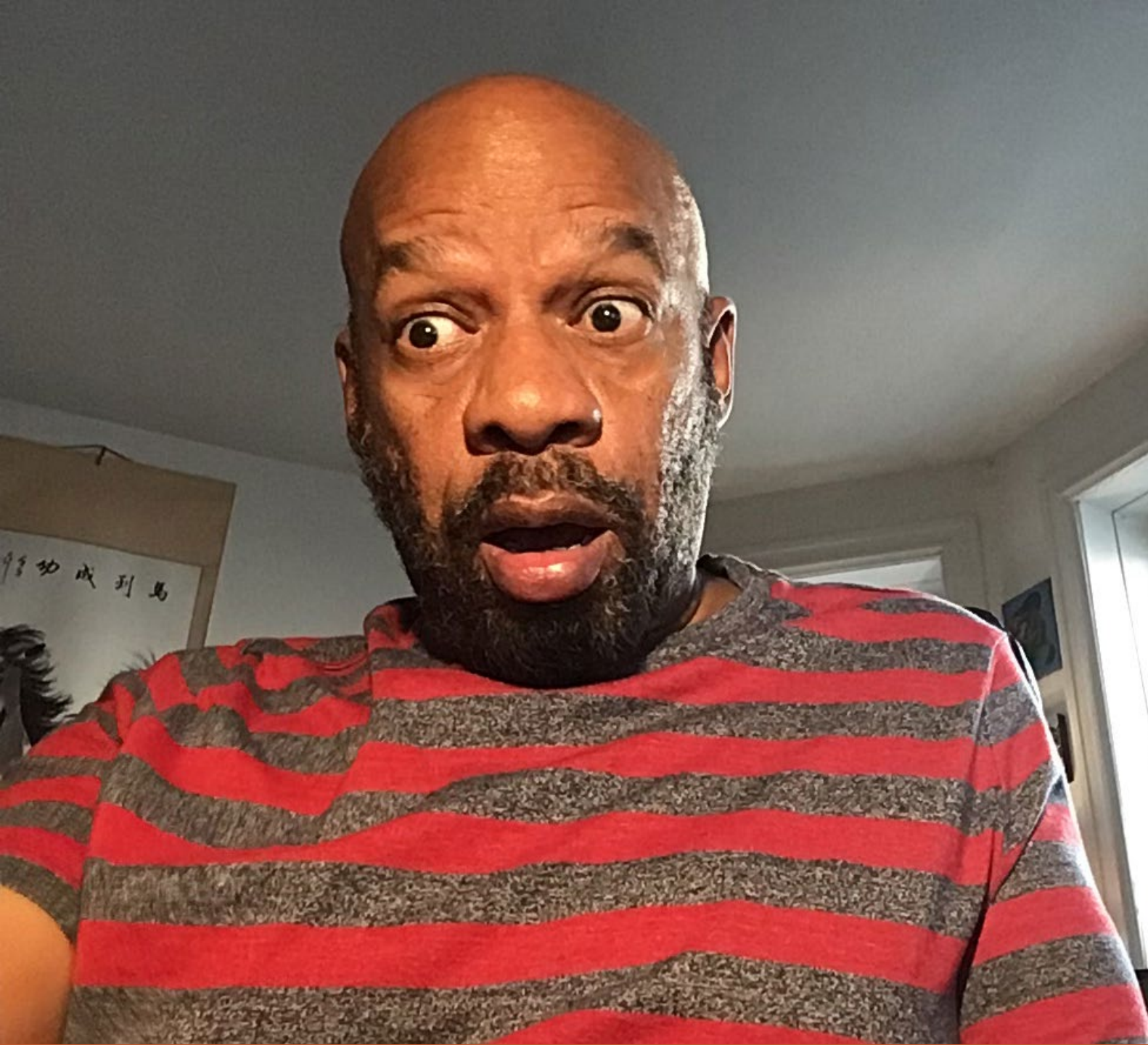


Timbuctoo Today

- In 2019, Timbuctoo Historical Society was founded to “preserve, promote,” and Timbuctoo.
- Current efforts focus mostly on public history events and public education with county and state funding.
- In March 2024, a grant was received from the New Jersey Historical Commission that included funding for archaeological work.

Objectives:

- Verify boundaries of cemetery burials
- Identify location of the church building formerly located in the front portion of the cemetery parcel
- Other research goals defined by archealogists
- Identify the “footprint” of my ancestors’ home, occupied from 1829 to circa 1940s
- Plan for excavation of that area



We can excavate my mother's back yard and potentially find artifacts related to my ancestors?





Findings

- The location of the dwelling had already been established by family and community oral history; oral accounts were confirmed by aerial photography.



Findings

- Describe findings, next steps

- Conclusion



