



# Finding My Fourth Great Grandmother and Her Contemporaries

ANN BARNES BRUER HALL (1790s–1872)

Guy Weston

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## ABSTRACT

Since all Northern states had taken some action to “begin the end” of enslavement by 1804, substantial numbers of “free colored persons” lived through much of this region in the early nineteenth century. My 4x great grandmother Ann was born in Philadelphia, which had the largest population of Black people outside of the Southern states in the years leading up to the Civil War. A majority of Black people living in Philadelphia and the adjacent New Jersey region where she migrated were classified as “free colored persons” during this period. As a result, sources for genealogy research can include land records, newspaper obituaries, birth and death records, and other documents frequently dismissed as non-existent for Black populations in the antebellum era. This paper describes lessons learned about my grandmother and her contemporaries, using these sources.

## KEYWORDS

free people of color; Quakers; antebellum Black genealogy; New Jersey Black history; Timbuctoo

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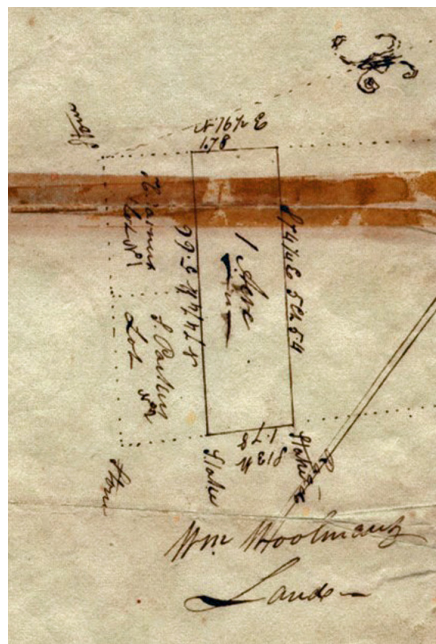
## Introduction

My initial foray into genealogy had a very easy and inspirational beginning. In 1989, my mother inherited a parcel of land in southern New Jersey, purchased by my 4x great-grandfather in 1829 (Figure 1). The inheritance included numerous hand-written, nineteenth-century legal documents, including the original deeds. The deed of record, dated 1930, included the chain of title with ownership and probate details back to the original purchase. In good New Jersey form,<sup>1</sup> the recital in the 1989 deed said, “being the same premises that Samuel Atkinson and his wife, by deed bearing date December 15, AD 1829, granted and conveyed to John Bruer in his lifetime in fee.”<sup>2</sup> John Bruer was my 4x great-grandfather. Samuel Atkinson was a Quaker farmer who sold him the land for \$30.

Bruer is a Dutch name, and my family’s oral history indicates he was Dutch. However, census records describe him as a “free colored person.” Therefore, I imagined he was biracial with a Dutch father, but have never found any information to investigate further. The Dutch had been prominent among colonial settlers in northern New Jersey, so the possibility of Dutch lineage comes as no surprise.

The 1989 deed went on to say that “the said John Bruer, by his Last Will and Testament, bearing date November 15, AD 1842, duly proved May 11, AD 1843, devised the said premises to his wife, Ann Bruer, for and during her natural life, and after her death to his daughter Sarah Barnes, who afterward married Lambert Giles, and became Sarah Giles.” I knew Giles as my great-grandmother’s birth name. Lambert and Sarah were her grandparents. Just like

*This Indenture* Made this fifteenth day of the twelfth month in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty seven between Samuel Atkinson of the township of Northampton in the County of Burlington and State of New Jersey and Hannah his wife of the one part, and John Bruer of the township and County aforesaid of the other part Witnesseth That the said Samuel Atkinson and Hannah his wife for the consideration of thirty dollars paid or to be paid to the said Samuel Atkinson by the said John Bruer, do grant, bargain, sell, and convey with their said John Bruer and to his heirs and assigns, all that lot or parcel of land being part of a larger lot or tract of land which the said Samuel Atkinson became seized of by virtue of a deed of conveyance made execution from John Bruer and given his wife and dated the first day of April in the year of our Lord 1818 and is recorded in book 113 of deeds page 54 of the in the Clerk's office at Mount Holly, together with some land well more fully and at large appears which said lot or parcel of land hereby conveyed is bounded as follows To wit Beginning at a stake in a line of land belonging to Daniel Miller and situate in the township of Northampton aforesaid and thence to a lot of land sold by the above said Samuel Atkinson to Henry Garner and said partly by said Garner and partly by another lot sold by the said Samuel Atkinson to Samuel Bruer South twenty four degrees and 4/4



*Deed*  
Samuel Atkinson  
Hannah  
John Bruer  
For 1 acre of land  
in Northampton  
County of Burlington N.J.  
Rec'd the 14th 1830 & recorded in book 9 of  
deeds page 57 the within & 10 is office  
of the County of Burlington N.J.

Figure 1 1829 Deed

that, in the blink of an eye, we knew things about our family that typically took weeks if not months of research in this era that preceded the advent of digitized, indexed records online.

The community of our ancestral homeland is called Timbuctoo.<sup>3</sup> Communities like Timbuctoo were not unique in antebellum southern New Jersey. New Jersey had passed legislation to begin ending enslavement in 1804.<sup>4</sup> Over the next few decades, the Quaker-dominant, southern region of the state became home to multiple free Black settlements. Timbuctoo was one of these, and had two schools, a church with a cemetery, and a benevolent association. A majority of residents of this small community were landowners. I found John Bruer's name as a trustee on a corporation document for nearby Mount Moriah AME Church in 1840,<sup>5</sup> as well as a deed for the "schoolhouse and place of divine worship," in 1841.<sup>6</sup> Apparently, my ancestor was a humanitarian, subdividing one of his lots to provide a place for education of children in the community.<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 2.)

The presence of land-owning free Black people translates to a substantial repository of genealogical records that facilitate research and details frequently not available for antebellum Black people

and communities. Combined with Federal and New Jersey census records, the land and probate records noted above provided enough information for me to easily learn my 4x great-grandmother Ann was born in Philadelphia in the 1790s. Antebellum vital records, newspaper obituaries, church records, and multiple other sources provide additional information that begin to paint a picture of Ann's life and contemporaneous family. This article summarizes those findings, as well as posing questions for future research to resolve gaps in knowledge.

Reviewing the sources chronologically, our first introduction to Ann was in John Bruer's will, dated November 15, 1842, as indicated above. The will also introduces daughter Sarah Barnes.

The fact that Sarah's last name is Barnes raises a question. Is Sarah a widow at age 18 or is John Bruer her stepfather?<sup>8</sup> New Jersey began recording deaths on full death certificates in 1878. Sarah's 1880 death certificate<sup>9</sup> identifies her father as Isaac Barnes, who was born in Maryland. On this basis, we surmise that John Bruer is not Ann's first husband. This raises questions as to whether Ann and Sarah are among John Bruer's household occupants in the 1830 Census,<sup>10</sup> or whether they married later. Prior to 1850, census records only named



Recorded July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1840

Jos. W. Read W.

Trustees M. E. African Church  
Mount Moriah

Burlington County State of New Jersey

Be it remembered that on the eighteenth day of July A.D. 1840 personally appeared before me the Subscriber one of the Justices of the peace in and for said County Robert Evans, Major Mitchell, Samuel Still, Thomas Harris and John Brewer who have been duly elected trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Mount Moriah located near Mount Holly in said County, and did each take the necessary qualifications of the Statute in such case made and provided viz To support the Constitution of the United States. To bear true faith and allegiance to the government of this State. And faithfully to discharge the duties incumbent on them as trustees of said Church according to the best of their understanding and abilities.

Affirmed and Subscribed before me this eighteenth day of July A.D. eighteen hundred and forty.

Clayton Moursel Justice

Recorded July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1840.

Jos. W. Read W.

Robert Evans  
Major Mitchell  
Samuel Still  
Thomas Harris  
John Brewer

Figure 2 Mount Moriah Corporation Document

the head of household. Other household occupants were reported by age group and gender. On 1 June 1830, six months after purchasing his first parcel, John Bruer's household had a total of four people, including one male between 36 and 55 (John), as well as a female between 24 and 36 years old. This could be Ann, who was born in the 1790s according to most records. There are also two minor children. One of the children was female and less than 10 years old. That could be Sarah, who was consistently reported as being born around 1824 in later records. There was also a male between 10 and 24 that doesn't appear in later records. John died in 1843. (See Table 1.)

Having John Bruer's will allowed me to go to the County Surrogate's Office to get the Inventory of

his estate.<sup>11</sup> In brief, his movable estate was worth \$108.00, and consisted mostly of household items and a few farm animals. To put \$108 in perspective, entire parcels of land in Timbuctoo were selling for less one-third of that sum during this period. The

**Table 1 Household of John Bruer**  
1830 United States Federal Census  
Northampton Township, Burlington County, New Jersey

Age Group	Males	Females	Total
36-55	1		1
24-36		1	1
10-24	1		1
<10		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

estate also included the acre of land purchased in 1829 and a second adjacent parcel purchased in 1831, along with a house. No value is stated for these. As indicated previously, John's will devised the premises to his wife and daughter.

Three years after John's death, Ann and her family have some significant financial need. One of the papers we inherited documents a mortgage in the amount of \$155, recorded in the Office of the County Clerk on 22 October 1845.<sup>12</sup> The grantor of the mortgage is a Jonathan Hilyard,<sup>13</sup> and the grantees are listed as Ann Bruer, Lambert Giles, and Sarah Giles. The mortgage was paid back in annual payments, typically about \$4–\$7 each year. The payments are recorded on the back of the Indenture of Mortgage. The payment record provided an invaluable clue about Ann that was not observed elsewhere. In 1847, Jonathan Hilyard writes "received of Ann Bruer, \$9.00, in part of the principal of the within bond. L. Giles agrees to pay the interest." The name Bruer had a line through it, and "Hall" is written above. Future payments by Ann say "Ann Hall." In the absence of a marriage record, this is the first indication that Ann Bruer became Ann Hall.

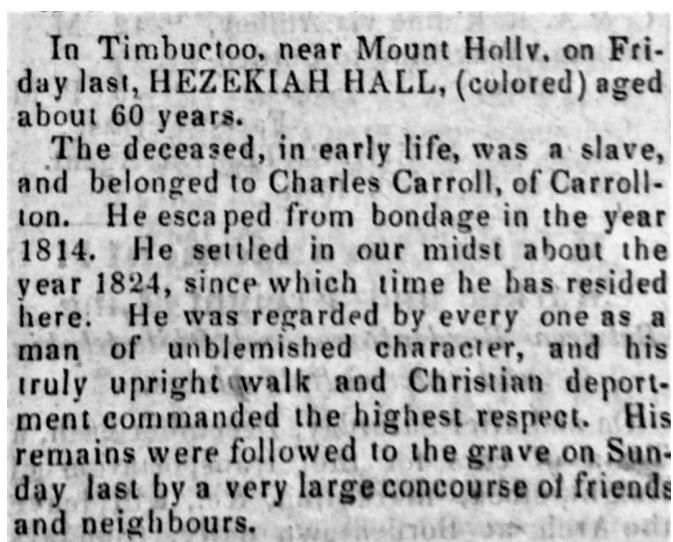
The 1850 Census was the first to identify the names of household occupants beyond the head of household. Only one Ann Hall was identified in Burlington County where Timbuctoo is located. She is enumerated as the wife of Hezekiah Hall, immediately before Lambert and Sarah Giles' household.<sup>14</sup> How do we know this Ann is the former Ann Bruer? We can't be absolutely sure at this point. This Ann is recorded as being 52, suggesting a birth year around 1798. Like my Ann, she was born in Pennsylvania. However, this is not uncommon with the Delaware River separating New Jersey from Pennsylvania just a few miles away. Death records for Hezekiah Hall's children do not list Ann as their mother. This fact alone suggests Ann is not Hezekiah's first wife. Upon his death, Hezekiah left his real estate to his children and left only personal property to his wife. This is puzzling. One explanation could be that Ann already had a house

left to her by John Bruer, her former husband of many more years.

Our Ann Hall did not pass away until 1872<sup>15</sup> and appears in later census records. No Ann Hall matching her description was found in 1850 Census records elsewhere in southern New Jersey or Philadelphia. With all this in mind, I concluded my 4x great-grandmother Ann Bruer likely married Hezekiah Hall, sometime after John Bruer's 1843 death, but before the 1847 mortgage payment that specifies her name change.

Who was Hezekiah Hall and why is he significant? His 1851 death notice in the *New Jersey Mirror*<sup>16</sup> (Figure 3) is the most extensive Timbuctoo obituary indexed in this newspaper.

Here we learn that Hezekiah had been enslaved by a very prominent Marylander. Charles Carroll was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the first elected Senator from Maryland.<sup>17</sup> How interesting it would be to go back in time to talk with this step-ancestor. Did he know of his enslavers' storied history in politics, most of which occurred during his childhood? What would he have thought of the hypocrisy of such active engagement in enslavement of Black people, while simultaneously advocating for the liberty of his peers? Carroll is reported to have enslaved more than 1,100 Black people in his lifetime.<sup>18</sup>



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.

Figure 3 Hezekiah Hall Death Notice  
*New Jersey Mirror*, 27 February 1851



Hezekiah was active in the civic affairs of his Timbuctoo community, serving as a trustee of the African Union School, as well as the “schoolhouse and place of divine worship.” Having such a laudable obituary in the *New Jersey Mirror* had to mean he was highly regarded by the White community at large, in addition to Black people in the Timbuctoo community where he lived.

Hezekiah’s will describes rents and profits from real estate holdings that his wife will be responsible for. The inventory of his estate includes an \$84.25 in balance of rent due, bonds, and mortgage interest. To put \$84.25 in perspective, entire parcels of land were selling for as little as \$15.00–\$25.00 in this era. Hall leaves his movable estate and management of his business affairs to his wife, while his real estate is devised to his children. Interestingly, his wife only retains control of his “rents and profits and real estate holdings” until the amount equals the amount of his debts and funeral expenses. If his children advance the money required to pay these expenses, then his wife “is not to receive any of the rent of his real estate or have any control over it, it being my intention that my wife shall have, out of my estate, a sum equal to all my personal property,” according to the text of the Will.

Hezekiah’s estate did not provide long-term financial security for his widow. In the 1860 Census she is listed as a 52-year-old servant in the Mount Holly household of alcohol manufacturer James Porteus, along with her 7-year-old granddaughter Elizabeth Giles. Elizabeth was Lambert and Sarah Giles’ daughter. Notably, Elizabeth’s age is consistent with her record in the New Jersey Births and Christenings Index. Ann’s reported age of 52 puts her birth around 1808, in contrast to other records where her reported year of birth is between 1792 and 1798. I have to wonder if she adjusted her age to facilitate this employment.

In the 1870 Census, Ann is back in Timbuctoo and enumerated next in sequence after Lambert and Sarah Giles’ household. Her age is listed as 76, which puts her birth in 1794. Her personal estate is listed as worth \$100, while her real estate is worth \$400.

The New Jersey Deaths and Burials Index records Ann’s death on 25 March 1872 at 80 years old, suggesting a birth year of 1792.<sup>19</sup> This index is based on “Returns of Deaths” recorded in ledgers, maintained by municipal clerks. Statewide registration of deaths began using this system in 1848. I was able to view a copy of the original ledger at the Burlington County Historical Society. The ledger has columns for cause of death and parents’ names, but unfortunately the page for these columns was missing.

Ann’s daughter Sarah Barnes Giles died on 17 September 1880.<sup>20</sup> By this time, New Jersey deaths are recorded on full death certificates, and there is a field for parents’ names and their birth places. Here is where we learn that Sarah’s father was Isaac Barnes, born in Maryland. Since Sarah and her mother were both born in Philadelphia, my initial presumption was that Ann and Isaac would have met and married in Philadelphia, sometime before Sarah’s 1824 birth. However, no records of a similar Isaac Barnes were found in Philadelphia or New Jersey records. Census research during this period is complicated by the lack of names for household members except for the head of household. Did Isaac escape to Philadelphia or New Jersey from enslavement in Maryland? Was he recaptured? Did he die from violence or disease? These are questions I can’t begin to research without further information.

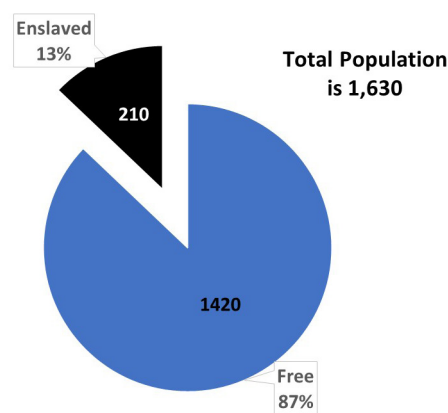
The last clue about Ann comes from her grandson Joseph Giles’ obituary. Joseph, who is also my great-great grandfather, died on 27 April 1938. His obituary,<sup>21</sup> published in the *New Jersey Mirror* says, “his great aunt, Sarah Ash, was one of the founders of Richard Allen’s Church, Sixth Street, below Pine.” Sarah Ash’s will identifies Ann Hall as her sister. Richard Allen’s Church is the renowned Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, founded in 1794 and still located today at 419 S. 6th St. in Philadelphia. It is the among the oldest Black church congregations in the United States, and the oldest church property in the United States to be continuously owned by

African Americans. Many prominent antebellum Black Philadelphians were members of Bethel. The fact that Sarah was also born in the 1790s suggests she herself would not have been old enough to be among the founders of the church, though she was a member during her adult life. However, a February 1865 obituary<sup>22</sup> from the AME church's *Christian Recorder* newspaper says "Mrs. Ash was one among the first who joined Bethel Church." My next inquiry on this question will be to see if her parents were members, or if she was christened there. Mother Bethel has a substantial archival collection available at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania that has multiple potential sources for this inquiry.

It is noteworthy that Philadelphia was an important hub of antislavery activity, due to its strategic location as the first major city north of the Mason-Dixon line, large and influential Quaker population, and perhaps most importantly, a large free Black population. As early as the ending period of the American Revolution, the US Census Bureau reported a Black population of 1,630 in Philadelphia, who represented 6% of the city's residents. A majority of the Black population was classified as free: 1,420, or 87%.<sup>23</sup> (See Figure 4.) When the US capital was located in Philadelphia, even George Washington as president had to rotate the people he enslaved back and forth from his Virginia estate because he was legally required to free them if they remained in Pennsylvania for more than six months.<sup>24</sup>

Since my 4x great-grandmother Ann was born in Philadelphia during this era when the vast majority of Black Philadelphians were free, she was at least statistically more likely born free than enslaved. By the time Ann's daughter Sarah was born in 1824, slavery had all but disappeared in Philadelphia.<sup>25</sup> This probability means there may be records of antebellum free Black people to peruse to learn more about this generation of my ancestry as well as preceding generations.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, Philadelphia had the largest Black population outside



**Figure 4** Black Population of Philadelphia, 1790 US Census

the Southern states. The 1860 Census counted more than 22,185 free Black people in Philadelphia, all of whom were classified as free.<sup>26</sup> Historian Andrew Diemer points out the limitations of this "freedom," noting that "the dramatic growth of the region's free Black population provoked anxiety among many of the region's White residents," resulting in obstructionist actions by the state legislature, as well as threats of mob violence and riots.<sup>27</sup> This is true, but still a stark contrast from the life of free Black people in Southern states who were always a miniscule minority population and typically prohibited from community organizing, establishing autochthonous institutions such as schools and churches, establishing businesses, and owning property.

My 4x great-grandmother's sister Sarah Ash died on 28 January 1865.<sup>28</sup> The return of her death is recorded on a full certificate that indicates typhoid fever as her cause of death and Olive Cemetery as her place of interment. Now defunct, Olive Cemetery was established 1849 as a resting place for Black Philadelphians.<sup>29</sup> Sarah's will says that her sister Ann Hall will receive her "wearing apparel" and a portion of her furniture.<sup>30</sup>

Sarah's husband was Joseph Ash, who died of cholera in 1849, according to his death record.<sup>31</sup> I remembered the name Joseph Ash from my 4x great-grandfather's John Bruer's probate papers. Joseph Ash had been named as one of two executors of his estate.<sup>32</sup> Sarah and her husband

Ash Samuel, laborer, 519 Fitzwater  
 Ash Sarah (c), layer out, 607 Minster  
 Ash Sarah (c), wid Joseph, layer out, 420 S 7th  
 Ash Sabastian, watchman, 2d bel Dauphin  
 Ash H. St. Clair, M.D., S E c 11th & Vine, b  
 1108 Vine

(c) means Colored wid Joseph means she was the widow of Joseph Ash

Figure 5 Excerpt from 1862 Philadelphia City Directory

Joseph apparently lived comfortably. At the time of her death, Sarah's estate included a two-story brick house at 420 S. 7th Street that she left to her grandchildren.<sup>33</sup> The 1862 *Philadelphia City Directory* (see Figure 5) lists her as the widow of Joseph and her occupation as "layer out."<sup>34</sup> It only took a few minutes for me to figure out that "layer out" referred to some role related to undertakers. I had previously seen her in the 1864 directory as an "undertaker." The term "layer out" reminded me of something my grandmother would say after funerals: "They really had her (or him) *laid out* nice."

Many years later, in 1914, *Philadelphia Tribune* columnist William Carl Bolivar mentioned Sarah Ash when writing about African American burial grounds and undertakers. He described her as a "shrouder" who was fearless in epidemics and contagion and who "filled her position without flinching during the cholera scourge of 1849."<sup>35</sup> "Shrouder," is a synonym for "layer out," and refers more specifically to the process of preparing a body for burial. Sarah's 1865 obituary called her a "noted" shrouder. Now I understand why she was noted. It is also noteworthy that Sarah's husband Joseph died of cholera during that 1849 epidemic.

The existence of free Black populations in substantial numbers as early as the latter Eighteenth Century presents unique opportunities for family and community history research that are frequently overlooked. While we emphasize the 1870 brick wall as a trademark of Black genealogical research, we seem to forget that free Black people living in northern states accounted for as much as 14% of the total Black population in each US Census between 1800 and 1860.<sup>36</sup> Philadelphia in particular was

home to a substantial free Black population that included the likes of Richard Allen,<sup>37</sup> founder of the AME Church, who was born enslaved in Delaware in 1760, but bought his freedom in 1780; James Forten,<sup>38</sup> born free in Philadelphia in 1766 of free parents, rising to become a wealthy businessman and abolitionist who financed various anti-slavery initiatives; Francis Harper,<sup>39</sup> abolitionist born free in Baltimore in 1825 who was also a suffragist, poet, teacher, public speaker, and writer and one of the first Black women to be published in the United States; and several others. With the possible exception of Richard Allen, we typically don't even know their names or what they did. There were also people like my aunt, Sarah Ash, and her peers who were part of a small but significant cadre of Black professionals and business owners that were highly distinguished in what they did, and there were many other rank-and-file free Black residents as well.

Where is the genealogical and historical literature that documents their existence? There is some, but it is sparse, particularly in genealogy. Where are the lesson plans that include this focus in the routine teaching of American history? We have lots of work to do, and I plan to be part of it.

**Guy Weston** currently serves as Managing Director of the Timbuctoo Historical Society and is a Visiting Scholar at Rutgers University (New Brunswick) in the history department. In addition, he is active in the Association for the Study of African American Life (ASALH), and the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS). He also serves as editor of *AAHGS Journal*. Guy has contributed articles about his research to *AAHGS Journal*, *AAHGS News*, *National Genealogical Society Magazine*, and *New Jersey Studies*. He maintains a website which can be found at [www.timbuctoonj.com](http://www.timbuctoonj.com). He has a master's degree in bilingual-bicultural studies from LaSalle University.





## ENDNOTES

- 1 Property descriptions in New Jersey deeds typically reference the chain of title in this fashion. In this case, the 1829 transaction was referenced because the 1930 transfer was not proper, resulting in a Quiet Title Action.
- 2 Burlington County, New Jersey, Deeds, 3926:34, Lillian Gardner to Mary Weston, 25 April 1889. Burlington County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly.
- 3 See Guy Weston, "Timbuctoo and the First Emancipation of the Early Nineteenth Century," in *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 8 no. 1, for further information about this community
- 4 Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. Trenton, New Jersey Historical Commission, 1989.
- 5 Burlington County, New Jersey, Deeds, Y:339, Mount Moriah AME Church, 18 July 1840; Burlington County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly. During this period, corporation documents were kept in deed books.
- 6 Burlington County, New Jersey, Deeds, A4:422, Amos Bullock to William Hill, et. al., 14 October 1841. Burlington County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly.
- 7 The purpose of this document is uncertain; it appears to be just a registration of the corporate officers with the County Clerk. Laws providing for incorporation of charitable organizations and churches were not passed until the 1850s. The transcription reads as follows: "Trustees ME African Church Mount Moriah, Burlington County State of New Jersey. Be it remembered that on this eighteenth day of July, AD 1840, personally appeared before me, the subscriber, one of the Justices of the Peace in and for said county, Robert Evans, Major Mitchell, Samuel Still, Thomas Harris, and John Brewer who have been duly elected trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Mount Moriah located near Mount Holly . . . did each take the necessary qualifications of the statute in such case made and provided viz. To support the Constitution of the United States. To bear true faith and allegiance to the government of this State. And faithfully to discharge the duties incumbent on them as trustees of said Church according to the best of their understanding and abilities. Affirmed and subscribed before me this eighteenth day of July, AD eighteen thousand and forty."
- 8 Later review of the original, hand-written will revealed the words "my wife Ann Bruer and *her* daughter, Sarah Barnes."
- 9 "New Jersey Deaths and Burials Index, 1798–1971," Database, Ancestry (<http://www.ancestry.com>). Accessed 15 Dec 2021. Entry for Sarah Giles, 17 September 1880.
- 10 1830 US Census; Census Place: Northampton, Burlington, New Jersey; Page: 100; NARA Series: M19; Roll Number: 80; Family History Film: 033793, <http://www.ancestry.com>. Accessed 5 April 2022.
- 11 "Burlington County, New Jersey, Book of Wills" F:229. Estate of John Brewer, 15 November 1842 .
- 12 Burlington County, New Jersey, Mortgages, Q:110. Jonathan Hilyard to Ann Bruer, et. al., 22 October 1845, Burlington County Clerk's Office, Mount Holly.
- 13 Another Hilyard family member (William Hilyard) had sold the first parcels to Black people in 1826 in the community that would later be called Timbuctoo.
- 14 1850 US Census; Census Place: Westampton, Burlington, New Jersey; Roll: M432\_443; Page: 250A; Image: 508 <http://www.ancestry.com>. Accessed 5 April 2022.
- 15 "New Jersey Deaths and Burials Index, 1798–1971." Database, Ancestry (<http://www.ancestry.com>). Accessed 15 Dec 2021. Entry for Ann Hall, 25 March 1872.
- 16 "Local Facts and Fancies," *The New Jersey Mirror*, 27 February 1851, p.3, col. 2; Indexed Transcription, Burlington County Library System Accessed 5 December 2021.
- 17 Bradley J. Birzer, *American Cicero: The Life of Charles Carroll (Lives of the Founders)*, Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2010.
- 18 Frank D. Roylance. Interview with anthropologist, Dr. Mark Leone. *Baltimore Sun*. 3 October 1991.
- 19 "New Jersey Deaths and Burials Index, 1798–1971." Database, Ancestry (<http://www.ancestry.com>). Accessed 15 Dec 2021, entry for Ann Hall, 25 March 1872.
- 20 Ibid. Entry for Sarah Giles, 17 September 1880.
- 21 Local Facts and Fancies," *New Jersey Mirror*, 4 May 1938, p. 5, col. 1. Indexed Transcription, Burlington County Library System <http://www.bcls.lib.nj.us/newspapers/newjerseymirror/>. Accessed 5 December 2020.



- 22 "Died," *The Christian Recorder*, February 18, 1865. Indexed Transcription, Accessible Archives. <https://www.accessible-archives.com/>. Accessed 6 April 2022.
- 23 Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States*. Washington, DC, US Census Bureau, 2005.
- 24 Erin Blakemore, "George Washington Used Legal Loopholes to Avoid Freeing His Slaves." *Smithsonian*, February 16, 2015.
- 25 US Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*. [https://www.census.gov/history/www/through\\_the\\_decades/overview](https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview). Accessed on May 20, 2021.
- 26 Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States*. Washington, DC, US Census Bureau, 2005.
- 27 Diemer, Andrew, "Free Black Communities" *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/free-black-communities>. Retrieved on 4 April 2022.
- 28 "Pennsylvania, Philadelphia City Death Certificates, 1803–1915." Index. FamilySearch, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2008, 2010. From originals housed at the Philadelphia City Archives. "Death Records." Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., Provo, UT, 2011. Entry for Sarah Ash, 28 January 1865.
- 29 Olive Cemetery is now defunct. In 1923 remains were removed and interred at the Eden Cemetery in Collingdale, Pennsylvania.
- 30 "Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683–1993." Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.: Provo, Utah, 2015. Entry for Sarah Ash, 25 February 1865.
- 31 "Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850–1880." Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.: Provo, Utah, 2015, Entry for Joseph Ash, 6 July 1849.
- 32 "Burlington County, New Jersey, Book of Wills," F:229, for John Bruere, 15 November 1842. Burlington County Surrogate's Office, Mount Holly.
- 33 "Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683–1993." Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.: Provo, Utah, 2015. Entry for Sarah Ash, 25 February 1865.
- 34 "Philadelphia City Directory, 1862. US City Directories, 1822–1989." Ancestry.com Operations, Inc. Provo, UT 2015. Entry for Sarah Ash.
- 35 In *The Corpse: A History*. Christine Quigley reports that historically, women typically did all of the preparation of dead bodies and were called "Layers out of the dead." The industry became more dominated by males in the late-nineteenth century.
- 36 Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States*. Washington, DC, US Census Bureau, 2005.
- 37 Richard Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*, New York, NYU Press, 2009.
- 38 Winch, Julie, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
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# Timbuctoo Historical Society

## **Timbuctoo** Est 1826

Know all people by these presents, that the **Timbuctoo Historical Society, a non-profit New Jersey Corporation**, was founded on August 15, 2019. The mission of the Timbuctoo Historical Society is to seek, document, preserve, interpret and perpetuate the history and heritage of Timbuctoo, an unincorporated community in Westampton Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, settled beginning in 1826 by formerly enslaved and free Black people.

### Did you know that:

- Timbuctoo was settled by formerly enslaved and free Blacks people, beginning in 1826.
- Residents owned land and established institutions such as the African Union School in 1834 and an AME Zion Church and Cemetery c. 1840s.
- Timbuctoo was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

### Learn more at:

[www.TimbuctooNJ.com](http://www.TimbuctooNJ.com)

### Also visit [www.TimbuctooNJ.com](http://www.TimbuctooNJ.com) to:

- Request a presentation for your group at your location, onsite at the Timbuctoo Cemetery, or via Zoom
- Find out about our curriculum development project with local schools
- Read stories about Timbuctoo and people who lived there from 1800s local newspapers
- See video presentations and PowerPoint slides about Timbuctoo history
- Read magazine articles and scholarly papers about Timbuctoo
- Provide feedback on how to make Timbuctoo engaging for visitors



## My great-great grandfather Nick Ashmore and his daughter (my aunt) Azlee Ashmore



I don't know much about my mother's paternal ancestors, but I was struck by these pictures when I got them from a cousin about five years ago. Nick Ashmore was born in Lincoln County, Georgia around 1850. That makes him the first ancestor I've laid eyes on that was most likely born enslaved. It appears he had been married and had children in Georgia before marrying my great-great grandmother Carrie Jennings, sometime around 1890. Carrie was born in Edgefield, in South Carolina. They raised their children in McCormick, South Carolina, and I assume this left picture was taken on the porch of their house. Azlee was their fourth daughter, born in 1900. She is sitting on the steps on the left picture, which I believe to be taken in the 1910s or 1920s. The right picture is also Azlee, take several years later.

I photographed these pictures with my iPhone 7. One day I will go back to my cousin's house with a proper scanner and try again. Hopefully, I will then be able to lighten the left picture and see who's peering through the doorway. One of them could be Azlee's sister, my great grandmother Mary Ashmore! The picture on the left is also special because its not a studio pose. Who would have been walking by with a camera, I often wonder?

*Guy Weston*  
June 6, 2022



*My Favorite Cousin  
Mary Melvina Small*

*1898-1955*



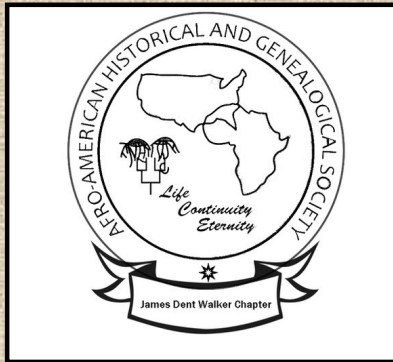
Taken in 1935

Actually my mother's first cousin, Mary Melvina was a bright light of love and encouragement in my life. She caused profound character to blossom in me, so I could become the woman I am today. She modeled qualities that cause one to excel and reach every attainable goal. Mamie, my fond name for her, was soft spoken and gentle in delivery. One would always desire to please one of such gentle yet persuasive manner. As I matured, she continued to plant nuggets of truth so I would not only be academically socially excellent but spiritually grounded. In that environment, I accepted Christ and served in Christian ministry with she and her husband, Rev. BJ Small. This was a sound foundation for a fruitful and successful life. That seed grew, and Mamie taught me to never give up on my dreams. Later in life I completed my college education with highest excellence and became a teacher. The values Mamie instilled in me had guided my path to a successful and productive life. What a divine encounter for a young girl to emerge to be a great star to impact generations to come. I stand proud.

*Mary Giles Weston*

Timbuctoo, NJ

May 31, 2022



## **James Dent Walker Chapter Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc. (AAHGS)**

The James Dent Walker chapter extends heartfelt congratulations to new AAHGS Journal Editor Guy Weston on producing this 45th Anniversary Sapphire Edition of the Journal. Guy is one of the newer members of our chapter who has a tremendous passion for family history, and he is always energetic and full of ideas. We are sure you will see that energy and innovation in this edition.

