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GW

Timbuctoo, New Jersey

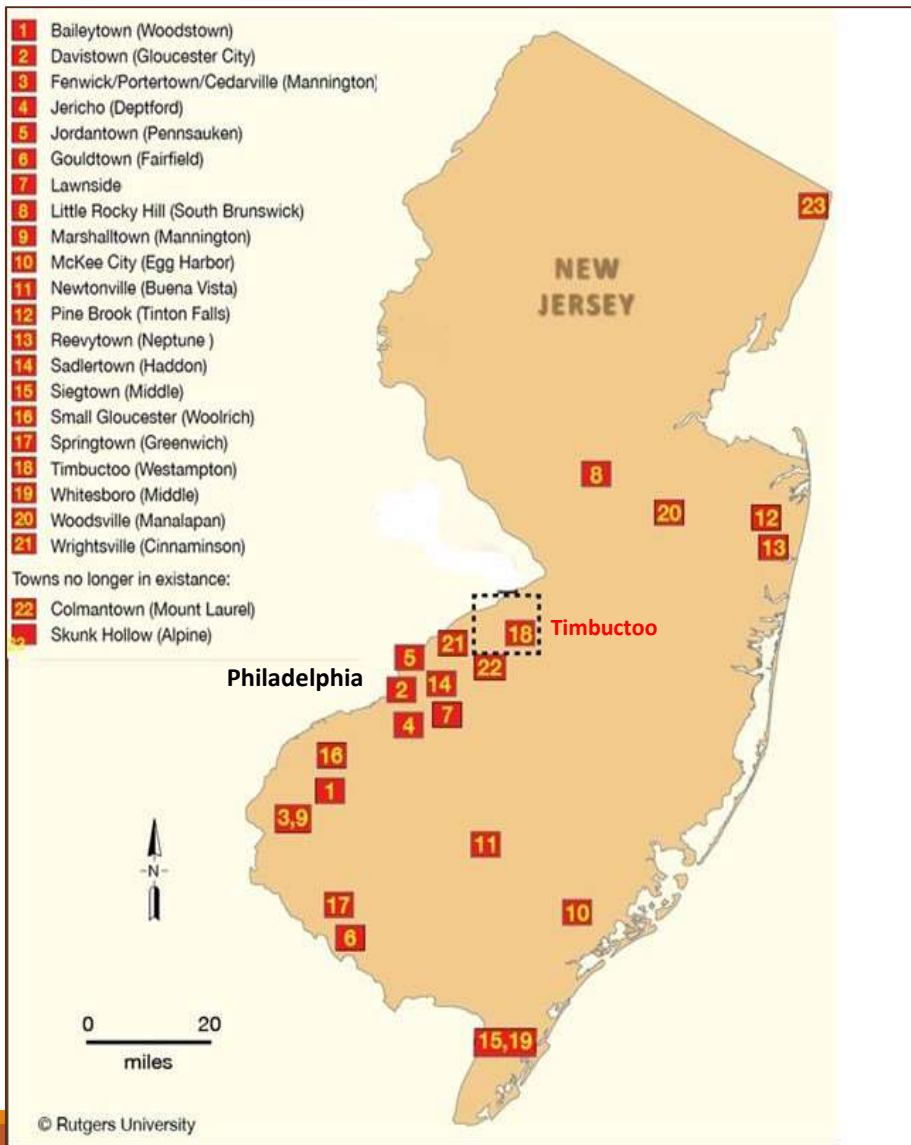
Settled beginning in 1826 by former slaves and free African Americans with the assistance of Quakers

Was one of several antebellum free black settlements in New Jersey, mostly located in the southern part of the state

Was a stop on the Underground Railroad, like most of the settlements

Is an unincorporated community in Westampton Township, Burlington County, NJ, according to the US Geological Survey Geographic Names Information System

African American Settlements in New Jersey c.1860



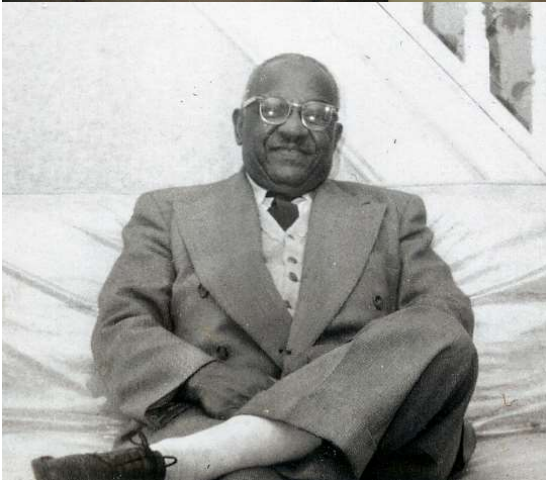
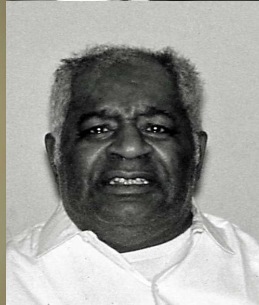
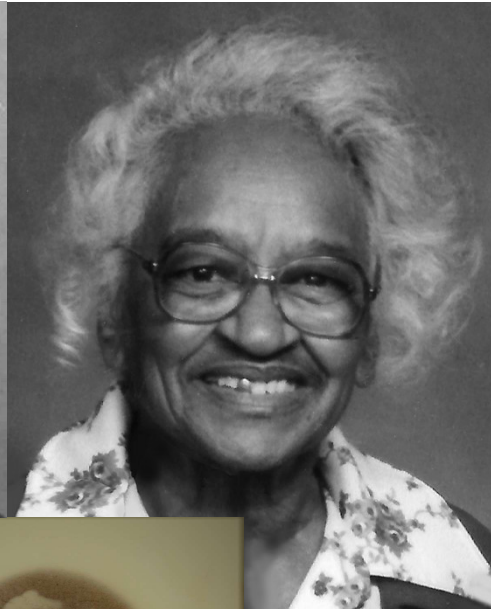
More antebellum settlements in NJ than any other state¹

Typically located near Quaker strongholds

- Timbuctoo near Mount Holly
- Colemantown near Mount Holly
- Lawnside (formerly Snow Hill or Sadlertown) near Haddonfield
- Small Gloucester near Sweedsboro
- Gouldtown and Springtown near Greenwich

1. Giles Wright: "Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History: Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission. 1988

Giles family members
born between 1881
and 1917 in Timbuctoo





Points of Discussion

- Newspapers can:
 - be a substantial resource for genealogy research; typically contain birth and marriage announcements, as well as obituaries
 - contain biographical information aside from births, marriages, and deaths
 - help supplement or complement information gathered from other records
- Information for African Americans not always limited to recent decades and/or African Americans publications
- Other information, such as then current events or historical context can be gleaned from newspaper archives

Accessible-archives.com
African American
Newspaper Collection



Includes the following titles:

- *Freedom's Journal*, New York, New York
• March 16, 1827 – March 28, 1829
 - *The Colored American (Weekly Advocate)*, New York, New York •
January 7, 1837 – December 25, 1841
(COMPLETE)
 - *The North Star*, Rochester, New York •
December 3, 1847 – April 17, 1851
 - *Frederick Douglass Paper*, Rochester,
New York • 1851–1855 (includes
Douglass Monthly, 1859–1863)
 - *The National Era*, Washington, D.C.
• January 7, 1847 – March 22, 1860
 - *Provincial Freeman*, Chatham,
Canada West • 1854 – 1857
 - *The Christian Recorder*,
Philadelphia, PA • 1861–1902
 - *Freedmen's Record*, Boston, Ma.,
Jan. 1865 – Apr. 1874
 - *The Negro Business League Herald*,
Washington, D.C., Apr. 1909 – Nov.
1909
- 

Accessible Archives has digitized two additional African American newspapers –

- **The Liberator,**
1831-1865



- **National Anti-Slavery Standard,**
1840-1870



Newspapers.com

- The largest online newspaper archive; nearly 15,000 newspapers from the 1700s–2000s
- I used Newspapers.com to research why my ancestors and their neighbors may have chosen to call their community Timbuctoo by using “Timbuctoo” as a search term + 1820s

What was known about Timbuctoo in 1820s to 1830s in “mainstream” society?

- Subject of great curiosity for British intellectuals, who thought it was a great failing of the Age of Enlightenment, for explorers to know geography well enough to be able to sail around the world, while the geography of “the dark continent” (Africa) almost totally uncharted.
- Exports of gold from the area were so great that the city took on the reputation in the outside world of possessing endless wealth.
- Travel to Timbuctoo could be dangerous for whites or non-Muslims; Scottish explorer Mungo Park was reportedly attacked and disappeared after his second attempt

A great African Civilization

A place of commercial
wealth and opportunity

A place where African
youth were sent from great
distances to further their
education

In parts of Africa (i.e.: Timbuctoo) never
“profaned by the unhallowed foot of a
slave dealer, civilization advances and the
arts of social life flourish...the natives
cultivate cotton and indigo”¹

What did Black and antislavery publications say about Timbuctoo, 1820s - 1830s?

¹ Genius of Universal Emancipation. Baltimore, 1826

Freedom Journal, published in New York City, also had references to Timbuctoo

More likely reflected a desire to have a connection to their own heritage, history, and self-determination.

Many were creating their own communities for the first time; wanted a name that reflected the “great civilization, wealth, opportunity, education,” etc. of the motherland.

The supportive Quaker environment, where Blacks purchased land, took out mortgages, had their institutions recognized, etc., underscores the idea that Timbuctoo was a positive reference.

My Conclusions

New Jersey Mirror

- Major weekly newspaper of the region between 1818 and 1947
- Covered local and national news, commentary and social events
- Also included marriage notices and death notices
- Death notices of African Americans appeared along side of those of whites without fanfare as early as 1851

Death of Hezekiah Hall February 1851

One of the first
four Timbuctoo
settlers in
September 1826

Community
leader identified
in incorporation
documents

Husband of my
fourth great
grandmother

In Timbuctoo, near Mount Holly, on Friday last, February 21, 1851, 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 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, February 23, 1851, by a very large concourse of friends and neighbors.

"Obituaries," The New Jersey Mirror, 27 February 1851, p.3, col. 2; Indexed Transcription, Burlington County Library System (<http://www.bcls.lib.nj.us/newspapers/newjerseymirror/> accessed 5 December 2014),

Death of David Parker June 1877

One of the first
four Timbuctoo
settlers in
September 1826

Very prominent
Community
leader

Identified in
incorporation
documents and
news reports

Associated with
multiple land
transactions

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 a large number of white friends, died at is 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 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.

*The New Jersey Mirror, 28 June 1877. Transcribed from Microfilm on
21 September 2017*

Death of Perry Simmons February 13, 1862

Escaped slavery in
Maryland with his
family c. early 1850s

Renowned as the
subject of the infamous
Battle of Pine Swamp
that recounts a failed
attempt to capture him
and his family

Perry Simmons, the colored man, whose attempted arrest as a fugitive slave, on two occasions, created considerable excitement in our neighborhood, died in Timbuctoo, a week or two ago.

Perry had not been well since the last attempt to capture him, in consequence of taking a severe cold on that freezing night.

It will be recollected that he was forced to fly suddenly from his bedroom to the garret, where he was obliged to remain till morning, suffering severely from the cold.

Perry is at last beyond the reach of his Southern master.

“Local Facts and Fancies,” The New Jersey Mirror, 13 February 1862, p.3, col. 1; Indexed Transcription, Burlington County Library System (<http://www.bcls.lib.nj.us/newspapers/newjerseymirror/> accessed 5 December 2014),

Death of Lambert Giles April 22, 1875

My third great-
grandfather

Lambert Giles, a well-known colored man, long a resident of this vicinity, was found 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 7 1/2 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 Laumaster 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 manner. He was about 60 years of age...

"Obituaries," The New Jersey Mirror, 22 April 1875, p.3, col. 3; Indexed Transcription, Burlington County Library System (<http://www.bcls.lib.nj.us/newspapers/newjerseymirro> accessed 5 December 2014),



Lambert Giles

New Jersey Mirror News Brief
April 29, 1875

The sudden demise of the old colored whitewasher, Lambert Giles, last week... put a number of housekeepers on the wing to find somebody 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.

The New Jersey Mirror, 28 April 1875, p.3, col. 1; Indexed Transcription, Burlington County Library System (<http://www.bcls.lib.nj.us/newspapers/newjerseymirror/> accessed 5 December 2014),

I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE



SLAVES THAT FOUGHT BACK

BATTLE OF PINE SWAMP¹

December 1860

- *A well-known slave-catcher, George Alberti, sought to capture an escaped slave by the name of Perry Simmons.*
- *Alberti traveled with several associates. He enlisted the help of a local constable to help take Simmons into custody by reporting he had stolen chickens*
- *Reportedly, Simmons had lived in the Timbuctoo area for a decade or more and had a strong network of supporters among Timbuctoo residents.*
- *When news of the attempt to capture Simmons reached his allies, a large group rushed to Simmons aid yelling and screaming, wielding weapons and scared the smaller raiding party off.*

¹Excitement at Timbuctoo, the Battle of Pine Swamp: Invaders forced to Retreat. The New Jersey Mirror, 6 December 1860. Transcribed from microfilm on 21 March 2017

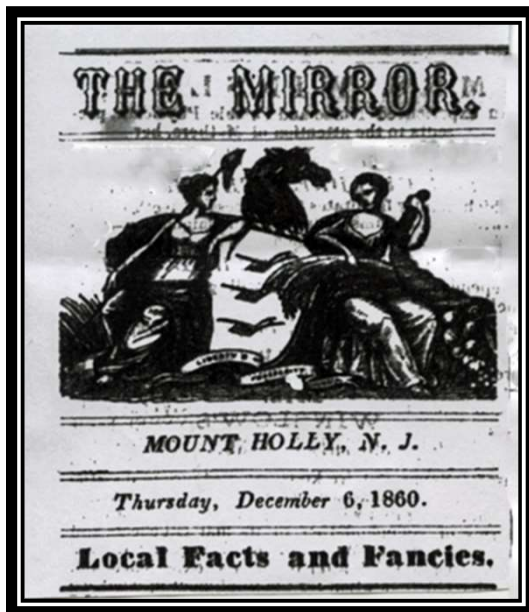
How do we know those details?

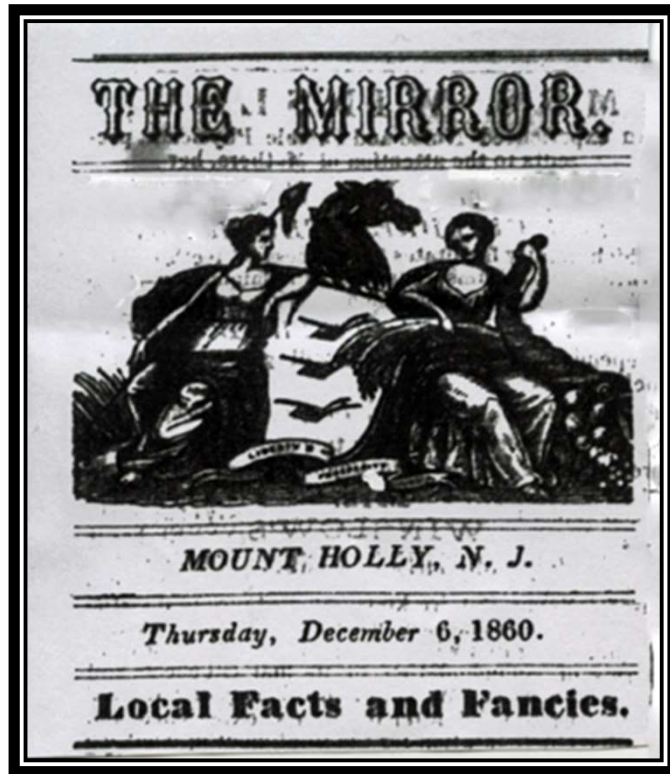
*An 1100 word “blow by blow” account from the
New Jersey Mirror*

*Uses words like “kidnapers” and “invaders” to
describe the slave catchers*

*Full of humorous anecdotes describing Simmons’
response:*

- *“Perry at once suspected who they were and the object of their midnight errand, and very coolly answered that they ‘could not fool Perry Simmons with any such story as that.’”*
- *“Perry, considering the circumstances, was firm and undaunted, and stood at the head of the stairway, with one of his guns, threatening to shoot the first man who attempted to come up.*





Battle of Pine Swamp, continued

- *Old Alberti, at one time, started up the stairway, but as he turned round, so that the top was visible, he saw that muzzle of Perry's musket was but a short distance from him, and he came down something quicker than he went up.*
- *They ...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 ... the horses were even then being urged to their utmost speed".*

Full text available on <https://timbuctoonj.com/battle-of-pine-swamp>

Battle of Pine Swamp, continued

Follow up report on December 13th, 1860:

- *The kidnapping party who were after Perry Simmons secured the services of the Moorestown constable, by the meanest deception. Coming to his house at a late hour at night, they told him they had a warrant against a colored man for stealing and wished him to serve it.*
- *He went with them, and it was not until after they reached Perry's house that he was made acquainted with the real nature of the business, when he at once told them he would have nothing to do with making the arrest and started home on foot. He had a very long walk, but he considered it infinitely more pleasant than to remain and assist such a man as George Alberti, in carrying off a Negro and his family.*



Timbuctoo was not totally unique among African American populations in the north

- Nearly 500,000 free African Americans were enumerated in the 1860 census. Free African Americans comprised between **11% and 14%** of the African American population in each census since 1800.¹
- A number of African American communities existed during that period, such as those that founded Mother Bethel AME church in Philadelphia in 1794, Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City in 1808, as well as Zion Wesley (1833)², Asbury Methodist (1836), First Colored Baptist,³ (1839) First Colored Presbyterian,⁴ (1842), all in Washington.
- The presence of such churches is a marker for the presence of free African American communities in some substantial quantity.

1. Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States," U.S. Census Bureau, September 2002 (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html>),

2. Now Metropolitan Wesley AME Zion Church

3. Now 19th St Baptist Church on 16th St NW

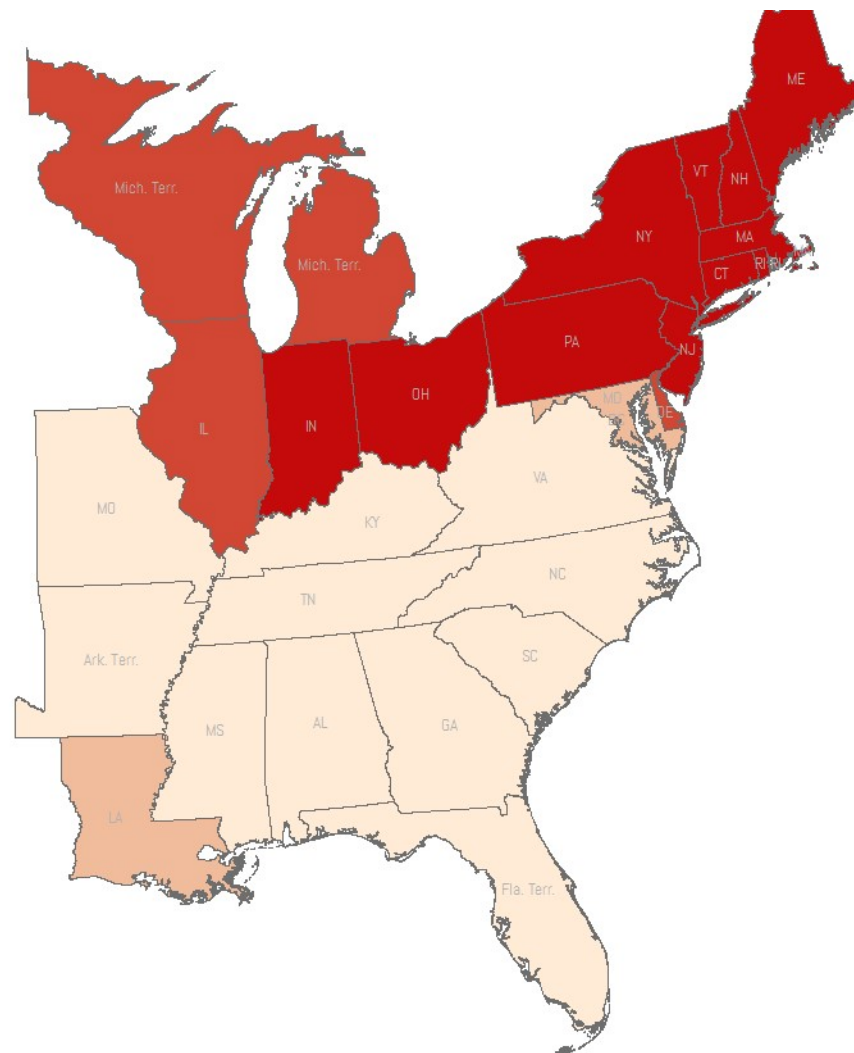
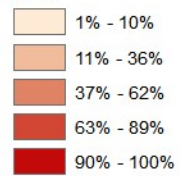
4. Now 15th St Presbyterian Church

1830

% of state's Black population classified as "free"

US_state_1830

free



Cartography:

Eric Rhodes

MA Candidate in History

Miami University

Shapefile provided by National Historical GIS

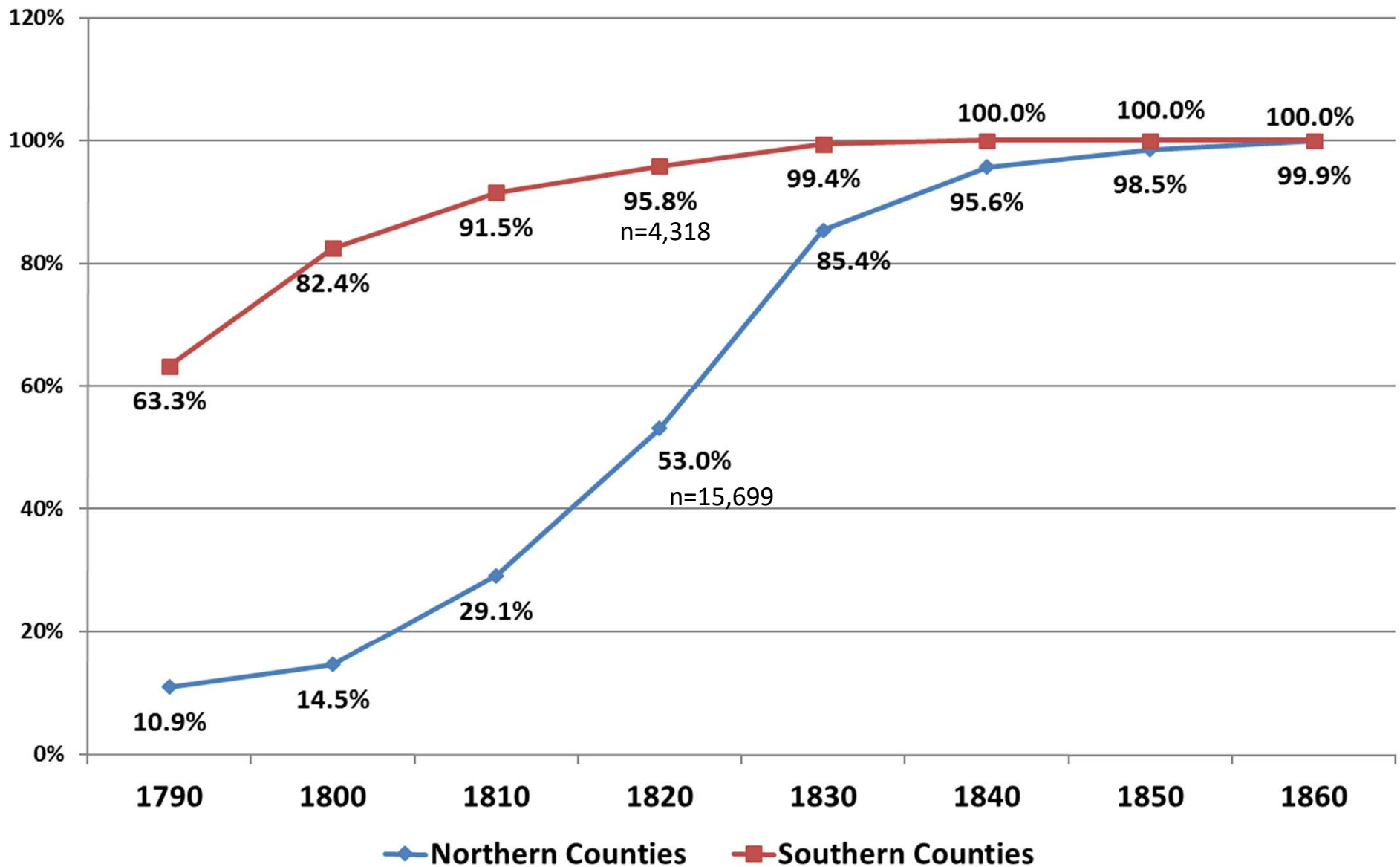
Data source: Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States," U.S. Census Bureau, September 2002

Context:
Northern
states were all
engaged in
ending slavery
by 1804

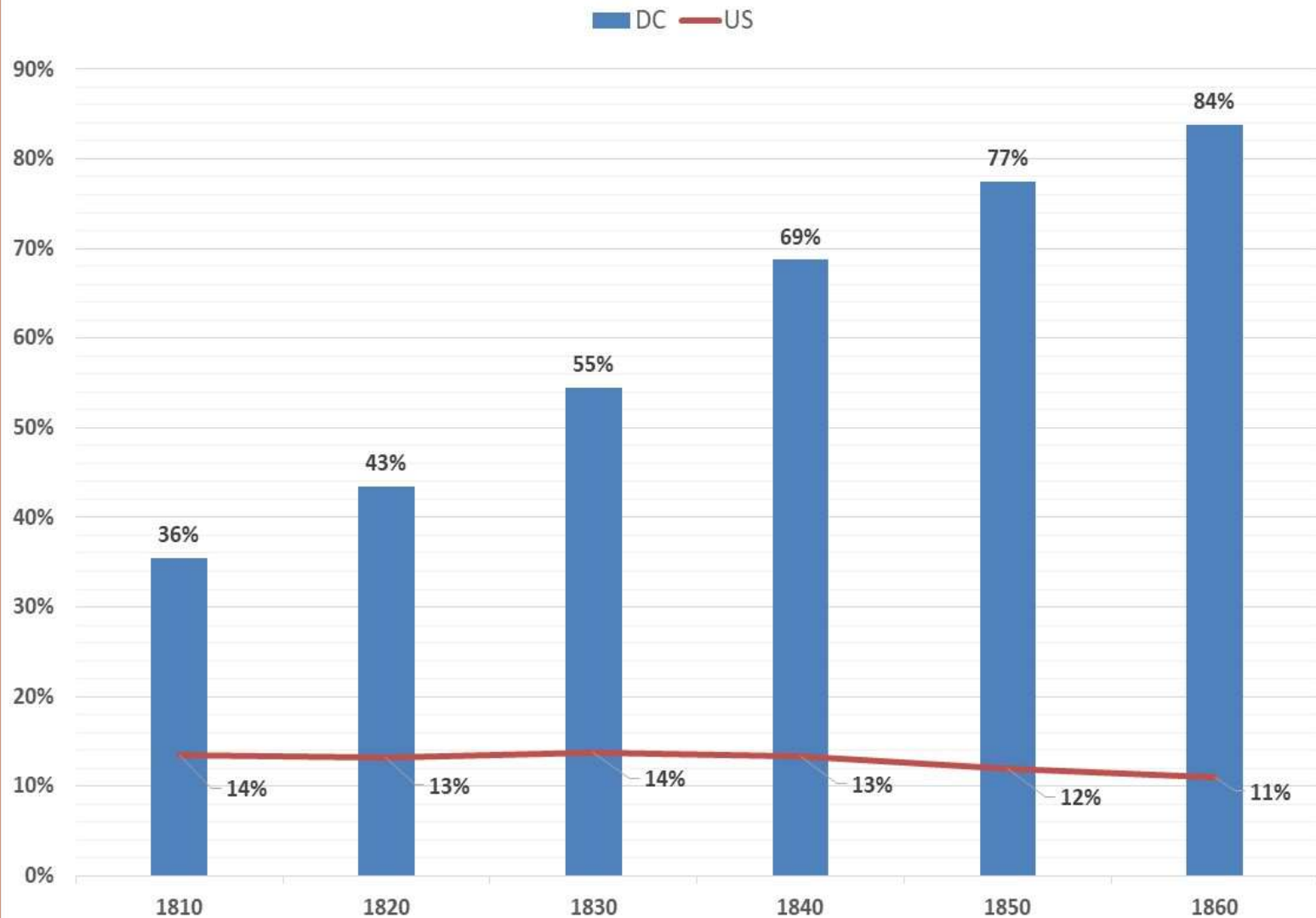
- 1777 - The Constitution of Vermont bans slavery
- 1780 - Pennsylvania prohibits further importation of slaves and establishes that all children are born free persons, regardless of parents' race.
- 1783 - Massachusetts Supreme Court rules slavery illegal based in 1780 constitution; **all slaves are instantly freed**
- 1783 New Hampshire begins gradual manumission
- 1784 - Connecticut begins gradual manumission
- 1784 - Rhode Island begins gradual manumission
- 1791 - Vermont enters the Union as a free state
- 1799 - New York begins gradual manumission
- 1804 - New Jersey begins gradual manumission

In 1800, 1,001,898 Blacks account for 19% of the US population. 108,298 or 11% of them are free, according to the 1800 Census. We are listed by name

Progress of Gradual Manumission of Slaves in NJ: Percent Free in Each Decennial Census



Free Blacks in Each Decennial Census



1. US Census Bureau US Census of Population and Housing,
https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/. Accessed on May 1, 2019

Evidence of a substantial free black population

Between 1810 and 1859:

- 14 black churches
- 43 black schools
- 6 black benevolent organizations

were established in the District¹

Many, if not most, were active in, and resulted from the abolitionist movement

1. Hillary Russell, "The Operation of the Underground Railroad in Washington, DC, c. 1800–1860." The Historical Society of Washington DC and the National Park Service, 2001

National Republican

TUESDAY MORNING FEBRUARY 16, 1869.

LOCAL DEPARTMENT.

CONGRESS AND THE COLORED SCHOOLS.—A very full meeting of colored citizens was held at Union League Hall for the purpose of taking action in regard to preparing a memorial to Congress to request the passage of the bill in relation to colored schools, lately vetoed by the President. At 8 o'clock Thomas Martin called the meeting to order, and, on motion of Mr. Hutton, Rev. Anthony Bowen was selected as chairman.

Mr. Bowen, on taking the chair, announced that the meeting would be opened with devotional exercises.

1869

THE EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION.—The executive committee having in charge the arrangements for the emancipation celebration, which is to take place on Wednesday next, held a meeting at the office of the Commissioner for the Second Ward yesterday afternoon at four o'clock. The line of march was discussed and the programme agreed upon. The following committee was appointed to engage speakers for the occasion: Chas. H. Peters, president of the convention; Collins Crusor, vice president, and Anthony Bowen, chief marshal. A committee to procure music was also appointed.

A meeting of the citizens of the Seventh Ward was held yesterday evening, at five o'clock, at the Wesley church, on D street, between 2d and 3d, Island, to make further arrangements for the emancipation celebration, Sampson Nutter in the chair. An executive ward committee was appointed, as were also marshals. The executive committee were instructed to urge the convention to postpone the celebration until the 16th; and were further instructed to invite all the male societies and organizations in the Seventh Ward to participate therein.

1870

THE POLITICAL POT A BILIN' IN THE SEVENTH WARD.

RED HOT! 1870

Boswell against Carson—Ring and Anti-Ring—The Ring Goes Under—"How are you, Six Hundred Dollar Cook?"—"How are you, City Hall Ring?"—Speech by Boswell—Sparring all Around.

A mass meeting of the Republicans of the Seventh Ward was held last night at Island Hall, under the call published in THE STAR, for the purpose of electing officers for the Republican Club of the ward. The hall was filled before the hour of meeting arrived, and the crowd at the entrance and on the stairway leading to the hall was so dense as almost to preclude any ingress to those who arrived on the ground at the usual hour of evening meetings. Perry Carson, and his Pioneer Club, were present, and occupied the row of benches on the north side of the hall.

Collector Boswell called the meeting to order, and R. J. Collins acted as secretary. Mr. Boswell stated the object of the meeting and reviewed the history of the Pioneer corps, the City Hall ring, and alluded to the effort made to concentrate the strength of the opposition so as to pack the meeting. He wanted all present to distinctly understand that this meeting could not be controlled, and he called upon every one present, who had a right to participate in the election of officers of the club, to vote according to their convictions, to express their sentiments irrespective of candidates or partisan control, and to show themselves true Republicans, without reference to the dictates of ward commissioners, corporation officials or anybody else. Every one should express his opinion to-night, and he would see that order was maintained. The first business was to elect officers for the club, and he called upon the meeting for nominations.

Geo. H. Newman nominated F. A. Boswell and Perry Carson offered the name of Anthony Bowen.

A perfect babel of cheers and groans followed the announcement of the nominations, but the preponderance of the applause was heavily on the side of Boswell's party. A rising vote was taken but was protested against as unsatisfactory, and finally Boswell announced that a vote



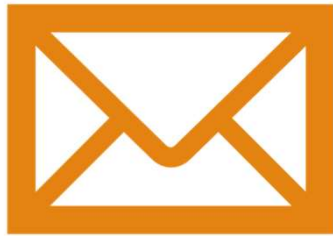
Anthony Bowen (1809-71)
Minister; Civic Leader
1st African American
employee, US Patent Office

THE FUNERAL of Rev. Anthony Bowen took place yesterday from St. Paul's Chapel on 8th street, between D and E streets southeast, and was attended by a large concourse of colored people, and many white people, friends of deceased. The funeral sermon was preached by Rev. R. M. Hall, pastor of the chapel. Among those present were Messrs. John F. Cook, Jas. Wormly, John T. Johnson, A. M. Green, Perry Carson, S. McFarlan, Chas. Peters, Wm. Syphax, and Wm. Smith. There were 252 carriages in the line which followed the remains to Harmony Cemetery. Mr. Bowen was sick but a short time, and the day before his death sent for a few of his personal friends among the colored people, and calmly told them that he was about to die, and requested that no displays of music or societies should be made at his funeral; but that it should be conducted in a quiet manner. He gave directions to Perry Carson, a member of his church, what to do for the success of St. Paul's Society, and made a disposition of his property and effects in a business-like manner.

1871

QUESTIONS???





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