

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery

other names/site number Mount Peace Cemetery

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 not for publication

2. Location

street & number 329 White Horse Pike (U.S. Route 30)

city or town: Lawnside Borough

state New Jersey code NJ county Camden code 007 zip code 08045

vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title [Signature] Date 7/27/08
Ann Cradic, Assistant Commissioner, Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature: Patrick Andrews]

7/29/2009

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY

Cemetery

Graves/Burials

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY

Cemetery

Graves/Burials

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other CONCRETE, METAL

STONE: Marble, Granite

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B. removed from its original location.
C. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local, State

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE

BLACK

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1903-1958

Significant Dates

1903, 1957, 1968

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

African American

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Lawnside Historical Society, Lawnside, New Jersey

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11.6

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 496494 4413697 3 18 496410 4413266
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
2 18 496207 4413504 4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul W. Schopp
organization Paul W. Schopp, Historical Consultant date 31 March 2008
street & number Post Office Box 648 telephone 856.786.1499
city or town Palmyra state NJ zip code 08065-0648

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Mount Peace Cemetery Association, Yolanda Romero, Secretary
street & number 207 John F. Kennedy Boulevard telephone 856.546.9069
city or town Lawnside state NJ zip code 08045-1035

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery

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Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery Description

Summary

The Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company cemetery is a twentieth-century African American cemetery located in the northeast quadrant of the U.S. Route 30 (White Horse Pike)-Mouldy Lane intersection in the Borough of Lawnside, Camden County, New Jersey (Photograph no. 1). The original 1902 purchase of land for the burial facility comprised approximately 18 acres. Subsequent sales of land by the cemetery company during 1968 and 1976 have reduced the cemetery's landmass to 11.6 acres (Photograph no. 2). Mount Peace Cemetery carries the designation of Block 101, Lot 5, on the Borough of Lawnside tax parcel mapping, Plate no. 1.

Geographical and Geological Setting

Geographically, the cemetery sits on the westerly down slope of Snow Hill, a prominence extending vertically from 109 feet at the northern boundary of Mount Peace Cemetery to 112 feet, east of the Lawnside Borough Hall, above sea level. Geologically, Wayne Newell *et al.* indicate Snow Hill's foundational depository composition consists of sand, gravel, silt, clay, and stone associated with the Pensauken Formation, perhaps dating from the Pliocene to Upper Miocene, and a deposition from the ancient Hudson River.¹ Its elevated position with capped upland is attributed to a phenomenon known as "invert topography."² Scientists believe stony salients in southern New Jersey started out as old river bottoms where the paleo-Hudson River dumped gravels, perhaps at a river bend, or perhaps where bog ironstone formed. After the paleo-Hudson retreated from its overflow course, these hard spots proved more resistant to erosion than the surrounding softer banks. After eons of natural forces wearing the softer banks away, the gravelly bottoms emerged as hilltops.³

Enhanced erosion occurred towards the end of each cold period during the Pleistocene, creating a badlands landscape reminiscent of arid regions in the world today. Evidence from local sandpits indicates that landscape modification during permafrost thaw became particularly intense.⁴ Newell identified widespread Pleistocene-aged dune sand upon an elevated location similar to and nearby Snow Hill.⁵ Windblown sands now veneer higher surfaces throughout South

¹ W.L. Newell, D.S. Powers, J.P. Owens, S.D. Stanford, and B.D. Stone, *Surficial Geologic Map of Central and Southern New Jersey*. United States Geological Survey, Miscellaneous Investigations Series, Map I-2540-D, 2000. Also see S.D. Stanford, "Late Miocene to Holocene geology of the New Jersey Coastal Plain." Published in M.J. Hozik and M.J. Mihalasky, editors, *Field Guide and Proceedings, 20th Annual Meeting of the Geological Association of New Jersey : October 10-11, 2003*. Geological Association of New Jersey, Trenton, New Jersey, 2003, pp. 21-49.

² E.C. Rhodehamel, "Geology of the Pine Barrens of New Jersey." Published in R.T.T. Forman, editor, *Pine Barrens : Ecosystem and Landscape*. Academic Press, New York City, New York, 1979, pp. 39-60; Stanford, 2003, pp. 29-32.

³ Newell, *et al.*, 2000.

⁴ H.M. French, M. Demitroff, and S. Forman, "Evidence for Late-Pleistocene Thermokarst in the New Jersey Pine Barrens (Latitude 39° N), Eastern USA." Published in *Permafrost and Periglacial Processes*, No. 16, 2005, pp. 173-186; H.M. French, M.

Demitroff,

S. Forman, and W.L. Newell, "A Chronology of Late-Pleistocene permafrost events in southern New Jersey, eastern U.S.A..

Accepted for publication in *Permafrost and Periglacial Processes*, No. 18, 2007.

⁵ W.L. Newell, Evidence of Cold Climate Slope Processes from the New Jersey Coastal Plain : Debris Flow Stratigraphy at Haines Corner, Camden County, New Jersey. United States Geological Survey, Open-File Report 2005-1296, Version 1.0, July 2005,

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Jersey and are colloquially and commonly called "sugar sand."⁶ In such loose, sandy terrain, Pine Barrens-like vegetation predominates.⁷

As documented above, the original soil overburden on Snow Hill was primarily composed of a Pine Barrens type of white sugar sand and its presence here is emblematic of the Lawnside area's original Pine-Barrens-outlier physiography. The occurrence of sugar sand on top of the prominence most likely provided the moniker, "Snow Hill," as the peak of this rise could be viewed for several miles in any direction, providing the illusion of snow on its apex. In discussing Snow Hill and its surrounds, George R. Prowell, writing in his 1886 work, *History of Camden County, New Jersey*, notes, "The soil here is light and the place was no doubt selected on account of the ease with which a clearing might be made, as the growth of timber in these sandy places was never very heavy."⁸

As an indication of the original Pine Barrens appearance of present-day Lawnside, the following excerpt from a November 1862 newspaper letter is provided. During that month and year, two Black ministers arrived at Haddonfield railroad and expected to find transportation waiting to take them to Snow Hill. Seeing none, the two men determined they would walk the distance of about two miles. In a narrative prepared for *The Christian Recorder*, Pastor M.L. Haney described their surroundings:

We did walk it, and well did we consider our self repaid by the beautiful sights which met our eyes as we journeyed on. Looming up like some beautiful vision of nature, the tall pines and wavy cedars reared their grand old tops in the face of heaven—and stretched away in the distant horizon as far as the eye could reach. The sight was sublime. Instinctively our thoughts flew back to the merry days of our boyhood, when in childish glee we trod the sandy plains of North Carolina, in the sunny South. ... Oh! But we did keenly realize the beauty of the scenery. Brethren, you can't imagine what a nice time we had of it. Brother Smith seemed quite struck with our speed as a pedestrian—for he thought that as we had resided in the city so long, we had now lost our taste for walking; but, reader, you may just imagine in your mind how readily we could move over the sloping little hills and dales, beautiful in nature....⁹

unpaginated. Also available at: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2005/1296/> Accessed 30 March 2008; see also French, *et al.*, 2007.

⁶ H.M. French and M. Demitroff, "Late-Pleistocene periglacial phenomena in the Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey : GANJ Field Excursion Guide : October 11, 2003. Published in M.J. Hozik and M.J. Mihalasky, editors, *Field Guide and Proceedings, 20th Annual Meeting of the Geological Association of New Jersey : October 10-11, 2003*. Geological Association of New Jersey, Trenton, New Jersey, 2003, pp. 117-142; French, *et al.*, 2007; M. Demitroff, Pine Barrens Wetlands : Geographical Reflections of South Jersey's Periglacial Legacy. Masters Thesis, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, 2007, p. 37, 135.

⁷ J. McCormick and J. Andresen, "The role of *Pinus virginiana* Mill. Published in "The Vegetation of Southern New Jersey," Published in *N.J. Nature News*, No. 18. New Jersey Audubon Society, Bernardsville, New Jersey, 1963, pp. 27-38.

⁸ George R. Prowell, *History of Camden County, New Jersey*. L.J. Richards and Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1886, p. 705.

⁹ M.L. Haney, "Visit to Snowhill, N.J." Published in the 8 November 1862 edition of *The Christian Recorder*. *The Christian Recorder*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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The presence of pines and cedars, as well as the mention of sandy plains and an undulating landscape all point to the Snow Hill being a Pine Barrens outlier. The poor quality of the land and soil at Snow Hill is emblematic of the parcels generally reserved for Free Blacks to eek out a life of agrarian subsistence in the pre and post Civil War period.¹⁰

Cemetery's Physical Description

When first constructed, the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company divided the cemetery into ten sections—A through J—with an aggregate of approximately 3,700 four-grave lots, creating a potential of over 14,500 individual graves.¹¹ The new cemetery still features three main drives through the property from the original design: Langston Drive, the only drive running parallel to the White Horse Pike (Photograph no. 3); Powell Drive, the northernmost drive running perpendicular to the White Horse Pike (Photograph no. 4); and Douglas(s) Drive, the southernmost drive running perpendicular off White Horse Pike (Photograph no. 5). The cemetery company contracted to have an office building constructed on the north side of the main entrance driveway off the White Horse Pike. Although this building burned sometime during the late 1960s, its foundation and footprint remain readily discernable. Based on a physical examination of the foundation, the building measured approximately 15 feet by 30 feet with a cross-gabled appendage on the south side toward the rear projecting approximately twelve feet southward and measuring approximately twelve feet wide. The building featured a stone foundation according to the extant *in situ* remains. In recent years, the Mount Peace Cemetery Association erected two concrete and steel storage sheds just north of the Powell Drive entrance (Photograph no. 4).

In 1922, when the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders issued a contract to pave the White Horse Pike with concrete, the construction work apparently included curbing and sidewalks.¹² As a result of cutting back the cemetery's natural embankment to allow room for the sidewalk, the cemetery likely received its extant decorative concrete-block retaining wall, originally featuring three courses of block and topped with soldiered brick trim. The main entrance was flanked with two decorative concrete block pillars or gate posts topped with a double course of bricks. The southernmost pillar held a mounted cast-metal or wooden sign featuring the name of the cemetery on it.¹³ The wall and paved driveways remain *in situ* all along the cemetery's White Horse Pike frontage, albeit the retaining wall is now missing its top course of decorative block and its soldiered brick trim (Photograph nos. 6 and 7). At some point, the cemetery removed the pillars.

The total number of burials at Mount Peace Cemetery is unknown, but based on surviving records of the company, between 1931 and 1959, minus 1934 and 1936, the cemetery received the remains of over 3,550 people. The cemetery still receives an occasional interment today in 2008. Veteran burials comprise a prominent group of remains interred at Mount Peace Cemetery (Photograph no. 8). As many as 108 Civil War soldiers and sailors rest on the slope of Snow Hill

¹⁰ Bob Craig, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, personal communication.

¹¹ Calculations based on Works Progress Administration. Historical Grave Survey Plan of Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company. 1938. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey.

¹² Ann Maria T. Cammarota, *Pavements in the Garden: The Suburbanization of Southern New Jersey, Adjacent to the City of Philadelphia, 1769 to the Present*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison, New Jersey, 2001, p. 144.

¹³ Ted Williams, historic image of the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company main entrance, 1935. Collection of Spencer C. Moore II, Lawnside Historical Society, Lawnside, New Jersey.

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at Mount Peace, including one Medal of Honor recipient, as well as 15 Spanish-American War veterans; at least 104 who fought in the First World War; a minimum of 30 World War II veterans; no less than two from the Korean War; and at least one from the Vietnam War. All of these figures were derived from a *circa* 1965 register maintained at the Camden County Office of Veteran Affairs.¹⁴

During the 1950s, conditions at the cemetery began to deteriorate as expenses eclipsed revenue. The 1960s brought more problems as the court placed the cemetery company into receivership. The Mount Peace Cemetery has suffered from many years of little or no maintenance. Beginning in the 1980s, the Lawnside Men's Association began to restore the cemetery, but there is still a great deal of vegetation and undergrowth blanketing the graves and the markers, particularly east of Langston Drive, towards the rear or eastern uphill portion of the cemetery (Photograph no. 9). The section between Langston Drive and the White Horse Pike exhibits a sense of good maintenance (Photograph no. 10). Some markers have suffered damage, while others have sunk into their grave shafts, or, in some cases, have been completely removed from their original foundation (Photograph no. 11). Row upon row of burials, once level with the surrounding ground, have sunk into the excavated grave shaft, creating an undulating landscape when moving from the front to the rear of the cemetery, primarily due to a lack of cast concrete burial vaults being installed in the grave before receiving the coffin or casket (Photograph 12).

Sample Types of Grave Markers at Mount Peace Cemetery

The collections of grave markers at Mount Peace range in form from homemade concrete, hand-inscribed headstones (Photograph no. 13) and plot enclosures (Photograph no. 11) to upscale granite stones (Photograph no. 14) and marble obelisks (Photograph no. 15). Most markers are a direct reflection of a particular family's social and financial status in life. A number of the markers consist of thin marble slabs originally manufactured as table and bureau tops, but adaptively reused as gravestones at a fraction of the cost of normal gravestones (Photograph no. 16). The Berry Family obelisk constitutes the most unique grave marker in the cemetery (Photograph no. 17). The obelisk has the appearance of stone, but the funerary marker is actually a casting of aluminum or magnesium, complete with molded-in hewn stone surfacing. The individual burial information is cast on plates cleverly mounted to the obelisk with hidden screws and clips. Some gravestones feature a composite assemblage with a cast concrete marker and a cast or engraved metal informational plaque (Photograph nos. 18 and 19). Simple temporary metal card holders, usually installed by undertakers to identify recently buried remains, and racquet-shaped stamped aluminum markers with incised lettering and decorative elements can also occasionally be found in the cemetery (Photograph no. 20). Typical for most graveyards, standard federal Veterans Administration tombstones proliferate throughout Mount Peace Cemetery (Photograph no. 8).

¹⁴ Camden County Office of Veterans Affairs, *circa* 1965. Microform edition. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey.

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Statement of Significance

The Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company cemetery is significant under National Register Criterion A. The cemetery's principal connection with the growth of the African American community within the City of Camden and Camden County makes it a strong candidate for Criterion A because the property is "...associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." It is the largest non-sectarian Black cemetery in the State of New Jersey and it has served the Black population of Camden County and beyond since its establishment in 1902. The cemetery remains an active burial ground today. The physical size of the cemetery, both in its original form and its current revised boundaries, demonstrates the important role that the Black neighborhoods in the City of Camden played in the overall development of the larger African American community within the State of New Jersey. The cemetery also meets Criteria Consideration D as a cemetery that is important both for association with an important event—the emergence of a large African American community the City of Camden and Camden County during the nineteenth century—and as a final resting place of numerous African American Civil War veterans, including John Lawson, who received the Medal of Honor for heroic service in the U.S. Navy during the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864.

The Black Community in the City of Camden: The Slave Era

Like many colonies in the New World, New Jersey's population included slaves, beginning with the Dutch occupation of the northeastern portion near Manhattan Island. According to Dr. Peter O. Wacker, "The Dutch West India Company appears to have initiated Negro slavery in the Middle Colonies as early as 1625 or 1626 with blacks captured from the Spanish or Portuguese."¹ Slavery did not end with the English winning temporary control of New Netherland in 1664 and final control in 1675. Berkeley and Carteret, in their *Concessions and Agreements*, actually encouraged British colonists to bring slaves with them from their homes by offering land grants based on the number of slaves and/or servants brought into New Jersey. By 1680, East Jerseymen held an estimated 120 slaves, or about three percent of the population, and 46 years later, residents of the same area possessed over 74 percent of all Blacks held as slaves in the combined East and West New Jersey, with many of the enslaved held in Old Bergen and Somerset counties where Dutch settlers abounded. Members of the Society of Friends or Quakers founded West New Jersey, beginning with John Fenwick's arrival in Salem during 1675. As a result of its continued Quaker influence, West New Jersey never had a large population of enslaved Africans, unlike East New Jersey, which embraced slavery.² In 1726, Governor Burnet stated, "there are few Negroes, if any imported in West Jersey."³ For example, during the same year, the non-White population comprised just 3.22 percent of the total population within Gloucester County.⁴

The City of Camden and the farms and settlements that it once comprised contained African Americans since at least the eighteenth century. For the entire area of present-day Camden County, historian Jeffrey M. Dorwart reports that a population of 150 African slaves existed by the mid-eighteenth century.⁵ During the same time period, Daniel Cooper became active in the slave trade, establishing a point of sale and entry for newly arrived Blacks from Africa. Daniel was the grandson of William Cooper the émigré, whom many consider to be the founder of Camden. In May 1751, Daniel advertised to sell "A Likely Negroe," which he described in the advertisement as "26 years of age, well acquainted with

¹ Peter O. Wacker, *Land and People*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1975, p. 189.

² Wacker, 1975, pp. 121-191.

³ Wacker, 1975, p. 200.

⁴ Wacker, 1975, p. 190.

⁵ Jeffrey M. Dorwart, *Camden County, New Jersey: The Making of a Metropolitan Community, 1626-2000*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2001, p. 29.

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country business, and has had the small pox and measles.”⁶ Slave sales increased in the years 1761-1762 at Daniel’s ferry “in the Jerseys” and at the ferry his cousin Benjamin owned, known as the Upper Ferry. During September 1761, Philadelphians William and John Harris sought to sell “A likely Negroe Wench. Any Person inclining to purchase, may apply to William and John Harris, at John Jarvis’s, in Second-street, Philadelphia.”⁷ Three weeks later, John Harris advertised, “To be sold at Daniel Cooper’s Ferry, three likely Negroes, viz. Two Men about 20 Years of Age, and a Boy about 13. Enquire of JOHN HARRIS, at the House of John Jervis, Hatter, in Second-street.”⁸

Beginning in May 1762, both Benjamin and Daniel held slave auctions at their ferries, attracting both Philadelphia and West New Jersey residents. The auction firm of W. Coxe, S. Oldman, & Company placed the first advertisement of the year, which read:

Just imported from the River Gambia, in the Schooner Sally, Barnard Badger, Master, and to be sold at the Upper-Ferry (called Benjamin Cooper’s Ferry), opposite to this City, a Parcel of likely Men and Women

SLAVES,

With some Boys and Girls of different Ages. Attendance will be given from the Hours of nine to twelve o’Clock in the Morning, and from three to six in the Afternoon, by

W. Coxe, S. Oldman, & Company,

N.B. It is generally allowed, that the Gambia Slaves are much more robust and tractable, than any other Slaves from the Coast of Guinea, and more capable of undergoing the Severity of Winter Seasons in the North-American Colonies, which occasions their being vastly more esteemed and coveted in this Province and those to the Northward than any other Slaves whatsoever.⁹

The next advertised sale at Benjamin Cooper’s ferry occurred in August 1762. The Captain of the sloop that carried the Africans to the colonies authorized the auction. The notice states,

To be Sold, at Robert’s Ferry, commonly known by the Name of Benjamin Cooper’s Ferry, Cooper’s Point New-Jersey:

A Parcel of choice healthy
Young Slaves,
Men, Women, Boys and Girls.

Attendance will be given by Capt. Bruce, Mast of the Sloop Hester, in which they were imported from the Windward Coast of Africa.

Being Negroes from the most established Parts of the Coast of Africa, for being good House or Plantation Slaves.¹⁰

Likewise, Daniel Cooper held a sale at his ferry in August. On 26 August 1762, Philadelphia merchant David McMurtrie placed a notice in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, reading:

⁶ *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. May 2, 1751 edition.

⁷ *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. September 3, 1761 edition.

⁸ *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. September 24, 1761 edition.

⁹ *The Pennsylvania Journal*. May 27, 1762 edition.

¹⁰ *The Pennsylvania Journal*. August 19, 1762 edition.

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JUST imported, a Parcel of fine young Negroe Slaves, Men, Women, Boys and Girls, and to be sold at Daniel Cooper Ferry, in the Jerseys, opposite the City of Philadelphia by

DAVID MCMURTRIE, Merchant in Water street. Attendance will be given from Nine to Twelve in the Forenoon, and from Two to Five in the Afternoon.¹¹

During October 1762, John Irland [sic] placed an advertisement in *The Pennsylvania Journal*, stating:

TO BE SOLD by

JOHN IRLAND, At Reese Meredith's:

A Negro Woman, A Negro Girl about 18 Years old, and a Negro Child, about six Years old, to be seen at Daniel Coopers at the Ferry, they were sold by Execution in Barbados, not sent off for any Fault.¹²

The slave auctions at the ferries apparently ended in 1762 as no additional advertisements could be located beyond the ones cited above. Perhaps the publication of John Woolman's second work, titled, *Some Considerations on Keeping Negroes, Part Second*, during 1762 aided the cessation of such activities, but the reasons for ending these sales remain obscured. Regarding these slave auctions at Cooper's Ferry, historian Spencer Crew notes,

By the eighteenth century, Cooper's Ferry had become the central debarkation point for slaves brought to West Jersey. Slave ships would sail up the Delaware River and drop anchor just outside the city. If the sale of slaves at Cooper's Ferry was at all similar to the importation of bondsmen in other parts of New Jersey, the shipments were usually fairly small. Normally not more than twenty slaves were brought at one time for sale. The slaves, who usually arrived directly from West Africa, were sold at auction in transactions held aboard the anchored ships. Later, in chains, they were transported from the vessel to their new residences.¹³

In 1777 James Cooper issued a call to the Society of Friends members at the Haddonfield and Woodbury Meetings to free their slaves. Those who refrained from manumitting their enslaved Africans faced disownment and being read out of meeting. Marmaduke Cooper, a member of the Newton Friends Meeting and owner of the Pomona Hall plantation in present-day Camden, was among those who initially refused to set their slaves free, fearing the economic impact of such a move more than the ire of the local meeting leadership. In Marmaduke's case, he operated a farm comprising 412 acres and felt compelled to use slave labor, along with numerous indentured servants, to successfully operate his plantation and harvest his crops. Marmaduke eventually manumitted his slaves in his will dated 1792. Jeffrey Dorwart notes, "By 1792 the Quaker tidewater planters of the Haddonfield Meeting held no slaves and announced that they would employ free Black labor instead."¹⁴ The proactive abolitionist Quakers not only worked within their sect, but also exerted pressure on the legislature to pass anti-slavery laws. Their efforts effected the passage of "An Act to Prevent the Importation of Slaves Into the State of New Jersey, and to Authorize the Manumission of Them Under Certain Restrictions, and to Prevent the Abuse of Slaves," passed 2 March 1786. Although considered a weak act, it represents the state's first step forward to emancipate those held in involuntary servitude.¹⁵

¹¹ *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. August 26, 1762 edition.

¹² *The Pennsylvania Journal*. October 28, 1762 edition.

¹³ Spencer Crew, "Black New Jersey Before the Civil War: Two Case Studies." Published in *New Jersey History*, Vol. XCIX, nos. 1 and 2, Spring-Summer 1981. New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey, p. 69.

¹⁴ Dorwart, p. 47.

¹⁵ Clement Alexander Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey*. New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey, 1980, p. 73-75.

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During 1792, a group of leading county citizens formed the Abolition Society for Gloucester County at the courthouse in Woodbury in 1792. During 1798 and 1799, the abolition society conducted a census of Blacks living within Gloucester County. For Newton Township, which included present-day Camden and several of its present-day suburban communities at that time, the unnamed Quaker enumerator reported:

Freeholders.....	2
Possessed of Houses and small lots of land.....	14 House holders
Total amt. 90 Men, Women & Children	
All Laborers, no tradesmen amongst them	
8 th Month 1798 ¹⁶	

Countywide, the abolition society identified 415 free Black residents and 47 Blacks held as slaves as of the 8th Month 1799.¹⁷ The comment at the bottom of the tally reads, "Some of the freed Blacks are of sober, orderly lives, and a number of those who are free possess considerable property." As Gloucester County entered the beginning years of the nineteenth century, small Black settlements began to appear throughout the county populated by African slaves freed primarily by conscience or by the 1786 Slave Act.¹⁸ The historic documents of Gloucester County record at least 30 slaves manumitted under this act.¹⁹ Historian Frank Stewart contended the record book for these manumissions "...is apparently very incomplete because it will be noticed that some of the freedom papers were not recorded until several years after they were granted."²⁰

The Black Community in the City of Camden: The Settlement Era

By 1820 Gloucester County contained 1,064 free Blacks and 39 slaves. Ten years later, the county's free Black population had increased by almost 50 percent, with 1,549 enumerated. Contrarily, Gloucester County now only contained four slaves. These numbers for 1830 represent the effects of the Gradual Emancipation Act, passed in the state legislature in 1804. George Fishman writes about this act, stating,

By state action this act made emancipation compulsory. It was not universal. It applied only to children of slaves born after July 4, 1804. Such children would not be freed, however, until age 21 for females and age 25 for males. As a result the full sweep of manumissions under the act would not show up until the census of 1830. Slaves born before July 4, 1804 remained in slavery, with a few slaves being on record clear up to and including the Civil War.

While noting that the act of 1804 made the handwriting on the wall clear for slavery, it is also important to note that this first emancipation act passed by New Jersey also was the last action taken by a northern state on emancipation. It came some thirty years after the first emancipation bill was proposed to the

¹⁶ Records of the Abolition Society of Gloucester County. Stewart Collection, Campbell Library, Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey.

¹⁷ Records of the Abolition Society of Gloucester County.

¹⁸ Oscar Williams, *African Americans and Colonial Legislation in the Middle Colonies*. Garland Publishing, Incorporated, New York City, New York, 1998, p. 89.

¹⁹ Frank H. Stewart, *Notes on Old Gloucester County*. Vol. 1. The New Jersey Society of Pennsylvania, [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania], 1917, p. 65-67.

²⁰ Stewart, 1917, p. 67.

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legislature. Further, unlike New York and Pennsylvania, New Jersey never did pass a general emancipation act that in actuality set all slaves free.²¹

In 1824, a group of abolition-minded Newton Township residents raised \$140 to purchase the freedom of Daniel Clark, an escaped slave from Delaware, once the property of a "Jenifer Taylor." Ms. Taylor signed the necessary manumission papers for filing in the Gloucester County Clerk's Office.²² This suggests the abolitionist movement had already caught the imagination of area residents.

Fettersville, Kaighnsville, and Centreville

As Blacks gained their freedom, groups of them assembled into segregated enclaves, including nascent communities in the area incorporated as the City of Camden in 1828, and in the adjacent townships of Newton and Waterford. Although the old settlement of Kaighnton may have offered some Blacks living quarters, the presumed first and largest of these ethnic enclaves within the City of Camden was Fettersville. In 1833, Richard Fetters acquired a parcel of land in several tracts from Charity and Grace Kaighn. The bounds of these tracts included Line and Cherry streets and Third Street to the Delaware River. Fetters had the land platted into building lots and advertised them for sale at a low price and easy financing. The advertisements in Philadelphia newspapers attracted many purchasers, "...a large proportion of them colored persons, a number of whom are still the most respected residents."²³ Prowell continues his section on Fettersville with a discussion of the first African American residents, the formation of the Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church during the initial settlement period of the early 1830s, and two descriptions of the community driving off slave-catchers without their quarry in the antebellum years of the Underground Railroad movement. The African American presence in Fettersville grew quickly, as Prowell states:

The colored settlement at Fettersville grew rapidly, and at one time figured largely in the census table, the colored population of the South Ward, in 1850 reaching nearly one-fourth of the entire population of the ward; but the proportion has since decreased, being slightly in excess of seven per cent. in 1886. The actual number in 1850 was seven hundred and twenty-five, and in 1885 it was seven hundred and ninety-one, while the total population in the former year was four thousand one hundred and twelve, and in the latter year eleven thousand and sixty-four.²⁴

Within five years of Richard Fetters establishing Fettersville, another Black community named Kaighnsville started east of Seventh and south of Chestnut Street, Newton Township, on the opposite side of Broadway from Fettersville. Benjamin Vandyke constructed the first house at what would become Ann Street and Kaighn Avenue, but then the corner of John Kaighn's cornfield, in 1838 and then took up residence. Soon thereafter, Daniel Wilkins, an African American builder from Fettersville, acquired the land bounded by Seventh, Ann, Sycamore Street and Kaighn Avenue. George R. Prowell's *History of Camden County* lists many of the other early settlers in Kaighnsville, noting, "...other well-known colored people settled in the neighborhood, built churches and established schools."²⁵ One notable developer in Kaighnsville was Dempsey D. Butler, who arrived in the Camden area from Virginia in 1848 at the age of 28. He initially opened a general store along Kaighn Avenue and used the income from the store for real estate investments. He constructed dwellings, boarding houses, churches, and schools within Kaighnsville. His real estate

²¹ George Fishman, *The African American Struggle for Freedom and Equality: The Development of a People's Identity, New Jersey, 1624-1850*. Garland Publishing, Incorporated, New York City, New York, 1997, p. 136-137.

²² Price, 1980, pp. 122-123.

²³ George R. Prowell, *The History of Camden County, New Jersey*. L.J. Richards & Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1886, p. 421.

²⁴ Prowell, 1886, p. 421.

²⁵ Prowell, 1886, p. 423.

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development work included building substantial brick houses along Kaighn Avenue in Kaighnsville. In May 1867, he advertised one of his dwellings for sale in *The Christian Recorder*, published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The advertisement read,

For Sale, at 741 Kaighn's Point Avenue, a Brick House, containing seven rooms, with a front of sixty feet. Terms easy. Immediate possession given. Apply to

D.D. Butler,

741 Kaighn's Point Avenue,
Camden, N.J.²⁶

Dempsey Butler grew in stature within the Camden Black community as his societal impact increased. At the time of his death in January 1900, a newspaper noted, "Mr. Butler is believed to have been the richest man of his race in this State and one of the richest in the country. The estate appraisalment has not yet been made."²⁷

A third Black settlement arose in western Newton Township upon the lands of the Kaighns Point Land Company, which firm platted a tract of land purchased from Isaac S. Mulford, physician and historical author, located east of the West Jersey Railroad beginning in 1849 and known as "Stockton." Two years later, the company acquired additional land from the Mickle family lying between Ferry Avenue and Jackson Street and extending eastward almost to the Evergreen Cemetery. After platting this parcel into building lots, the company named the new section "Centreville." Prowell reports,

Most of the tract was a corn-field and on it were two tenant-houses, both on Central Avenue, one at the corner of Master and the other on Phillip Street. South of Ferry Avenue was a forest of oak-trees, and north of Stockton was a dense thicket, where rabbits, quail and smaller game were sought after, and not in vain. The lots were sold on easy terms.²⁸

Although Centreville comprised an overall racially integrated population, some neighborhoods within the community contained predominately Black residents. In the 10 August 1867 edition of *The Christian Recorder*, a notice advertised a "Grand Union Excursion:"

There will be a grand excursion of the Sabbath-schools of the A.M.E. Macedonia Church, Camden, NJ, A.M.E. Mission, Kaighnsville, NJ, A.M.E. Mission, Centreville, NJ, and the Deep Cut School, to Miss Gibson's Woods, on the steamer Eagle, via. The Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, on Tuesday morning, August 13, 1867. The steamer will leave South Street Wharf, Philadelphia, at 7 AM, and Kaighn's Point at 7 ½ AM. Tickets 40 cents. Children half price.²⁹

Two years later, a notice published in an October 1869 edition of *The Christian Recorder*, suggests a growing African American presence in Centreville: "The corner-stone of the new church and school house of the Macedonia charge,

²⁶ Advertisement, *The Christian Recorder*. 25 May 1867 edition. *The Christian Recorder*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

²⁷ *The New York Times*. 25 January 1900 edition. *The New York Times*, New York City, New York.

²⁸ Prowell, 1886, p. 423.

²⁹ *The Christian Recorder*, "Grand Union Excursion." 10 August 1867 edition. *The Christian Recorder*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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Camden, NJ, will be laid at Centreville, Oct. 25, at 2 o'clock, by Bishop J.P. Campbell. 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' WM. M. WATSON, Pastor."³⁰

With the establishment of these three historic African American communities within the City of Camden, the growth of the Black presence in the city and adjacent Newton Township would soon follow.

The Black Community in the City of Camden: The Growth Era

By 1840, the federal census enumerator identified 1,631 African Americans in Gloucester County with none of them held in bondage within the county's boundaries. In 1844, the New Jersey State Legislature approved an act to erect Camden County out of Gloucester County.³¹ Six years later, the combined total of Black inhabitants in Camden and Newton townships, the latter including outlier enclaves, was 1,141. As Clement A. Price noted in his 1980 book, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, the City of Camden's growing African American population made it a natural station on the Underground Railroad.³² On the brink of the Civil War, the 1860 aggregate of the African American population for the same two municipalities is 1,507, while the 1870 federal census enumerated 2,217 African Americans within the City of Camden and Newton Township. During 1865 the eastern portion of old Newton Township became Haddon Township, leaving only the western portion, closest to Camden, as the surviving territory for the municipality. So, by the census year of 1870, the enumeration only counted those Black residents in such localities as Kaighnsville, Centreville, and other African American neighborhoods associated with the City of Camden but situated across the municipal line in Newton. Finally, in 1871, the state legislature merged most of the remaining Newton Township landmass into the City of Camden, with some of the territory going to Haddon Township, and old Newton disappeared as a political entity.³³ Growth within Camden City's Black community continued apace. In 1880 the city contained 3,574 Black citizens. Twenty years later, at the turn of the twentieth century, the City of Camden held fully 65 percent of Camden County's Black population, with the census enumerating 5,491 African American residents within the city limits. The same census identified 8,448 Blacks living within Camden County. Of those Blacks living in the City of Camden, the census-taker listed the vast majority of them to be natives of New Jersey:

City of Camden African American Population in 1900	
<u>Nativity Location</u>	<u>Population</u>
New Jersey	2,142
Delaware	782
Pennsylvania	772
Virginia	639
Maryland	602
Other Locations	<u>554</u>
Total Black Population in the City of Camden	<u>5,491</u>

Organizing Fraternally

Following close on the heels of establishing churches, African American fraternal groups arose in the City of Camden. Black masonry arrived in the City of Camden in 1847, when African American residents of organized Rising Sun Lodge

³⁰ *The Christian Recorder*, "Notice." 9 October 1869 edition.

³¹ John P. Snyder, *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries : 1606-1968*. Bureau of Geology and Topography, Trenton, New Jersey, 1969, p. 103.

³² Price, 1980, p. 91.

³³ Price, 1980, p. 107-108.

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of Free and Accepted Masons at the home of Ishmael Locks, located at the southwest corner of Fifth and Cherry streets in Fettersville. Spencer Crew reports on this phenomenon in his 1984 essay on Camden:

Like the church, fraternal groups provided Afro-Americans with opportunities denied them in the larger society. In Camden, as was the case throughout the United States, black fraternal organizations underwent a burst of growth in the years following the Civil War. Camden's black fraternal development was aided in large part by a disagreement over sovereignty among black New Jersey masons which resulted in schism. In 1850, two separate statewide black fraternal orders emerged: The Union Grand Lodge (Independent), a rival body of dissenting black Masonic brothers organized at a meeting in Kaighnsville. The formation of these separate bodies inaugurated a twenty-five year struggle statewide and in Camden for additional members and influence. As a result of this rivalry the number of black masonic in Camden proliferated. During these years, eleven different lodges existed in Camden.³⁴

Within two years, Rising Sun Lodge met for a time at Butler's Hall, a building constructed by Dempsey Butler specifically for the meetings of such organizations on Sycamore Street, east of Seventh, in Kaighnsville. Other Masonic bodies followed and, at times, disputes arose, causing splits among the lodges. New Jersey Black Masonry historian Aldrage B. Cooper, notes in his 1957 work,

Camden has possessed what would seem to the observer to have been more than its just complement of Lodges. The great rivalry between the two former Grand Lodges crystallized in the establishment of several Lodges in that city. It becomes increasingly apparent that the efforts of those two Grand Lodges to plant their constituents in the same places was purposeful, and much prestige was at stake in Camden. As far as can be ascertained, eleven Lodges existed in that city at about the same period.³⁵

However, after 1875 the competing lodges began to merge and consolidate. This action resulted in a diminution of importance for these fraternal and secret organizations. Spencer Crew notes,

Unlike Camden's black churches, black fraternal bodies did not maintain their importance in the city's black community throughout this period. Once the Grand Lodge of New Jersey reconciled its differences, black fraternal life in Camden diminished in vitality. Without the fierce competition and debate between the rival organizations, black fraternities found it difficult to recruit new members. In part, the development of other recreational and social alternatives undermined black Masonic participation.³⁶

The Civil War

As the national issues involving slavery and states' rights erupted into the Civil War, the Union initially refused to accept Blacks seeking to enter military service. The first federal authorization for accepting them came in July 1862 with congressional passage of the Second Confiscation and Militia Act. Prior to Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, effective 1 January 1863, only five colored regiments existed. However, in May 1863, the United States War Department issued General Order No. 143, which established the Bureau of Colored Troops. The Adjutant General's office provided oversight for this new bureau and Major C.W. Foster received an appointment of bureau chief

³⁴ Crew, 1985, p. 23.

³⁵ Aldrage B. Cooper, *Footprints of Prince Hall Masonry in New Jersey: The Source and Course of Ancient Craft Masonry Among Prince Hall Freemasons in New Jersey in the Nineteenth Century*. Press of Henry Emmerson, New York City, New York, 1957, p. 156-157.

³⁶ Crew, 1985, p. 25.

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under the title of "Assistant Adjutant General." The war department charged this bureau with recruiting Black soldiers, commissioning officers as commanders, organizing the regiments, and managing all the related bureaucracy and paperwork. Fourteen states raised volunteer military units under the militia laws and many of these units eventually became part of the new U.S. Colored Troops. Only the regiments from Connecticut, Louisiana, and Massachusetts retained their individual state identities.³⁷

New Jersey failed to raise any regiments for the U.S. Colored Troops or even for the state militia, forcing the state's African Americans who desired to serve to attend recruiting camps in either Pennsylvania or Massachusetts. In 1860, Camden County contained a total free Black male population, spanning all ages, of 1,176. After federal regulations potentially allowed these men to join the Union military, 190 of them traveled to Cheltenham, Pennsylvania and entered Camp William Penn for training, while 14 African American males from Camden County made their way to Massachusetts and joined state units there. A small number of Camden County Black males, perhaps as few as nine, joined the United States Navy. Assuming a level of accuracy in these enlistment numbers for Camden County Black males, over 18 percent of the total African American men then residing in the county entered military service. However, when you look at the total number of Black men presumed eligible for military service in Camden County, covering the range of age from 15 to 49 years of age, the percentage of those who entered the Union forces rises to almost 36 percent, based on an eligible population of 598 Black men.³⁸ Of these men, Charles C. Smiley records 46 of them as entering military service from the locality that would become the Borough of Lawnside in the twentieth century.³⁹

As a result of their military service, Black veterans from the City of Camden and its suburbs formed the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) William P. Robeson Post, No. 51, of Camden, in June 1881 with 25 charter members. Reportedly, the Robeson Post was the first GAR post organized in New Jersey exclusively for Black veterans.⁴⁰ During the course of its operations, the post had membership that fluctuated from 24 in 1885 to as many as 90 in 1889 before diminishing to just 6 members in 1923. The post failed to file a report in 1923 and 1924, so the New Jersey Department of the GAR suspended the post.⁴¹ The Reverend Alexander Heritage Newton, pastor of the Macedonia AME Church, was among the prominent members of this GAR post. The remains of Black Civil War veterans lie in the various sectarian and non-sectarian African American cemeteries scattered throughout Camden County.⁴²

Political Activism

As noted above, the growth of the African American community within the City of Camden brought forth a variety of public and private institutions. These include schools, churches, clubs, veteran and fraternal organizations. Black historian Spencer R. Crew notes in a 1984 monograph,

Nineteenth century black residents constantly faced racial barriers constructed by the larger community which excluded them from meaningful participation in the social and political activities of their cities. As a result they developed their own separate organizations. Born of necessity, these alternative institutions provided an avenue through which blacks could express, without recrimination, their aspirations to actively participate in the political process, to hold leadership positions, to attend social

³⁷ William A. Gladstone, *United States Colored Troops: 1863-1867*. Thomas Publications, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania., 1990, p. 9, 11.

³⁸ Samuel Asbell, The Lost Black Legion website: <http://www.lostblacklegion.org/> accessed 23 February 2008.

³⁹ Charles C. Smiley, *A True Story of Lawnside, N.J.* n.p., 1921, 12-13.

⁴⁰ Prowell, 1886, p. 175-176.

⁴¹ Buzz Smithcors, Lyon Camp #10, Vineland, NJ, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War website: <http://www.lyoncamp.org/Lyoncamp/robeson51.htm> accessed 23 February 2008.

⁴² Asbell, The Lost Black Legion website.

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functions without fear of demeaning treatment, or to enjoy a myriad of their other rights as citizens. Separate black organizations and activities provided Afro-Americans a means of bridging the gap between the reality of their circumscribed existence and the rights that should have been theirs as residents of the United States.

The focal point of the independent organizations developed by Camden's black community between 1860 and 1920 was the black church. Historically, the black church served a number of purposes for black Americans. ...In Camden, the church helped ease the increasing Afro-American population in their adjustment to urban life. ...

...Because of the multitude of services it offered, the church was one of the most important institutions established by black residents. ...Between 1860 and 1920 in Camden, more than a dozen new black religious institutions appeared while the established churches grew larger. At the start of this period four churches provided religious instruction for the black community: Kaighn Avenue [or Seventh] Baptist Church [Kaighnville], Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, Macedonia [African] Methodist Episcopal Church [Fetersville], and the Wesley Church [Kaighnville], the smallest of the four houses of worship, consisted of a small congregation located on Sycamore Street.⁴³

Many African Americans living in the City of Camden's Black community embraced "...aspirations to actively participate in the political process..." as Spencer Crew stated above. During April 1867, Dempsey D. Butler put voice to those aspirations when he addressed a memorial to New Jersey lawmakers requesting the right for all of the state's Black residents to exercise the voter's franchise. The 4 May 1867 edition of *The Christian Recorder* reported,

APPEAL FROM A BLACK MAN. – Under this head a memorial was addressed, by D.D. Butler, of Camden, to the State Legislature of New Jersey, asking, in the name of seven thousand colored voters of that State, that the elective franchise be no longer withheld from them on account of color. Mr. Butler's letter was enough to move the heart of a modern Nero, but not powerful enough to convince a "democrat." When will that tribe become extinct?⁴⁴

New Jersey failed to extend suffrage to African Americans until the ratification of the United States Constitution's Fifteenth Amendment. Despite this racially groundbreaking amendment, Camden Blacks continued to encounter resistance to their free exercise of the voter's franchise. In November 1870, local Democratic Party members hired eight off-duty Philadelphia police officers and an assorted group of other ruffians to discourage African Americans from voting in Newton Township. The melee at the polling place, located in the Centreville section of the township, resulted in the smashing of the ballot box and the serious injury of six African American voters, two of which suffered gunshot wounds.⁴⁵ The United States District Attorney brought 23 indictments against the guilty parties and obtained justice for the Blacks injured and for those prevented from voting during a court trial held in February 1871.⁴⁶

Political empowerment grew out of the attempts to prevent Blacks from voting in Newton Township. New Jersey African Americans, including those in Camden and its surrounds, held its very first convention of Black voters of New Jersey during April 1872. The convention's major platform was to prevent the passage of discriminatory state statutes

⁴³ Spencer R. Crew, "Making Their Own Way : Black Social and Institutional Life in Camden, New Jersey 1860-1920." Published in *The Black Experience in Southern New Jersey : Papers Presented at a Symposium February 11 & 12, 1984, Camden County Historical Society*. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey, 1985, p. 19-21.

⁴⁴ *The Christian Recorder*, "Appeal from a Black Man." 4 May 1867 edition.

⁴⁵ *The New York Times*. 11 November 1870 edition.

⁴⁶ *The New York Times*. 11, 13 February 1871 editions.

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and, conversely, to encourage the passage of laws favorable to the state's Black population. These conventions became an annual event and in 1880, the conventioners elected Charles W. Robinson, a Camden resident, as the body president, strongly suggesting that the Black community in Camden played an increasingly important role in such statewide proceedings. Using his position of strength, Robinson dispatched Black delegations to the National Republican Committee beginning in July 1880. The five-man committee from Camden consisted of David Turner, A.J. Aldridge, Jesse Lawson, James Merrit, and the spokesman, William F. Powell, who served the Camden Black community as principal of the segregated schools. Powell annotated the position paper the delegation from Camden delivered to the National Republican Committee concerning the ongoing relationship between Blacks and Republicans. His role as spokesman propelled Powell to ever increasing importance on the national political stage. Despite his growing national prominence, he remained active in local Camden politics and campaigned for Republican candidates both in the city and statewide. As a reward for his unwavering dedication to the Republican Party, President William McKinley appointed Powell as the United States *Charge d'Affaires* to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 1897. He remained in this position until 1905, when he returned to Camden and resumed his position of school principal.⁴⁷

However, despite Powell's crucial work in state and national politics, locally, Camden Blacks experienced only limited success in politics. The Republican-controlled government remained sympathetic to the plight of the city's African American population. Spencer Crew states,

The most important political advantage they had in Camden was the settlement patterns of Afro-Americans in the city. Throughout this period, Camden had a clearly distinguishable black community. Evolving out of the former areas of Fettersville and Kaighnsville, the seventh and eighth wards of Camden housed the majority of the city's Black citizenry until 1890; the fifth, sixth, and eighth wards served the same functions after that date. Although blacks did not constitute the majority of the residents in any of these wards, their concentration in these areas gave them greater political strength than they would have had if they were more evenly distributed throughout the city. Consequently the Republicans, who held political sway in Camden during most of this period, were quite sympathetic to the political needs of Camden's black community. Black voters helped maintain Republican ascendancy in Camden and local officials recognized the necessity of providing blacks with some political patronage in return for their support. However, the alliance that emerged between Afro-Americans and local Republican officials was a fragile one. Republicans would not make major concessions to black voters for fear of losing the support of white voters.⁴⁸

Camden's Black community not only failed to achieve a representative number of elected offices, but they also lost in their battle for an integrated city school system. Despite these deficiencies, the Republican government did allow Camden's African American population to exercise almost complete control over the education of Black children within the segregated schools. Under the direction of former diplomat William F. Powell, after he returned to Camden from the Dominican Republic in 1905, the Black schools created a highly developed system for the efficient and productive education of the children under his charge. He also achieved in convincing the Camden Board of Education to retain the services of Dr. Roscoe L. Moore, the first Black school doctor hired in New Jersey, for addressing the health needs of black students in the city. Spencer Crew suggests that Camden's Black community's experience in the education realm became iconic for African-American life and society in the city:

⁴⁷ Spencer Crew, 1985, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Spencer Crew, 1985, p. 27.

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The situation for blacks in the realm of public education in general was indicative of the political predicament of blacks in Camden. They did not have enough political power to force fundamental changes in the operation of the city, (i.e. ending segregation); however, they did have enough clout to manipulate their segregated status to their benefit. This was not the ideal situation, but in the long run black Camden residents achieved some positive gains, many of which stretched beyond the realm of public education.⁴⁹

During the final quarter of the nineteenth century, Camden Blacks achieved some success in moving forward occupationally and, consequently, societal status. By exerting pressure as a whole, the city's Black community obtained governmental positions for some of its individual citizens, including police officers, justices of the peace, and post office clerks and letter carriers. Their newfound professions provided proof of the important role the city's black population played in Republican politics. In response, Camden's Black community organized themselves politically, including forming "colored Republican clubs," which became quite influential in local politics. The more prominent of these political bodies included the Seventh Ward Republican Club, the Ninth Ward Colored Republicans, and the Third Ward Republicans.⁵⁰ As the City of Camden's Black community entered the new century, the status of its constituents had slowly improved both internally and within the larger city structure. As a result, many of its aging citizens sought a suitable burial place for their remains.

The Black Community in the City of Camden: The Need for Proper Burial Facilities

Similar to the experience of area White Christian congregations, as various Black churches organized in the City of Camden and adjacent western Newton Township during the nineteenth century, none are known to have established burial grounds adjacent to their edifice or anywhere else in the area. Furthermore, no non-sectarian Black cemeteries existed within the city or Newton Township and only one small non-sectarian cemetery out in then Delaware Township (now Pennsauken Township), operated at that time. The apparent lack of burial space for African Americans living in the City of Camden and Newton Township must have caused great concern in the minds of many Black people as they considered the final resting place for their remains. African Americans from Camden City and the surrounding area had few choices for a final resting place beyond the few Black churches in the rural hinterlands with adjoining cemeteries; the ancient slave burial grounds; or a select few of the public township "pauper" graveyards in the county. At least one township cemetery, the eastern Waterford Township burial ground in current-day Cherry Hill Township, featured two sections: one for Whites and one for Blacks, but the township generally limited burials to just its residents.⁵¹ The grantor of the land for the western Waterford Township burial ground, situated in present-day Pennsauken Township, specified the half-acre tract of land "for the special purpose of a Burial ground for the White Inhabitants of said township, and for no other use, intent, or purpose," making this public cemetery off-limits to African Americans.⁵²

At least two graveyards in Camden County contained the remains of former local slaves. George R. Prowell, writing in his 1886 work, *The History of Camden County, New Jersey*, states,

The few graves that formerly appeared by the road leading through Guineatown [Bellmawr] from Snow Hill [Lawnside] to Gloucester [City], in Centre Township, is the resting-place of many of the slaves of

⁴⁹ Spencer Crew, 1985, p. 27.

⁵⁰ Spencer Crew, 1985, p. 27-28.

⁵¹ John Clement, Maps and Draughts, Volume 7. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, p. 50.

⁵² Gloucester County Deed Book XX, p. 1. Gloucester County Clerk's Office, Woodbury, New Jersey.

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the Huggs, the Glovers, the Harrisons and others, who, after they were free, built houses and settled them at this place. No vestige of the graves or stones is left.

The law required that they should not become a county charge; hence this means was taken to keep them from want when too old to work. There is a like place, known as Hurley's Grounds, on the farm now owned by Benjamin and Joseph Lippincott [in Haddon Heights], a short distance east from the Mount Ephraim road. This was the burial-place of the Hinchman slaves and their descendents, and was used until with a few years⁵³

Both of these ancient burial grounds have disappeared today. Other graveyards containing the remains of local slaves probably existed at one time within present-day Camden County, but their locations and remembrance are lost to historians today.

Township/Public Burial Grounds

The City of Camden and co-extensive Camden Township, legislatively created as municipalities in 1828 and 1832 respectively, received its first public burial ground in 1836, when Camden Township established The Camden Cemetery, now identified as Old Camden Cemetery, operated by an appointed board of trustees. Laid out adjacent to the Newton Friends Meeting burial ground, the Camden Cemetery originally comprised only three acres. Enlargements occurred in 1864, 1868, and 1876 until it reached its present size. While the cemetery offered plots to rich and poor alike, the trustees did set aside a "strangers burying ground." Prowell notes, "A portion of the ground is laid out into family burial lots, and the remainder is for city purposes—that is, the burial of strangers and the poor. The city ground for the poor is separate and free of charges."⁵⁴ However, there are no recorded instances of African American burials in The Camden Cemetery during the nineteenth century.

Newton Township, formed in Gloucester County during 1695, first considered establishing public burial grounds during 1742 on two one-quarter-acre parcels that Joseph Kaighn and Joseph Zane agreed to give to the township on a gratis basis. The township acquired land from Zane [in West Collingswood] in 1749.⁵⁵ Newton added another public burial ground during 1754 in the village of Haddonfield, adjacent to the Friends graveyard as Douglas Rauschenberger and Katherine Tassini note in their 1989 work, *Lost Haddonfield*:

In 1754, a ¼-acre lot, in the glen between the Friends School and Lake Street, was purchased by Newton Township as a burial land for the poor. The "Poor's Burying Ground" later known as the "Strangers Burying Ground," was deeded to the Meeting in 1853 and was incorporated into the Friends Cemetery.⁵⁶

Prior to 1832, the City of Camden was still a political entity within Newton Township. It appears Newton Township also established a pauper's burial ground in which Blacks evidently could be buried at some point prior to 1832, the year the legislature erected Camden Township out of Newton Township, moving the City of Camden into Camden Township. In the settlement between the old and new municipality, the governance of each agreed "...that the graveyards should belong each to the township in which it was located."⁵⁷ This cemetery for the poor comprised about an acre of ground

⁵³ Prowell, 1886, p. 399.

⁵⁴ Snyder, 1969, p. 104; Prowell, 1886, p. 553.

⁵⁵ Newton Township Minute Book, 1723-1821. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, unpaginated.

⁵⁶ Douglas Rauschenberger and Katherine Tassini, *Lost Haddonfield*. Haddonfield Historical Society, Haddonfield, New Jersey, 1989, p. 124.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, "Pauper Graveyards, Newton—Camden—Haddon." Unidentified and undated [c. 1879] newspaper clipping tipped-in to a scrapbook. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey.

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and existed on a parcel of land along Kings Highway near its present-day intersection with First Avenue in Haddon Heights. Camden County historian Charles S. Boyer identified the other Newton Township burial ground that once existed within Camden Township when the legislature erected the municipality, and it once stood along Federal Street between Wright Avenue and Newton Avenue. Reportedly this graveyard opened for burials in 1825 and it closed in 1836 when the Camden Cemetery opened.⁵⁸

When the City of Camden absorbed the western portion of Newton Township in 1871, the territory became the Seventh and Eighth wards of the city, which contained the large Black population centers of Kaighnsville and Centreville respectively. The city continued using the pauper's graveyard along Kings Highway to bury the poor deceased residents from the Seventh and Eighth wards, which annoyed Haddon Township officials:

The ground on the Mount Ephraim and Haddonfield road, belonging to Newton township has continued to be used as a burial place for paupers to this day. In 1865 the township was divided, the eastern part, containing the grave yard being set off under the title of Haddon township. By the terms of settlement, both townships were to have the use of the ground, which was to be in charge of the township committee of Haddon, but Newton was to pay a share of the expense of keeping it in order. In 1871 Newton township was again divided, the eastern portion, chiefly rural, was set off to Haddon and the western section with 8600 inhabitants was annexed to the City of Camden as the Seventh and Eighth wards. The Haddon township committee have attended to the taking charge part of the bargain made with Newton, and the latter has performed its duty, so far as using the ground is concerned, and the punctuality of the Seventh and Eighth wards in fulfilling the last clause of the treaty is what has caused the trouble and led to a conference. As the May meeting of City Council, a communication was read from the township of Haddon committee on relief of the poor and last week the committee met the Haddon committee on the ground. The latter complained that since the annexation of Newton to Camden, the latter has contributed, nothing toward the support of the ground but that the paupers of the Seventh and Eighth wards have been buried there. It was further stated that bodies were placed in very shallow graves and the probing a cane in the hands of a person present, revealed the fact that some of the coffins were less than two feet below the surface. The Haddon committee suggested to the Camden committee that if the latter will give up all claim to the use of the ground Haddon would forgive the city all past dues and acquit it of all charges on that account in the future.⁵⁹

Within a year of Camden surrendering any claim it had to the old Newton Township pauper's ground, Haddon Township sold the burial ground to Jacob Dodd, a local farmer whose land surrounded the graveyard and it ceased to be maintained as a cemetery, becoming just another portion of Dodd's farm.⁶⁰ No trace of this graveyard can be identified today.

The only known and extant private non-sectarian Black cemetery dating to the early nineteenth century in today's Camden County is Jordan Lawn or St. Martin's Cemetery, a small graveyard originally located in Waterford Township but now in Pennsauken Township along Haddonfield-Sorrel Horse Road. The year of this burial ground's establishment is unknown, but it likely dates to 1840, the earliest period of settlement in the African American hamlet called

⁵⁸ Leonard S. Irwin, Cemetery Records Finding Aid. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey; Anonymous, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ Anonymous, *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ Dennis G. Raible, *Down a Country Lane*. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey, 1999, p. 84-85.

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Jordantown.⁶¹ Among those interred here are 38 Civil War veterans from the United States Colored Troops and the United States Navy. Veterans of other wars also lie in repose here, along with civilian burials.⁶² This Black cemetery has been associated with Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church beginning in 1971, but prior to that time and from its inception, Jordan Lawn was an unaffiliated cemetery. Its relatively small size precluded regular interments from the City of Camden's Black community.

Johnson & Company's Colored Cemetery

To address the pressing problem of non-sectarian burials for Camden's growing Black population, and particularly for those who status in life had risen above the ranking of pauper, Jacob Johnson, Anthony Collings (Collins), and Luke Derrickson, three Black men, purchased a plot of land containing 2.67 acres along Federal Street in what then was Delaware Township from William and Mary Rich on 20 January 1854 for \$775.00.⁶³ During the census year of 1850, Johnson, a 25-year-old "mulatto" laborer and native of Maryland, resided in the South Ward of Camden, probably Fettersville, and owned real estate valued at \$2,000.⁶⁴ The same enumeration identifies Anthony Collings (Collins) as a 44-year-old native of New Jersey and a laborer residing in Fairfield Township, Cumberland County, New Jersey, although the sale deed for the cemetery land lists him as a resident of Camden County.⁶⁵ The census-taker found Luke Derrickson, a 35-year-old laborer born in Virginia, living in Newton Township, Camden County, New Jersey.⁶⁶ From its inception in 1854 until the last known burial in 1915, Johnson and Company's Colored Cemetery received the remains of at least 264 people. Among these burials are 107 Black veterans with service ranging from the Civil and Spanish American War to World War I. Notables buried here include W. Miles Butts (1847-1899), the first African-American policeman in the City of Camden; and Peter M.D. Postles (1830-1896), the first Black Freeholder elected in Camden County, serving in office from 1881-1883.⁶⁷

During a murder investigation, Camden County detectives discovered that gravediggers had failed to maintain the minimum depth of four feet and excavated the graves much shallower in at least 22 burials at Johnson's Cemetery. The police discovered this discrepancy while probing graves for the murder victim and found some graves only 18 inches deep. They also found that miscreants had carried out grave robbery over an extended period of years within the graveyard. The detectives found 28 graves disturbed with the coffin and bodies all missing. The newspaper reports:

The most recent robbery that has been committed in the graveyard was the stealing of the body of Elizabeth Watts, an aged colored woman, who died in Merchantville some time in June last. According to the story of her nephew, John Huggins, who lives at Matchtown, Mrs. Watts died from a peculiar disease something like a cancer. She was buried in a black cloth-covered casket, with six silver handles. It is also stated that the relatives of the dead woman had been approached to buy the body for professional purposes, but that they refused to agree to such a sale. The body was buried in Lot 20, Plot 2. This grave was pointed out to the Camden County detectives as not being of the required depth, which, according to the law, should be four feet from the surface, and on examination it was found that

⁶¹ Prowell, 1886, p. 761.

⁶² Paul W. Schopp, "Jordantown and Its Cemetery." At <http://westjerseyhistory.org/articles/jordantown/index.shtml> accessed 30 December 2007.

⁶³ Camden County Deed Book U, p. 329. Camden County Clerk's Office, Camden, New Jersey.

⁶⁴ United States Census Bureau. Seventh Decennial Census. Microform edition, roll M432-445, p.91. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., 1850.

⁶⁵ United States Census Bureau, roll M432-446, 1850, p. 178.

⁶⁶ United States Census Bureau, roll M432-445, 1850, p. 162.

⁶⁷ Gail Greenberg, A Survey of Johnson Cemetery, Federal Street, Camden. Typescript. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey, 1978.

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the grave contained no body or coffin. The grave showed signs of being tampered with. ...Johnson's colored burial ground is situated on the Moorestown pike, between Camden and Merchantville, and is just the spot for the work of body snatchers.⁶⁸

As stated above, the last known interment occurred at Johnson Cemetery in 1915 and as time elapsed, the closed cemetery endured a downward spiral of general deterioration. Anecdotes from an anonymous individual recall prepubescent White boys using the cemetery as a baseball field, with the players using the flattened grave markers as bases and home plate during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1978, the then Camden County Historian, Gail Greenberg, recorded the information on the readable headstones and deposited the completed recordation in the collections of the Camden County Historical Society. During the early 1980s, the City of Camden determined it would remove the burials and headstones from Johnson & Company's Colored Cemetery and turn it into a city park, complete with a memorial and bronze marker dedicated to the veterans once interred therein. However, no firm evidence has ever been found that the city completed its commitment to remove the remains buried there for re-interment elsewhere and the bodies presumably still lie there beneath the city park.

Following the Civil War, Black developer Dempsey D. Butler provided the City of Camden's Black community with a small, triangular-shaped, cemetery along Ferry Avenue behind the Evergreen Cemetery, originally established as a fashionable burial ground for Whites and the preferred final resting location for upscale Camden residents until Harleigh Cemetery opened in 1885. Butler Cemetery contains the remains of his wife, Anna Eliza, who died in 1867 and six Black Civil War veterans. In his will, Butler devised a fund to aid in maintaining the small cemetery, including paying a sexton for the graveyard.⁶⁹ The diminutive size of Butler Cemetery, measuring less than one-half acre, precluded it from accepting more than several hundred burials, so it never really offered a solution to the ongoing problem of cemetery space for African Americans living in the City of Camden. Even with its limited capacity, Butler Cemetery actually contains very few burials.

The Black Community in the City of Camden: The Formation of the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company

By the turn of the twentieth century, Johnson's Cemetery had become quite crowded with burials and most, if not all, the graves had been sold. The pending maturation and closure of Johnson's Cemetery, the only non-sectarian Black burial ground in the Camden area, combined with the outrage of periodic grave desecration activities and improper burial procedures, and being barred by all other public cemeteries, must have weighed heavily on Camden's African American community. A Bill of Complaint, prepared in July 1966 and filed with the Superior Court of New Jersey, Chancery Division Camden County, confirms the concerns of the Black community in the City of Camden:

The plaintiff [Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company] corporation was organized in the year 1901 by Negroes, in order that Negroes might be assured of a place for the burial of their dead. At the time, Johnson Cemetery, a Negro cemetery located in East Camden, was almost filled; and Negro customers were not welcomed by other public cemeteries.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *The New York Times*. "Wholesale Grave Robbery." Published in the 8 December 1890 issue. *The New York Times*, New York, New York, 1890.

⁶⁹ *The New York Times*, 26 January 1900, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Bill of Complaint filed in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Chancery Division, Camden County, Docket No. C-3100-65. July 1966. Haddonfield Historical Society, Haddonfield, New Jersey.

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A group of ten men, ranging in life status from educators to a bell boy, associated themselves together to form the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company in April 1901. It is unclear where and how these men first met socially; surmising suggests a fraternal organization like one of the Black Masonic lodges in the City of Camden; a local political club; a social group; or even at church, although the non-sectarian nature of the cemetery seems to refute any direct association with a given religious denomination.⁷¹ The Masonic connection appears somewhat likely; however, the lack of an established section for Masonic burials may detract from this hypothesis. Nonetheless, grave markers scattered throughout Mount Peace exhibit the Masonic emblem of dividers and a carpenter's framing square surrounding the letter "G." Unfortunately, no conclusive evidence could be found that provides the crucial link between these men involved in the formation of the Mount Peace corporation. Whatever their connection, the following Black men recorded their names as incorporators of the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Occupation*</u>	<u>Place of Birth*</u>
Cornish, Malachi D.	739 Kaighn Ave., Camden, NJ	School Teacher	Pennsylvania
Fernanders, Samuel N.	841 S. 6 th St., Camden, NJ	Manager, Insurance Co.	New Jersey
Heath, William H.B.	67 Carpenter St., Woodbury, NJ	Clergyman (1900)	North Carolina
Johnson, William H.	751 Cherry St., Camden, NJ	Public School Teacher	New Jersey
Moore, Spencer D.	652 Locust St., Camden, NJ	Stock keeper, Raffia House	New Jersey
Morton, John W.	867 Central Ave., Camden, NJ	Bell Boy, Hotel	New Jersey
Newton, Alexander H.	332 Washington St., Camden, NJ	Clergy	North Carolina
Roberts, George H.	617 St. John St., Camden, NJ	Messenger, Steam Railroad	Delaware
Saunders, Levin J.	435 West St., Camden, NJ	Messenger, PRR Railroad Office	Delaware
Spaulding, Thomas N.	1236 S. 2 nd St., Camden, NJ	Dr. of Patent/Botanic Medicines	Harrisburg, Pa. ⁷²

*Based on data collected from the 1910 Decennial Census population schedules for the City of Camden.

Of these men, Cornish, Fernanders, Johnson, and Roberts all resided in the Kaighnsville section of Camden; Moore, Newton, Saunders, and Spaulding lived in Fetersville; and Morton called Centreville home, based on the addresses they listed on the incorporation filing. The spread of residency across all three of the City of Camden's major African American neighborhoods provides an indication of the growing problems the then available burial facilities presented to the city's Black citizens. The addition of a pastor from Woodbury suggests a geographically larger interest in seeing such a cemetery become a reality, signifying a transcendent importance beyond just the Black community in the City of Camden. The mix of two African Methodist Episcopal clergymen, a naturopathic physician, an insurance company manager, and two educators—all professional people—along with a bell boy and two railroad messengers—representing a lesser skilled class of people—reflects a broad-based community support for establishing Mount Peace Cemetery. Black residents in Camden viewed some of these men as community leaders. Malachi D. Cornish, a native of Philadelphia and an 1878 graduate of that city's Institute for Colored Youth, became a well known educator in the City of Camden's pre-1920 segregated school system.⁷³ He succeeded Black education pioneer William H.F. Armstead at the African American grammar school in Camden, known as the Old Mt. Vernon School, located on Mt. Vernon Street.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Prowell, 1886, p. 562-563.

⁷² New Jersey Secretary of State, Incorporation Papers, Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company. Corporation no. C-2058. Division of Revenue, Trenton, New Jersey, 1901.

⁷³ *The North American*. "Colored Youth Graduating." 30 May 1878 edition. *The North American*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Fred Reiss, *Public Education in Camden, N.J. : From Inception to Integration*. iUniverse, New York City, New York, 2005, p. 120, *passim*.

⁷⁴ Fanny Jackson-Coppin, *Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching*. A.M.E. Book Concern, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1913, p. 145.

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With the completion of the John Greenleaf Whittier School on Chestnut Street between Seventh and Eighth streets, Cornish became the first principal of the new school, a position in which he remained tenured until his retirement. He also served on the City of Camden's Board of Education until his death in 1931.⁷⁵

Like Cornish, Samuel N. Fernanders also graduated from the Philadelphia Institute for Colored Youth, initially for stenography and typewriting in 1894 and then for printing in 1899, before becoming the manager of a local insurance company office in the City of Camden.⁷⁶ William B. Johnson worked in the same City of Camden School System with Cornish for many years. His son, Robert Burk Johnson, became a renowned Camden attorney and filled the unexpired term of Malachi Cornish on the Camden Board of Education upon Cornish's death.⁷⁷ The Reverend Alexander Heritage Newton served the City of Camden's Black community as the influential pastor of both Macedonia AME Church in Fettersville and, later, Hosanna AME Church in East Camden, standing on Saunders Avenue near 30th Street. Newton maintained a high level of activity in Prince Hall Masonic orders and associated bodies until his death in 1921.⁷⁸ A Civil War veteran and the author of the 1910 autobiographical volume, *Out of the Briars*, Newton's work as a pastor and a mason brought him into contact with many people within the City of Camden's Black community and African Americans residing throughout the region and the state.⁷⁹ The other incorporators likely played their own role in the social, religious, fraternal, and political realms in the City of Camden's Black community.

Initial Organization of the Corporation

Local newspapers failed to give much attention to the formation of this new corporation. Only the *Camden Post-Telegram* published a one-paragraph notice of its incorporation, noting:

New Companies Incorporated

Mt. Peace Cemetery and Funeral Director's Association [*sic*], of this city, capital stock, \$12,500. The objects of this new corporation are to establish a new colored cemetery in the vicinity of this city. Among the incorporators are Malachi D. Cornish, principal of the Mt. Vernon School, and funeral director, James Johnson.⁸⁰

Contrary to this article and absent in the list of names above, James Johnson obviously failed to subscribe to the incorporation and serve as an original incorporating director. This may explain why the funeral directing aspect of the corporation never developed as first intended. While the original Certificate of Incorporation included the words "To conduct a funeral directing business in all its branches including the disposal of the dead by burial, or by incineration or cremation or other process," the very first annual report filed with the New Jersey Secretary of State reports the character of the business as "sale of burial lots and interment of the dead" with no mention of funeral business. This suggests that with James Johnson's name missing from the incorporators, the company never pursued this aspect of the

⁷⁵ Phil Cohen, DVRBS website. Webpage on Malachi D. Cornish:

<http://www.dvrbs.com/people/CamdenPeople-MalachiDCornish.htm> accessed 17 March 2008.

⁷⁶ *The North American*, "Institute for Colored Youth." 28 June 1894 edition, p. 4; *The North American*, "Forty-Fourth Anniversary." 29 June 1899 edition, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Cohen, webpage on Robert Burk Johnson: <http://www.dvrbs.com/people/Camdenpeople-RobertBurkJohnson.htm> accessed 17 March 2008.

⁷⁸ Richard R. Wright Jr., editor in chief, *Centennial Encyclopedia of the African American Episcopal Church....* n.p., 1916, p. 170; Cooper, 1957, pp. 193-195.

⁷⁹ A.H. Newton, *Out of the Briars: An Autobiography and Sketch of the Twenty-ninth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteers*. A.M.E. Book Concern, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1910.

⁸⁰ *Camden Post-Telegram*. 13 April 1901 edition. *Camden Post-Telegram*, Camden, New Jersey, p. 1.

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firm's stated purposes in the Certificate of Incorporation. Furthermore, the 1908 annual report filed with the New Jersey Secretary of State clearly states, "no funeral directing business."⁸¹ If the company had pursued this aspect of the business, they would have offered full service to a grieving family, not only supplying a burial plot, but offering embalming, casket sales, memorial and funeral service facilities and other such functions normally the purview of independent funeral homes. Since Mount Peace failed to enter this aspect of the business, the City of Camden's funeral directors and morticians, particularly those who specialized in providing such services to the African American population, continued as they always had done.

The Geographical Setting for the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company

Whether the Mount Peace incorporators already had a tract in mind for the new cemetery is unknown. However, in January 1902, the corporation purchased a ±18-acre tract of land in Centre Township, Camden County, from Heulings Lippincott, assignee of Samuel A. Willits for the benefit of creditors for the sum of \$1,800.⁸² According to the deed, Lippincott presented the pending sale to the Camden County Orphans Court, who ruled it an acceptable sale on 10 December 1901. The land that the Mount Peace corporation acquired stood within the African American unincorporated community of Snow Hill, now the Borough of Lawnside. The Black presence in this neighborhood can be traced to eighteenth century. Concerning this location, historian George R. Prowell writes,

The Village of Snow Hill is two miles from Haddonfield, on the elevated lands along the road to that town. Its population is composed almost exclusively of colored people. It contains several small stores, two good society buildings, three churches and within a radius of a mile are six hundred colored inhabitants. Although a number of colored people had settled in this locality at a much earlier period, the village was not regularly laid out until about 1840. At that period, Ralph Smith, an Abolitionist, living in Haddonfield, who had advanced ideas of the future condition of the negro, purchased a tract of land and had William Watson survey the same into lots for him. In accordance with his purpose, to give the negro a village of his own, the place was appropriately called *Free Haven*. The lots being offered cheap, and as much effort was made in Philadelphia and other cities to induce settlement, a large number were soon sold, only a few of which were improved. ...Free Haven, as applied by Ralph Smith, never obtained any hold upon the people, and the original name [Snow Hill] still remains good. The village plot was enlarged by Jacob C. White, a colored dentist, of Philadelphia, who was warmly interested the development of the place.

...Within the last few years small stores have been kept at Snow Hill.... A few shops are also maintained, but most of the inhabitants find occupation in agricultural pursuits.⁸³

Perhaps the African American community in the City of Camden and the incorporators of Mount Peace felt the new cemetery would receive greater respect and a *de facto* guardianship located within this historic Centre Township Black community, especially since Lawnside contained two old and notable sectarian cemeteries, both associated with Methodist congregations. The Mount Pisgah African Methodist Episcopal Church formerly organized in May 1808 as "the People of Colour Belonging to the Methodist society at Snow Hill."⁸⁴ However, Charles Smiley indicates the roots of the congregation extend back to 1797, when religious classes began at Mrs. Beaten and Mr. Joseph Pratts, "...who resided on farms in the vicinity of Greenland, now Magnolia and Free Haven. To organize a class was the first step in forming a church. This class developed into a church and this congregation built the first Methodist Meeting House in

⁸¹ New Jersey Secretary of State, Annual Report. Corporation no. C-2058. Division of Revenue, Trenton, New Jersey, 1908.

⁸² Camden County Deed Book 262, p. 293.

⁸³ Prowell, 1886, p. 708.

⁸⁴ Gloucester County Deed Book L, p. 401.

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the vicinity.”⁸⁵ The congregation acquired the land for its first edifice and cemetery “...about the year Eighteen hundred and one the deed for which although known to be in existence has been lost or mislaid and cannot at the present time [1874] be produced....”⁸⁶

In 1816, Richard Allen declared his Philadelphia congregation—Bethel Methodist Church—separate and distinct from the Methodist Episcopal Church and he formed the new African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) denomination. Allen’s original formation of Bethel grew out of an increasing discontent during the late eighteenth century among Black Methodists with the uncharitable treatment they endured while attending Saint George’s Methodist Church on North Fourth Street in Philadelphia. The final straw came when church leaders relegated the African American congregants to the balcony. White ushers at Saint George’s ejected remonstrators, including Allen’s friend and colleague Absalom Jones, from the church when they protested the segregation of Black worshipers to the balcony area.⁸⁷ Richard Allen subsequently became his new denomination’s first bishop and he advised the Snow Hill Methodist congregants to declare “...themselves independent of the Methodist Episcopate.”⁸⁸ The Snow Hill faithful did as the Rev. Allen suggested and he became their new pastor as he connected them to Bethel Church. Writing in 1883 about the cemetery associated with Mount Pisgah, George R. Prowell notes, “In connection with the church is a grave-yard, where are buried some of the first colored settlers of this part of the township.”⁸⁹

In 1827, approximately ten years after the Mount Pisgah congregation aligned itself with Richard Allen and his AME denomination, those African Americans living in the Snow Hill area who dissented from becoming Allenites and wished to remain loyal to and within the regular Methodist denomination, formed the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church. South Jersey Methodist historian Robert B. Steelman notes, “Black Methodists were part of the New Jersey Conference from its origin...at the first session of the New Jersey Conference in 1837, there were 502 colored members.”⁹⁰ Like Mount Pisgah, the church grounds belonging to the Mount Zion church also features a cemetery.

At its annual meeting in March 1872, the Centre Township governmental committee adopted the following resolution:

That the Township Committee be authorized to purchase a lot in the cemetery owned by the Methodist Episcopal church at Heading [*sic*] [now Hedding in Bellmawr] and another lot of the colored church at Snow Hill for the interment of poor persons, Provided the lots can be purchased at a reasonable price; if however the price of said burial lots should be exorbitant that the committee purchase a lot of land central and not more than fifty hundredths of an acre.⁹¹

Apparently the township committee succeeded in obtaining a public burial ground for Whites, but failed to do so for Blacks. At the March 1874 annual meeting, the township committee again adopted a resolution stating: “That the

⁸⁵ Smiley, 1921, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Camden County Deed Book 77, p. 230.

⁸⁷ Wright, 1916, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Prowell, 1886, p. 708.

⁸⁹ Prowell, 1886, p. 708.

⁹⁰ Robert B. Steelman, *What God Has Wrought : A History of the Southern New Jersey Conference of The United Methodist Church*. The United Methodist Church, Southern New Jersey Annual Conference, Commission on Archives and History, Pennington, New Jersey, 1986, p. 251, 252.

⁹¹ Centre Township Minutes, 1855-1904. Vol. 1. New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey, 3rd mo 13th, 1872, unpaginated.

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township committee attend to purchasing a burial lot at Snow-hill or Mount Zion for the use of the Township immediately.⁹²

During May 1874, Centre Township arrived at an agreement with Mount Pisgah to purchase a small parcel of ground within the existing church cemetery for use as a public burial ground for poor Blacks. The township paid \$20.00 to acquire this 0.092-acre of land.⁹³ A resolution adopted during the Centre Township annual meeting for 1885 appropriated "...\$10.00 for fencing poor burial ground at Snow Hill...."⁹⁴ The township failed to award the contract for the fence, and the following year, the annual meeting approved "A motion that the Township Committee places the fence around Poor Ground at Snow Hill on the [property] line, which motion gives them power to employ [a] surveyor if necessary...."⁹⁵

The land that the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company acquired from Heulings Lippincott, assignee of Samuel A. Willits for the benefit of creditors, had been part of the Charles L. Willits farm during the nineteenth century, which property spanned across the White Horse Pike. Charles's nephew, Samuel Willits, inherited the 140-acre farm from his Uncle Charles, but then faced paying a legacy devised in his uncle's will without enough cash in the estate to cover the amount. This financial difficulty caused him to sell the farmland to the cemetery company through an assignee.⁹⁶ To confirm the transaction, Samuel A. Willits and his wife, Abigail E. Willits, conveyed any outstanding interest, including Abigail's dower interest, in the property to the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company.⁹⁷

In their 1992 work, *History of Barrington, New Jersey*, the Barrington Historical Society states:

The Willits was a Quaker family who arrived at the shore area of South Jersey from England via New England and Long Island in the seventeenth century. The family grew and spread over the whole of the southern part of the state, one branch settling in the Haddonfield vicinity.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Nathan Willits, who lived in Haddonfield, bought three farms in Centre Township, comprising a major portion of present Barrington. He installed his three sons, Samuel S., Nathan B., and Charles L. on these farms. Upon his death in 1851, he devised each farm to its occupants, a common practice. Nathan estimated in his will that each of them was worth \$10,000.

...The third son, Charles L. Willits, received a 140 acre farm which started at the intersection of White Horse Pike and Clements Bridge Road, and stretched up both sides of the pike a half mile; the opposite quadrant of the intersection (about 50 acres) extended along Clements Bridge Road past the railroad and down the Pike to Mouldy Road, Lawnside. He owned three quarters of the intersection. The other, the west quadrant, was owned by Benjamin Cooper.

...Charles was a man of some significance, as well as principle. ...In 1855, the Greenland School (for the use of black children) was built by Centre Township on a lot donated by Mr. Willits. Located where Davis Road meets White Horse Pike, it was used until 1882, when replaced by a[nother] building.

⁹² Centre Township Minutes, 1855-1904. Vol. 1, 3rd mo 11th, 1874, unpaginated.

⁹³ Camden County Deed Book 77, p. 231.

⁹⁴ Centre Township Minutes, 1855-1904. Vol. 1, 3rd mo 10th, 1885, unpaginated.

⁹⁵ Centre Township Minutes, 1855-1904. Vol. 1, March 9, 1886, unpaginated.

⁹⁶ Camden County Deed Book 262, p. 293.

⁹⁷ Camden County Deed Book 264, p. 255.

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Perhaps the most singular and little known aspect of Charles Willits has to do with a provision of his will, probated in 1882. He gave to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) the sum of Ten thousand dollars "In Trust, the interest to be annually used for the distributions of religious tracts and writings of Friends—one half of which shall be distributed among the Colored People of the Southern States of the United States & the remainder in the colony of Liberia so that religion and morality may be promoted." It needs a knowledge and understanding of the situation of the black in the South in the post Civil War era to fully appreciate the significance of this gift of books and other written material to the recipients. These trust funds are still being administered for the specified purposes by a committee of the Yearly Meeting.

It should be noted, however, that when Charles died he did not have the \$10,000 cash, so it became a "charge" against the real estate which he gave to his nephew Samuel A. Willits, who did not have an easy time raising the money.⁹⁸

Being members of the Society of Friends, the Willits family expressed great concern for the welfare of African Americans and sought to improve the lives of these former slaves and, based on correspondence and other family material at the Historical Society of Haddonfield, the Willits reportedly became quite active in financing and operating within the Underground Railroad movement in the antebellum years.⁹⁹ Whether the family's ongoing care and concern for Blacks played a role in the sale of Willits farmland to the cemetery company is unknown.

Constructing Mount Peace Cemetery

After acquiring the necessary land for establishing its private burial ground, the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company applied to the Centre Township Board of Health for permission to open and operate its facility:

Magnolia, Aug. 1st 1902

At a meeting of the Board of Health of Centre Township... An application was... read and received from Mt. Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company of Camden asking for permission to open and operate a Cemetery in said township on what is known as the Willits' Tract containing eighteen (18) acres of land situated on the White Horse Stone road and bounded as follows:

North by land of J. Fernandez, East by lands of the Estates of J.C. White and James _____ [unreadable], South by Snow Hill road [present-day Mouldy Lane] and West by White Horse Stone road.

The application was accompanied by a copy of "Blue Print," showing full description of land to be used for said purpose, which was filed with the Board of Health.

On motion permission was granted to them to open and operate the same according to the laws of the State, and that a copy of the same be forwarded to them by the Secretary.¹⁰⁰

Upon receiving the board of health's permission, the incorporators surveyed and platted the tract of land they acquired into ten sections—A through J—with an aggregate of approximately 3,700 four-grave lots, creating a potential of over

⁹⁸ Barrington Historical Society, *History of Barrington, New Jersey*. Barrington Historical Society, Barrington, New Jersey, 1992, pp. 59, 61-61.

⁹⁹ Jody Rodgers, Rutgers graduate student conducting research for the Lawnside Historical Society. Personal communication, 6 August 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Centre Township Board of Health Minutes, 1880-1913. Vol. 1, New Jersey State Archives, 1902, p. 47-48.

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14,500 individual graves.¹⁰¹ As constructed, the new cemetery three main drives through the property: Langston Drive, the only drive running parallel to the White Horse Pike and probably named for John Mercer Langston, "...a Black leader of conviction and influence, a visionary reformer, and an accomplished statesman and lawyer" who died in 1897;¹⁰² Powell Drive, the northernmost drive running perpendicular to the White Horse Pike and likely named for William Frank Powell, the Camden African American educator and diplomat. Douglas(s) Drive, the southernmost drive running perpendicular off White Horse Pike and undoubtedly named for Frederick Douglass, the great African American abolitionist.¹⁰³ The cemetery company contracted to have an office building constructed on the north side of the main entrance driveway off the White Horse Pike. Although this building burned sometime during the late 1960s, its foundation and footprint are readily discernable. Based on a physical examination of the foundation, the building measured approximately 15 feet by 30 feet with a cross-gabled appendage on the south side toward the rear projecting approximately twelve feet southward and measuring approximately twelve feet wide. The building featured a stone foundation according to the extant *in situ* remains.

In 1922, when the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders issued a contract to pave the White Horse Pike with concrete, the construction work included curbing and sidewalks.¹⁰⁴ As a result of cutting back the cemetery's embankment to allow room for the sidewalk, the cemetery likely received its extant decorative concrete-block retaining wall, originally featuring three courses of block and topped with soldiered brick trim. The main entrance was flanked with two decorative concrete block pillars or gate posts topped with a double course of bricks. The southernmost pillar held a mounted cast-metal or wooden sign featuring the name of the cemetery on it.¹⁰⁵ The wall and paved driveways remain *in situ* all along the cemetery's White Horse Pike frontage, albeit the retaining wall is now missing its top course of decorative block and its soldiered brick trim. The cemetery removed the block pillars sometime in the past. In July 1904, the cemetery company obtained a mortgage from the Pioneer Building & Loan Association of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the amount of \$800. This amount may represent the funds needed to construct the office building, but no confirmation has been found. The cemetery company satisfied the mortgage in February 1916.¹⁰⁶

Officially recorded transactions, filed with the Camden County Clerk's Office (formerly the Camden County Register of Deeds) for recordation in deed books, of burial lots sold began on 1 January 1903 with the sale of Lot 162 to Henrietta Cornish and Lot 178 to Malachi D. Cornish and end with a deed for a lot substitution to A.L. Hardy on 19 September 1961.¹⁰⁷ The lot deeds recorded at the Camden County Clerk's Office cover 35 four-grave lots and seven two-grave lots for a total of 154 individual graves. Based on a visual observation of Mount Peace Cemetery, the corporation obviously sold many more lots and management failed to file the deeds for the other lots with the county clerk. Presumably, the corporation only recorded lot transactions with the county when the purchaser insisted on its filing for confirming legal title to said lot or lots. The Bill of Complaint, prepared during July 1966 and cited above contains the following information:

¹⁰¹ Calculations based on Works Progress Administration. Historical Grave Survey Plan of Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company. 1938. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey.

¹⁰² Oberlin College website: <http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/OYTT-images/JMLangston.html> accessed 5 December 2007.

¹⁰³ Works Progress Administration, 1938.

¹⁰⁴ Ann Maria T. Cammarota, *Pavements in the Garden : The Suburbanization of Southern New Jersey, Adjacent to the City of Philadelphia, 1769 to the Present*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Madison, New Jersey, 2001, p. 144.

¹⁰⁵ Ted Williams, historic image of the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company main entrance, 1935. Collection of Spencer C. Moore II, Lawnside Historical Society, Lawnside, New Jersey.

¹⁰⁶ Camden County Mortgage Book 95, p. 245. Camden County Clerk's Office, Camden, New Jersey.

¹⁰⁷ Camden County Deed Book 590, p. 438, 439; Book 3155, p. 914.

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Approximately 11 acres of said tract...has been laid out in burial lots, containing 4 graves each. Many of these 4 grave lots have been sold. Each purchaser of a burial lot received a deed for his or her lot, and some of the deeds have been recorded in the office of the Register of Deed of Camden County. From time to time, at the request of the purchasers, burials have been made in the lots sold. The four-grave lots which have not been sold, known as Single Sections, have been used for single burials. No deeds have been given for single graves. ...Available records of the plaintiff corporation disclose the names of 218 persons who have purchased burial lots. All purchasers of burial lots have received deeds for their respective lots. 31 of said deeds have been recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Camden County. Records of lot owners are incomplete, as some records are no longer legible, and some records were never surrendered by former officials now deceased. ...Addresses of burial lot owners were not kept by the plaintiff corporation, as graves are opened in burial lots only upon presentation of the deed to the lot.¹⁰⁸

After Mount Peace Cemetery opened for burials, several Centre Township residents made application to the Board of Health to disinter the remains of loved ones from the public burial ground at Mount Pisgah and have them reburied at Mount Peace. In the December 1902 minutes, the board secretary recorded that "Application was duly made to the board for permission to remove the body of Garfield Newton from Snow Hill graveyard to Mt. Peace Cemetery, which was granted."¹⁰⁹ Apparently the board of health officials soon grew weary of such applications. In the January 1911 minutes, the secretary recorded,

Application was made for permission to remove the body of Viola Cox from Lawnside Grave Yard to Mt. Peace Cemetery. The permission was granted and the Secretary was authorized to charge 25 cts. for issuing such permits. On motion that hereafter the Secretary be empowered to grant permits of removal, without further action by the board.¹¹⁰

Burials at the cemetery continued from opening day until the present. A pedestrian survey of Mount Peace Cemetery in March 2008 quickly revealed more recent burials, including one in 2004 as attested on an incised grave marker. Determining the exact number of burials would be almost impossible, especially since many of the graves do not have markers of any kind, yet the earth on top of some graves exhibit profound settlement, in some cases sinking more than 18 inches below the surrounding grade due to a lack of individual burial vaults. Based on company records housed at the Haddonfield Historical Society, between 1 January 1931 and 21 November 1959, except lacking the interment information for 1934 and 1936, the Mount Peace Cemetery received the remains of 3,557 people for burial. Analyzed on a geographical basis, for those burials—a total of 1,558 people—listed with city and state residential information, the preponderance of these burials arrived from the City of Camden (882), but many other New Jersey locations are represented, ranging from Atlantic City (13), to Blackwood (16), to Gloucester Township (38), to Haddonfield (36), to Lawnside (138), to Merchantville (Matchtown) 25, to Trenton (25), and to Woodbury (6) as a selected sampling of total locational spread. Outside of New Jersey, burials arrived from Phoenix, Arizona; Baltimore, Maryland; Boothbay Harbor, Maine; Queens and New York City, New York; and even Monrovia, Liberia, in Africa. Again these are a selected sampling of locations. Philadelphia (131) and a number of communities in adjoining Pennsylvania are also represented in these burials.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Bill of Complaint, July 1966.

¹⁰⁹ Centre Township Board of Health Minutes, 1880-1913. Vol. 1, 1902, p. 51.

¹¹⁰ Centre Township Board of Health Minutes, 1880-1913. Vol. 1, 1911, p. 110.

¹¹¹ Database compiled from a Mount Peace burial ledger, 1937-1959; and monthly superintendent reports, 1931-1935

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 26*Veteran Burials at Mount Peace Cemetery*

Over the years since it began operations, Mount Peace Cemetery has received the remains of numerous African American area residents—many of them important personages. These burials include veterans who rendered service to their country in military actions ranging from the Civil War up through the Vietnam War and perhaps beyond to even more recent conflicts. The Civil War veterans buried at Mount Peace total at least 95 soldiers and sailors.¹¹² The Camden County Office of Veteran Affairs records as many as 108 Civil War burials at Mount Peace.¹¹³ The county register indicates that the family of one Civil War veteran named David E. Smith had his remains moved from Johnson Cemetery and reinterred at Mount Peace on 19 February 1930. Based on headstone inscriptions compiled in 1999, Lawnside residents Lloyd A. Romero and Bryson C. Armstead Jr. identified 71 individual soldiers and sailors from the Civil War at Mount Peace. These include 12 from the United States Navy and 59 from the United States Army. The sailors served on six naval vessels: U.S.S. Allegheny; U.S.S. Brandywine; U.S.S. New Hampshire; U.S.S. North Carolina; U.S.S. Potomac; and the U.S.S. Princeton. The soldiers buried at Mount Peace include men from the following regiments: 1st; 3rd; 5th; 9th; 22nd; 23rd; 24th; 25th; 26th; 27th; 28th; 29th; 32nd; 35th; and 41st.¹¹⁴ The discrepancy between Asbell's findings, based on documentary research, the county records, and the findings of Romero and Armstead, based on headstones, stems, in part, from some Civil War veteran burials lacking headstones.

The lack of headstones for some veteran interments includes the only Medal of Honor winner buried at Mount Peace. The remains of U.S. Navy Landsman John Lawson, recipient of the Medal of Honor for heroic actions taken during the Battle of Mobile Bay in 1864, lie in what is now an unmarked grave. His Medal of Honor Certificate reads,

...awarded to him on the Thirty-First day of December 1864 for gallant and meritorious conduct in action, while serving on the U.S.S. HARTFORD in an engagement in Mobile Bay, August 6, 1864. He was one of the six men stationed at the shell-whip on the berth deck; a shell killed or wounded the whole number. Lawson was wounded in the leg and thrown with great violence against the side of the ship, but as soon as he recovered himself although begged to go below. He refused and went back to the shell whip, where he remained during the action.¹¹⁵

After recovering from his wounds, he returned to Philadelphia, the city of his birth, and his wife, Mary Ann Livingston Lawson, who he had married *circa* 1856.¹¹⁶ By 1880, the Lawson Family resided in the City of Camden, Eighth Ward, on Branch Street. John and Mary now had seven children: five daughters and two sons.¹¹⁷ A review of subsequent census records suggests that John and Mary Ann separated and, perhaps, even divorced. By 1910, John's son, Raymond Lawson, resided at 865 Central Avenue in the Centreville section of the City of Camden, the Eighth Ward. Living next door at 867 Central was Lucy Morton, who became the Vice President of the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral

¹¹² Samuel Asbell, The Lost Black Legion website: <http://www.lostblacklegion.org/> accessed 17 February 2008.

¹¹³ Camden County Office of Veterans Affairs, *Veteran Grave Registration*, microform edition, *circa* 1965. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey.

¹¹⁴ Lloyd A. Romero and Bryson C. Armstead Jr., compilers. *Civil War Veterans Buried at Mt. Peace Cemetery Lawnside*, New Jersey. Mount Peace Cemetery Association, Lawnside, New Jersey, January 1999, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Lini S. Kadaba, "Honoring A Freeman's Feat in War: A Black Medal of Honor Winner's Family Turns Back to his Page in Civil War History." Published in the 25 May 1992 edition, Local Section, of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, p. A1. United States Census Bureau, Eighth Decennial Census, City of Philadelphia, Ward 5, Southern Division. Microform edition, roll M653-1155, p. 349. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

¹¹⁷ United States Census Bureau, Tenth Decennial Census, microform edition, roll T9-774, p. 418.

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Directing Company in 1921 and the President in 1922.¹¹⁸ Raymond's younger brother, George, lived right up the street at 811 Central Avenue.¹¹⁹ When John Henry Lawson died 3 May 1919 in Philadelphia, presumably Raymond and/or George Lawson prevailed upon Lucy Morton to obtain a final resting place for John Lawson.¹²⁰ Reportedly, Bryson Armstead obtained information from the Veterans Administration about Lawson's marker, including a marker number, but it must have suffered damage and been discarded many years ago.¹²¹

Based on the *circa* 1965 microfilm of Camden County's Veteran Grave Registration record, veteran burials at Mount Peace Cemetery from conflicts subsequent to the Civil War include fifteen Spanish-American War soldiers and sailors; 104 veterans of World War I; at least 30 who served in World War II; at least two from the Korean Conflict; and at least one from the Vietnam War. The burial numbers for all military action that occurred during the twentieth century have likely increased over the intervening 40-plus years since preparation of the *circa* 1965 register.¹²²

Corporate Management of the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company

Following the cemetery's incorporation, the company filed annual reports with the New Jersey Secretary of State. The first one, filed during February 1902, lists Samuel N. Fernanders as President; the Reverend Alexander H. Newton, Vice-President; Spencer C. Moore, Second Vice President; Malachi D. Cornish, Treasurer; and William H. Johnson, Secretary. Of the total capital stock of \$12,500 authorized, the company had issued \$1875 of that stock as of 1902. The corporation listed its address of record as 1236 S. 2nd Street in the City of Camden, the home of Thomas Spaulding, who served as the registered agent. William F. Powell joined the board of directors as of 1908. By 1913, Thomas Spaulding had moved to 725 Kaighn Avenue and the address of record relocated to that address. In October 1916, the board passed a resolution to move its address of record again, this time to 927 S. 6th Street in the City of Camden and then filed the resolution with the New Jersey Secretary of State. The following year, Samuel N. Fernanders became the agent of record. With the 1920 annual report, Malachi D. Cornish became the corporate agent and his dwelling at 739 Kaighn Avenue became the address of record. Virtually all of the board of director positions remained vested in Camden residents until the 1929 annual report, when Herbert Roberts of Pennsauken, New Jersey, and Raymond K. Heath of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania joined. In addition, Samuel N. Fernanders had moved to Haddonfield.¹²³

A list of stockholders, dated 31 December 1930 and now deposited with the Haddonfield Historical Society, identifies 73 outstanding shares of corporate stock. While City of Camden residents held the preponderance of these shares, other stockholders resided in Haddonfield, Pennsauken, and Atlantic City, New Jersey; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Newark, Delaware; and even Pasadena, California. Stock ownership ranges from individual possession of one-half of a share to six shares with many stockholders holding one share of stock.¹²⁴

The expansion of directorships outside the City of Camden continued with the 1934 annual report, when John B. Sadler became the first Lawnside resident to serve on the board. Similarly, Dr. Roscoe L. Moore of Magnolia, New Jersey, also became a director. In 1937, Sadler became the President of the Board.¹²⁵ For a portion of the time prior to the Second

¹¹⁸ United States Census Bureau, Twelfth Decennial Census, microform edition, roll T624-873, p. 1A; New Jersey Secretary of State, Annual Report. Corporation no. C-2058. Division of Revenue, Trenton, New Jersey, 1921, 1922.

¹¹⁹ United States Census Bureau, Twelfth Decennial Census, microform edition, roll T624-873, p. 1B.

¹²⁰ Kadaba, 1992, *op. cit.*

¹²¹ Linda Shockley, President of the Lawnside Historical Society, personal communication, 22 March 2008.

¹²² Camden County Office of Veterans Affairs, *circa* 1965, *op. cit.*

¹²³ New Jersey Secretary of State, Annual Reports,

¹²⁴ Stockholders, The Mt. Peace Cemetery & Funeral Directing Company, of Camden, N.J. of Record, December 31, 1930. Haddonfield Historical Society, Haddonfield, New Jersey.

¹²⁵ New Jersey Secretary of State, Annual Reports.

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World War, original incorporator and stockholder Spencer C. Moore, served the company as superintendent, directing burial excavations, maintaining the records of the corporation, submitting all bills and expenses payable, and taking care of routine maintenance issues. His name appears on the monthly superintendent reports filed with the board of directors between 1931 and 1935 that the Haddonfield Historical Society now holds in its collections.¹²⁶ The original by-laws of the corporation spelled out the role of the superintendent:

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to look after the keepings of the grounds, see that the graves and plots are properly cared for, properly registered in the names of the owners, entered in a book for that specified purpose; collect all moneys for the opening of graves and see that the same is turned over to the proper party as may be directed by the Board of Directors.¹²⁷

The 1940 annual report was the last one the corporation filed with the New Jersey Secretary of State.¹²⁸

On January 1955, the New Jersey Secretary of State declared the corporation's charter voided for nonpayment of corporate franchise taxes, but apparently the state office never notified the company. Concerning the cemetery's history up through the early 1950s, a bill of complaint filed with the New Jersey Superior Court a decade later stated the following:

For many years, the plaintiff corporation prospered, was able to meet current expenses, and was able to keep the cemetery grounds in reasonably good condition. In recent years, other cemeteries have been provided especially for Negroes, and Negro burials are now accepted in all public cemeteries. Since 1952, the plaintiff corporation has been financially unable to meet some of its current obligations, and financially unable to keep its building and grounds in an attractive condition.¹²⁹

The Cemetery After 1958

For the next few decades, the Mount Peace cemetery was the subject of ongoing efforts both to physically maintain the Mount Peace property and to ensure the perpetuation of the cemetery company as a corporate entity in good standing in conformance with New Jersey's cemetery laws.¹³⁰ Several years of apparent neglect of the property led in March 1962 to a meeting of the cemetery company's shareholders, and a subsequent effort to contact all of the shareholders. These efforts were followed by a civil action filed in the chancery division of the New Jersey Superior Court in Camden County, which was decided in July 1966. The result of this court action led to the sale, in January 1967, of 6.26 acres of the cemetery's original land purchase, reducing its size from more than 18 acres to just under 11.75 acres. Sections A and F of the WPA-prepared plan of the cemetery were thus eliminated, although no burials had actually been made in either section, and thus none had to be removed. These areas had been considered to be too low and too wet to be suitable for burials. The proceeds of the sale, \$70,000, formed an endowment from which stipends for annual maintenance of the property would be disbursed. The court also appointed three new trustees to head the company, led by a local attorney who also served as the company's registered agent. In 1972 the trustees began filing reports with the New Jersey Cemetery Board, and in 1974 filed for a reinstatement of its status. In 1975, however, further controversy led the State Cemetery Board to prohibit further burials at Mount Peace, a restriction not lifted until 1985. Under a federal grant

¹²⁶ Monthly reports, January-December 1931, 1932, 1935.

¹²⁷ Constitution and By-Laws of the Mt. Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Co. of Camden, N.J., Haddonfield Historical Society, Haddonfield, NJ.

¹²⁸ New Jersey Secretary of State, Annual Reports.

¹²⁹ Bill of complaint, July 1966.

¹³⁰ This concluding paragraph is based on a longer treatment of the recent history of the Mount Peace cemetery on file at the Historic Preservation Office.

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awarded in 1977, four full-time workers expanded cleanup efforts at Mount Peace, which continued through November 1978, but further maintenance monies from the endowment fund continued to be insufficient to fully take care of property of its size. In the early 1980s, the Lawnside Men's Association, a civic organization, pushed forward efforts to clean up and improve the cemetery, and its efforts led to the formation of a new corporation, the Mount Peace Cemetery Association, Incorporated, led by a board of six trustees. Construction of the two concrete and steel storage sheds that still stand just north of the cemetery's main entrance was one of the Association's early actions. The Association has continued its work at the cemetery since its official formation in July 1986. Lloyd A. Romero served as the registered agent until his death. His daughter, Yolanda Romero, became the registered agent for the association in June 2001. Today, the Association's board of trustees still consists of six members who continue to work to restore the appearance and functions of the cemetery, and occasional burials still occur at Mount Peace.

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Abolition Society of Gloucester County

Records of the Abolition Society of Gloucester County. Stewart Collection, Campbell Library, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ.

Anonymous

“Pauper Graveyards, Newton—Camden—Haddon.” Unidentified and undated [c. 1879] newspaper clipping tipped-in to a scrapbook. Camden County Historical Society, Camden, NJ.

Asbell, Samuel

The Lost Black Legion website: <http://www.lostblacklegion.org/> accessed 23 February 2008.

Barrington Historical Society

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Camden County Deed Book

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Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 2**Boundary Description**

The Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery is located at 329 White Horse Pike (U.S. Route 30), Borough of Lawnside, Camden County, New Jersey. Its tax parcel identifier on the Borough of Lawnside Tax Parcel Map, Plate 1, is Block 101, Lot 5. The nominated property begins at the northeast corner of the White Horse Pike and Mouldy Road; thence extending a distance of 368.90' along the northerly line of Mouldy Road to a point; thence, extending N 07° 45' E a distance of 1058.60' to a point; thence turning west and running along the 6150' radius of the southerly line of Interstate Route 295 a distance of 29.00' to a point; thence extending S 75° 49' 20" W a distance of 139.87' to a point; thence, extending S 14° 10' 40" a distance of 80.00'; thence, S 75° 49' 20" W a distance of 90.00' to a point; thence S 14° 10' 40" E a distance of 70.64 feet to a point; thence, S 65° 37' 04" W a distance of 194.22' to a point; thence, S 71° 19' 24" W a distance of 389.48' to a point; thence extending S 18° 40' 36" E a distance of 40.00' to a point; thence, extending S 71° 19' 24" W a distance of 50.00' to a point; thence, extending S 29° 58' 40" a distance of 185.04' to a point; thence, extending S 60° 01' 20" W a distance of 208.41' to a point on the easterly line of the White Horse Pike; thence, extending along the easterly line of the White Horse Pike 418.30' to the point of beginning. This boundary description applies to the cemetery as it now exists in 2008 and removes the 0.19-acre of land the State of New Jersey took in 1955 for the construction of Interstate Route 295 and the parcels and easement totaling 6.276 acres conveyed out from the original bounds of the cemetery on 9 February 1968 to Lawnpike, Incorporated.¹

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel of land containing burials and historically associated with the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company, dating to 1902. The property taken for interstate road construction and the parcels and easement conveyed during February 1968 never contained burials. Since the cemetery no longer includes this property within its boundaries, it is not considered to be part of the historic and current landmass of Mount Peace Cemetery.

¹ Camden County Deed Book 3046, p. 544. Camden County Clerk's Office, Camden, New Jersey; Camden County Deed Book 3429, p. 776.

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Photographs

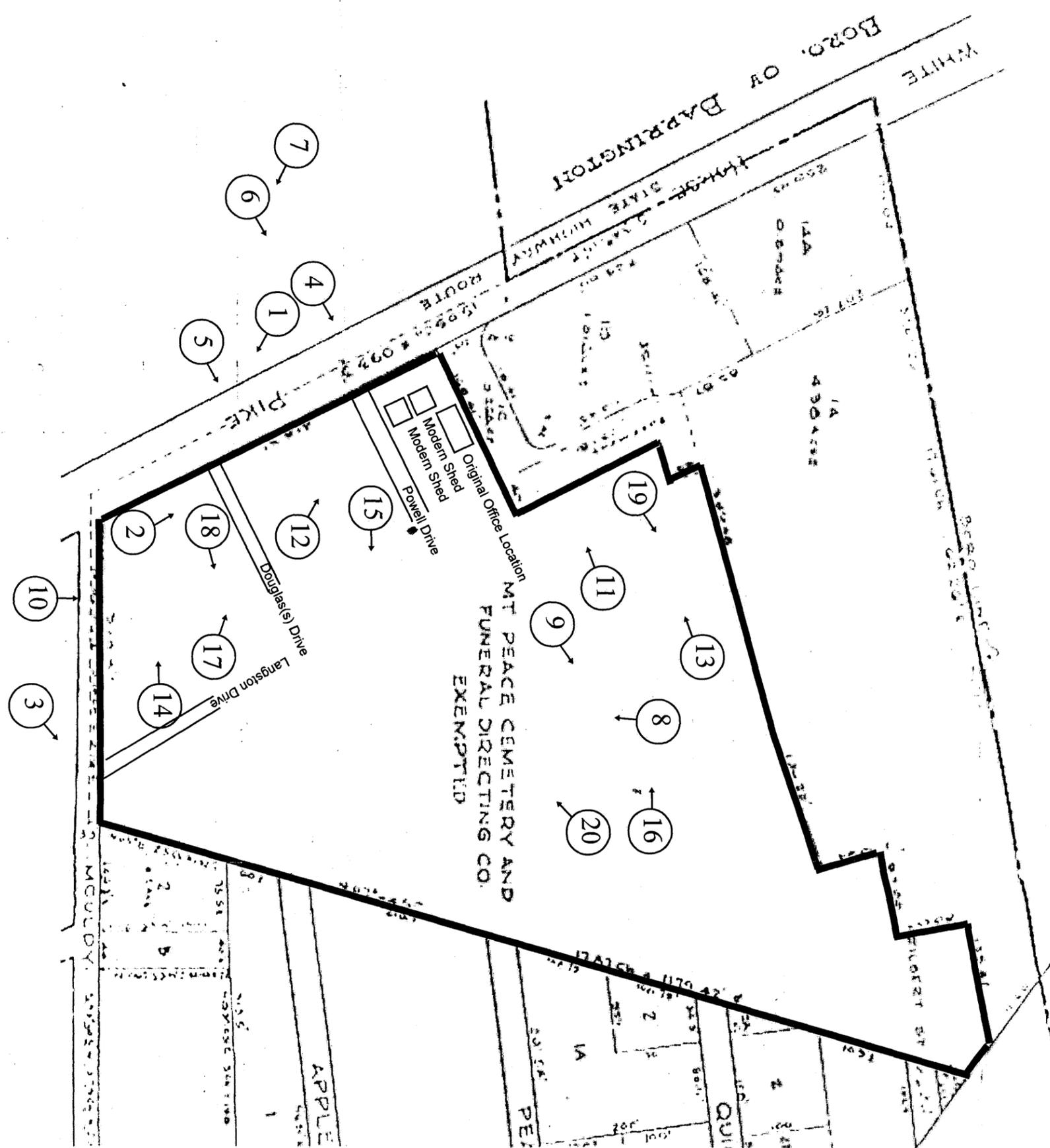
Photo No.	Description
1.	View looking southeast from across White Horse Pike towards Mouldy Road
2.	View looking north from near Mouldy Road towards the property sold in 1968
3.	View looking north from across Mouldy Road showing entrance to Langston Drive
4.	View looking east from across White Horse Pike showing main entrance (Powell Drive)
5.	View looking east from across White Horse Pike showing Douglas Drive entrance
6.	View looking east from across White Horse Pike showing decorative concrete block wall
7.	View looking southeast from across White Horse Pike showing decorative concrete block wall
8.	View looking south showing "Soldiers' Row"
9.	View looking east showing uphill section of Mount Peace requiring maintenance
10.	View looking north from across Mouldy Road showing maintained section of Mount Peace
11.	View looking west showing homemade concrete grave enclosure sinking into grave shaft.
12.	View looking north showing undulating land surface due to sunken graves
13.	View looking west showing homemade, hand-inscribed cast concrete grave marker
14.	View looking west showing granite grave marker
15.	View looking east showing marble obelisk
16.	View looking west showing thin marble tabletop adaptively used as a grave marker
17.	View looking west showing Berry Family obelisk, a marker cast in either aluminum or magnesium
18.	View looking east showing composite grave marker of cast concrete with metal plaque
19.	View looking east showing composite grave marker of cast concrete with engraved metal plaque
20.	View looking west showing temporary metal card holder and racquet-shaped stamped aluminum marker

Photographer: Paul W. Schopp
 Date: 15 March 2008
 Negatives on permanent file with:
 Paul W. Schopp, Historical Consultant
 223 Elm Avenue
 Riverton, New Jersey 08077-1215



Photograph courtesy of Spenser C. Moore, II

Historic Photograph, Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company, 1935



NOT TO SCALE



— = Boundary of Nominated Property

Paul W. Schopp, Historical Consultant
 P.O. Box 648
 Palmyra, New Jersey 08065-0648

Mount Peace Cemetery
and Funeral Directing Company
 Lawnside, Camden County, New Jersey
 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION
 SITE PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPH KEY MAP

Prepared By:	Scale:	Date:
PWS	NTS	31 March 2008