

# Timbuctoo

Westampton Township, Burlington County, NJ

Photo Credit: Reginald Covington

**Settlement in Timbuctoo** began in 1826 when David Parker, Ezekiel Parker, Wardell Parker, and Hezekiah Hall, all believed to be escaped slaves from Maryland, purchased 4 parcels of land from a Quaker named William Hilyard. In the first decades, Timbuctoo residents established at least two schools, a church with adjoining cemetery and a benevolent organization. They also worked together to thwart efforts to capture former slaves and return them to their southern masters. Today, the only visible evidence of Timbuctoo's historic past is the cemetery of the Zion Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal African Church, which includes gravesites of US Colored Troops that fought in the Civil War. The Burlington County Clerk's and Surrogate's offices have numerous historic property and legal records relating to Timbuctoo. The New Jersey Mirror, which was the predominant weekly area newspaper for many decades, beginning in 1818, had numerous articles about Timbuctoo residents and their community, including several obituaries. Further information about Timbuctoo, including article transcriptions from the New Jersey Mirror can be found at [www.TimbuctooNJ.com](http://www.TimbuctooNJ.com)

**The Timbuctoo Advisory Committee** was established by the Westampton Township Committee to provide advice on historic preservation issues related to Timbuctoo and to plan events to raise public awareness about Timbuctoo's historic significance. Membership is appointed by the Township Committee. Current members are as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Denita Curry	Westampton Township Resident
JoAnn Donnelly	Westampton Middle School
Rev. Thomas Gortman	Wesley AME Zion Church
Sandy Henley	Westampton Township Committee
Eric Orange	Burlington County Div. of Parks
Machell Still-Pettis	Westampton Township Resident
Guy Weston	Timbuctoo Descendant
Mary Giles Weston	Timbuctoo Descendant
Lynda Williams	Westampton Township Resident

## Timbuctoo Advisory Committee

### Selected Accomplishments: Spring 2017-present

- Worked with American Legion Post 509 to secure funding and install Timbuctoo sign on Rancocas Road
- Worked with Westampton Township to secure funding from the Burlington County Parks Department to install interpretive signage about Timbuctoo history
- Worked with Wesley AME Zion Church, Boy Scout Troop 117, and USCT researcher Gail Astle on research and design of interpretive signs
- Worked with the Rancocas Nature Center on 2 educational programs and Timbuctoo artifact display.
- Working with academic partners to complete nomination package for listing of Timbuctoo on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.
- Working with various partners on planning of Timbuctoo Day (Saturday, September 22, 2018)

**SAVE THE DATE  
TIMBUCTOO DAY 2018  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22  
12:00 PM Sharp**

**We will unveil exciting interpretive signs, which include:**

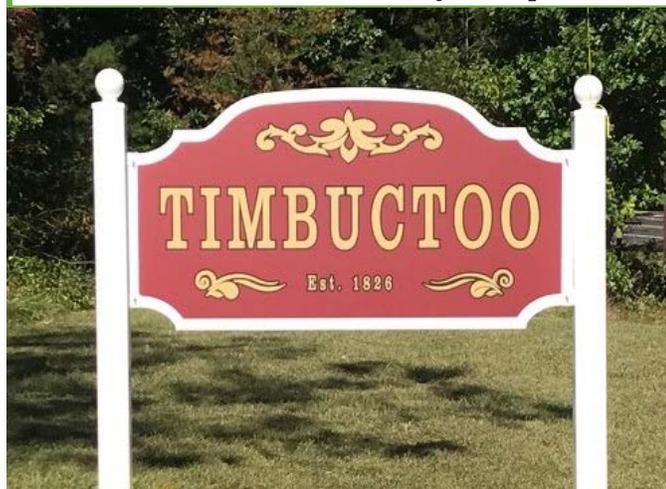
- Biographical information on all of the US Colored Troops buried in the Timbuctoo cemetery with marked graves, with a QR coded (scan with phone) link for further details.
- Information about the Zion Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal African Church and Cemetery, including identification of civilian graves beginning in 1847, thirteen years before the Civil War, with a QR coded link for further details.
- Compelling history of Timbuctoo, with a QR coded link for further details.

**PROGRAM IS CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT; FURTHER DETAILS WILL BE POSTED AT <https://www.westamptonnj.gov/timbuctoo-advisory-committee> IN AUGUST**

**Timbuctoo Trivia**

**Did you know that:**

- Slavery was abolished in New Jersey in 1804 by gradual manumission.
- Due in large part to strong Quaker influence, 2/3 of African Americans living in the southern region of NJ were already free in 1790, according to the 1790 Federal Census.
- By the era of Timbuctoo's founding, 96% of African Americans living in southern New Jersey were free, according to the 1820 Federal Census.
- African Americans began buying property in Timbuctoo in 1826.
- The African Union School was established in Timbuctoo in 1834.
- Land for Zion Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal African Church and Cemetery was purchased in Timbuctoo in 1854, but the oldest marked grave is from 1847.
- Stories about Timbuctoo residents were reported in the New Jersey Mirror, available online at <http://www.bcls.lib.nj.us/newspapers/newjerseymirror/> or <https://timbuctoonj.com/nj-mirror-articles>
- Notwithstanding more favorable conditions as compared to slave states, local African Americans could be abducted and taken to slave states regardless of their status; and faced other barriers.
- Timbuctoo **is** an unincorporated community in Westampton Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, according to the US Geological Survey Geographic Names Information System, and has been continuously occupied since 1826.



See Timbuctoo artifacts on display at  
the **Rancocas Nature Center**  
794 Rancocas-Mt Holly Rd,  
Westampton, NJ 08060  
609-261-2495

Further information about Timbuctoo, including supportive documentation for Timbuctoo Trivia above, is available at [www.TimbuctooNJ.com](http://www.TimbuctooNJ.com) or [GuyWeston@TimbuctooNJ.com](mailto:GuyWeston@TimbuctooNJ.com)