

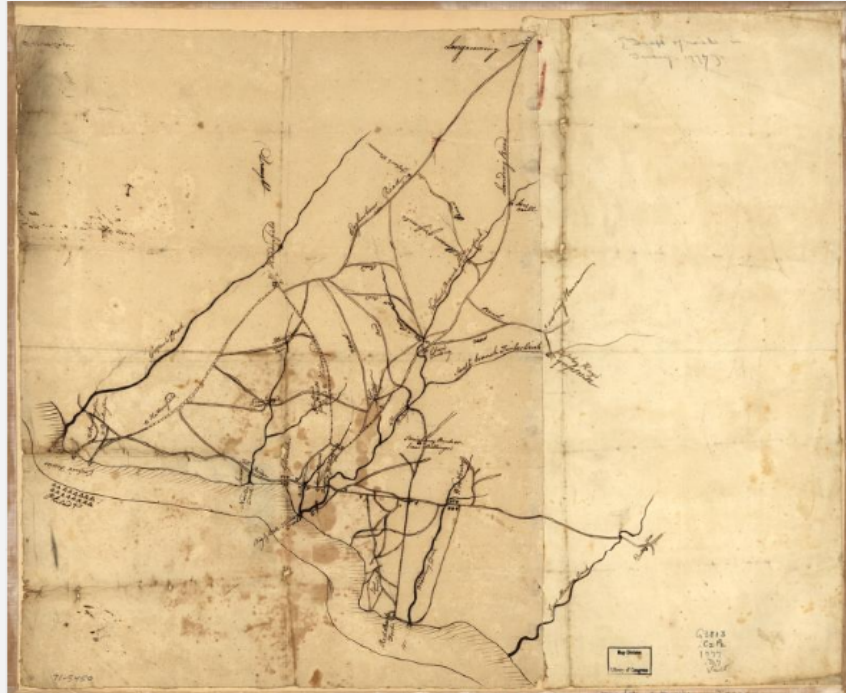


LAWNSIDE: A Free Haven

A historical overview of the first independent self-governing African American municipality north of the Mason Dixon Line

Irene and Henry Lankford

Researched & Presented by Historian Dolly L. Marshall



Origins of the settlement

1777

Draft Roads in Camden and Gloucester
counties -

Title pg of Charles C. Smiley's 1921

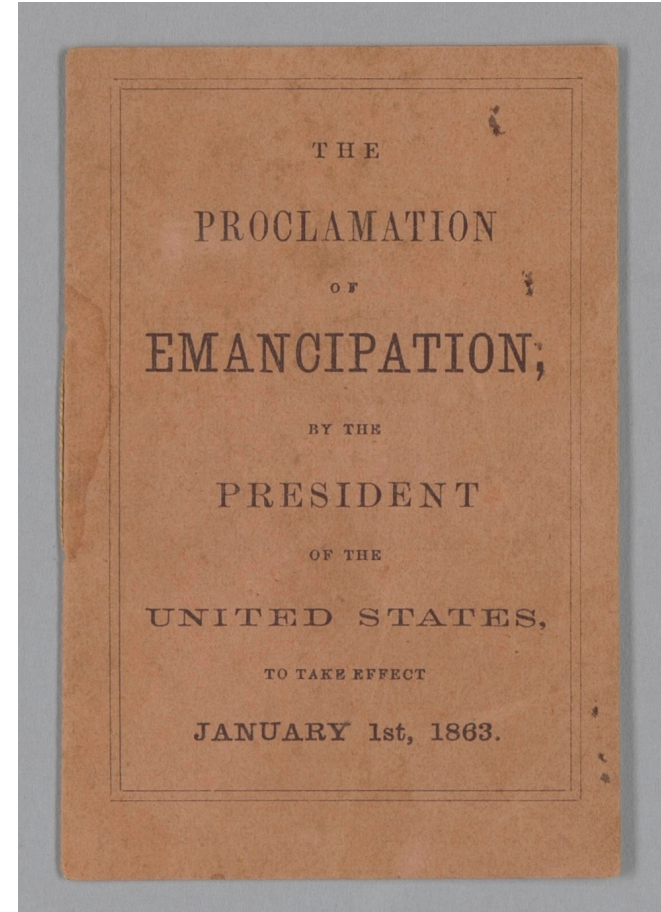
A
True Story
of
Lawnside, N. J.

Compiled by
CHARLES C. SMILEY

Robert J. Wythe, Jr., Printer, 625 Pearl St., Camden, N. J.

- People of African descent began settling in what's now Lawnside in the 1700s. Both freedmen and escaped slaves were drawn to the community, and as the anti-slavery movement grew, Philadelphia abolitionist Ralph Smith began purchasing land in the area. To encourage further settlement in the place he called Free Haven, Smith divided the acreage into lots and sold it to blacks at reduced prices. When a group of former slaves from Maryland joined the community, it became known as Snow Hill, after their former home. The current name of Lawnside was coined in 1907 when the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroad built a station stop there.
- The community that became Lawnside made its own contributions to the freedom effort. Nearly fifty men joined the Union Army during the Civil War, likely in the 22nd US Colored Troops that mustered out of Philadelphia. The hamlet was also a stop on the Underground Railroad, and its respected resident minister and agent preacher Peter Mott'. His house was the station.
- Lawnside officially became a borough in 1926.

- Jan. 1, 1863, all enslaved individuals in all areas still in rebellion against the United States “henceforward shall be free.” The Emancipation Proclamation also enabled African American men to enlist in the armed forces. The war to preserve the Union became a war to end slavery. The proclamation was limited in scope but revolutionary in its impact. Pictured at left is an early copy of a handheld pamphlet of the Emancipation Proclamation. Courtesy of the National Museum of African American History & Culture:
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/.../national-museum-african...>



CANNOT BURY IN CAMDEN CEMETERY

Colored Citizen's Demands
Will Likely Be Refused.

Restrictive Clause is Found in the
Deed That Conveyed Original
Property to the City
in 1836.

The discussion on the part of certain of the organizers of the Mt. Peace Cemetery Association (colored) to demand that their dead be buried in the new Camden cemetery, on the ground that the burying ground is a city institution was discussed in official circles this morning.

It is not likely that the demand of the colored people will meet with favorable action, however, as the rules and regulations of the Board of Trustees of the Camden



bodies of white persons from being interred in the cemetery. This is in conformity with the deed conveying the old cemetery property to the Board of Trustees to be held in trust for the city. The deed was made by Isaac Cooper in 1836, and expressly provides that the grounds are "to be used for the especial purpose of a free burying place of all the WHITE inhabitants of the township and city of Camden, county of Gloucester, State of New Jersey."

CHARTER FORBIDS IT.

Rev. Joseph P. Waters

- Joseph Robert Smith Waters, one of 10 children of the Rev. Samuel Griffin and Henrietta Fontaine Waters, was born May 8, 1856, in Fairmount, Md. in Somerset County.
- Educated in local schools available at the time, Waters answered the call to ministry, a legacy that flowed like a river through his veins.
- Waters' father was among 10 men to be admitted into "the first Conference for Colored Preachers, under the rule of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church." The new Delaware Conference's inaugural session was July 29, 1864.
- Joseph Waters joined the Delaware Conference in 1879 and was followed by two brothers, Samuel W. Waters and Wilmore E. Waters, in 1891 and 1896 respectively. Between 1864 and 1913, 10 members of Waters' extended family were admitted to the Delaware Conference, serving in various assignments along the east coast.
- The Rev. Daniel Lyman Ridout (Princess Anne Academy, class of 1918) described Waters as "a man of great personable magnetism and charm, possessing a rich speaking and singing voice, and being a preacher of power and persuasion."
- While Waters' ministerial career spanned some 67 years, his most notable accomplishment was his leadership in founding an institution of higher learning for children of slaves and freedmen on his native Eastern Shore.
- Waters and the Rev. John A.B. Wilson, a white Methodist, worked together to establish a school where African-American children, otherwise denied access to a formal education, could learn and move forward *in society*.
- The Delaware Conference Academy in Princess Anne, Md., opened its doors on Sept. 13, 1886. Six days later, on Sept. 19, 1886, members of the local Methodist Episcopal denomination laid a cornerstone for a new church — Metropolitan — not far from the Academy. Waters was Metropolitan's first pastor.
- Ten years earlier, Waters married Effie Jane Rounds of Snow Hill, Md., the daughter of local lay preacher Ebenezer Rounds. They had four children: Mary Lily, Grace Selane, Joseph and Paul Caldwell Waters. After the death of his first wife, Waters married Sarah Gaskins of Philadelphia, Pa. in 1927.
- The Nov. 11, 1944 edition of the New York Age newspaper published an article on page 2, noting that Waters appeared at Princess Anne College as the guest speaker for a Founders' Day program earlier that month, and "was given a purse by alumni and friends of the college" where he was a revered figure. Waters served in various appointments throughout a career spanning six decades in the Delaware conference, including in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. In April 1946, the Delaware conference adopted a resolution recognizing Waters as the founder of Princess Anne College, the name the institution took on as a higher education institution. Known today as the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.
- Bennett College in Raleigh, N.C., conferred upon Waters a doctor of divinity degree "in recognition of his significant contributions to his Conference, church and Christianity at large," according to his obituary.
- When Waters died at age 90 on July 29, 1946, at his home in Lawnside, N.J., he had lived long enough to see the Academy in Princess Anne he helped found graduate its first four-year college class. At his passing, his brother Wilmore survived him, along with his wife, daughter Lilly and son Paul.





Students and
descendants of the
formerly enslaved circa
1880s



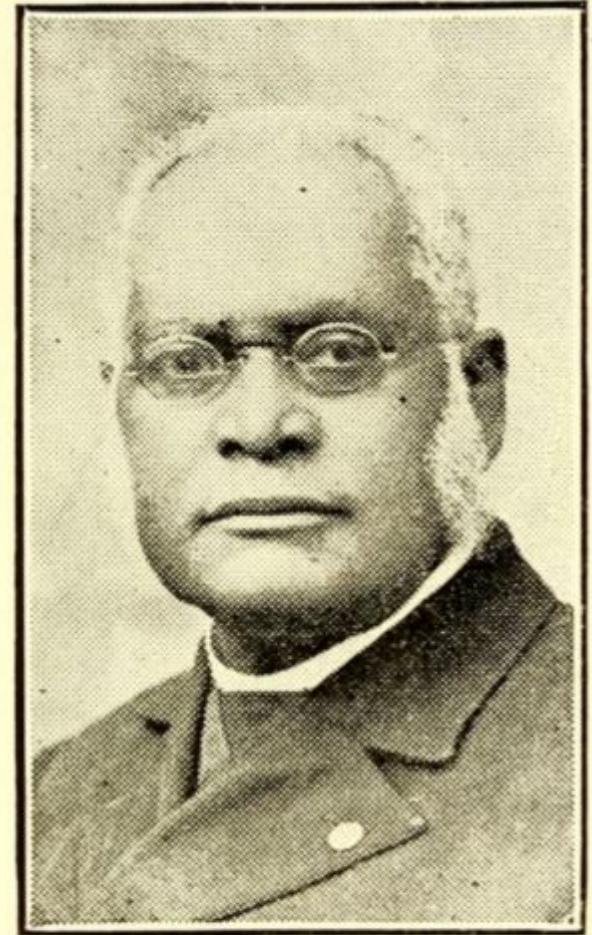
Princess Anne
Academy/University of
Maryland Eastern Shore

REV. DR. JOSEPH R. WATERS
The Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Waters 94, former pastor of Lawnside African Methodist Church for many years, died Monday at his home, Warwick Road, Lawnside. He retired three years ago after having been pastor in the Delaware Conference for 63 years. He was the founder of Princess Ann College, at Princess Ann, Md. Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Sarah R. Waters; a daughter, Mrs. Lillie W. Bunday, and a son, Paul C., all of Lawnside. Services will be at 1 p. m. Monday in Lindley Temple, Philadelphia. Burial will be in Mt. Peace Cemetery, Lawnside.

- Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Waters obituary, buried in Mount Peace Cemetery

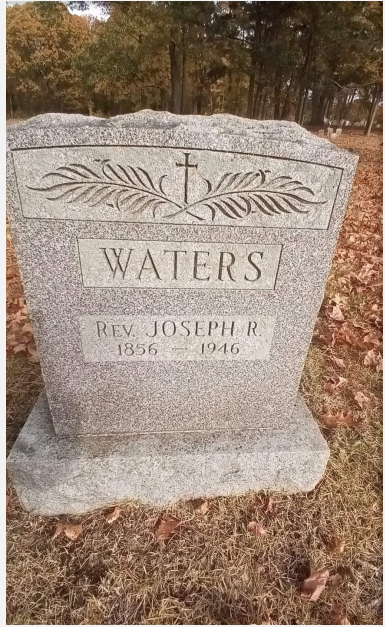
Dr. Rev. Alexander Heritage Newton 1837- 1921

- Distinguished Civil War veteran of the 29th Connecticut Volunteers - Underground Railroad Conductor at 17 years old organized daring escapes
- Leader of the A.M.E. Church for 50 years
- Pastored in Camden at the Macedonia AME & Hosanna Churches
- Delegate to the NJ State Republican Convention
- Led the Invocation at Camden's annual Memorial Day Celebration
- Freemason, author, founding trustee of Mount Peace Cemetery in Lawnside, NJ
- Wrote his autobiography called "Out of the Briars" in 1910 which was published by the A.M.E. Book Concern founded by the Christian Recorder.

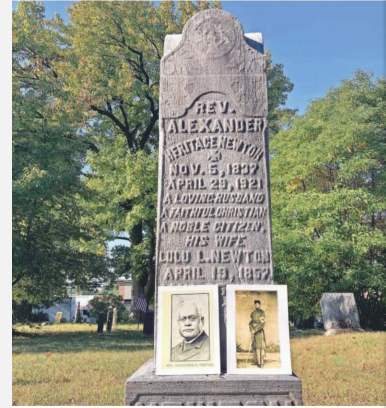


REV. ALEXANDER H. NEWTON.





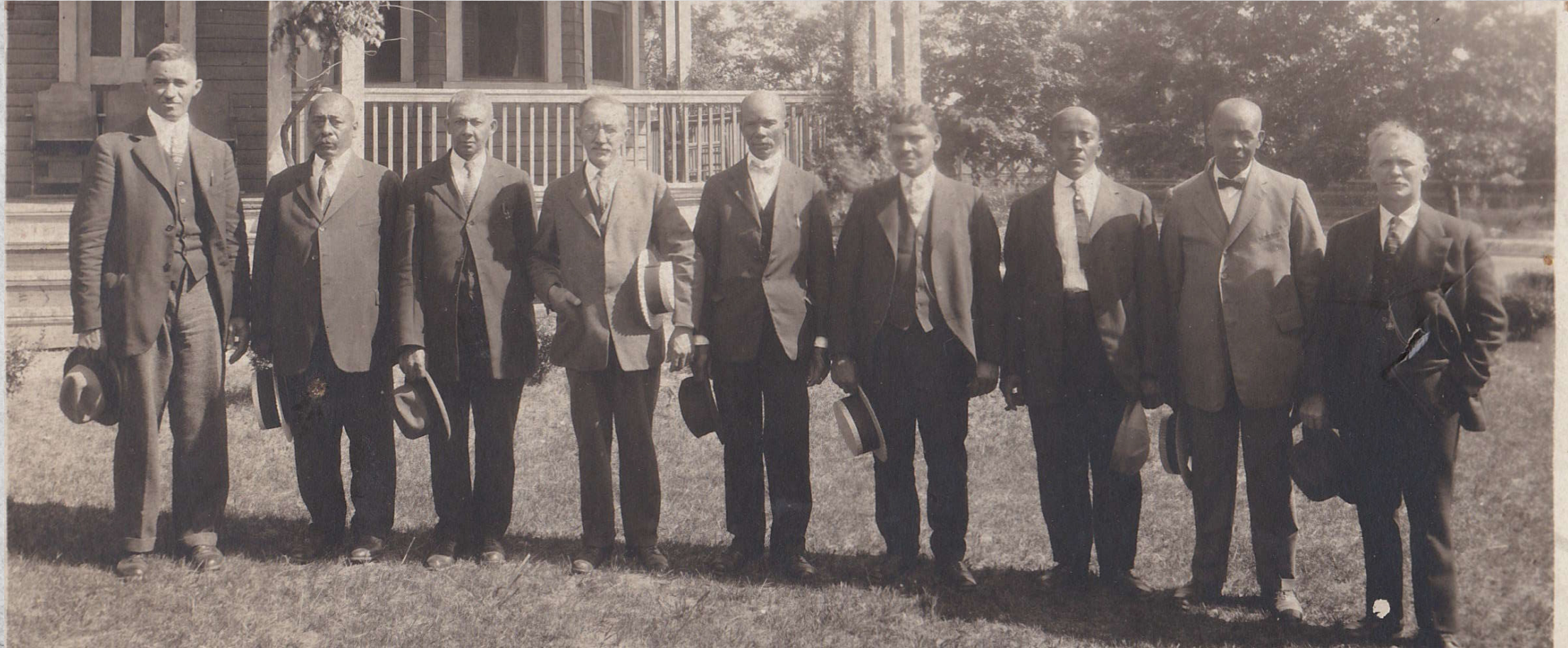
SOUTH JERSEY RAVE RECOGNIZ



Alexander Newton rest on his headstone. Born free to a free Black mother and enslaved for veteran lived the latter part of his life in Camden and played an active role in the National Underground Railroad Network adds si

HAEDRA TRETHER

First Mayor and council 1926. From l to rt: Horace J. Bryant, George H. Forten, Councilmen Douglas Brown & Walter Miller, Major James Hemmings; John Brown, Charles Cooper, Thomas N. Rivers Sr., James Smith. Not pictured councilman George Morris.





Lawnside Gets \$1365 From Sale of Lots

Lawnside Borough collected \$1365 when it sold 14 of 43 parcels of borough-owned land placed on public sale Wednesday night.

Sale of the parcels, with minimum prices ranging from \$75 to \$500, called up lively bidding on one \$75 plot located on the North side of Cherry st. near Company st. It sold for \$215, an increase of \$140 over the minimum price set at \$75. The other plots sold at their minimum prices.

Marvin Walker, of Magnolia, who had purchased adjoining land at the sale, continued to bid as Roosevelt Marshall, of Philadelphia, made repeated bids for the Cherry st. property. It was Marshall who made the final bid of





"I was fighting for the liberty of my people and the
righting of many wrongs that belonged to their
social and religious welfare."

ALEXANDER H. NEWTON
ON HIS RETURN TO THE SOUTH AFTER HIS ENLISTMENT
WITH THE 29TH CONNECTICUT VOLUNTEER INFANTRY



Thank You

Lawnside Seal

*Resources: The Library of Congress
Land, property and deed records
U.S. Census
HBCU library archives
Schomburge Center For Black*