

*Voices from the Past*

*Visions for the Future*



## *Doylestown Presbyterian Church Celebrates Black History Month*

During Black History Month, we take time to reflect, remember and offer recognition to the African-Americans laid to rest in our historic church graveyard.

Their stories are ones from which we can all learn and admire. They are stories of families, of struggle, of faith, and of love. DPC's History Committee in partnership with the Matthew 25 Task Force has gathered newspaper accounts, records, and other documentation to help us better know those who came before.

We invite you to visit our Black History Month page on [www.dtownnpc.org](http://www.dtownnpc.org) to explore the variety of ways we strive to learn and grow together.

There you will find a video documenting a ceremony during which DPC members as well as a descendant of one of the men buried here laid wreaths on the gravestones.

As you read these stories and take time to reflect, feel free to view the stones by following the map on the back of this booklet. The numbers after each name correspond with the numbers on the map.

In 2018, volunteers began carefully cleaning the headstones with various preservation techniques. The stones were catalogued and photographed. Further research into the possibility of undocumented persons buried is ongoing.

Below are summaries of what we have learned to date. We have retained the original language of the day used in newspaper articles and other documents. Some of the phrasing is jarring to our modern sensibilities, but we have copied the words unchanged so that we can learn from this too. Words matter and contribute to societal norms and behavior.

### Morris Bake (3)

Morris Bake, age 50, appeared in the 1860 census, (born approximately 1810) worked as a hostler and lived with a 60-year-old man named John Walker. Walker's occupation was gentleman – designating a retired man who lived on investment income. Walker is buried in the Doylestown Historic Cemetery. While Bake's family history is unclear, there is a free black man named Benjamin Bake in the 1820-1840 censuses who resided in Wrightstown and may have been Morris' father. Benjamin and his large family did not appear in the 1850 census, but Morris Bake was working as

a hostler (groom or stableman) in a hotel in the Spring Garden district 1, Philadelphia.



From an article published following Bake's death in the Doylestown Democrat on April 21, 1863: *"He occupied a small shop on State Street, where he sold apples, and such other things as he could procure, to earn a little money. He had been ailing for some time but was not thought to be dangerously ill. He was subject to cramp colic, and it is supposed he died in one of those spells. His remains were buried in the Presbyterian graveyard, in the section appropriated to the internment of persons of color, followed by a number of gentlemen. Rev. Dr. Andrews delivered an appropriate address. Morris always shuddered at the idea of being buried at the Alms*

*House, or as a pauper. A collection was taken up at the grave, and a sufficient amount of money raised to bear the expense of the funeral. In the brief services held, it was observed, "We bury an industrious man, a man of honesty, of truth, respectful toward others, uncomplaining, a constant reader of his Bible, and who leaves no stain on his character as a practicing Christian."*

### **Peter Jackson (1)**

Peter Jackson was born around 1789 first appeared in the 1820 U.S. Federal Census for Doylestown. Mr. Jackson died in July of 1859. He was married to Katherine Derry Jackson, who was baptized at DPC on February 13, 1859



Descendants of Peter Jackson throughout the years. Photos contributed by Lydia Keene Williams. Left: Emma Jackson Burr with Husband Raymond Burr and family. Louella Lydia Burr Mitchell is seated in the rear on the right. Center: Louella Lydia Burr Mitchell and husband Theodore Judson Mitchell; Right: Paul Farwell Keene and Laura Mitchell, 1944. Paul was a Tuskegee Airman.

and was listed as a member in full Communion. According to his family, they lived on Church Street next to Doylestown Presbyterian Church.

They had three daughters: Amanda, Emma and Rebecca. The W.W.H. Davis History of Doylestown reports that there was also a son, John, but family members are still attempting to confirm this. According to Doylestown tax records, Peter owned land, a horse, and a cow.

From the W.W.H. Davis History of Doylestown (1905): *"Peter Jackson was the first colored man of any distinction in Doylestown, that we have note of. He was here as early as in the twenties, in the service of Judge William Watts, and to his death, off and on. He was a tall, good-looking man, and, in the heyday of the volunteer militia, attended the trainings and waited on the ranking officers. Jackson was married and raised a family, and, in later years, we remember when his daughters lived in some of our families. On the reputation of their father, they held their heads pretty high"*

From the "History of the Doylestown

Guards” by W.W.H. Davis (1887): *“Peter Jackson was a slave in Delaware, who ran away and settled at Doylestown, more than half a century ago. He became quite famous in his day. He visited military parades in the service of the officers, as coachman, waiter, etc. At one time he lived with William Watts, associate judge of the courts, and drove his pair of cream-colored horses.”*

The following contains information compiled in recent years by various members of Peter’s family.

His daughter Amanda Matilda was born in December 1843 in Pennsylvania. Amanda married Charles Smiley, a caterer. They had three sons.

His daughter Emma was born on April 27, 1844, in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. She married Raymond Johnson Burr, a painter, in 1870. Raymond Johnson Burr was the son of John Pierre Burr (American Abolitionist and community leader in Philadelphia) who was the son of Aaron Burr, the Vice President of the United States. Raymond and Emma had 11 children in 20 years. She died on November 4, 1921, in Pennsylvania at the age of 77. Emma’s youngest



Emma Jackson Burr, daughter of Peter Jackson. Photo contributed by Lydia Keene Williams.

daughter was Louella Lydia Burr born December 30, 1890. Louella married Theodore Judson Mitchell in 1914 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

They had five children during their marriage: Miriam, Eugene,

Louella, Theodore, and Laura. Laura Ann Mitchell married Paul Farwell Keene, a renowned African American Artist, and they settled in Warrington, Bucks County where the family still resides.

His daughter Rebecca was born in April 1848 in Pennsylvania. Rebecca married Edmund Birchett, a salesman and eventual store owner. They had three sons and four daughters.

The man who may have been Peter’s son, John H. Jackson: From Silas Andrews’ Historical Discourse by the Pastor, December 1876 as he lists pastors who’s faith was nurtured at



DPC: #26 John H. Jackson, biblically trained in our Sunday School, and theologically at Lincoln University, of whom Professor Westcott said for us the day he preached four years ago: “Among the foremost, if we take him all in all, the most reliable man we ever educated there”. Beloved by his ministerial brethren of every shade and complexion, amidst his pastoral work in the city of Baltimore, he died of smallpox in 1872.

### **Robert and Ruth Freeman Montgomery (8)**

Robert and Ruth were married before Judge John Pugh, who is also buried at DPC, on August 2, 1823. They are identified as “free people of color.” DPC’s History Book Volume I describes Robert as “formerly enslaved” – but this has yet to be confirmed.



The gravestone of Robert Montgomery. He is believed to have died in 1833 and shares the headstone with his wife Ruth.

### **The Price Family (7,10)**

Susan Price appeared in the 1880 census, age 73. She was born in Maryland as were both of her parents. Living with her is Samuel Price, age 65. He was born in Virginia as were both of his parents. He was a laborer according to the 1880 census, but also served as the town crier in Doylestown. Samuel and Susan had a daughter named Laura, age 18 in the 1880 census.

According to reports, one of Samuel’s sons, was buried here upon his death at a young age. From a local paper – “About one o’clock on the morning of the 9th ... at Doylestown, of consumption, Samuel Price, oldest son of Samuel Price, in the 19th year of his age.”

February 19, 2020 Article from the Doylestown Historical Society, taken as excerpt from a report by Wilma Rezer:

The Story of a former slave who became Doylestown’s Town Crier

*Sammy was born a slave on a plantation in Virginia. Not wishing to live a life of bondage he fled North and*

*came to Doylestown in the 1850s. He filled his days shining shoes for locals; weekends were spent making a tour of nearby hotels to accommodate visiting guests. Sammy was a good worker, but when business was slow, he supplemented his income as a handyman and gardener for residents.*

*Two families in particular, the Halls (Samuel Hall was a mason and builder) and the Kachlines (he was a carpenter) took a strong interest in Sammy and greatly influenced his life. Price worked at the Centennial in Philadelphia in 1876 and evidently made enough money to buy the Beek Street lot for \$125.*

*Price is now made the town crier, appointed by the Town Council, of which Samuel Hall was a member. Whenever an important event was about to happen or word needed to be spread, it was the crier's job to take to the streets of town and call out in a loud voice so that all could hear the latest news. On June 17, 1884, Sammy died. He was buried on June 20 next to his wife in the cemetery on East Court Street. His obituary in the Intelligencer said "Sammy Price, our aged*

*townsman, known by every man, woman and child, died Wednesday. He was a polite and respected man."*

*Samuel Price died without leaving a will. As there were no heirs to handle his estate, his life-long friend Samuel Hall & his son Charles H. Hall, a lawyer, took care of the funeral and legal proceedings.*

*Sammy Price's home still exists today on Beek Street.*

*From the Doylestown Democrat March 27, 1883 issue: wife of "Uncle Sammy" Price was buried in the Presbyterian Graveyard. From the Democrat June 1884: "Uncle Sammy", colored well known in Doylestown for 25 years. Had been a slave in Virginia, member of the Baptist church.*

*From the Intelligencer: "Uncle Sammy", a well-known colored resident of our borough for the past 20 years, died on Wednesday morning. He had been in poor health for a long time. He was a slave before the war, and lived in Virginia and other Southern States, but at its close drifted northward and settled in Doylestown. He was a member of the Baptist church and was*

*an exemplary man. "Sammy" used to delight in relating the coon hunts in Virginia in the olden time.*

### **Jane Scudder (4)**

Jane Scudder was living with the young family of Edward Palmer as a domestic in 1860, in Doylestown at the age of 60, records indicate. According to her death record, she died in August of 1870 at age 86. The document says she was born in New Jersey (although the 1860 census says Pennsylvania). She died at the Bucks County House, possibly this is the almshouse.



The gravestone of Jane Scudder. She died in 1870.

### **Hannah Trippet (2)**

Hannah Trippet was a domestic for Dr. G.R. McCoy, a physician in Doylestown. She was living with the family in 1850 and in 1860. She was 53 in 1860. She died later the same year.



The gravestone of Hannah Trippet. She died in 1860.



Pastor John Willingham speaking with Lydia Keene Williams, a descendant of Peter Jackson during a recent wreath-laying ceremony.

There are five other individuals buried here for whom we have little or no information. These are people whose graves DPC has been entrusted to care for over all of these past years and we hope in the future we are able to learn more about each of them. But it is important to include their names here and share what we do know.

**James Rairson (5):** Died April, 1831

**Mary Ann Rairson (6):** Daughter of James and Sarah, baptized at DPC on December 14, 1822. She died at age 4.

**Judy (9):** No data on her headstone.

The following burials do not have headstones and their burial locations within the grave yard is unknown:

**Mary Ann Grove:** Died December 11, 1860 at age 18 (born appx. 1842) She is buried at DPC as reported in Episcopal Church Records.

**A. Newman**

**Samuel Price** (possibly buried next to his wife)

