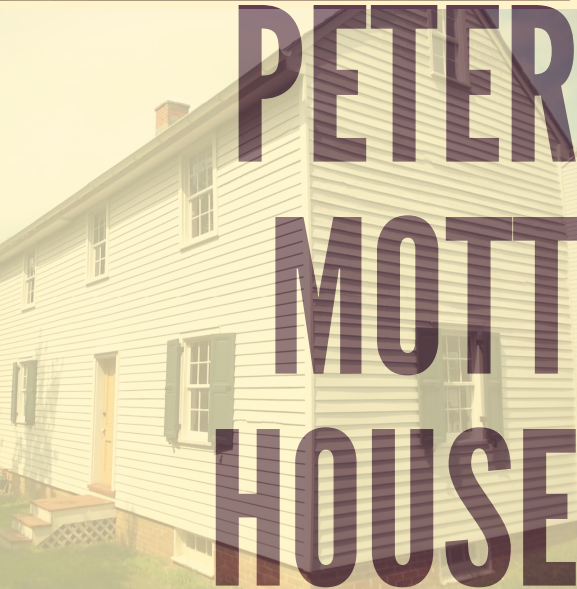


1800

Peter Mott was a free Black man, a 19th century preacher and Sunday School superintendent in Snow Hill, New Jersey, the former name for Lawnside. He was a farmer, a landowner, a laborer and a plasterer. The community's population grew with fugitives from slavery, others freed by nearby Quakers and by the efforts of abolitionists.

Elizabeth Ann Thomas married Peter Mott in 1833 in Gloucester County, New Jersey. She may have been born in slavery

They built their home in Snow Hill around 1845. In the 1850 and 1860 U.S. censuses the Motts reported they were born in New Jersey; only in 1870 -- after the Civil War -- did they say their birthplaces were Delaware and Virginia. Each was designated "B" for Black.



PETER MOTT HOUSE

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MUSEUM

"You may wish to know why so much secrecy about a place known as Free Haven. Well, it was a place of freedom to an oppressed people, so much so that they with thankful hearts called it Haven, and the secrecy was to conceal their habitation from the oppressors."
--Charles Smiley, "The True Story of Lawnside," Camden, New Jersey, 1921

According to oral tradition, the Rev. Mott carried freedom seekers in his horse-drawn wagon to members of the Society of Friends in Haddonfield and Moorestown. Residents passed down stories of local women cooking more food to help Mrs. Mott feed her furtive guests. Bounty hunters were confounded by the community's dense woods and freemen who were ready to fire off shotguns. In one case, a newspaper reported the sound thrashing residents gave two suspected spies sent by slave catchers.

Peter Mott died in November 1881. His death certificate listed the cause of death as heart disease. Elizabeth Ann died two years earlier. The Rev. Mott was buried at Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church cemetery on Mouldy Road by Edward Miller, originator of the area's Miller Funeral Home. His grave is no longer marked.

1881

The Mott House, Lawnside's oldest house, was placed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 1994. Giles Wright, director of Afro-American History for the New Jersey Historical Commission, who with Clarence H. Still, conducted tours of the Mott House noted its triple significance as an Underground Railroad site owned by an African-American abolitionist in an African-American community.

Today descendants of those who ran away, bought their freedom or were manumitted, still live in the town. Among these families are the Arthurs, the Coopers, the Bells, and the kin of William Still, "the Father of the Underground Railroad."

SCHEDULE 1.—Free Inhabitants in *Orange Township* in the County of *Orange* State of *New Jersey*, enumerated by me, on the *23rd* day of *June* 1860, for *L. Higgins*, Ass't Marshal, Post Office *Mount Ephraim*.

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District	No. of Family	Name of Head of Family	Sex and Color			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, and age and birth, over 15 years of age.	Value or Estate Owned.		Place of Birth, Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, lame, idiot, pauper, or insane.
			M	F	C		Real Estate	Personal		
112	128	Reuben Thomas	35	M	B	Farm Laborer	50		New Jersey	
		Married Wife	17	F	B				B	
		Child	10	M	B	Domestic			B	
		Child	4	F	B				B	
113	128	Stephen Smith	42	M	B	Farmer	100		Delaware	
		Wife	40	F	B				B	
		Child	15	M	B				B	
		Child	12	F	B				B	
114	128	Thomas H. Thomas	30	M	B	Farmer	200		Pennsylvania	
		Wife	28	F	B				B	
		Child	10	M	B				B	
		Child	8	F	B				B	
115	128	Samuel S. Thomas	60	M	B	Farmer	50		B	
116	128	George Kelly	30	M	B	Farm Laborer	200		New Jersey	3
		Wife	28	F	B				B	
		Child	10	M	B				B	
		Child	8	F	B				B	
		Child	4	M	B				B	
		Child	18	M	B				B	W
		Child	7	F	B				B	W
		Child	6	F	B				B	W
		Child	4	M	B				B	
		Child	15	M	B				B	
		Child	12	F	B				B	
117	127	John Jones	42	M	B		200		B	
		Wife	37	F	B				B	
118	127	Charles Thomas	45	M	B	Farm Laborer	50		New York	
		Wife	38	F	B				B	
119	127	Thomas Miller	35	M	B		300		New Jersey	X
		Wife	32	F	B				B	
		Child	18	M	B				B	
		Child	16	M	B				B	
		Child	12	M	B				B	W
		Child	9	F	B				B	
		Child	6	F	B				B	
		Child	4	M	B				B	
120	127	William H.	42	M	B		50		Delaware	
		Wife	38	F	B				B	
		Child	10	M	B				B	
121	127	Thomas Thomas	35	M	B	Farmer	200		B	X
		Wife	32	F	B				B	
		Child	7	F	B				B	W
		Child	4	M	B				B	
		Child	30	F	B				B	



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