



AFRICAN BURYING GROUND 1801

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On June 22, 1801, three African American Men - one free Negro and two slaves - purchased one tenth of an acre of land from Aaron Melick for the sum of three dollars to establish a burying ground for the "Black people in this Neighborhood." This is the earliest known purchase of land by slaves for burials in New Jersey. The free Negro's name was Robert Aaron, a local bee keeper, and the two slaves were Aaron Melick's Robert and Aaron Van Doren's Yaff.

The burying ground is one square chain (66'x66') -bounded on the west by the Hillside Avenue. In his 1889 book "The Story of an Old Farm," Andrew D. Melick, Jr. refers to the site as 'God's Acre.'

ERECTED BY THE SOMERSET COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS - 2016