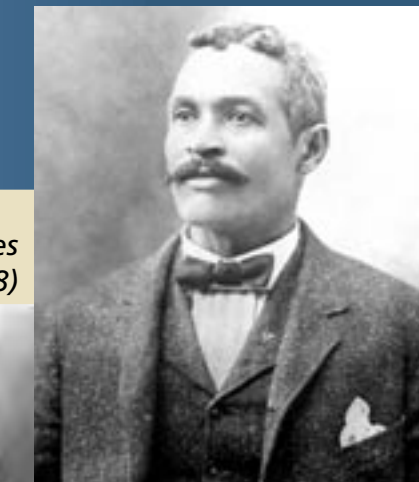


MORRIS CANAL GREENWAY



James Campbell



JAMES CAMPBELL

CANAL BOAT CAPTAIN (1856 – 1932)

James Campbell (Camel) was born January 16, 1856. He and his wife, Hannah K. Anderson were married on October 9, 1878 and had eight children; four boys and four girls.

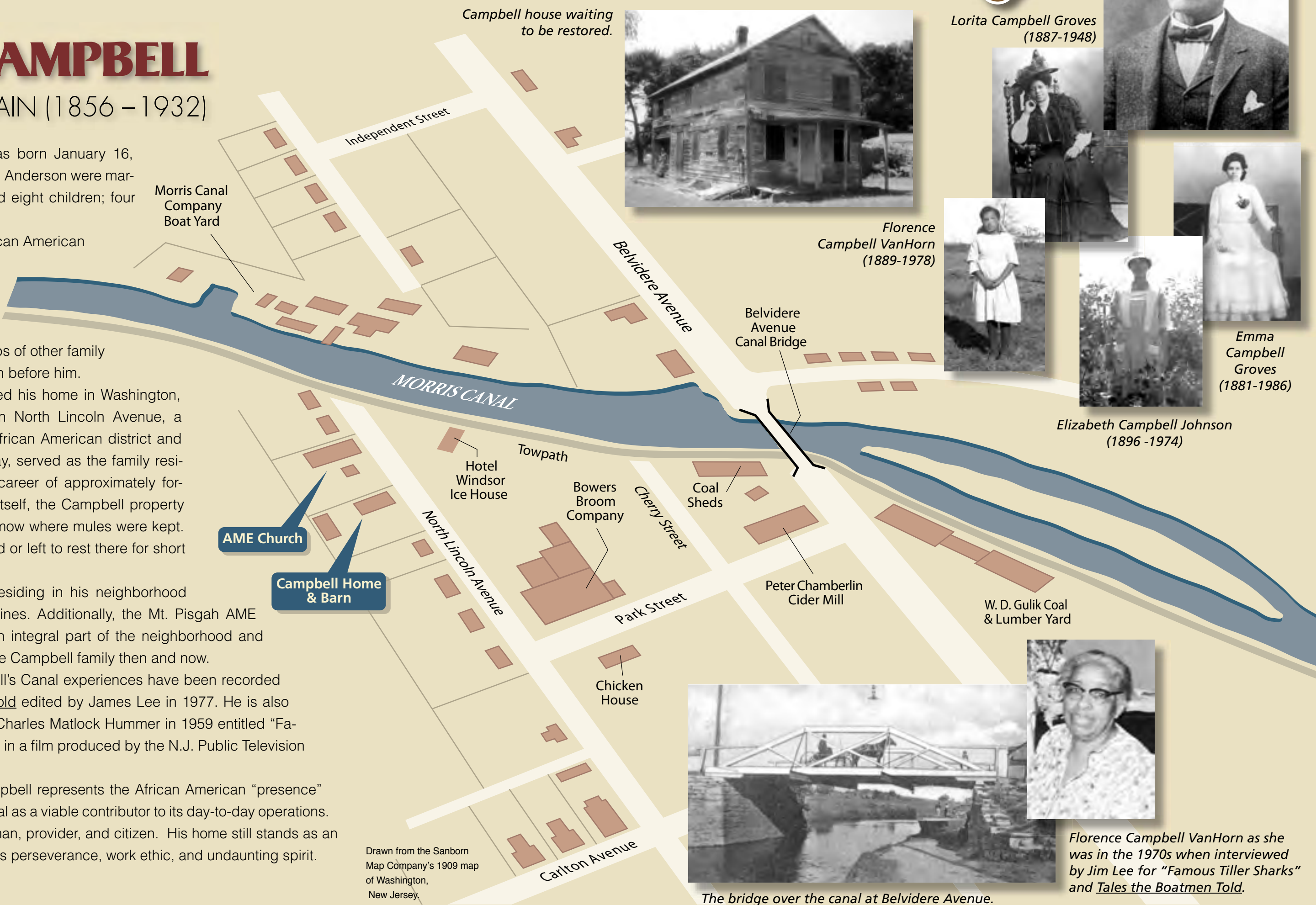
James was a “free” born African American who could both read and write. At the age of fifteen, he became one of only a small percentage of Black Boat Captains on the Morris Canal, following in the footsteps of other family members who had been Boatmen before him.

In 1889, James purchased his home in Washington, N.J. for \$167.98. Its location on North Lincoln Avenue, a once thriving, well-established African American district and in close proximity to the waterway, served as the family residence throughout his Boatman career of approximately forty plus years. Beside the home itself, the Campbell property featured a large barn with a haymow where mules were kept. These animals could be borrowed or left to rest there for short periods of time.

Other Black Boatmen residing in his neighborhood included Joe Taylor and Jim Haines. Additionally, the Mt. Pisgah AME Church, erected in 1877, was an integral part of the neighborhood and served as the church home for the Campbell family then and now.

Some of Captain Campbell's Canal experiences have been recorded in the book Tales the Boatmen Told edited by James Lee in 1977. He is also referred to in a poem written by Charles Matlock Hummer in 1959 entitled “Famous Tiller Sharks” which is sung in a film produced by the N.J. Public Television Corporation with the same title.

Boat Captain James Campbell represents the African American “presence” and experience on the Morris Canal as a viable contributor to its day-to-day operations. He felt “duty” bound as a family man, provider, and citizen. His home still stands as an authentic witness and legacy to his perseverance, work ethic, and undaunting spirit.



Campbell house waiting to be restored.

Lorita Campbell Groves (1887-1948)



Florence Campbell VanHorn (1889-1978)



Emma Campbell Groves (1881-1986)



Elizabeth Campbell Johnson (1896 -1974)



The bridge over the canal at Belvidere Avenue.



Florence Campbell VanHorn as she was in the 1970s when interviewed by Jim Lee for “Famous Tiller Sharks” and Tales the Boatmen Told.

Drawn from the Sanborn Map Company's 1909 map of Washington, New Jersey.