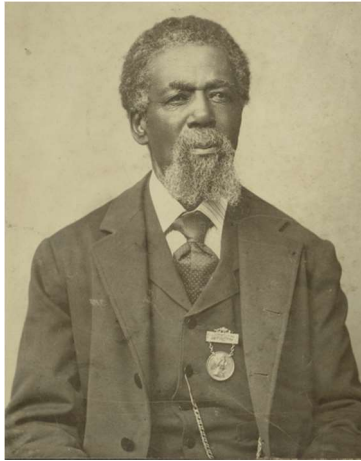


# Thomas Mundy Peterson



1824 - 1904

On March 31, 1870, one day after the ratification on the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Thomas Mundy Peterson voted in the local election in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. He became known as the first African American to cast a ballot in the U.S. election under the provisions of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The citizens of Perth Amboy were voting to settle a disagreement to revise the town charter or abandon it in favor of a township form of government.

The son of an ex-slave, Lucy Green, Thomas Peterson was born in Metuchen, New Jersey in 1824 and grew up to work as a handyman and janitor. At the age of 46, Peterson attended Perth Amboy's local election as a member of the Republican Party, casting his ballot in favor of revising an existing city charter, which made him the first African American to vote in any election in United States history.

Peterson also became the first Black person in Perth Amboy to serve on a jury, going further on to earn the distinction of being jointly appointed to make amendments to the very revisions he voted in favor of previously. The citizens of the City raised money and presented him a gold medal on Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) and in 1989, the school that he became the first custodian of was named after him. He remained active in the civic affairs of Perth Amboy and Middlesex County throughout his life.