



Nathan and Polly Johnson House

New Bedford Historical Society  
For Immediate Release  
August 14, 2017  
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### **A Celebration of Paul Cuffe's Legacy Set for September 16**

New Bedford, MA. On Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> five local historical organizations will commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of local hero Paul Cuffe with the inauguration of an **African-American Native-American Heritage Trail**, an informational website, and panel discussions dedicated to new research on this remarkable 19<sup>th</sup> century hero and his family. The town of Westport will declare September 16, Paul Cuffe Day and proclamations from Governor Baker and other citations and recognitions will mark this occasion.

In celebration of Cuffe Day, several panel discussions will be held at the Westport Friends Meeting House and in the Westport Grange with presentations of new information and insights about the lives of Paul Cuffe, his long-term business partner and brother-in-law, Michael Wainer, and their families. Following the symposium there will be a launching of an African-American and Native-American Heritage Trail comprising ten sites in Westport, Dartmouth and New Bedford that were important in the lives of Paul Cuffe, his parents, Cuff and Ruth Slocum, and his brother-in-law and sister, Michael and Mary Wainer.

The title and theme of the symposium is **"Paul Cuffe: 1759-1817, Following His Footsteps."** The keynote speaker, Vanessa Julye, is coordinator of the Committee for Ministry on Racism of the Friends (Quakers) General Conference and co-author of the book *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African-Americans and the Myth of Social Justice*. Vanessa works on the issue of racism in the wider community and has a calling to ministry with a focus on eradication and the healing of racism's wounds.

Lamont Thomas, the author of the most frequently cited biography of Paul Cuffe will moderate a panel that includes Cedric Woods, Director of the Institute for New England Native American Studies and Jeffrey Fortin, author of the forthcoming book *Paul Cuffe: Yeoman*, in a discussion of **"Paul Cuffe and His Vision for a New World."** There will also be a presentation on the many images that profess to be of Paul Cuffe and a discussion of which ones are legitimate and which ones are not.

In the afternoon, the African American Native American Heritage Trail will be launched with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and an opportunity for participants to travel over the trail by bus with Cuffe scholars. The Heritage Trail will connect historic sites between Westport, Dartmouth and New Bedford that belonged to the Cuffe and Wainer families. The trail will extend from the Captain Paul Cuffe Monument and grave markers at the Friends Meeting House in Westport to the soon to be re-opened Captain Paul Cuffe Memorial Park at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Along the way it includes sites that were the homesteads of Paul and Alice Cuffe, Michael and Mary Wainer and Cuff and Ruth Slocum, several business properties including a windmill at Westport Point, a residence and tannery of Michael Wainer's in Russells Mills, and a store in New Bedford selling West Indian products owned by Paul Cuffe and two of his sons-in-law, Peter and Alexander Howard. A self-guided map of the sites will be available to participants and will be available at Westport Town Hall, the Handy House and other sites in the region.

The organizations that are sponsoring these events include the Westport Historical Society, the Dartmouth Historical and Arts Society, the New Bedford Historical Society, and the Westport and Dartmouth Historical Commissions. The public is invited to the symposium, but is requested to register. The registration fee is \$10 and covers a light lunch, refreshments and a special commemorative souvenir. The Westport Friends Meeting, the Westport Women's Club and the Westport Grange are providing support for these events.

Information and registration for the symposium is available at the Westport Historical Society website at <http://wpthistory.org>. Persons wishing to attend these events are requested to register at this website or by contacting any of the three sponsoring historical societies. For more information, call (508) 979-8828 or e-mail [info@nbhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@nbhistoricalsociety.org).

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It is the mission of the New Bedford Historical Society to document and celebrate the history, legacy and presence of African Americans, Cabo Verdeans, Native Americans, West Indians and other people of color in New Bedford, Massachusetts.