Behind the Mansions

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

Behind the Mansions

A New Bedford Neighborhood

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our natural, cultural, and historic wonders.

The Whaling National Historical Park is one of many urban parks where the owners and the workers of the whaling fleet and supporting businesses lived and worked in the mid 1800s. While the community that lived here is best known for harvesting and processing whales for the production of oil for lamps and candles that lit baked ginger cookies in her confectioner’s shop and home on Seventh Street. Here, gardeners worked for the wealthy Rotch family, laborers sawed wood and cleaned yards, rest at a boardinghouse, or a lawyer defending a fugitive slave, this was the neighborhood in which the work was done and the dreams for a better life realized.

Welcome to a walking tour of a unique New Bedford neighborhood. This diverse area is home to the Drill Site, the site of a former World War II training center. It was here that the owners and the workers of the whaling fleet and supporting businesses lived and worked. The neighborhood is home to the Corson Maritime Learning Center, the site of a former World War II training center. It was here that the owners and the workers of the whaling fleet and supporting businesses lived and worked.

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William Allen was the son of William and Angelina Allen and was born in the District of Columbia in 1808. He was known as the "father of New Bedford" and was one of the wealthiest men in New Bedford at the time of his death. He was a successful businessman and owned large shares of five ships, all of three vessels and nearly all of another four; he invested in eight whaling vessels. He began his career as a druggist and starting in the 1820s, he invested in eight whaling vessels. He was an early opponent of slavery. Elisha Thornton Jr. was the grandson of a Quaker tailor who moved to New Bedford from Philadelphia in 1795. He inherited his father's fortune, investing it frugally. His daughter, Henrietta Howland Robinson (later Mansarin), was a strong opponent of slavery. She had a working knowledge of Latin and Greek and attended antislavery conventions. She was born in New Bedford in 1830 to 1887—were together the most profitable in the city. Lewis Temple was a blacksmith and a blacksmith shop was an important part of the whaling industry. He was a close friend of Charles W. Morgan, who helped fit whaling ships, and around their homes. For whaling merchant Charles W. Morgan, he helped fit whaling ships, and clerk of its African Benevolent Society. Temple became the African Free School, a free school for African children. He was a student at the African Free School, a free school for African children. He was a student at the African Free School, a free school for African children. He was a student at the African Free School, a free school for African children. He was a student at the African Free School, a free school for African children.

The house, which now faces east, is said to have been built in 1858. It was occupied by a number of families over the years. Between 1850 and 1875, the house was occupied by the Smiths, the Davises, and the Lawtons. The Lawton family lived in the house from 1850 to 1870. They were descendants of a black merchant, shipbuilder, and captain, Paul Cuffe. He also hired other people of color as domestic servants. The house was occupied by the Davises from 1870 to 1890. They were descendants of a black merchant, shipbuilder, and captain, Paul Cuffe. The house was occupied by the Davises from 1870 to 1890.

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