

The Research and Documentation of African and African Descendant maritime influences in the history of sail needs to be made public in a manner that is easy to read and once marketed properly to be purchased and passed on to others who might be interested. The concept of a series of volumes that present in detail the accomplishments of Black mariners is best served by the publication both in a book format and online. I am putting a nutshell concept of three important 18th through 19th Century mariners that have much more than these words to both research and presentation but this gives the concept a platform to start.

Atlantic Creole Maritime Series

Volume One

Tales of Three Black Sailors- Equiano, Perkins and Cuffe

Introduction

I have chosen to present in Volume One three individuals from a list of many more during an era of revolution and nation building between England and the Western Hemisphere. The theme is a maritime representation of an Atlantic Creole definition: having a foot in both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The three stories are of an African born, a Caribbean Islander and a North American.

An extremely important almost invisible part of Black British history is our part in their movement upon the waters. This series of stories is intended to stimulate a growth in curiosity about the involvement of African and African Descendant peoples using the waters for transportation and in these cases British mariners. What we have found is a tendency to not involve maritime heritage in much of what we consider the important parts of Black history and a prime example of that is neglect in the telling of most of Olaudah Equiano's life being a mariner. Another aspect of this absence in relating the Black maritime experiences comes from the perspective of the Jamaican, Captain John 'Jack Punch' Perkins, the first Black officer in the Royal Navy. And the last Atlantic Creole being Captain Paul Cuffe, who was originally a British subject

but becomes an American and initiates the first back to Africa transportation of Black American families. All three of these sailors made their names known during the same time period between 1745-1815.

My aim is to continue and to encourage more research on those mariners that I have listed at the end of the synopsis of Volume One. I need a viable website to promote the encouragement and to seek further funding.

It should also be noted that during this same time period the first five narratives on personal African enslavement were published in the Americas and in Great Britain and they were narrated by African and African Descendant mariners.

Chapter One- The Captain Olaudah Equiano Odyssey

Sections:

Introduction

Enslavement and Freedom

Sailor

Caribbean Adventures

Sailing the World

North Pole Adventure

Last Port

Chapter Two- Captain John Perkins-Royal Navy Officer

Sections:

Introduction

From Enslavement to Command

Spy Tales

The Warrior and his Ships

Battle of St Croix

Retirement without Seeing England

Chapter Three- Captain Paul Cuffe-Back To Africa

Sections:

Introduction

Kofe Slocum Enslaved to Freedom

Native and African Marriage

Paul Against the British

Paul Cuffe Fights for Rights

The First Black Quaker

Vessels and Trade

Trading around Africa

English Abolitionists Court Captain Cuffe

Back To Africa

A Noble Ending

Chapter One

The Olaudah Equiano Odyssey

Introduction

The Little World

There have been numerous books and over 500 articles written about Olaudah Equiano's short life of 52 years. But of those none concentrated on a life that spanned over 29 years at sea aboard over 26 vessels on at least 40 voyages. I have not read the in any of my research the theory that those experiences might have contributed to his evolving abolitionist views. It is as though he got taught that by Englishmen or that those thoughts emerged from his seeing enslaved people getting treated badly. His emphasis on those years at sea is right there on most of the pages in his only, but profound book, [The Interesting Narrative of The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African](#). But, strangely the sailing aspect that sees him sailing to North America, the Caribbean, Italy, Turkey, Central America and even the North Pole is usually glossed over as though it is not as important as his later connection to the abolitionist movement on land. In the book he definitely emphasises how his ship-board experiences both put him in intimate contact with white people for good and bad, as well as giving him a first hand experience with African enslavement at its worst.

What I am presenting on these pages, in this Chapter, are a life searching for the better graces of humankind from the perspective of a former enslaved African sailor who writes. I am an African Descendant and a sailor with a lot of ocean miles under sail who also writes and I have wondered for years why Equiano's maritime exploits have not been a focus. The foundation for his views during that European African enslavement era of the mid 18th Century questioned the morals of those who would participate in businesses so evil as slavery? He saw and experienced a gaining of knowledge that eventually presented itself to us in his book from the deck of a sailing ship, some times with him as a crew member of slave ships.

Sections:

Enslavement and The Little World

Sailor

Caribbean Adventures

Sailing the World

North Pole Adventure

Last Port

Enslavement and The Little World

Olaudah Equiano was born to an Embrenche, a nobleman in the Kingdom of Beninin in 1745. His branch of the Kingdom was known as Eboe and his village was Essaka. Equiano's youth, because of his father's rank, seemed idyllic until his kidnapping at the age of eleven. Equiano was named *Olaudah*, which, translates as having a loud voice and well spoken. He begins his story with the fairytale youth of pleasure and parental love and moves into cultural traits that he will be astonished by later in the worlds outside his small village.

At 11 years old Equiano is kidnapped with his sister from their home while their parents are out working. The siblings are separated and he travels with his captors and is sold a couple of times. He is not treated badly with one family but after an escape attempt he is sold off again and is re-united with his sister. After one night together they are separated again and he is heartbroken. His newest owners marched him off again for a couple of months living as nomads until he finally reaches the sea and there sits a slave ship.

The boy had never seen a slave ship before but finds out that he will be taken aboard by the strange looking light skin people with long hair, who do not wash their hands before they eat and speak in a strange language. They scare him and he thinks they are going to eat him. He is taken to the ship by a boat and the smells of others being confined below is overwhelming.

The Middle Passage crossing is horrendous because of the extremely cramped quarters with a cargo wedging them in together and the foulness of bowel waste and sickness. People die and are thrown overboard. He witnesses some Africans jumping overboard with his constant fear of being eaten. This is his first impression of enslavement of Africans by Europeans and it is surrounded and holds a manifest of fear.

Landing at Barbados he is classified as unsellable and shipped off by Sloop to Virginia to be sold to a tobacco merchant. The disrespect of people's bodies by touching and turning by those wishing to buy slaves provides a different kind of fear, especially when he witnesses families being torn apart. The white people look evil to him and that is his first impression of these types of people.

The merchant sold Equiano for forty Pounds Sterling to a British Naval Officer, Lieutenant Michael Henry Pascal, who was doing business with the merchant and about to depart to England. Equiano is treated kindly by the man and taken to his ship, the *Industrious Bee*. They set sail for England and Equiano is renamed, Gustavus Vassa, and eventually that name sticks even though he did not like it. The ship is comfortable and the crew were kindly, including an American boy a five years older named Richard Baker. Baker, or Dick, as they called him had never been to sea and though he owned slaves that first time at sea link created a friendship with Equiano to the extent that they are hardly apart.

The camaraderie amongst the *Bee's* crew lightens his fear that relaxes into comfort but also confusion for his eleven years. His only other experience with sailors was on the slave ship and that was horrible but aboard this vessel the sailors, who still didn't wash their hands before eating, were not only nice but curious about him. When the voyage across the Atlantic took longer than planned and the food was rationed Equiano got the same amount as the crew. There was a hierarchy aboard that Vassa recognised, similar to his village clan with a leader or Captain, a Mate and the crew, of which he thought himself included though he was more of a passenger. The ship was *a little world* in which those in it had a purpose; a job and were dependant on the others aboard and that made those in the crew all equal. This was the seed for Vassa's commitment to equality on land.

They made landfall at Falmouth after a passage of thirteen weeks with the Captain immediately going ashore and sending back provisions ‘and our famine was soon turned into feasting; almost without ending.’ Gustavus Vassa was entering his twelfth year as he marvelled at the architecture of Falmouth and was fascinated by the pavement of the streets.

Vassa sees Dick and Pascal reading and wants to learn to read, thinking that they were talking to the books and the books were talking back to them. More confusion adds to his list when they are lodged with a friend of Pascal’s who had a seven year old daughter who was fond of Vassa to the extent that they had servants serving him as he ate with her. When Pascal was appointed First Lieutenant aboard the HMS *Roe-buck* Dick and Vassa are sent for and they start their careers in the British Navy.

Sailor

Vassas first time aboard a war ship left him with a feeling of the extension of camaraderie that he had felt on the last trading vessel he had sailed across the Atlantic aboard. ‘When I went on board this large ship, I was amazed indeed to see the quantity of men and the guns. However my surprise began to diminish as my knowledge increased; and I ceased to feel those apprehensions and alarms which had taken such strong possession of me when I first came among the Europeans, and for some time after. I began now to pass to an opposite extreme...’

There are other boys around his age and they pulled him into their group. He had his first fight aboard as a sporting event with a white boy. It was a draw with him coming away with his first bloody nose. He was a part of the crew and was learning about how the ship worked. They sailed with the fleet but saw no actions. Back in London he suffered chilblains, a painful itching swelling of his leg, and a doctor recommended cutting his leg off, but he got better in time to join Pascal who had been promoted to First Lieutenant and they were sent to another vessel, the big *Preston*, a Man of War of fifty guns.

I am stopping here as this is a long chapter in his sailing life but the very exciting list of stories are listed in Sections...

(Note) At the end of Olaudah Equiano's chapter I have his list of vessels and the years he was aboard them.

1756	Unnamed Ship
1757	HMS <i>Roebuck</i>
1757	HMS <i>Savage</i>
1758	HMS <i>Preston</i>
1758	HMS <i>Royal George</i>
1758	HMS <i>Jason</i>
1758-59	HMS <i>Namur</i>
1759-62	HMS <i>AEtna</i>
1762-63	Sloop <i>Charming Sally</i>
1763-66	Many unnamed small vessels
1766	Sloop <i>Providence</i>
1766	Sloop <i>Nancy</i>
1766	<u>Freed</u>
1766	Sloop <i>Nancy</i> wreck and saved crew
1767	Sloop <i>Nancy</i> wreck and saved crew again
1767	Sloop <i>Speadwell</i>
1767	Unnamed vessel
1768-70	Yacht <i>Delwar</i>
1771	Ship <i>Grenada Planter</i>
1771-72	Ship <i>Jamaica</i>
1773	HMS <i>Race Horse</i>
1774-75	Ship <i>Hope</i>
1776	Unnamed <i>Schooner</i>
1776	Sloop <i>Morning Star</i>
1776	Unnamed <i>Schooner</i>
1776	Sloop <i>Indian Queen</i>
1777	Unnamed Ship
1784-85	Ship <i>London</i>
1786	Ship <i>Harmony</i>

Chapter Two

Captain John Perkins-Royal Navy Officer

Introduction

Black Jack Punch

Though British Royal Navy during the Age of Sail was a fairly conservative and socially homogeneous institution records were meticulously kept of their operations but some how early records of John Perkins slipped by that concerned his birth and parentage.

There are no berth or official records of anything about this person who called himself John Perkins until his story begins until he suddenly appears and becomes an officer. The Royal Navy at this point in time also did not record race in their enlistment backgrounds. Perkins is only referred to in correspondences as a mulatto, with brown skin and sometimes referred as ‘Black Jack Punch’. He just suddenly appears in November 1775 as a second pilot on the Jamaica Station Command Ship, HMS *Antelope*, by order of the Commander-in-Chief, Vice Admiral Clark Gayton.

It is assumed that he was the child of a white father and a black enslaved mother. Under the Jamaican law, this would have made him a slave. His father, being in a position of authority, could have freed young John who might have worked aboard vessels of the Royal Navy and caught somebody’s eye. But, he has never been entered into any crew listings before coming aboard the HMS *Antelope*.

Sections:

The Mysterious and Popular Captain Jack Punch

Perkins the Spy

Perkins the Warrior

Perkins Starting a War with Denmark

Almost an Admiral

Died Without Ever Setting a Foot in England

The Mysterious and Popular Captain Jack Punch

Before officially joining His Majesty's Royal Navy what we do know about John Perkins is only what is on his official papers that he was born in Jamaica in 1745. Perkins was highly regarded for his knowledge of ports around the Greater Antilles and since his berth is just at the end of the Golden Age of Piracy it has been conjectured that maybe his missing early years might be on purpose.

Vice Admiral Clark Gayton wrote of Perkins, "His knowledge of the different ports, in the West Indies was, perhaps, seldom equaled, and never surpassed." Maybe he received that pilot posting and caught somebody's eye because he had been praised continuously by officers he had served under as a private pilot and a prize winner for them. A prize was a ship captured and sold with the sales price divided by the Crown, Admiralty, officers and crew of the capturing vessel.

Whatever the reasoning Perkins was given a commission and command of a small probably pilot schooner, the *Punch*. He commanded the *Punch* from 1778 through 1779 and brought in 315 American and French vessels as prizes, while capturing over 3000 prisoners, hence the nickname *Jack Punch*. You can see why he became popular. This feat was officially endorsed by the Jamaican House of Assembly.

The Punch and Judy show is a traditional and still very popular English puppet show that always has Punch beating up a protagonist. A Jack was a nickname for a sailor.

Perkins the Spy

John 'Jack Punch' Perkins was commissioned as a spy to scout enemy preparations at Cap François and at Havana, making clandestine visits to the shore. He apparently spoke both Kreyol and Spanish enough to make his visits without problems. The British were still at war with the newly forming United States of America with the French on the side of the USA. Spain became involved as an ally of the French because of their Treaty of Aranjuez in 1779. The French assisted the Spanish to take Menorca in the Mediterranean and because of this were actively at war with England.

These were the reasons for Perkins' visits to both places and obtain information on any possibility of either of the French and Spanish possessions mounting an assault on Jamaica. As a passing note, a young Horatio Nelson also served at Jamaica Station at the same time as Perkins.

This was important information and Perkins reported directly back to Admiral Gayton that there was no apparent restocking of personnel nor equipment at either island. Perkins was commissioned after this task in October 1781 by the new Jamaica Station Commander-in-Chief, Sir Peter Parker as Lieutenant on the 12-gun schooner, *Endeavour*. Because of his daring he captured a prize much larger than his vessel and as a reward Perkins was made Commander of the *Endeavour* by Admiral George Rodney and the vessel was loaded with sufficient armament to become a Sloop-of-War. The Royal Admiralty disallowed his promotion though.

After the War with the newly formed United States of America ended Perkins disappears from history with a gossiped hint toward a bit of piracy during those very confusing years. He is also believed to be running guns to the Haitian revolutionaries. This latter development in his career moved even higher as he regained his position as a spy.

But, in 1790 Rodney successfully petitioned the Admiralty, through the Jamaican Assembly, that Perkins be promoted to Post Captain. As the Haitian revolution against the French worked toward the benefit of the British Perkins volunteered his services as a spy again to Rear-Admiral Affleck in 1790. His first mission took him to Haiti. In February 1792, he was arrested and condemned to death by the French authorities at Jérémie, but was rescued by the threat of force at the last minute by the British Frigate, *Diana*, under the command of Captain Thomas McNamara Russell who coincidentally was at dinner with the French command in Jeremie having just brought a convey of supplies to the post. Russell threatened to blow up Jeremie with his Frigate, *Diana*, and his accompanying Schooner, *Ferret*, if Perkins was not released. Perkins joined the *Diana* safely.

Perkins the Warrior

In 1793 as Post Captain he was awarded command of a captured privateer, the *Spitfire* of 6-guns, in Commodore John Ford's squadron. In Haiti the squadron took eleven merchant vessels as prizes. In 1795, in Haiti again, Perkins was given command of a larger captured prize schooner called the *Convention Nationale* with her name changed to the *Marie Antoinette*. The forty five ships in the squadron were held for a short period when they entered the anchorage at Port au Prince but negotiated their way out and soon captured the Schooner *Charlotte* and the Brig *Sally*.

A percentage of these prizes were awarded to the both the crews and officers up the line including those officers in charge who were not in the actions. Perkins made a lot of friends with his participation in many many actions.

In June 1797, by order of the ever-enriching Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Hyde Parker his friend, 'an old and deserving officer' was promoted to command the 14-gun Brig, *Drake* as part of Captain Hugh Pigot's Squadron. The worked patrolling Haiti capturing merchant ships in port or on the sea. On 20 April they were bringing nine merchant ships out of Jean-Rabel Harbour when they came under fire sinking one of the British schooners. But, they got through.

A month later Perkins captured the *Favorite* which put around £5000 in his pocket, well, to be divided as a very good prize. A little later, in company with Captain Poyntz's 5th Rate, 32-gun *Solebay* they came into contact with four French Corvettes off Cape Tiburon from 8-gun *Vengeur* to the gun *Egyptienne* with 48-guns total. They gave chase and captured all four due to a calm where they were able to pick off each vessel separately.

In September 1800 we see Perkins receiving a Command posting on the frigate, *Meleager*, 32-guns, from which in January 1801 he was transferred to the fast *Arab* (22 guns).

I am stopping here but the next three tales are listed in Sections...

(Note) At the end of Perkin's Chapter there is a list of the vessels he commanded and the wars in which he actively participated:

Vessels

4-10-gun Schooner HM *Punch*

12-gun American Schooner HMS *Endeavour*

4-gun Schooner HMS *Spitfire*

Schooner HMS *Marie Antoinette*

14-gun Brig HMS *Drake*

32-gun Frigate HMS *Meleager*

32-gun HMS *Arab*

32-gun HMS *Tartar*

Wars

American Revolution

Anglo-French War

Anglo-French & Spanish War

Fourth Anglo-Dutch War

Anglo-Danish War

Haitian Revolution

Napoleonic War

Chapter Three

Captain Paul Cuffe-Back To Africa

Introduction

“Rise To Be A People”

This is the tale of an exemplary African-Native American master mariner. His life depicts a time in history when a part of British America was becoming independent of that sovereignty through the will of a type of people who were forged by a culturally clashing association. During his lifetime the invention and division of race became an absolute definition of class in this newly forming republic. Cuffe epitomises an array of those at the social and economic bottom, and he also epitomises their rising to whatever level they wished in the spirit of the revolution that was supposed to identify the United States of America.

His father, Cuffe Slocum (Said Koffi- later changed to Cuffe), an Akan-Ashanti (Ghanaian), had purchased his way out of enslavement through his mariner skills and had married Ruth Moses, a free Wampanoag Native American to have ten children with Paul as the last boy.

Despite a combination of factors, Cuffe had discourse with the President of the United States, was a chief consultant to Clarkson, Allen and Wilberforce on aims of abolition in Great Britain, represented the American Loyalists in Sierra Leone, invested with Wampanoag and Quakers in mercantile shipping pursuits, might have been the first Black Quaker, was an initiator of the concept of pan-Africanism, personally financed and captained, on his own vessel, the first back to Africa migration voyage of thirty-eight free Black Americans (nine families) to Sierra Leone.

Captain Cuffe, who was noted as fair skin and plump, had been born a free British subject. He and his wife funded and built a smallpox hospital, funded and built the first integrated school in the United States, built a Quaker Meeting House after one had been burned, purposefully had only Black and Wampanoagah crews on his vessels, owned a store, a mill and a shipyard. At the turning of the 18th Century into the 19th Century Captain Paul Cuffe was the wealthiest Black man in the United States of America.

Sections:

Introduction

Enslaved Said Koffi to Freedom as Cuffe Slocum

Captain Paul Cuffe

The First Black Quaker

Vessels and Trade

Trading around Africa

Back To Africa

English Abolitionists Court Captain Cuffe

A Noble Ending

Enslaved Said Koffi to Freedom as Cuffe Slocum

Around 1717 the Ashanti, Said Koffi (Koffi means born on Friday), was born in what is now the West African country of Ghana, also known as the British Gold Coast. At the age of 10 he was sold into slavery to Captain Ebenezer Slocum and brought to the coastal Massachusetts town of Dartmouth. Young Said was given the the enslavement ownership surname of Slocum and the Anglicised first name of Cuffe. Cuffe Slocum was trained to build and crew vessels for his master. He worked for the Quaker Captain for fifteen years before being sold, in 1742, to Captain Slocum's nephew, John, for £150.

One point that should be stated early in this writing is that both Said Koffi when brought to North America and his freeborn son, Paul, were British subjects. It would be another 24 years from the time of Captain Cuffe's birth before England was to recognise a newly formed United States of America. The reason for making this an evident point so early in this writing is because of later events in the story that show a willingness by gentry in England to assist the goals of the British African-Native American.

The Slocum family had a long established residence in what was known as Slocum's Island in the Elizabeth chain of islands, now known as Cuttyhunk. Quaker John Slocum allowed Cuffe to obtain extra work in order to pay for his legal freedom. Cuffe Slocum did purchase his freedom from John in less than three years in an amicable arrangement that showed a quality of respect between the Slocum family, the Quakers, and the young Ashanti. Cuffe Slocum was a farmer, a builder and an accomplished coastal navigator. He owed these skills to the Slocums who also insisted that he learn rudimentary reading and writing and, most importantly to Quakers, bookkeeping.

Cuffe's extra work probably included cargo carrying because he met Ruth Moses, while enslaved, and she was living in the port town of Harwich. They fell in love. Ruth Moses, a Gay Head of the Wampanoag Tribe, was an intelligent woman who

was straight forward and could read and write. They made a good couple and were officially engaged just after Cuffe Slocum purchased his freedom from enslavement. Their engagement was announced on 3 January 1745. They married the following year on 8 July 1746.

The Gay Head Indians were part of the Wampanoag Nation of Southern Massachusetts. The couple decided to live with the Gay Heads and were accepted, establishing a small farm and starting up a fishing and freight business that served the Buzzard's Bay communities. The couple always emphasised the need to make contracts clear and to maintain a record of business transactions. At the time spelling was accomplished phonetically and clarity had to be agreed upon by both parties. Added to that was the use of the Quaker manner of speaking, which re-arranged words that would sometimes complicate written dealings with non-Quakers.

Cuffe Slocum had arrived in North America in chains, freed himself through hard work and honesty, built a thriving commercial concern through the sweat of his own brow and the ability of his mind and hands. And with the assistance of his wife, Ruth, they had essentially become established and respected amongst the Wampanoag groups which broadened their business reach throughout the coastal Southern Massachusetts Colony.

The Cuffes had ten children, David, Jonathan, Sarah, Mary, Phoebe, John, Paul, Lydia, Ruth and the last child was named Frelove. The children were called 'Mustee' meaning that they were equally of both African and American Indian bloodlines. By law, that meant that they were born as free persons because of having a Native American mother who was not enslaved.

Cuffe Slocum developed a close working relationship with the prominent businessman William Rotch Sr., whose son William Jr. had been born in 1759, the same year as Paul. The Rotch family were Quaker merchants and whalers of New Bedford. The mutual esteem between the Rotches and the Slocums was instrumental in Cuffe's de-

veloping connections. The very wealthy Rotch's continued advice and partnerships in ventures was to serve the young Paul later in life.

Paul Slocum was the seventh child and the youngest boy. The family was tight knit and loving with a sense of pride in achievement that grew as their businesses prospered. Cuffe Slocum specifically served the growing township of Dartmouth from their first home on Cuttyhunk Island and the Indian community of Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard Island. The routes through the Vineyard Sound and across Buzzards Bay could be hazardous but they were also profitable. The move brought them in closer to island markets by boat and again assisted their income. As they grew the children became a part of the enterprises with Paul at a young age wanting to go sailing with his father. This bonding was an essential part of Paul's later life and the influence of his father's adoption of Quaker moral concepts. Cuffe Slocum was not a Quaker but took on their values and even spoke using their vernacularisms.

Cuffe and Ruth Slocum saved enough to purchase a 120-acre farm not far from Dartmouth near Westport Village. As it grew the family would do carpentry around their area and do deliveries from their farm over land, while also working along the river, deltas and bay shores by boat. The children learned to read and write, building construction, farming, bookkeeping and navigating the tricky waters that extended their enterprises in the port villages and townships of Buzzards Bay. For Cuffe Slocum large family life was good. They had a home, businesses and a loving family. Then, Cuffe Slocum died.

Paul was eleven, the seventh and youngest son but was the closest to his father and the death devastated the boy. He felt both the anguish of loss and the pride in having Cuffe Slocum's blood in his veins. His father had repeated the Ashanti concept that when one dies the spirit of the person stays on as what that person in life represented to the family. The family had always been strengthened by the presence of Cuffe Slocum and his effervescent energies. As a young teenager Paul built small boats to trade and work among the Massachusetts islands, as his father had done for many years.

Paul Slocum stayed with his mother and brother John to take care of the farm for another three years. But his heart was aboard the many ships he saw plying the Bay and the many memories of his father's little sloops trading along its shores. At the age of 14 Paul Slocum went to sea, he did not just go to sea, he went whaling, he shipped aboard a whaler owned by the Rotches.

The one positive aspect about whaling was the acceptance aboard a whaler by anybody who was crazy enough to step aboard voluntarily. The crews usually contained a high percentage of African Descendants and American Indians. Because of this mixture most aboard could rise in rank through the skilled use of their hands. But because of the horrible living conditions aboard, possible long durations of the voyages and low pay not many wanted to take that step aboard and if they did not many returned for another voyage. It was perfect for a young boy with an eye to the sea.

An 18th century Massachusetts whaling trip was a long circular voyage that went out to and back from the North Atlantic fishing banks, or down and back up the coast of Africa and/or South America searching for sperm whale whose fat gave some of the finest burning oils of that period. It was a profitable business if the whales were caught and a dangerous one given the setting and the hands on method of killing the great mammal.

The skipper took a liking to the curiosity and coastal knowledge of young Paul and taught him celestial navigation during the year long voyage. Maybe because Paul was also a close friend of the Rotch family, who owned the whaler, assisted the lessons a bit. Whatever happened the skipper showed a tendency to keep Paul at his right hand and through this intimacy Paul recognised and filed the diplomatic powers of a captain in keeping a large vessel moving through the seas with a crew of people from all walks of life. The captain had to tackle the weather, the morale of the crews and the skills needed to achieve the objective of the voyage. With whaling one had a chance to earn and keep more because of the long duration at sea and the continuing value of whale oil but it was dangerous work.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) Paul, in respect for their father, changed the family's surname to Coffe. Since English was spelled phonetically he later signed his correspondence, deeds, and his will by spelling his name as Cuffe. His surname is also written officially in three censuses as Cuff, again phonetic pronunciation could be at fault. Later still, members of the family wrote Cuffee but he never did, always writing Cuffe.

Cuffe's life became public as a young teenager when the cargo ship he was working on fell into the hands of the British at the beginning of the American Revolution. He was jailed for a short time and released due to a scarcity of space for soldiers. Sailing was the life for young Paul and through it and his present life experiences he learned to drink. He began to drink more and shrank to within the protections of his mother's people and his family. There was dissension against the King mounting amongst the whites and many blacks and Indians were caught up in the political process for the first time. Paul shipped out again on a cargo vessel headed for the Caribbean once more but this time they had to sail through a British Naval blockade and were caught. He spent three months in jail only released due to a scarcity of space for soldiers.

Rebel mariner, Paul Cuffe with the help of his brother sailed on a small schooner as a privateer smuggling supplies through British blockades but the vessel was lost to pirates, again making his name known around the small whaling community of Westport.

He built another schooner and not only was successful at smuggling but started whaling as well which became another successful venture. In 1780, perhaps his most famous to date entry into history came when he, at seventeen, and his oldest brother, petitioned the newly formed state government not to pay taxes until they, as black property owners, could have a legal say in the affairs that affected their lives. 'While we are not allowed the privilege of free men of the state having no vote or influence in the election with those that tax us.' Though they lost their battle they did receive a discount and eventually, three years after this petition the State of Massachusetts enacted a law that gave free Blacks the right to vote.

Twenty-one year old Captain Paul Cuffe developed a drinking habit somewhat due to the legal problems and complexities of the voting-tax rulings. His older brother saw him through it with love and respect for the name of their father. A little more than a year later Paul met Alice.

In 1783, after a year of engagement, Paul married Alice Abel Pequit, an educated Wampanoag woman from a prominent family of the Aquinnah tribe on Martha's Vineyard or Noepe in Wampanoag. Alice's father was a chief and they were accepted in the tribe and lived there at the beginning of their marriage. The Wampanoag had lived on Noepe (Martha's Vineyard) for over 12,000 years. Encouraged by the Rotch family and other successful merchants, and with partnerships with Alice's family the Cuffes set about building their own mercantile empire.

At the ending of the war with his father's Quaker influence Cuffe combined hard work and resourcefulness with a political conscience. In 1789 they purchased 0.2 acres of land on the Acoaxet River and built a wharf and a shipyard in Westport in partnership with Alice's brother, Michael Wainer.

Captain Paul Cuffe

'You are freedoms swift winged angels, that fly around the world'

-Frederick Douglass, Ship Caulker

Sailing was the life for him. In sailing one had to be self-reliant and humble, traits his father had instilled in the family. His father, always talked about the right to be free through his teachings through example of farming, sailing, commerce and keeping accountings. The last was a point that Paul easily found exciting - to know what you had at hand and what was needed for a purpose.

This was the life he wanted and the following year Paul took a voyage on a Rotch owned trader. They sailed down the coast of North America, around Cuba, past Hispaniola to Jamaica. In Jamaica he saw first hand and for the first time absolute brutality in the treatment of black people by Europeans. The plantation slavery of Jamaica gave him the depth of understanding about this institution that his father was fortunate in escaping through hard work. The Quakers and the types of businesses in the

New England colonies did not rely upon mass slavery and the strict discipline needed to keep so many people consistently at task. It was blood in his eye.

I will stop this tale here and hopefully keep you interested enough to want to continue this tale about a sailor as told by a sailor. Cuffe's life takes a turn here and he has a purpose after his Caribbean voyage and that purpose combines morality with commerce and for him it becomes a success story. His success is how I end this series of tales about sailors in our history and the heritage we need to explore.

I am including a list of the vessels growing in size that Paul Cuffe either built, owned or 51% co-owned with some launching dates and a list of his ships voyages:

Vessel	Schooner, 18 Tons
Vessel	Schooner, 12 Tons
Schooner	<i>Sunfish</i> , 25 Tons 1787
Schooner	<i>Mary</i> , 42 Tons 1792-93
Schooner	<i>Resolution</i> 1795-96
Schooner	<i>Ranger</i> , 69 Tons 1796
Brig	<i>Hero</i> , 162 Tons 1800-03
Brig	<i>Alpha</i> , 268 Tons 1806

Voyages

1773	Whaler Atlantic
1775	Whaler Atlantic
1776	18 ton Schooner Whaler Atlantic
1784	12 ton Schooner purchased with Michael Wainer/ Cod fishing Atlantic
1784/87	16 ton Schooner/ Paul Cuffe Captain/Cod fishing Atlantic
1787/95	25 ton Schooner, Sunfish, partner Michael Wainer Whaling
1792/93	42 ton Schooner, Mary, partner Michael Wainer/7 whales one trip
1795/96	Schooner Resolution/ Paul Cuffe Captain Cargo
1796	69 tonSchooner Ranger/sold Indian Corn amongst slaver plantations
1798	69 tonSchooner Ranger/cargo repeats
1800	69 tonSchooner Ranger/nephew Thomas Wainer Captain and partner-cargo
1800	69 tonSchooner Ranger/ nephew Jeremiah Wainer Captain-cargo
1802	162 ton Schooner Hero/ Paul Cuffe Captain/slave areas-cargo
1802	69 ton Schooner Ranger/nephew Jeremiah Wainer Captain/slave areas-cargo
1802	162 ton Schooner Hero/ Isaac Cory Captain/ Paul Cuffe owner-cargo
1803	162 ton Schooner Hero/ Thomas Wainer Captain/ Oporto, Portugal-car-go
1803	162 ton Schooner Hero/Thomas Wainer Captain/ Oporto, Portugal, Santander, Spain-cargo
1803	69 tonSchooner Ranger/Jeremiah Wainer Captain/ Slave areas-cargo
1803	69 tonSchooner Ranger/Jeremiah Wainer Captain/ Slave areas-cargo
1803	69 tonSchooner Ranger/Jeremiah Wainer Captain/ Slave areas-cargo
1803	69 tonSchooner Ranger/Jeremiah Wainer Captain/ Slave areas cargo
1804	162 ton Schooner Hero/Thomas Wainer Captain/Le Havre, France-cargo
1804	162 ton Schooner Hero/Samuel Tobey (white man)/Cape of Good Hope-Whaling
1804	162 ton Schooner Hero/Samuel Tobey/Guadaloupe-bad trip
1805	Schooner Ranger/Jeremiah Wainer dies/crew returns-Guadaloupe

1806 re-rigged 162 ton Bark Hero/Cuffe/whaling/Cape of Good Hope/Cuffe
3/4% Lemuel Milk 1/4%

1806 258 ton Brig Alpha launched

1806 69 ton Brig Cuffe/Paul Jr 1st sail/Goteborg, Sweden/passengers/2 white
apprentices- Abraham Rodin & Charles Feidberg

1806 69 ton Brig Traveller/Asa Bly Captain (White)/owners Lemuel Milk &
Paul Cuffe

1809 69 ton Schooner Ranger/Schooner Ranger/Thomas Wainer Captain
Wilmington slave areas

1809 Brig Traveller/ Alvan Phelps (son in law) Captain Wilmington
slave areas

1809 258 ton Brig Alpha/Thomas Wainer/ Portugal-London-Spain cargos

1809 258 ton Brig Alpha/Thomas Wainer/ Cape of Good Hope whaling

1810 69 ton Brig Traveller/Sylvester Gifford (white) Portugal cargo

1810 162 ton Bark Hero/ William Barnes/South America whaling

1810 258 ton Brig Alpha/Slyvester Gifford/Portugal cargo

1810 162 ton Hero/ Issac Cory/ South America whaling

1810 69 ton Brig Traveller/Thomas Wainer/all Black crew/Sierra Leone-Cape
of Good Hope-New Orleans slave areas cargos

1810 258 ton Brig Alpha/Thomas Gifford Captain/New Orleans

1811 69 ton Brig Traveller/ Paul Cuffe Captain/two Sierra Leone apprentices
pressed but freed/ arrived same day as Alpha Liverpool

1811 258 ton Brig Alpha/ Thaddeus Coffin (White)Captain/co-owned John
James&Cuffe/ Liverpool day after Traveller

1811 69 ton Brig Traveller/ Paul Cuffe Captain/ Sierra Leone cargo

1812 69 ton Brig Traveller/ Thomas Wainer Captain/ Sierra Leone-Newport
seized cargo but president Madison intercedes for Cuffe after
meeting

1815 69 ton Brig Traveller/ Paul Cuffe Captain/Sierra Leone with settlers

1815 69 ton Brig Traveller/ Paul Cuffe Captain/Sierra Leone-Westport

1816 45 ton vessel launchd for sale by Cuffe and Job Gifford built partnership

1817 69 ton Brig Traveller/Alvin Phelps (son in law)/ North Carolina-Santo
Domingo cargos

1817 69 ton Brig Traveller/ divided amongst family/ Captain Paul Cuffe Dies

