

Historical Personages of New Bedford: Zachariah Hillman

The oldest extant photo of anyone in the Hillman clan: Justin (1792-1896) and Abigail (1795-1892) Hillman.

Series Introduction

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Initially I thought to make this an installment for the “streets” series. Since so many streets are named after important historical figures, I have to make a decision on how to approach an assignment. Often it’s clear cut, other times not so clear. This is the case of “Should I make this a street

article or one about a historic figure?" At the end of the day, it comes down which would be more interesting and readable?



Zachariah's son, Zachariah, would not only follow his father's footsteps as a shipwright, but later become engineer and fire chief at Station 5. (Spinner Publications)

The Hillman family is a massive one. One that has their stamp all over New England in general, and the South Coast particularly. In fact, they were so ubiquitous that a book **has** been written about the family and five separate branches detailed, an English, a New England, a New Jersey, a Dutch and a German Jewish branch. To condense a book into a sort of "Cliff" notes is to lose much. To condense it even further into an article would be an injustice to the family and the reader.

"tis easier to focus on one Hillman and the one that started the Hillman clan in New Bedford: Zechariah or Zachariah Hillman. Both spellings are acceptable and will be encountered in historical documents if you do follow up research. The name is Hebrew in origin and the block or Assyrian script in Hebrew does not define vowels – though there are vowel marks to serve as an aid in some cases. If you know how to speak Hebrew, the

vowels were almost superfluous. So, if you saw "Zchrh Hllmn" you knew what it meant. Anyhow, I digress.

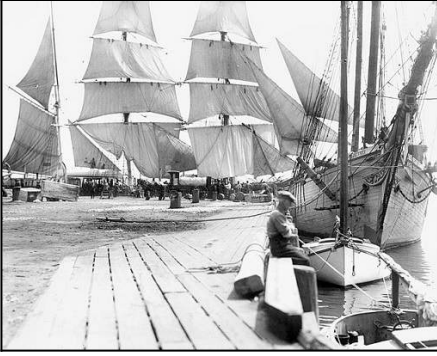
The first record of any Hillman is of a John Hillman, Esq., born circa 1550, likely somewhere in Cornwall, England. The first official mention of a Hillman here in New Bedford, and our subject at hand, is of Zachariah Hillman born at Chilmark, Dukes, MA on June 12, 1758, son of Benjamin Hillman and Love Cathcart. He had five siblings and when his father remarried, garnered seven step-brethren.

As you may have discerned, Zachariah was born into a shipbuilding family. This family had businesses throughout Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Any search through the genealogy or general history of the family, shows shipwright after shipwright. Clearly, it was something they excelled at and were known for. Also, explains why New Bedford was chosen as a destination for Zachariah.

During the Revolutionary War (1765-1783) the whaling industry...ahem, floundered because the British were targeting whaling vessels as a way to hurt America in the wallet. One of the whaling capitals of the world at that time was Nantucket, and the British managed to devastate the fleet there, reducing the number of vessels from 150 to 30.

After the war ended, whaling not only resumed, but went through a boom. There were two hotbeds for whaling, Martha's Vineyard and New Bedford. Great news for many of the support industries and tradesman involved in whaling. Certainly, a great time for a shipwright like Zachariah.

Incidentally, Nantucket was slow to rebound, because the powers that be decided to relocate their operations back in England, to Canada or even France. It wouldn't be until circa 1806 that Nantucket would rebuild their fleet.



*Charles W. Morgan,
built by the Hillman
Brothers at the foot
of Maxfield (now
Hillman) Street in
1841 (Spinner Pub.)*

Not only did Zachariah enjoy and financially benefit from this revitalization of the whaling industry, but in 1790 the industry really took off when fertile whaling grounds off of South America were discovered making the Pacific Ocean the new world for whaling. America would become the world leader in whaling and most of it was centralized in New England, obviously with great benefit to New Bedford.

However, all was not lilies and roses. With the War of 1812, we would see the British return to attacking whaling vessels, bringing New Bedford whaling to a virtual standstill. The end of this war in 1815, would not only visit upon the industry another boon, but the first "Golden Era" of whaling. In fact, by 1853, New Bedford would be considered the richest city in the nation, perhaps the world.

Being from an old family and also being a shipwright meant that Zachariah would have been quite the catch. He married twice, first wedding Mary Norton (1762-1810) and then Rhoda Maxfield (Unknown-1824). He would spawn six children, likely with his first wife, Mary; Jethro who is buried at Peckham West Cemetery in New Bedford, Zachariah, Benjamin, Love who is buried at Griffin Street Cemetery, Mary who married Ephraim

Kempton and is buried at Oak Grove cemetery, and Martha who married into the iconic shipwright Beetle family (Henry). The Beetles got their start by working for the Hillmans.

Brothers Zachariah and Jethro would take over the father's business and eventually have the claim to fame of having built the famous Charles W. Morgan, launched from their shipyard at the bottom of Maxfield Street in 1841. Sadly, their father would not live to see this happen as he passed away on August 11, 1824 at the age of 66. His second wife Rhoda, would pass away a few months later in October.

The street itself would be named after son Zachariah, not just for his accomplishments as a shipwright, but for his roles as commander in a local militia (the city had no official police force at this time) in the 1820s and after his shipwright career, as chief engineer and fire chief at Fire Station #5 in the 1840s and 1850s. Many of the Hillmans were involved in the militia and were involved in the beating back of the mob during the infamous attack on the brothel, the "Ark."

Special thanks to Spinner Publications for the various photos of Hillman Street. Plaque and monument commemorating the building of the Charles Morgan by the Hillman brothers is from hmbd.org, a photo by Michael Herrick.

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Historical Personages of New Bedford: James and Sarah

(Rotch-Rodman) Arnold

*The posh, luxurious Arnold Estate with its splendid grounds.
(Spinner Publications)*

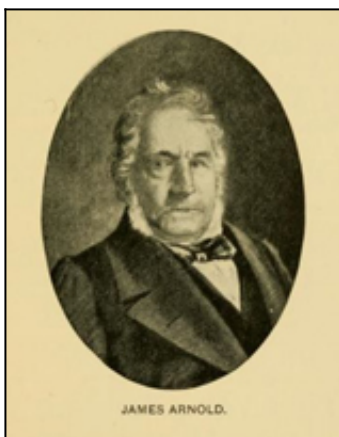
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*James Arnold,
1781 – 1868.
(WhalingCity.net)*

Unlike any of the past installments, this article is per request. Do you have a street or personage that you think – or know – has an interesting back-story? Curious about why it is called what it is? Send your request to nbgarts@gmail.com!

This article is a combination of chocolate and peanut butter – “You got your street article in my personage article!” The James Arnold featured in this article is the one that gave Arnold street its name. If you are a history buff, nerd, or fan, how Arnold Street got its name maybe “common” knowledge. However, there are a lot of people – dare I say the majority – that aren’t privy to many of New Bedford’s historic figures. If you are of the former group, perhaps you may enjoy some little factoids that you weren’t aware of...or even better, perhaps you’ll chime in and embellish.

If you are of the latter group, you will learn about a hugely important figure in New Bedford’s past. A real cornerstone of the city’s success in the 19th century. I hope you’ll chime in too. Hopefully this will pique your interest and you’ll head to the library or book store and read books written by far better authors going into greater depth.

Well born beginnings of a polymath

Arnold Street got its name from a one James Arnold, son of Quakers Thomas Arnold and Mary Brown. He was born in Providence on September 9, 1781. James’ family was a prominent one, so he had interest and access to many academic areas. He was fond of agriculture, literature, horticulture, public speaking, and was a member of the debate society called the Old Dialectic Society. Of temperament, he was said to be impassioned, exacting, disciplined, and in business matters,

autocratic.

As he grew into adulthood, he was attracted to New Bedford because of its robust economy, whaling industry and the opportunities those offered. Arnold worked for the family that was responsible for developing New Bedford's whaling industry in the first place: the Rotches. These whaling moguls owned a number of enterprises including William Rotch Jr. & Sons, William R. Rotch & Company, Rotch Wharf Company, Rotch Candle House, and New Bedford Cordage Company. Specifically he received work under the tutorship of William Rotch III.



The house where James Arnold was born on South Water & Madison Streets. (Spinner Publications)

James' first house – a modest one – was built by Jonathan Howland on the corner of South Water and Madison Streets. Arnold's intellect, temperament, and business acumen helped him rise through the ranks rapidly and he would eventually be made a partner. It would be through his close work with the Rotches that he would be introduced to his future wife, Sarah (Rodman) Rotch, daughter of William Rotch Jr. Sarah was a sort of precursor to businesswoman Hetty Green, in the sense that she had a similar business acumen, was well respected, and intelligent. However, she was well cultured and had a soft spot for the poor of New Bedford.

Sarah had an indelible effect on James and through their

relationship she would soften some of his rough edges. They would marry on October 29, 1807. Surely due to the influence of his wife, he began to take a more serious role in the city of New Bedford's economic environment – something that would help the poor, by creating more jobs.

Post War of 1812

The War of 1812 certainly hurt the economic aspirations of New Bedford and some serious work was needed to get things back on track. Arnold along with many Howlands, Russells, John Avery Parker, Grinnells, Nyes and Rodmans was one of the principals on a committee to recharter the Bedford Commercial Bank in 1816. As a business partner and now family member of the Rotches, Arnold begun to amass a sizable fortune allowing him a greater role in the city and region's economy.

In 1819, Abraham Russell sold his farm and James would buy a large portion of the land to build what would become an iconic building in the city. In 1821 he commissioned housewright Dudley Davenport to begin work on a home at 427 County Street: a large Federal Style brick house at the head of Spring Street – you know this building today as the Wamsutta Club.



Built in 1821, the James Arnold House on County Street would be purchased by the Wamsutta Club in 1919. (Spinner Publications)

Arnold's wealth allowed him to not only erect a large home,

but his love for horticulture and agriculture could be expressed here. A large amount of monies were spent to create greenhouses, impressive groves, grottos and extensive gardens – in fact, James and Sarah spent considerable time traveling throughout the world, particularly Europe, to find and bring back all sorts of botanical items. These were easily brought back to New Bedford aboard one of the many whaling vessels under his or the Rotches' employ.

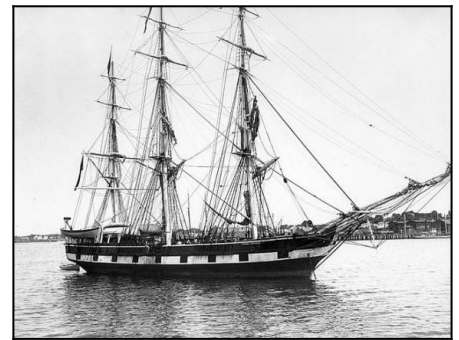
In what was considered rather unusual for the city's aristocrats, Arnold allowed the public to enjoy his gardens and it was quite popular in its day – in fact, there is mention of "villagers" having Maypole dances and festivities in the gardens and Arnold's Grove, it was a popular picnic ground on the site. I'd imagine this was through the encouragement of his wife, and because it was a source of great pride. The entire region knew of Arnold's Gardens and it would garner visitation by many famous people including President John Quincy Adams and Herman Melville. It is sometime in this period that James abandoned his Quaker upbringing and he and his wife became congregants of the Unitarian Church.

The amount of wealth that James Arnold had amassed continued to grow. As he got older, he became more and more interested in city issues and increasingly philanthropic. While he and his wife maintained an anti-slavery stance, their ambitions were focused on the city's poor.

The Arnolds from 1820s-1830s – political aspirations, serving New Bedford, and various committees

From the late 1820s through much of the 1830s he would spend most of his time not only traveling to improve his gardens, but was very active in the city's economics. In 1829 he would become the Massachusetts State House of Representatives, the same year he would form a committee with Samuel Rodman, Abraham Gifford, Thomas Greene, and many others to establish the lines of the streets as accurately as possible. Up to that

point, the rather pedestrian “red oke” or “crooked black oak” method of defining streets was used, but this led to much confusion. This method utilized a length of oak to define the width of the streets as well as the “run” of the street’s length by flipping the log end to end. It certainly wasn’t a standard that was defined in any specific way. In small towns and hamlets where a few feet here and there weren’t that important, the method was adequate. In the cities, where a few feet meant a difference in revenue, liability, or legality it was a method that simply could not be utilized. This committee established permanent, accurate boundaries across the city – which primarily are still used today.



*The whaling vessel
James Arnold at sea.
(Spinner Publications)*

In the early 1830s, New Bedford went through a sort of recession. Arnold helped form another committee with many other local business leaders to prepare resolutions to help New Bedford economically. This endeared him to many locals, and they rallied to support him as thousands of locals from New Bedford, Dartmouth, Rochester, Wareham, Westport, and Fairhaven signed his resolutions.

He was a president of the Port Society associated with the Mariner’s Home who the Rotches owned. The objective was to help the moral improvement of seamen and to assist them in any way possible through the little recession.

By 1836, Arnold was now 55 years of age and was perhaps slowly

working towards less work and more of a retirement lifestyle. He, his wife, and daughter would spend the next three years abroad. On their return, they would find an altogether different economic environment in New Bedford. The whaling industry was going through a boom – indeed it was heading towards its peak in 1853. This new environment and even more increase in his wealth would allow him to enjoy his passion for horticulture even more. He and a number of other businessmen would found the New Bedford Horticultural Society in 1847.

In 1854 the mansion of William Rotch Jr. at the southwest corner of William and Water Streets was owned by Arnold's wife Sarah. She donated it to the Port Society and it was moved to Johnny Cake Hill where it was dubbed as the Mariners' Home.

In the 1850s, a sort of minister-at-large, Reverend Moses Thomas was also of a philanthropic lean and was very active in helping the city's poor. He had the support of the Unitarian Church that the Arnolds were congregants of. For unknown reasons, the church withdrew its support and the Arnolds stepped up to the proverbial plate and put him in their employ in a full-time capacity until his retirement. A very nice gesture.

Legacy: Last Will & Testament, Arboretum, and Philanthropy

Sadly for Arnold he would outlive both his wife and daughter, passing away right here in New Bedford in 1868. His estate was worth \$1.4 million dollars, or about \$24 million dollars today. In his will he specified that \$100,000 (approximately \$1.7 million today) of his fortune be left behind to advance agriculture and horticulture. Unfortunately, these monies didn't stay in New Bedford, as one of the trustees of his estate, George Emerson had the funds sent to Harvard University for botanical research and helped build the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plains, founded in 1872.



*One of the
Arnolds' legacies:
The Arnold
Arboretum in
Jamaica Plains,
founded in 1872.
(Daderot)*

However, he did leave something for New Bedford: \$100,000 or \$1.4 million dollars in today's money for the city's poor. Of course, his mansion, the Wamsutta Club still stands today – with additions and renovations. In 1919, the Wamsutta Club purchased the mansion and added two wings, and a squash court. Today the mansion is on the National Historic Register of Historic Places.

The Arnolds had big hearts and were of a generous, sympathetic bent. Their philanthropic mission lives on with the James Arnold Fund started in 1934. This charitable organization offers "...gifts, grants, or loans to other organizations, Gifts or grants to individuals (other than scholarships), Aid to the handicapped." The Arnolds' have made themselves immortal in a sense – their presence lives on in the street names, Wamsutta club, charity organizations and philanthropic nature that is part and parcel of the city's spirit. This is a trait of New Bedford's citizens, regardless of what other places will say about us. We may bark and even bite, but there's always someone eager to help those in need, in hard times, or down on

their luck. There is a humanity and kindness to most and I'd like to think it was a precedence set by James and Sarah Arnold.

Historical Personages of New Bedford: First Mayor Abraham H. Howland

1852 Portrait of Abraham H. Howland by William Allen Wall (N.B. Free Public Library)

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Abraham Hathaway Howland (1802-1887)

A city's success – or nation's success for that matter – is indirectly due to the direction dictated by past city officials in a sort of generational domino effect.



*Howland purchased the
Rotch mansion in 1865
for \$25,000*

While a politician typically spends the majority of his time remedying current issues, each spends a fair amount of time on setting up the future. Fertilizing the economic soil, if you will.

He or she places certain laws or bills into motion that may take a year, a decade or a generation to come to fruition. This makes some officials down the road look *really* good, but they unfairly get the credit for their predecessors work. Not all, some.

I begin the article with this point, because the economic, social, and educational climate of a city is a result of every mayor to come before. Now, a disclaimer...I am NOT saying that the people don't play a role. In fact, they probably play a greater role. We vote the officials into office, we vote them

out. We approve or disapprove of city proposals.

It is a union between politicians and the people, however you wouldn't read an article on how John Doe cut out of work early to make it to the polls and played his part in being one of 6,000 that voted on town referendum! Besides, there's no information on John Doe in 1840 that I could go by!

So, we'll focus on the "names." In the case, with this series, the "lesser" names in terms of familiarity. Very few know who the first mayor of New Bedford is, but I bet you're familiar with his surname: Howland. If you consider yourself a historian or even a pet historian, it is a name you *should* be very familiar with. The city's firsts should be an area of knowledge for anyone who professes to know anything about greater New Bedford history.

One of Eleven Children; Born of Quakers

Abraham Hathaway Howland was born of Quakers Weston Howland and Abigail Hathaway in New Bedford, March 2, 1802 – one of 11 children. Abraham H. was actually the second Abraham, named after his "older" brother who died before his second birthday.

His father Weston Howland was a well-known, respected figure in New Bedford; he was a business mogul who bought and sold grain and flour in the 18th century into the early 19th century. He also owned most of the vessels that carried his product to and from his storehouse on Rotch's Wharf.



Another William Allen Wall masterpiece showing Abraham H. Howland in color.

Abraham would follow his father's footsteps, but refused to have things handed to him. Showing his character early on, he began as a clerk and worked in virtually every department of his father's business. He even captained his father's vessels at one point which eventually led him to dip into the whaling industry and captain vessels of his own, most notably the 279 tonnage "London Packet." He maintained a counting room at 13 Middle Street.

This attitude, work ethic and experience would prove to be invaluable and serve him throughout his life. When whaling began to wane, he went directly into the petroleum refining business. He held high positions or was on the boards of many businesses, Burgess & Howland, director with the Whaling Insurance Company of New Bedford, director of the Western Railroad, Committee on Mercantile Affairs, and even the N.B. Fire Department.

Socially he was a member of the Eureka Lodge F. and A.M. which was formed by members of the Star in the East Lodge, and the Sutton Commandery of Knights Templar.

Business First, Politics After...then Business again

In the early 1840s, showing his continuing desire to be diverse, he jumped into politics, and became a member of the Massachusetts State House of Representatives and served from 1843-1846. All the while still running his many businesses, and even expanded his whaling company and increased his fleet with the aptly named Abraham H. Howland, built in 1845. Alas, this vessel would make three trips before being lost at Honolulu in 1852. In 1846, he obtained from the Legislature of Massachusetts a charter to begin to manufacture cotton, wool, and iron under the name of Wamsutta Mills.

Abraham fell in love with and married Mehitable Earle Russell Howland (1810 – 1892) and they had six children, Abigail, Hannah, Abraham H. jr, Alice, Horace and Mary. Abraham jr. would follow his masonic and political footsteps, and served as chief engineer for the city from 1871-1874 and as mayor of New Bedford (and president of the Water Board) himself from 1875-1876.

When the city of New Bedford decided to incorporate on March 18, 1847, he jumped ship from the House of Representatives and ran for mayor. Certainly his economic effect on the city combined with his political experience made him a shoe-in. The population of the city at this time was 22,000.

A.H. Howland became the first mayor of the newly incorporated New Bedford in 1847 and stayed in office until 1851. I'd imagine, his many businesses ventures suffered with his lack of time and direction. So his last term was in 1851 and he returned to his business life.

Helping the Whaling City become the City of Light

Gas for illuminating was first used in New Bedford in 1853. Howland, James B. Congdon and business associates from Pennsylvania helped obtain a state charter and city franchise to use gas for street lighting.



*Abraham H. Howland
interned at the Rural
Cemetery*

Eventually the Pennsylvania businessmen were bought out and Congdon became treasurer, and William C. Taber became president. Pipes were laid as soon as possible and the first gas lamp for street lighting was turned on on February 14, 1853.

Their first works were at the foot of Bush Street – today called Madison Street. It was a simple brick house with a gas tank that held 35,000 cubic feet, an office and coal shed. Within a few years, they expanded to three acres with three tanks holding a total of 200,000 feet.

This company eventually grew to purchase the New Bedford Electric Light Company and the Edison Electric Illuminating Company who had a plant on Middle Street. By March of 1888 Howland's company controlled the entire production of light for electricity for the entire city.

In 1857 he purchased the Joseph Ricketson Works and began to distill oil from coal, along with most of the city's Alderman, including John Hicks, Weston Howland, and Joseph C. Delano. Kerosene was first distilled in New Bedford in 1858. He was one of many powerful businessmen – William C. Taber, Joseph C. Delano, William Penn Howland, Henry T. Wood and son Weston Howland (who owned Fish Island at one point) that erected a factory at the foot of South Street.

Weston's factory on Fish Island distilled kerosene until it blew up in an explosion in 1861 which led to the death of two employees. It was quickly rebuilt and resumed turning a profit.

In 1865 he was wealthy enough that he purchased the [Russell Warren](#) designed William R. Rodman Mansion, built in 1833 for \$25,000. He remained there until his death on May 24, 1887. Abraham and his wife Mehitable are both interned in the Rural Cemetery at the Abraham Howland Family Plot.

In many ways, Howland wasn't only the first mayor, but the first real business mogul. Certainly there were some major business figures in the city's history before him, but in terms of diversity, progressive and forward thinking, and success he was a massive figure.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned, the sort of domino effect political figures have. When you walk the "cobblestone" or Belgian Sett streets of the historic park, you can look at the faux antique street lamps and remember that you can thank the city's first mayor Abraham H. Howland for lighting the Whaling City.

Historical Personages of New Bedford: Albert Bierstadt

"Gosnold At Cuttyhunk" – Albert Bierstadt (Wikipedia)

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*Albert
Bierstadt
(1830-1902)
(Wikipedia)*

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In this article, I want to spotlight and showcase the talents of German-born, Romantic painter Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902). While he was born in Solingen, Germany he was a long time resident and fixture in New Bedford for almost two decades. He was raised in his family home which was on the northeast corner of Acushnet Avenue and Mill Street. The house built in 1780 was called the George East House. He found inspiration for his work in New England's natural scenery and his stunning creations in some cases could be said to rival or even better it. His talent is too breath-taking to not share.



*Bierstadt Family
Home built in
1780 (1832-1862)
(Whaling Museum)*

German-Americans make up the largest ethnic group in the United States and they began heading to the New World in the 1670s pushed out of their home country because of lack of perceived freedoms, land resources and religious persecution. Of course, talk of the economic flourishing and opportunities were an attractive feature as well.

They brought with them their music, customs, foods like hamburgers, hot dogs, bratwurst, beer, kindergarten and even the concept of the Christmas tree. Most of the Germans who immigrated were simple farmers. As with all ethnic groups, Germans began to flock together and form tight-knit communities. In the case of German-Americans these little

communities were called “Germanias.” Germans who came to New Bedford began to congregate in a village called – surprise, surprise – Germantown!

Germantown and German Culture in the Region

Germantown was located in the North End and to this day is still home to some 5,000 German-Americans. There were a number of German cultural contributions to the city of New Bedford, including a Rheinberger Club or Sängerbund which was a German singing club. Like the Cape Verdean or Portuguese Clubs there were German only clubs like the Independent Order of the Red Men on North Second Street, and the Order of the Iron Hall on Purchase Street. Surely, there were eateries, butcher shops, and more.



Mount Corcoran (Wikipedia)

Sadly, you wouldn't know it as it seems the cultural connection to the Old World has died out. I would love to see a small section of the city have a German characteristic akin to what we see in the South End with the Portuguese community. Signs, business, restaurants, eateries, and more in German.

Having spent time living in Germany, I would love to enjoy another Altstadtfest, hear some Polka, eat some Currywurst, or Pommes Frites with curry-ketchup. We do have an Oktoberfest though, don't we...hmmmm.

Anyhow, our protagonist Mr. Bierstadt – whose surname by the

way, interestingly enough means “City of Beer” – came to New Bedford as a one year old in 1831. He stayed for twenty two years before moving back to Germany to study at prestigious art schools for a few years. In essence, he was a bonafide New Bedford denizen, since he had no recollection of Germany and up to the age of twenty two only knew New England. When he finished his schooling in 1858, he returned to America and traveled about.

His Life Work

As with many artists, including literary, New England’s landscape left a deep, indelible impression on Bierstadt and it threaded his work for the rest of his life. The seasons, flora, fauna, foliage, and history of the region can take on an almost spiritual hue. Bierstadt was quite the prolific painter and had over 500 original creations. His work is featured in museums across the world, including right here in New Bedford at the Whaling Museum.



*“Guerrilla Warfare”
(Wikipedia)*

Bierstadt had a central home in Irvington, New York where he kept his studio. He would spend long amounts of time abroad and was rarely in one place for long. He was received well in his day, found critical and popular acclaim and at one point even won a private reception with Queen Victoria.

He won many awards, and had no trouble selling his paintings

for moderate amounts of money. In contrast, near the end of his life his work evolved as it does for many artists. He fell out of favor of critics, who felt his work became too theatrical. With the loss of critical acclaim, he began to fall out of the popular eye. Sadly, at the time of his death in 1902 he was virtually forgotten.

Without Further Ado

There is no real point in describing Bierstadt's work. Not being an artist, I would do a disservice to Bierstadt and his pieces. Even if I were an artists and capable, there are no amount of words in any combination that would do his work justice. The most pragmatic thing to do is just end the article and let his pieces speak for themselves.

Because he was so prodigious and had such a massive volume of work, I've cherry picked some of what I believe to be his most stunning. Of course, that is completely a subjective process and if you would like to see more of his work, there are a number of his images available of course, on Google images.

Historical Personages of New Bedford: Edward F. Dahill

Fire crew cleaning a steam engine (Spinner Publications)



*Edward F.
Dahill
Portrait
(Spinner
Publications)*

Welcome to the fifth installment of the series "Historical Personages of New Bedford." The first being pharmacist [Robert H. Carter III](#), the second being photographer [James E. Reed](#), the third was businessman and contractor [Dudley Davenport](#) and the fourth was blacksmith extraordinaire, and innovator [Lewis Temple](#).

My intention with this series is to shine some light on the lesser known names and figures of New Bedford's past. I won't focus on the more popular and well-known figures since they have not only been covered in substantial depth, but information about these figures is something most people already have a cursory knowledge of. Though redundant to say, if any more information is desired, it is readily available and easily accessible.

Some of these great and popular figures got to be well known, wealthy, or famous on the shoulders of names vaguely recalled or ne'er heard. I don't want to swing all the way to the other side and overcompensate by saying that these great figures would be no one without those you haven't heard of. Perhaps they would have, but I think since history has traditionally ignored the lesser known figures, let's give them their due!

Edward Dahill (1862-1950) was one of those guys who no one has heard of, but has left an indelible mark on the city itself, and even the nation as a whole. He has saved many lives and in an indirect way, continued to save countless lives after his passing.



*Dahill Hoist Trucks
(Spinner
Publications)*

Mr. Dahill, was born here in New Bedford and spent his childhood growing up at 772 County Street. His first job in the city was as the owner of a modest Boot and Shoe dealership at 667 Purchase Street just few blocks down the street. Selling shoes, however, is not what Edward Dahill was known for. He certainly saved no lives selling shoes. At least there is no historical mention of a miracle of this sort.

What made Edward Dahill important enough to be discussed a century later, is his service as a fireman for the city and as an innovator. The first semblance of firefighting in New Bedford was a citizen's brigade of bucket passers, that was finally assisted by the purchase of the city's first fire engine in 1772. It wouldn't be until circa 1832 that a "Protecting Society" – the precursor to a genuine fire department – was founded to officially handle the breakout of fire in the city. It consisted of seven fire engines, and a

sole hook and ladder company, all manned by volunteers.

Of course, at this point in time, all the engines were horse drawn. Slowly but surely motorized engines began to replace the horse-drawn engines. By 1850 a value was seen in a highly trained, motivated force to battle outbreaks and the volunteers became regular city employees by 1850. Mr. Dahill climbed through the ranks of the Fire Department at a rapid pace and by 1901 he was the 1st assistant engineer with an annual salary of \$649.26. By 1904 he was Chief Engineer with a substantial raise to \$1500.00. Within a year after that he would be Fire Chief until retirement.



Dahill proudly posing with his crew, Engine 3 in 1928 (Spinner Publications)

Where Dahill enters the history books in general, and specifically New Bedford, is his contribution to firefighting technology. Up until the turn of the 20th century spring mechanisms were used to extend the engine ladders. In 1902, Dahill invented an air-hoist aerial ladder to be used on the fire trucks. Instead of manually turning a crank, compressed air would do the work easier and faster. Within 7 seconds a 70 foot ladder could be extended. So ahead of it's time was the air-hoist that it would not find something more efficient with hydraulics, until more than 30 years later.

Edward F. Dahill gave New Bedford over 50 years of service in

the Fire Department and his innovation not only saved lives in the city, but countless lives all over the world.

Historical Personages of New Bedford: Lewis Temple

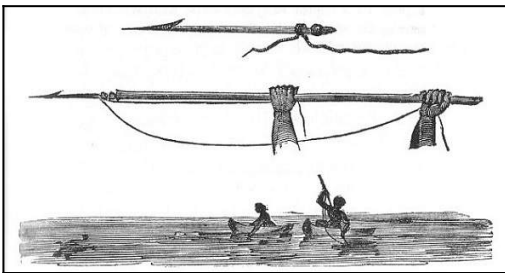
Lewis Temple Memorial in front of the New Bedford Public Library.

Welcome to the fourth installment of the series “Historical Personages of New Bedford.” The first being pharmacist [Robert H. Carter III](#), the second being photographer [James E. Reed](#) and the third was businessman and contractor [Dudley Davenport](#). My intention with this series is to shine some light on the lesser known names and figures of New Bedford’s past. I won’t focus on the more popular and well-known figures since they have not only been covered in substantial depth, but information about these figures is something most people already have a cursory knowledge of. Though redundant to say, if any more information is desired, it is readily available and easily accessible.

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To mention that whaling was a part of New Bedford's history would be terribly redundant. New Bedford and whaling are synonymous with one another. There is no New Bedford without whaling and no whaling without New Bedford. One of the most important figures in both New Bedford and whaling history was inventor, blacksmith, and abolitionist, Lewis Temple.

Temple was born as a slave in Richmond, Virginia in 1800. To place this in context without getting too "heavy", this is 60 years before the American Civil War which led to the emancipation of slaves. The Constitution actually protected the slave trade. States above the Mason-Dixon line wouldn't officially abolish slavery for another 4 years, and the South's cotton industry was just beginning, so they weren't letting go of slavery. Temple was born smack dab in the heart of slave country.



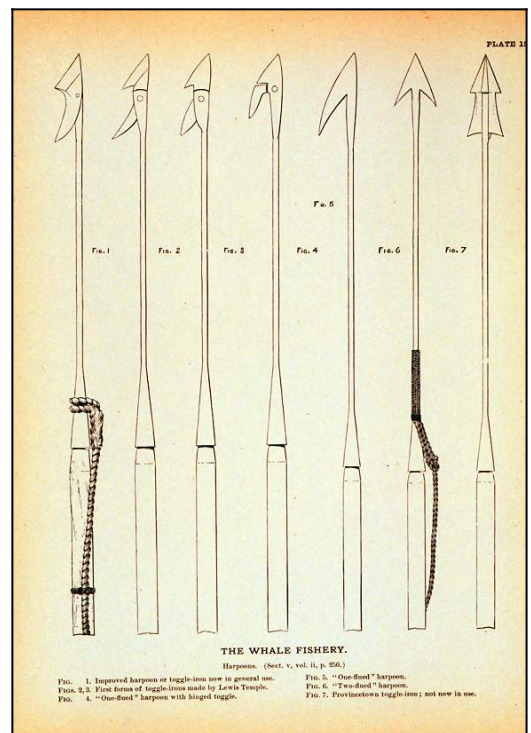
Amerindian harpoons used to harvest turtles

The treatment of slaves during this period was abhorrent. Flogging, lynching, regular beatings, branding, and rape weren't uncommon. While history records Temple as being a free man, he was not born so. Being surrounded by these conditions must have been psychologically taxing and spiritually draining. Whether he left the South because of these conditions or to find better work is unknown. What is known is that he arrived in New Bedford in the early part of 1829. Likely it was a combination of factors; the north had abolished slavery and was treating black people more humanely – though relatively so – and New Bedford's whaling industry

insured income and needed skilled craftsmen like Lewis Temple.

Temple was a Blacksmith by trade and opened a shop on Coffin's Wharf at 3 Walnut Street. He would practice as a smith at this specific shop for the rest of his life. The same year that he arrived he married a Mary Clark, whose family had recently moved to New Bedford from Baltimore. Together they had three children.

Abolitionism was very important to Temple, and he was very active in the movement. By 1834 he was a free man, one of 315,000, and served two important roles within the anti-slavery movement: he was one of the black auxiliaries to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and vice president of the New Bedford Union Society.



Different Types of Harpoons

Temple made a decent living and was able to support his wife and three children. Since Temple was often crafting tools, harpoons, and other whaling trappings, he was in the thick of the industry "issues." One of those issues was whales who were finally spotted and harpooned, would often still escape. The

early harpoons were based on what was *thought* to be utilized by native Amerindians. In essence, these were spears that penetrated the target but did not fasten to the whale. This was called a "common iron."

A supposed improvement on these common irons was to add a barb called a flue. These harpoons had one or two flues that looked like an arrowhead. These flues were supposed to create drag or friction, snagging the whale when the pulled on. However, they were basically glorified darts that did little to actually keep the whaleboat fastened to the bounty.

Where Lewis enters the history books is with his innovative solution to this problem that haunted whalers in 1848. He did away with the static flues and made the head pivot or toggle. The tip of the harpoon would be streamlined and easily embed in the whale's flesh, yet when the line was tugged the flue would cause the tip to pivot and lengthen. This was so effective that the only way to remove the harpoon was to actually reel the harvest in and butcher it out. This was dubbed the "Temple Toggle", "Temple Iron" and eventually his surname was dropped and simply called the "toggle iron."

Amerindians, especially the Inuit had been using the toggle, made from bone for thousands of years, in spite of the fact that Temple would be credited with its invention. They used them to catch, fish, turtles as well as whales. In addition, Englishman Francis Thompson had invented what is called a grommet pivot for harpoons. Whether Temple just did a better job of observation, actually had intimate contact with Amerindians, was influenced by Thompson's early design, or came up with the idea on his own, isn't known. Temple's version was a vast improvement and one that was vastly sturdier and superior to its progenitors.



Lewis Temple's
Innovation: The Toggle
(Whaling Museum Photo)

Initially, there was resistance and skepticism about the innovation, and in some cases downright refusal. Within the context of the era, while slavery was abolished in the north, there were plenty of social issues that hadn't been yet worked out. Many whites didn't consider blacks to be very intelligent and thought them to be base. Of course, not all people were bigoted and ignorant, and those who were more progressive in thought gave Temple and his toggle iron a chance.

Like many things, word of mouth can be responsible for an immense success in a business. It only took a few voyages where there was a dramatic increase in a harvest for Temple's toggle harpoon to spread like wildfire. Clifford Ashley, author of *The Yankee Whaler*, stated that Temple's toggle was "*the single most important invention in the whole history of whaling.*" Indeed, by 1850 most whaling ships had made the transition and this had a marked effect on the harvest and revenue of the crews and vessels. This proved to be an economic boon for the industry and especially the city. So much so that a law firm, Delano and Pierce offered to pay for Temple to open a new, larger shop.

While Temple was responsible for the toggles invention, he did not patent it and this led to many frauds claiming to be its creator. The toggle entered mass production and Temple was left in the proverbial "dust." He still benefited financially

from the toggle, but missed on on a potential fortune had he patented it.

The city was hired to build his new shop that Delano and Pierce had funded and began construction on a site at the foot of School Street in 1853 on the Steamboat Wharf. While part way into construction, Temple visited the site to see its progress and was crossing a plank placed over a sewer trench. He slipped and fell into the trench because the plank was not fastened by a negligent town worker. I know what you're thinking. I won't say it. I was unable to find any historical records on the breadth and depth of this trench and the extent of Temple's injuries, but suffice it to say that it was a rather large one and his injuries were very severe.



Lewis Temple Memorial
Plaque

While recovering from his injuries, Temple began to sue the city, most likely under the advice and assistance of his friends at Delano and Pierce. Unable to work in the interim, Temple began to slip into financial debt. Within a year, Temple won his case and was awarded \$2,000, but alas his haunting injuries ended up killing him before he saw any of it. To add insult to injury, the \$2,000 awarded was used to pay off the debts accrued due to his inability to work. His heirs, family and estate were not able to benefit from these monies and were left with \$459.

A statue in Temple's honor was erected on the lawn of the

Public Library in 1987. Since Temple was alive in an era when photography was not very common and restricted to the aristocratic and wealthy, a likeness of his son, Lewis Temple Jr. was used. His handiwork and craftsmanship can be seen up close today, as the New Bedford [Whaling Museum](#) has many of his harpoons in their collection.

Lewis Temple was an innovator that greatly contributed to the prosperity of the whaling industry and the revenue generated by it. A monumental figure in economic terms and in the role of African-Americans in society. He disproved the ignorant paradigm of the day on the intelligence African-Americans and showed they were far more capable than the thought of the era dictated. His contribution to the economy, history, and city helped paved the way for African-Americans after him.

If you are interested in the more technical aspects behind the crafting, design, and use of the toggle iron, more reading can be found on this fascinating [website](#). Nerds unite!

Historical Personages of New Bedford: Dudley Davenport

The James Arnold House built in 1821 by Dudley Davenport (New Bedford Whaling Museum Photo)

Welcome to the third installment of the series "Historical Personages of New Bedford." The first being pharmacist [Robert H. Carter III](#) and the second being photographer [James E. Reed](#). My intention with this series is to shine some light on the lesser known names and figures of New Bedford's past. I won't focus on the more popular and well-known figures since they have not only been covered in substantial depth, but

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The third personage is housewright, builder, carpenter, and businessman Dudley Davenport. Mr. Davenport was born sometime around 1790 right here in New Bedford, when it was a village and city directories have him registered as late as 1908. If these records are accurate, he was a centenarian. He kept a residence at 2 Bush St. at the corner of South Water Street. Bush street is called Madison Street today. This shop was 3 stories high and had a tower and clock.

For most of his life, he was a prominent, wealthy individual responsible for building and relocating many churches, banks, and homes in New Bedford. He was described as being a showy and energetic man, but often erratic. His story is not altogether uncommon for the most part. Like many business moguls of the time, they had a very diverse approach to their business as a way to insure success. If the market slowed or collapsed in one industry, the others would keep you afloat.



View from Bush Street
where Davenport lived (NB
Whaling Museum Photo)

In this manner he not only offered the aforementioned services as a housewright (shop at 74 South Water Street), builder, and carpenter, but he was part owner of a number of whaling vessels, served as a director to the Mechanic's Bank, steam planing mill, grocery store (at 76 South Water Street) and lumber yard (at the foot of Bush Street). At the centennial celebration in 1876, he is referred to as having the title "Esquire" suggesting that he also practiced law, but this is the only mention on historical record connecting him to law practice in any way.

In this way Davenport, was like many prominent and powerful businessmen in the city. Where his distinction begins is his near total ruin, not once, but twice. Two fires nearly two decades apart destroyed his livelihood. We'll discuss both these fires within his timeline. It is difficult to see how exactly Dudley got his start. Likely he begun as a carpenter, and ran his lumber yard and made a name for himself. As he developed capital, he operated side businesses like the grocery store. On August 27, 1815 Davenport married Betsy "Betty" Booth and the had a son, Dudley Jr. Life was going swimmingly for Davenport. He was a successful businessman, married, and rising in prominence.

In 1821, Davenport built the James Arnold House (his second) at 427 County Street, now known as the Wamsutta Club. He relocated the large brick Abraham Russell house at the head of Union Street a distance of 400 feet with furniture intact, resulting in zero damage. The move was supposedly so perfect, that the clock, which contained a swinging pendulum, kept perfect time. He was contracting jobs to build the woodwork interiors of many of the brick mill buildings being erected.



Another view of the James Arnold House built in 1821 (New Bedford Whaling Museum Photo)

Fire was a major concern for all citizens in any city, let alone one that was burgeoning as quickly as New Bedford was. It was certainly a primary concern for any businessman, where one fire overnight could wipe out his revenue makers. This was an obvious worry of Davenport's as he contributed to the purchase of a suction-engine – cutting edge technology of the day- called "the Cataract no.6" from Philadelphia. This made extinguishing a fire much easier to do and could be done much quicker. The Cataract, which was renamed the Mechanic when it arrived, was the only suction-engine in the city. It was likely dubbed this due to the financial connections Davenport had to the Mechanic's Bank. He was also a member of the Board of Fire-Wards during the years 1822-1830.

Davenport's apparent fear and concern about losing his

businesses were shown to be realistic, and not that of a worry-wart. July 25, 1830 was the date of New Bedford's "Second Great Fire" which destroyed a substantial part of the city. It can be said that this was Davenport's "First Great Fire." This fire originated at William H. Allen's house, which was on the southeast corner of School and 7th streets. The weather on this Sunday was said to be amidst a spell of very dry conditions, but this day had strong winds.

When the fire begun it spread rapidly and was unintentionally allowed to progress. Being a Sunday, much of the town was at worship. In that era, there was a fire department, but citizens always were integral to putting out fires. We had a "perfect storm" of sorts. Dry conditions, strong winds, and few people around to assist in the extinguishing efforts. It was said that these strong winds were responsible for blowing cinders up to 3/4 of a mile away. Davenport's rather large carpentry shop -and Jethro Coffin's boat building shop – were said to have "burned to the ground with the rapidity of magic." A total of 5 hours of continued effort from the fire department and rallied citizens was needed to finally put this fire to rest.



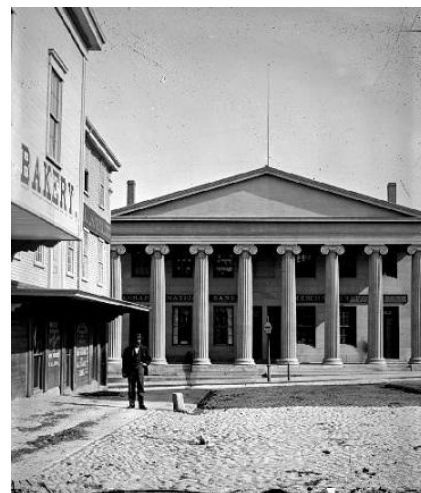
Vintage Fire Engine – similar to what would have been used in Davenport's Day (NB Whaling Museum Photo)

Not to be deterred, maintaining a mindset that made him successful in the first place, and having other businesses to fall back on, Davenport continued onward and upward. He kept his chin up and renewed his business efforts. His name as a housewright, contractor, and builder was a strong one. He was contracted along with his "rival" builder Robert Chase to build the Double Bank Building. Each was responsible for one half of the bank, which was designed by [Russell Warren](#). Robert Chase was responsible for Mechanic Bank, which was the northern half and Davenport was responsible for the Merchant bank's southern half in spite of the fact that he was a director for the Mechanic's Bank. While both builders followed specifications, they differed in the "swell" of the ionic columns. If you look at the corner columns in each group of four, you can see the difference today. Ultimately, Russell Warren sided with Robert Chase when it came to the judging of who was correct.

He built a church on the corner of School and Pleasant (Fifth) streets in 1835 for Reverend Hosea Ballou. Rev. Ballou held the first Universalist sermon right in Davenport's carpentry shop, which was the future site of the Trinitarian Church. By the summer of 1831, he was prominent and wealthy enough to be added to the list of directors of the Mechanic's National Bank. By 1836, he was actually an active member of the fire department's hook and ladder company.

Things seemed back to normal for Davenport, and he was back on track. The next tragedy to strike his life was the passing of his wife nee Betsy Booth on December 17, 1838. By 1843, Dudley's businesses floundered. Whether this was due to the mourning of the passing of his wife, economic woes of the time or both is unclear. It was only temporary though, as with his previous tragedies, Davenport invested all his time and energy into his business projects. Perhaps, his solution was to be as busy and distracted as possible. In 1846, he was one of the builders contracted to build the interior of the Wamsutta

Mills which was a financial boon. He went on to build the house of William. H. Sherman, on the northeast corner of Fourth and School Streets. The North Christian Church, the largest place of worship in Bristol County was erected in 30 days by 20 men under the direction of Dudley.



Double Bank Building with infamous asymmetrical ionic columns (NB Whaling Museum Photo)

On March 3rd, 1846 he had insured his properties with the New England Fire Insurance Company for a 3 year term at \$2,500.00. This is an important tidbit that comes into play later. Almost 2 decades later, on May 18, 1848 Davenport would have *deja vu*. One of the fiercest fires the city had ever seen swept through and consumed most of his business properties. This fire started around 10:00 p.m. and consumed his steam planing mill, grocery store and lumber yard. Other casualties of this major fire were William Rotch's house, Tilson B. Denham's barn, most of Abraham Barker's oil which he kept stored in Davenport's shop. What was saved was due to the "*...spirited and hearty exertions of the firemen and citizens.*" To demonstrate how united the citizens were when a fire erupted, it was said that "*Ladies were actually seen passing water and furnishing refreshments to the exhausted firemen.*" This battle also took

5 hours, even with the suction-engine "the Mechanic" and citizens to assist.

After the fire, the New England Fire Insurance Company fought to reimburse Davenport. They felt that he was dishonest about his financial status, and that he was far behind on mortgages and even had liens on some of his properties. He had not stated these issues on his application. Records show that he did have 2 mortgages that were past due. I couldn't confirm the liens. After this fire, it seems Davenport had his fill and no longer thought of expansion of his business ventures. While he still maintained a number of them, his mind was not on building his "empire", but on modesty.

He kept a provisions business, the grocery store, and a few other small businesses. Not much more is heard from him in city directories or historical records until 1898 when he is listed as living at 254 Arnold Street.



North Christian Church built in 1846 (New Bedford Whaling Museum Photo)

He is also mentioned as selling his Provisions business to a J.B. Tasker in 1902. His son Dudley, jr. operated a grocery

store at 148 Arnold Street, a few blocks from their residence. The last record for both Dudley's is the city directory listing them as living at 254 Arnold Street. From 1909 on, they disappear from all records. This area containing his home and stores was eventually demolished for the Route 18 highway expansion project.

Dudley Davenport's role in the city's history was a pivotal one. He brought a financial boon to the city in terms of jobs, and taxes. He was born, lived and probably died in New Bedford and spent all his money here in New Bedford. His fingerprints are left behind in the gross – the Arnold House, Wamsutta Mills, Double Bank Building, churches- and the subtle; Dudley Davenport has placed a number of “bricks” in the foundation that the city's success was built upon. He played a large role and was a big contributor to bring the city to where it is today. In an indirect way, Davenport has given back to New Bedford and his life reflected the spirit of its denizens: persistent, tough, almost stubborn, and who will ultimately persevere and triumph in the face of hardship.

Historical Personages of New Bedford: James E. Reed

Welcome to the second installment of a the series “Historical Personages of New Bedford”, the first one being Historical Personages of New Bedford: Robert H. Carter III. My intention with this series is to shine some light on the lesser known names and figures of New Bedford's past. I won't focus on the more popular and well-known figures since they have not only been covered in substantial depth, but information about these figures is something most people already have a cursory

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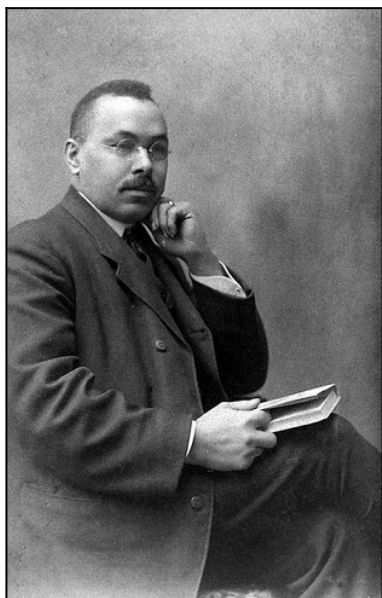
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James E. Reed, early and important African-American photographer

African-Americans played a prominent role in New Bedford's growth, progression and history. There is hardly a facet of society, high or low, that they did not participate in. From menial jobs like custodian, cook and lamplighter to ship building, medicine, and law. One of those professions, photography, was beginning to take off in America in 1880s. One particular New Bedford citizen saw the merit and potential revenue that could be generated by someone who had a keen eye and attention to detail. That man was a one **James E. Reed**, one of two important African-American photographers in New Bedford's early history. Mr. Reed had begun to take photos of city streets, whaleships, and people, whether black, white, purple with green polka dots, young, old, etc. He clearly had a passion for photography as he was quite prolific.

In 1884 a fellow by the name of George Eastman (of Kodak fame) found a way to use film instead of photographic plates. The use of plates meant a rather modest amount of materials, including chemicals had to be lugged about. In 1888, his Kodak camera meant anyone could take pictures with the press of a button, and his slogan advertised "*You press the button, we do the rest.*" This revolutionary, innovative process helped make

photography cheaper and more practical to practice. Here was a fellow that was already practicing photography regardless of how expensive it was, and perfectly poised for this new development. Someone in his profession found a way to do it cheaper, allowing him to practice even further? Oh boy. He was like the proverbial kid in a candy store.



*James E. Reed
Posing with Book
(Spinner
Publications)*

By 1895 James E. Reed was bringing in enough revenue to open his own studio, which he did with his partner Phineas C. Headley. Headley & Reed were the premier studio at 5 Purchase Street in New Bedford and ran a successful business from 1890-1896. For unknown reasons Headley left the business in 1896, however, Reed continued on at this particular site for another four years until 1900. Reed struck out on his own at another location that I had serious difficulty tracking down. I found a single reference in the form of a letter addressed the James E. Reed at the address of 7 Purchase Street. I could not confirm that this was a simple error or that he did indeed relocate next door. What I do know is that he was in business within the city until 1914, which as many of you know was the

time that the city begun to widen Purchase street. A fair number of buildings were lost to history when the street was widened and we do know that Reed's studio was one of them.

It seemed at this point in Reed's life that perhaps his passion for photography – as a business anyhow – had waned as he moved on and became the first Photostat Operator for the Massachusetts State Archives, a position he held until he retired. It could be that his passion for photographer still was there, but this offer was financially superior to his career as a photographer. I'm willing to bet surviving relatives could fill in the missing pieces with anecdotal mortar. If by happenstance, you dear reader are a descendant or friend of the family, by all means clarify or fill in the gaps!

Behind every great man lies a great woman; Anna Jourdain

James married Anna Jourdain and occupied a homestead at 172 Arnold Street, one of two octagon houses in New Bedford in 1880. His wife studied at the Swain School of Design and used the skills she learned there to embellish her husband's photos by coloring and tinting them. This breathed life into the otherwise black and white photos and surely contributed to the popularity of Headley & Reed in eventually Reed when he struck out on his own. His wife also worked on Tiffany style lampshades for the famous Pairpoint Company of New Bedford.



*Waterfront Shot by James E. Reed
(Whaling Museum)*

Their home was built in 1866 for the beard family, but became known as the Reed house as the family occupied the site for over 100 years until 1992 when it was sold to Gary and Lyn Newton. On the 100th anniversary (March 17th, 1991) of the Reed family having occupied the home, they held an open house. They had at least one child, Elsie Jourdain Cole who lived until passing away on March 24, 1996 living to the ripe old age of 102!

It is due to the passion and foresight of James E. Reed that we have so many historic photos from the 1880s onward. Anyone who visits any of the historic websites, reads any history books in the area (especially 'A history of the town of Acushnet, Bristol county, state of Massachusetts'), or has read some of the historical articles on New Bedford Guide has most likely come across his photos. His cabinet card -the most widely used method in the 1870s of portraiture by mounting it on cardboard- of Frederick Douglass is one of the most famous images of the iconic historical figure.



*Headley & Reed Studio at 5 Purchase Street
circa 1893 (Whaling Museum)*

The Legacy of James E. Reed

James E Reed left an abundance of photos behind capturing the city and region for three decades giving us a window to the past. So many photos that the N.B. Whaling Museum had an exhibition in 1991: James E. Reed: Pioneer Black Photographer and there was even an attempt to establish a James E. Reed Day at one time.

I hoped you enjoyed this little article about a figure that gave so much to the city, but has unfortunately been lost to time for the most part. There are local historians that I bump into at various venues throughout the city that not only know about these historical figures, but know far more than I. Feedback – positive and negative – criticism, suggestions and corrections are always appreciated. I simply abhor a one way conversation.

Special thanks, as always to N.B. Whaling Museum and Spinner Publications, without whom none of my articles could be done without. I simply wouldn't have the information, and the lack of photos would force everyone to read my text. I need those photos to distract from the horrible writing! I can't say enough about the generosity of these two organizations in general and too many individuals to name. Please patronize them both! Enjoy the scroll gallery compliments of these two organizations. There are not only images of James E. Reed, but include much of his work. There is a wealth of more images on both their websites. Enjoy!

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Historical Personages of New Bedford: Robert H. Carter III

Robert Hayden Carter III – Courtesy of Spinner Publications

Welcome to the first installment of a brand new series “Historical Personages of New Bedford.” My intention with this series is to shine some light on the lesser known names and figures of New Bedford’s past. I won’t focus on the more popular and well-known figures since they have not only been covered in substantial depth, but information about these figures is something most people already have a cursory knowledge of. Though redundant to say, if any more information is desired, it is readily available and easily accessible.

Some of these great and popular figures got to be well known, wealthy, or famous on the shoulders of names vaguely recalled or ne’er heard. I don’t want to swing all the way to the other side and overcompensate by saying that these great figures would be no one without those you haven’t heard of. Perhaps they would have, but I think since history has traditionally ignored the lesser known figures, let’s give them their due!

New Bedford is rich in African-American history. African-Americans were one of the ethnic groups pivotal and central to its success and growth. New Bedford simply wouldn’t be the city it is without African-Americans and early on in its history held jobs across almost every occupation, from leather worker, smith, salesmen, to grocer, barber, and cooper.

I have discussed with multiple people who had no inkling that African-Americans played a prominent role in New Bedford’s

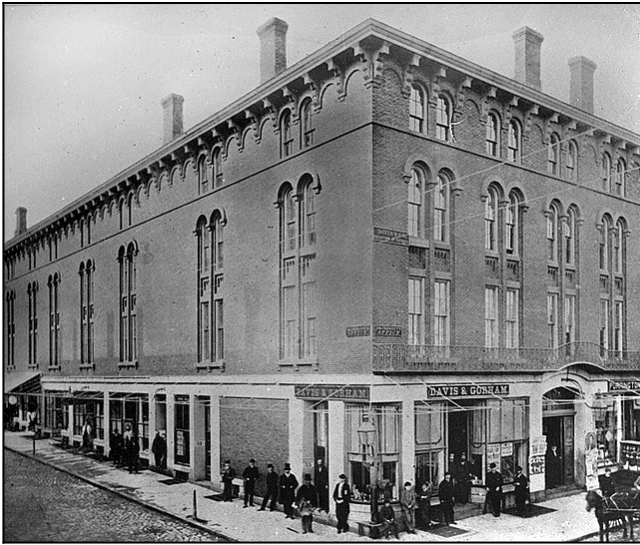
history. While people are familiar with Frederick Douglass, many aren't aware of the Black Heritage Trail which has 37 stops, or Lewis Temple who revolutionized the whaling industry.

Ask people who Captain Paul Cuffe was, and where the park dedicated to him is and you'll catch many unaware. Ask someone if they know where President Abraham Lincoln's official site for recruitment of the very first all African-American regiment, the 54th, was and you will find that most will not know.

Now, this isn't to say every person in the city should know everything about every aspect of the city's history, particularly that of every ethnic group. It is also not to say that you, dear reader, did not know these things already. If you knew one or more them, then pat yourself on the back. If you know all of them, then you are a better local historian and more knowledgeable than I. You certainly know a greater deal than most.

I felt it fitting to begin this series on New Bedford's historical figures with an African-American. I also think it fitting to begin with someone with a more modest and humble role. Some contributions to a city's progress are more modest in grandeur, but no less important. Take a score of people making modest improvements and contributions and their contribution can be greater than one lone legendary figure.

Rosa Park's stand (pun intended?) is a fine example. A "simple" act with massive, profound effect. Was it a great battle against all odds of 300 against 10,000? Was it someone taking over a plane after a pilot has had a heart attack? Is it an exciting story of a man fighting a bear with his bare hands? It was an elderly lady that refused to give up a seat. No explosions, high body count or super model, but you'd better damn well believe that "boring" act was immensely powerful.



Site of Cadwell's Drugstore where Carter got his start.

So I introduce Robert Hayden Carter III (1847-1908). Carter paved the way for African-Americans by being the first to practice pharmacy in Massachusetts, which he did by earning his license in 1886. At this time in the nation's history African-Americans or blacks had very little rights, and for those who had rights as freemen, they had to deal with the social conditions of the time.

New Bedford was an area that had a substantial anti-slavery sentiment, had the underground railroad, and was an abolitionist hotbed. New Bedford was a bit friendlier towards blacks and provided more opportunities than were the norm. This however didn't mean they had it easy, or that there weren't some massive societal hurdles to overcome. In spite of this, there were quite a few individual success stories like black lawyers, business owners, and even council members. A tribute to perseverance, dedication and optimistic doggedness. They took what opportunities were available or created their own!

Carter seemed to be destined to be a pharmacist as he expressed an interest very early on in life. In fact, by the time he was a teenager he was already an apprentice. The fabled anecdote is that he discovered a person's wallet one

day with \$400 (about \$10,000 today by some estimates) in it while shoveling snow and turned it in to the proprietor where he discovered it. That shop happened to be a pharmacy or drugstore and thus his apprenticeship began. By 20 he was considered a master. In spite of this, he remained unlicensed due to the restrictions and societal hurdles of the day.

By 1871, records show that he was employed in 49 Purchase Street by William P.S. Cadwell a druggist and chemist. Records also show that he was married by 1875 and lived a few houses down from Cadwell's shop with his wife, a hairdresser, at 66 Purchase Street. By 1887, he had his own shop at 141 Purchase Street and relocated his residence to 237 Kempton Street.

If his story ended there, it would be one to be proud of. Not many of us can say we played a role in changing society's paradigm. While perhaps less complex in that time period, to become a master pharmacist by age 20 is quite an accomplishment. I think many of us would be satisfied with these achievements, but Carter wasn't. His ambition superseded any restrictions. It's almost as if they didn't even exist and he saw nothing but opportunity.

Carter's next step was to take his successful pharmacy and replicate it. In 1892, he opened another shop on the corner of Kempton Street and Cedar Street. He eventually had three drugstores in New Bedford and two in Boston within a ten year period from 1895-1905. On January 5, 1886, he was officially certified as a registered pharmacist.

His story is interesting enough considering the context. A prodigy who skirts the social pressures of the day, takes on a profession not considered normal for his ethnic group, and sadly not even considered capable of because of his skin color. In light of this, he proves everyone wrong. A simple "staying seated on a bus", but powerful nonetheless.

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Historical Personages of New Bedford

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- Dudley Davenport
- James E. Reed
- Robert H. Carter III

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- Hangman Coffee Hut

New Bedford Architecture

- The Grand Designs of Russell Warren; New Bedford Architecture

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- Hove Down

Of Owner-Agents, Masters, and Salty Dogs

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- New Bedford's Early Villages; Turning Sprawl into a City
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- Fairhaven's Top Ten (Almost) Forgotten Landmarks
- Lobster in Local History & Culture
- The Maya Calendar, 2012 and Pop Culture

Local Travel

- Silverbrook Farm; Sustainable & Progressive
- 10 Reasons to Visit the New Bedford Whaling Museum
- Slinging Ink in the Whaling City
- New Bedford's 44th Annual Whaling City Festival
- The 10 Best Dishes on Earth and Where to Get Them Locally (Part 1)
- The 10 Best Dishes on Earth and Where to Get Them Locally (Part 2)

Things to Do This Weekend

- 21 Things To Do This Weekend (17-19 May)
- 11 Things to Do This Weekend (25-28 April)

Eight Date Ideas in New Bedford for Valentine's Day

BY ADMIN – FEBRUARY 7, 2012 (EDIT POST)

POSTED IN: EVENTS

7. **Charter a Private Scenic Air Tour** – Guys trying to pull out all the stops can charter a scenic flight with Atlantic Aviation at the New Bedford Airport. They offer three tours:

- ▶ Route # 1. Newport Mansions – Newport Bridge
- ▶ Route # 2: Cape Cod Bridges – Woods Hole
- ▶ Route # 3. Gillette Stadium – Boston – Providence

Contact info: (508) 979-7878, (774) 226-5189 or (774) 226-6434 (Mobile)

8. **Make a Reservation at a Nice Hotel** – The hard work is done and now it's time to reap the rewards. Here is a list of excellent hotels and bed and breakfasts in the area:

- ▶ Fairfield Inn & Suites New Bedford
- ▶ Hampton Inn Fairhaven
- ▶ Davenport House Bed & Breakfast
- ▶ Orchard Street Manor
- ▶ Captain Haskell's Octagon House
- ▶ Melville House Bed And Breakfast
- ▶ Wayfarer Bed & Breakfast
- ▶ Baggins End Guest House
- ▶ The Mattapoisett Inn
- ▶ Lizzie Borden Bed and Breakfast

Extra Credit: Order Your Netflix or Redbox Movie Early – Don't be a buffoon and wait until the last minute to order a romantic movie. I recommend Shakespeare in Love, The Notebook, Moulin Rouge, Casablanca, Ghost or Sixteen Candles. Here is a good [Top 50 list](#).

Plan your Valentine's day early and take your date out somewhere special. It's up to you whether Cupid's arrow strikes your lady in the heart...or you in the groin.

Sample Ad



The sample ad is a dark blue banner with white and yellow text. On the left, it says "love is in the air" in yellow. Below that, in white, it reads: "Indulge in a little time for just the two of you. Your special night includes accommodations in a one bedroom king suite, dinner for two, and breakfast delivered to your room. Use Group code LUV when booking." At the bottom left is a green button with white text that says "book now". On the right side of the banner is the Hampton Inn logo, which consists of a red and white crest with the words "Hampton Inn" in a script font. Below the logo, in white, it says "New Bedford/Fairhaven".

What do Sponsors Get?

Sponsors get a large leader board-style banner at the end of the article they sponsor. Example can be seen above. The article is titled, "Eight Date Ideas in New Bedford for Valentine's Day." The sponsor is The Hampton Inn with their Valentine's Day specials. When clicked, the banner leads to Hampton Inn's website specials where customers can get more information and order the service.

There are two ways for businesses to sponsor NewBedfordGuide.com articles. First, a business can sponsor existing articles on our website, which still generate traffic. Second, business can work with us on current article ideas and sponsor upcoming articles that are relevant to them. For example, we do weekly and monthly series that businesses could sponsor, or we could come up with a relevant article.

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