

New Bedford is Not Just Anywhere!

This article was written by Lisa Bergson, executive director of WHALE (Waterfront Historical Area League).

On February 15, New Bedford was named one of the **Dozen Distinctive Destinations** in the United States by the National Trust for Historic Preservation – the *only* city in the Northeast to receive this prestigious designation in 2011.

Annually, the National Trust honors cities and towns across the country that provide an authentic visitor experience by combining dynamic downtown areas, cultural diversity, attractive architecture, cultural landscapes, and a strong commitment to historic preservation, sustainability and revitalization. New Bedford clearly meets all the criteria and then some. In each community, residents have joined together and taken action to protect their town's character. This designation confirms what many of us already know – that New Bedford is ***Not Just Anywhere.***



The nomination, which was submitted by WHALE in collaboration with the City of New Bedford, presented many reasons why New

Bedford is an authentic and interesting place to visit. It featured **10 *Don't Miss*** sites throughout the city and we will be highlighting each of those sites in the coming weeks. So read on, and rediscover New Bedford.

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

Visiting the historic core of New Bedford will transport you back to a time when New Bedford was known as the "City That Lit the World." Walk along the cobblestone streets with period gas lamps that harken back to the heyday of whaling, a period which brought great wealth to the city, at one point the richest per capita city in the world. See the amazing architecture of the preserved, historic buildings, a world class whaling museum, a whalemens chapel made famous by Dickens' *Moby Dick*, or tour a whaling merchant's mansion. All of these attributes and more combine to provide irreplaceable links to the history and character of New Bedford. The Partners in the Park include the City of New Bedford, WHALE, the Whaling Museum, the New Bedford Historical Society, *Ernestina*, New Bedford Port Society, and the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum.

This is the *one* place in the United States where the story of American whaling is told, it is right here in the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.

This quaint, historic neighborhood that makes us all so very proud today was not always so pristine. In fact, a 1959 study of the district showed that most of the properties within the National Historical Park were in various stages of deterioration, the streets were torn up, and most buildings did not meet code. This same report, however, clearly documented that the architecture and ties to our history

clearly still existed in this forlorn neighborhood. And, as a result, WHALE was established to address the blight and neglect that plagued the historic core of our city. In this one district alone WHALE has saved 20 historic buildings that no one else could. These buildings include the Sundial Building which was nearly destroyed during a natural gas explosion in 1977, the Candleworks, Andrew Robeson House, and the Corson Buildings which were slated for demolition, and the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, which was going to be developed and the original surviving gardens from the whaling era paved over into a parking lot. These preservation efforts, which brought together residents and concerned citizens to protect our history, architectural heritage, and character, ensured that New Bedford remained a special place and paved the way for the designation of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.



So, if you've never been to New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, the Whaling Museum, Seaman's Bethel, Ernestina, or the Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum, there's no time like the present. Come see why New Bedford is ***Not Just Anywhere!***

For more information about the Park and its Partners visit www.nps.gov/nebe.

VOTE! VOTE! And Keep VOTING! Every day, in fact!

During the next month people all over the country can vote every day for the *Fan Favorite* of the Dozen Distinctive Destinations. Go to www.destinationnewbedford.org and scroll down to the ***Not Just Anywhere*** button to click on the link to vote for the city you love. You can help make New Bedford #1.