

**Press Release**

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**Contact: Jenny O'Neill**

**Westport Historical Society**

**508.636.6011**

**Email: [westporthistory@westporthistory.net](mailto:westporthistory@westporthistory.net)**

**Paul Cuffe Day in Westport Set for September 16**

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

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

The title and theme of the symposium is **"Paul Cuffe: 1759-1817, Following His Footsteps."** The keynote speaker, Vanessa Julye, is coordinator of the Committee for Ministry on Racism of the Friends (Quakers) General Conference and co-author of the book *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African-Americans and the Myth of Social Justice*. Lamont Thomas, the author of the most frequently cited biography of Paul Cuffe will chair a panel of Paul Cuffe scholars in a discussion of **"Paul Cuffe and His Vision for a New World."** There will also be a presentation on the many images that profess to be of Paul Cuffe and a discussion of which ones are legitimate and which ones are not.

In the afternoon, the African American Native American Heritage Trail will be launched with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and an opportunity for participants to travel over the trail by bus with Cuffe scholars. The Heritage Trail will connect historic sites between Westport, Dartmouth and New Bedford that belonged to the Cuffe, Slocum and Wainer families. The trail will extend from the Captain Paul Cuffe Monument and grave markers at the Friends Meeting House in Westport to the soon to be re-opened Captain Paul Cuffe Memorial Park at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Along the way it includes sites that were the homesteads of Paul and Alice Cuffe, Michael and Mary Wainer and Cuff and Ruth Slocum, several business properties

including a windmill at Westport Point, a residence and tannery of Michael Wainer's in Russells Mills, and a store in New Bedford selling West Indian products owned by Paul Cuffe and two of his sons-in-law, Peter and Alexander Howard. A self-guided description of the sites will be available to participants and will be available at Westport Town Hall, the Handy House and other sites in the region.

The organizations that are sponsoring these events include the Westport Historical Society, the Dartmouth Historical and Arts Society, the New Bedford Historical Society, and the Westport and Dartmouth Historical Commissions. The public is invited to the symposium and advance registration is requested. The Westport Historical Society website at <http://wpthistory.org> provides additional information and access to the on-line registration process. The registration fee is \$10 and covers a light lunch, refreshments and a special commemorative souvenir. The Westport Friends Meeting, the Westport Women's Club and the Westport Grange are providing support for these events.

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