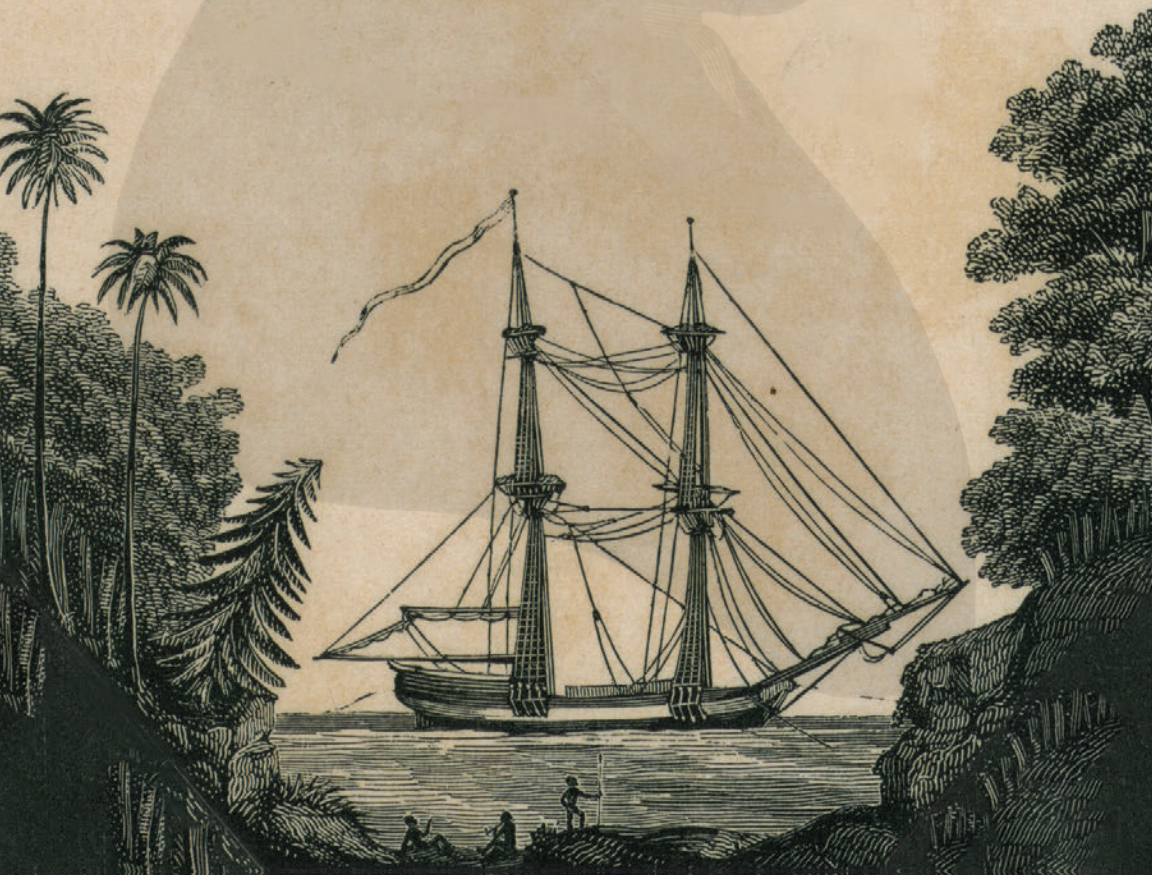
JEFFREY A. FORTIN

Captain Paul Cuffe, *YEOMAN*

A BIOGRAPHY



Captain Paul Cuffe, *YEOMAN*

A VOLUME IN THE SERIES

Black New England

EDITED BY

Kabria Baumgartner, Kerri Greenidge, Jared Ross Hardesty, and Nicole Maskiell

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In Memory of Dr. Eric Kimball

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Preface

The Atlantic world—composed of those continents, peoples, and cultures that border the Atlantic Ocean—became inextricably interconnected during the era of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, circa 1500–1877. Millions of men, women, and children were forcibly removed from the African continent and shipped as human cargo to ports around the Atlantic world, which emerged as an economic, social, political, and cultural power in modern global history. The macro-history of the Atlantic consists of countless micro-histories that reveal the complexities of the past. The stories of individuals, such as Paul Cuffe, illustrate this ambiguous milieu, a world where—despite systemic racism built on institutionalized slavery—strict definitions and rigid social structures did not always exist. Born in 1759 in Massachusetts, a particularly socially, ethically, and legally permeable corner of the Atlantic world, Paul Cuffe's story begins thirty-one years prior with his parents, Kofi, an African man, and Ruth, a Wampanoag woman.

Acknowledgments

It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes an army of academics, friends, and family to write a book. There are many people to thank, beginning with Dr. Mel Camberiati and Dr. John Murray, two faculty at Manhattanville College who took in this wide-eyed, first-generation college student and made him feel at home. Although I transferred to Boston University, they ignited a love of learning and modeled the kind of professor I wanted to become.

Under the watchful eyes of Dr. Cynthia Van Zandt and Dr. Jeffrey Bolster at the University of New Hampshire, I grew to become a scholar. Cynthia taught me to pay attention to detail and to put meticulous research first. Larger-than-life Jeff, on the other hand, taught me the importance of telling a good tale while weaving in analysis based on that same meticulous research. If you know Jeff, he can tell a story with the best of them. Without them, this book would have never happened. Graduate school at UNH taught me more than how to create effective scholarship:—it taught me the importance of community. Dr. Kirk Dorsey, Dr. Lige Gould, Dr. Lucy Salyer, and Dr. Janet Polasky each had a profound impact on me, sharing hours of office time to discuss class readings, current research, sports—you name it, they took the time to be available. Once again, I try to model my interaction with my students after these experiences.

Now I find myself at Emmanuel College in Boston's Fenway neighborhood. Working in Boston—my favorite place in the world—feels like reaching full circle. My colleagues at Emmanuel are the most dedicated faculty I have been around. Social justice and making positive change are front and center in the Emmanuel community.

My friends in the History Department have been unwavering in their support over the past twelve years, and their help will never be forgotten. Dr. Violetta Ravagnoli, Dr. Javier Marion, Dr. William Leonard (Bill), and Dr. Melanie Murphy, you all make our department a home for us and our students. The staff at our Cardinal Cushing Library Learning Commons has been beyond helpful with my research. There are no better allies than highly skilled librarians. Diane Zydlewski and Anne Hancock are simply the best.

Students have made this profession, this job, much more than that. Mentoring, hanging out and talking about their futures, pestering them to do the reading—all of it brings so much satisfaction and happiness. A few students over the years stand out as student research assistants or office workers in the department who helped me with my research, including Marci Paez, Karen Luu, Emily Tessier, and Emily Solup, among others.

And, of course, none of this would happen without family. Although not always sure what I was doing and why this book took "so long to write," they provided unwavering support. As a struggling grad student, their financial support to visit archives and travel for research was always appreciated. After I took up golf, my dad said the book would never get finished! But it was my wife, Suzanne, and two boys, Luca and Andre, who wouldn't let me quit even when it meant me working at the archives in New Bedford or Nantucket or Mystic while they tried to enjoy their beach vacations. They never complained, and to be honest, we had some fun family adventures traveling to archives as close as Cuttyhunk Island and as far as London, England. Those three hold my heart and my deepest appreciation for everything they put up with.

Enjoy!

Terminology

As a historian who studies eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Atlantic history, I regularly encounter terms and descriptions that do not mesh with twenty-first-century norms. As one of many scholars who study the roots of institutionalized racism in America and the broader Atlantic, it is important to tell an inclusive story in an accessible manner. Yet, as a storyteller and scholar seeking to reconstruct the past as closely as possible, I want to expose the reader to the language and ideologies of the period discussed in this book.

Direct quotes from archival materials—letters, newspaper articles, diaries, etc.—allow the subjects of this book to move in the world in which they lived, for the reader to fully grasp concepts of race and identity, power and oppression, as it existed at the time Paul Cuffe and his contemporaries lived. Periodically, the language used at the time may be uncomfortable at best, offensive at worst, yet I believe it makes Cuffe's story that much more powerful by allowing us to fully recognize the social norms that he fought, the challenges that he faced during his day in their fullest, most repulsive manner.

As a scholar of my own time, I have carefully chosen the terms and language used in my voice, based on current standards in the field. Periodically I may include a term that is no longer used in modern vernacular as a point of emphasis, though I've not done so lightly or with any negative intent or for shock value. Rather, my goal as a storyteller is to try to re-create Cuffe's experiences as closely as possible to reveal the massive challenges he faced as a biracial man in the Atlantic world.

Some key terms and words in the text to consider.

I use the terms "Indian" and "Native American" interchangeably throughout this book in line with the Smithsonian Institution's guidelines. Because the use of either term is acceptable today and subject to individual Indigenous people's preferences, I have used "Indian" when reflecting Paul Cuffe's use of the term to describe himself. Conversely, I use "Native American" when it is clearly my voice in the text.[1]

The term "musta" is derived from "mustee," which was reserved for people of African and Native American descent. Variations of the term, including "mulatto," can be found throughout the Americas during this era, but "musta" was used widely across the south coasts of New England.[2]

"Slave" and "enslaved" peoples are used throughout the text, with "enslaved" favored because it returns the humanity of the individual forced to perform labor by their enslaver or owner. Similarly, "enslaver" or "owner" is often substituted for the "master" when reflective of my voice. The language used in this biography is intended to reflect the norms set forth by the scholars and journalists of the *New York Times* and *The 1619 Project*.[3]

Additionally, some ordinary words take on somewhat different meanings in this text. For example, the term "Friend" concerns Quakers or a member of a Quaker Meetinghouse. Some references to "men" seemingly exclude "women," which reflects the archival record's lack of evidence that women were involved in certain meetings or events. This is not to suggest women played less of a role in Paul Cuffe's life story; rather, the record does not specifically mention the presence of women at certain Quaker meetings or in letters passed among abolitionists. In writing any history of the Atlantic, one wishes to be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible, while not fabricating or making assumptions about the past. My choices as a scholar and author may not please all readers, but I believe they reflect the historical record as accurately as is currently possible without detracting from Cuffe's story.

Captain Paul Cuffe,

YEOMAN

INTRODUCTION

A young Paul Cuffe identified himself as Musta, recognizing his multiracial heritage in a region of the world undergoing enormous ideological, social, and cultural change toward the end of the eighteenth century.[1] "Musta" is an antiquated and dubious term used in colonial Massachusetts to refer to peoples of mixed African and Indigenous heritage. Cuffe publicly and proudly described himself as the son of an African father and Wampanoag mother when signing a tax relief petition sent to the town of Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1778. The petition functioned as a platform on which to powerfully claim his multiracial heritage while joining, in spirit, the American revolutionaries' fight against unfair taxation by British authorities. This bold young man saw an opportunity to take advantage of the commonwealth's laws providing tax-exempt status for Indians. As a person of African descent, he was expected to pay, but Cuffe found this unfair, arguing his Indigenous heritage made him exempt from taxes.[2] Interracial marriages were common in colonial Massachusetts, yet Paul Cuffe emerged as anything but ordinary, a man whose life would be recognized the world over as exceptional.

In a few short decades, Paul Cuffe transformed from a mustee Indian and farmer's son to a wealthy coastal trader and deep-water whaling captain with a fleet of vessels, to an African seeking redemption on the continent from which millions had been kidnapped and sold into oblivion. His ability to self-identify as Indian in certain situations and as African in others illustrated the complex

process of social and racial change taking place during the Age of Revolution in the Atlantic world. Local officials in Massachusetts gradually redefined multiracial peoples as "mustee," then "Negro," and finally "Black" during this period, as was often the case throughout the English-speaking North Atlantic.[3] Such racial redefinitions transformed the legal status of men like Paul Cuffe from Indian to the subordinate Black identity.[4] Although Indigenous peoples of the region were "written off the record" in this legal context, many multiracial peoples existed in a cultural duality that was of Indian and African background.[5] Paul Cuffe would emerge from his "musta" heritage as a Black man based on his own terms and not the opinion of local authorities. His older brother John took a different route, marrying a Wampanoag woman like Paul did but choosing to live in Aquinnah, an Indian community on Martha's Vineyard. Two brothers from the same biological parents fashioned two separate, but not entirely different, racial identities.

Cuffe's life story is exceptional, yet in many ways it fits within the norms of his day. Skilled Native Americans along the New England coast had introduced English colonists to fishing and whaling, teaching them the basic skills necessary to harvest the sea.[6] New England Indigenous communities intermixed with free and runaway Blacks as early as the seventeenth century, when safety often meant holding up in relative anonymity on Massachusetts's Indian plantations, the region's antecedents to reservations. Farmers and the sea were intricately connected, with Cuffe joining throngs of other teenage men who for generations fought boredom and satiated economic needs on their fathers' farms by enlisting on whale ships leaving from Nantucket, New Bedford, and other local ports.[7] African Americans represented at least 18 percent of all crew members aboard British and American ships by 1803.[8] As a young man, Cuffe briefly faded into the multiracial crews aboard these whalers scouring the ocean for their quarry.

Anonymity was short-lived for Paul Cuffe. He reinvented himself beside the hardscrabbled masses aboard their floating slaughterhouses. From oil-soaked decks that reeked of blood and death, he

became the celebrated, venerated, and respected Captain Paul Cuffe, the (erroneously) oft-claimed founder of America's first back-to-Africa movement and example of the heights a free Black man could attain.[9] Celebrity followed Paul Cuffe throughout the Atlantic world as he built a shipping empire that specialized in fishing and trading goods in coastal waters as well as across the ocean. Cuffe and his Black crews became increasingly famous, sailing seemingly without fear into Charleston and other ports where slavery was legal, radiating confidence that they would be allowed to conduct business without interruption. Newspapers in England, America, and the Caribbean reported his whereabouts and adventures, hailing him as a man to be admired by whites and Blacks. Cuffe's celebrity protected him, making it less likely he or his crew would be pressed into slavery or service under the British or American navies. A man of enterprise, hard work, and discipline, Paul Cuffe was a Wampanoag Indian. Yet, he redefined what it meant to be African in America in the wider Atlantic world, serving as a beacon to persons of African descent.

Paul Cuffe exhibited a fluid identity, common to persons of African descent trying to navigate a world with the odds stacked against them. He sometimes chose either identity in his early life, but as he matured and became middle-aged, he firmly saw himself as African. Paul Cuffe challenges our traditional notions of citizenship and identity. Would he have considered himself "American"? He does not refer to himself this way—simply as African, mustee (another form of Musta), or Indian. It seems clear through his actions, such as fighting for the patriots during the American Revolution, that Cuffe appears to have been a man seeking liberty. In all facets of his life, he dealt with those people who did and did not consider him equal—whether American, English, African, Indian, etc.—and he would trade with any state, nation, or merchant willing to offer a fair deal. Rarely, if ever, does Cuffe refer to himself as "American," but he always refers to himself as the brethren of Africans and kin of Wampanoags.[10]

How did this complex man go from being tossed into county jail for unpaid taxes as a young man to rising to speak for a race and a continent, a shining example of the success persons of African descent

could achieve, Christian beliefs, and a willingness to work within the structures of white society? How did Paul Cuffe emerge from obscurity on a small coastal farm in Massachusetts to being perhaps the wealthiest and most distinguished African American in the Atlantic world during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? Paul Cuffe's story captures the ambiguity and enormous complexity of being multiracial in a bifurcated society where identity was fluid and where the idea of a Black America and a Black Atlantic were simultaneously emerging from the chaos of slavery and emancipation on the heels of the American and Haitian Revolutions. Whites occupied a heavily stratified society shipboard, where they were "among the most marginalized men in white society."[11] Blacks, on the other hand, found relief aboard whalers, transports, and other merchant vessels. Black seamen could achieve shipboard levels of freedom and economic reward unavailable to them elsewhere in the Atlantic world. Paul Cuffe used this vehicle—mostly brigs, a medium-sized vessel with two square-rigged masts—to hunt whales, transport grains and cotton grown by enslaved people, and begin ferrying back the first African Americans determined to resettle Africa.

Paul Cuffe's story is simultaneously uplifting and yet complicated because it presents a heroic, admirable African American whom few people outside the academic world know. Rather than venerating the man, like so many American historical figures are in popular biography, in this book I interrogate his life, allowing a critical eye to penetrate the veil historians have surrounded Paul Cuffe with since his first biographical study was published in the 1920s.[12] This is, after all, a Black man who sold boatloads of cotton grown by enslaved people around the Atlantic world's seaports while amassing his shipping empire.

That same man had a life-changing dream that convinced him to aid his African brethren, to help build a new free nation in Sierra Leone while also trying to educate pagan and Muslim Africans still involved in the slave trade.[13] The last ten years of Cuffe's life were devoted to uplifting his race even while forming business partnerships with men like Isaac Cory, a slaveowner who ventured into trade

with the Black sea captain. Paul Cuffe's world is a complex, multilayered space with hardened racial ideals that typically assigned Blacks to the lower levels of society. Few men, like Paul Cuffe, were able to break through these barriers to thrive in Black and white societies, floating between social and business circles, dealing equally with white and Black merchants or sailmakers, offloading cargo in ports where workers were enslaved persons like Vienna, Maryland, or being celebrated on the banks of the Mersey River in Liverpool, England—the former capital of the transatlantic slave trade. Cuffe could be admonished for daring to sit on a stagecoach next to a white woman and heralded the next day as William Wilberforce and other London Saints proclaimed him to be a beacon of freedom and hope to all Blacks in the Atlantic world. His reputation could be sullied by racist conniving British businessmen in Sierra Leone, yet President James Madison willingly listened to him argue his case for having an impounded ship returned to his custody during the War of 1812. Paul Cuffe lived in an unpredictable world in motion, where race, religion, the environment, money, and good fortune often ruled unpredictably.

Just days before his death, Cuffe described himself with the singular adjective of *yeoman* in his last will and testament. The term refers to the hard work and burden Cuffe took on as the patriarch of a farming family, leader of a shipping enterprise, captain of several vessels, and spiritual and emotional leader of early African colonization efforts.[14] Cuffe hoisted the world on his shoulders in multiple, profound ways. He wished to pass on quietly, without fanfare, but his yeomanry would not let him. A humble man from Westport, Massachusetts, Paul Cuffe led a life of integrity; his death would elevate him to iconic status. The venerable Paul Cuffe juxtaposed most white Americans' racist vision of African Americans; people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures respected this "Interesting Negro Navigator."[15]

CHAPTER ONE

Born of the Atlantic

In 1728, a young Ashanti boy named Kofi arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, shackled, scared, and exhausted from the long Atlantic crossing.[1] Emerging from the depths of the slave ship into the fresh air of the protected harbor, Kofi—whose name means "Friday" in his native language—encountered a strange new world. Gone were odors of rancid food and sickness on board the slave ship, replaced by the sweet molasses aromas of baking brown bread and rum distilleries that filled the air.[2] Sailors from around the Atlantic mingled with entrepreneurial locals, including Portuguese Jews, Quakers, and Baptists attracted to this thriving port since the mid-seventeenth century. Despite Rhode Island's pious reputation, Newport's citizens operated on the margins of law. Captains and merchants flouted a 1652 act that banned the enslavement of "Blacke mankind" for more than ten years, even evading a 1712 customs tax on imported slaves (£3 per person) by anchoring in nearby Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, and offloading captive Africans onto sloops to ferry to Providence Plantation.[3] Kofi moved into a world of flexible morals, ethics, and legal regulations. The ease of illicit trade attracted many, transforming this town near the entrance to Narragansett Bay into a commercial port that rivaled New York and Boston by the mid-eighteenth century.[4]

Kofi had been bought near another bustling port, the Banana Islands, in present-day Sierra Leone. Trade there centered on two commodities, slaves and rum, a New England product that rapidly displaced French brandy as the preferred currency of the slave trade

in Africa. A boy like Kofi would cost between 60–80 gallons of the molasses-based spirit.[5] Just ten years old, Kofi began the long journey into chattel slavery as he boarded the Newport-based ship, *Charming Bell*, anchored near an area so crowded with slave ships that captains "devur one another" for the "prime slaves" but were too often "forced to take any that comes."[6] Success usually depended on the brokering skills and patience of the captain. Prohibited access to the large trading factories, sites for trading and business transactions established by the French and Dutch, Newport's captains spent weeks or months gaining their "cargo," buying a small group of slaves at a time from whichever traders were willing to negotiate.[7]

Newport slave ships led colonial American participation in the transatlantic slave trade, averaging at least seven voyages per year to the Gold Coast.[8] From Africa they ventured along the southerly winds for Barbados and other Caribbean ports to sell their captive cargoes and pick up molasses for New England's distilleries.[9] Some slaves, such as Kofi, were reserved for the New England market. Although slave ownership in the region tended to be on a small scale compared to other parts of the Americas, the massive dairy farms owned by the Narragansett planters enslaved hundreds of Africans, ensuring steady demand from slave ship captains.[10] Slaves like Kofi—an unexceptional commodity interchangeable with the thousands of other young boys for sale in ports around the Atlantic—would be inspected and scrutinized for signs of sickness, bought on one of the many wharves lining Newport's harbor. Buyers paid in cash, such as British pounds or the globally accepted Spanish dollars, completing each African's grim transformation into property.[11]

Peleg Slocum, a wealthy Quaker minister from nearby Dartmouth, Massachusetts, purchased young Kofi as a wedding present to his twenty-three-year-old son, Ebenezer, who had married eighteen-year-old Bathsheba Hull earlier that winter of 1728. Peleg Slocum was a leading figure in the town, donating land and money for the construction of Dartmouth's first Quaker meetinghouse, for which he became the founding minister. Merchant, farmer, and "an honest public Friend," Peleg and his family followed norms that seemed to

conflict with their faith: they were known to engage in smuggling and owned slaves.[12] Although the Slocums were not the largest slaveholding family in New England—the Redwoods of Newport held that distinction with 238 enslaved people—they were participants in the larger interconnected global web of mercantile exchange that thrived on the use of bonded labor along the South Coast of Massachusetts.[13] When Kofi left the wharves of Newport for the thousand-acre Slocum farm in Dartmouth just thirty-eight nautical miles away in Bristol County, Massachusetts, he would learn a wide range of skills, from carpentry to outfitting ships, anything the Slocums needed for their businesses.[14]

Being sold to the Slocum family was Kofi's best-case scenario. The conventions of race-based slavery in New England during the eighteenth century were more favorable than other colonies in the Americas. Slaves frequently served roles akin to servants, apprentices, sailors, or farmers rather than the heavy labor of southern and Caribbean colonies. The relationship between owner and enslaved person in New England often took the form of paternalistic affection from the white person's perspective. Sometimes owners even mourned slaves upon their death.[15] Moreover, the large Quaker population in Rhode Island and along the South Coast typically kept close watch over one another's treatment of slaves, publicly admonishing or expelling members for dealing with their slaves harshly.[16] Quakers had already begun to question the morality and justness of chattel slavery by the time Kofi arrived from Africa in 1728, yet that did not change his status as property in the Slocum family. Four years after purchasing Kofi, Peleg died in 1732, leaving Ebenezer a two-hundred-acre parcel of the vast property, where he resided with his family until 1754.

Kofi first appears officially in the colonial records in 1742 as a "Negro Man of about twenty five years of age Named Cuffe."[17] The bill of sale illustrates how enslaved people were stripped of their African identities, as Kofi was Anglicized to Cuffe and given his master's surname of Slocum.[18] Sold within the Slocum family from Ebenezer to his cousin John Slocum and then possibly afterward to another cousin, Cuffe may have felt relief because these Quakers were reputed

to be kind to their slaves.[19] Known to be "diligent in the business of his master, and faithful to his interest," Cuffe, "like many of his countrymen possessed a mind superior to his condition."[20] Such qualities likely contributed to Cuffe's relatively benevolent treatment. To know more about the next few years of Cuffe's life is difficult, yet two oft-repeated but undocumented versions of events yield insight into this period of his life.

Shortly after his sale from one Slocum to another, Cuffe negotiated a price for his emancipation. Such agreements were not entirely unusual in the Quaker communities of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and published accounts suggest he "contrived, by great industry and economy, to collect money for the purchase of his personal freedom" over the next three years.[21] The numerical price Cuffe paid is unknown, but his freedom came with different registers of cost—physical, emotional, and psychological expenses few white colonists had to endure. Another account according to family letters dated one hundred years later has either John Slocum or Captain Holder Slocum manumitting Cuffe as he sat for breakfast one brisk morning. The local justice of the peace unexpectedly appeared, carrying manumission papers for the disbelieving slave, who immediately became concerned for his future: How would he support himself or even find food and shelter? The Slocums offered him work for wages such that he could accumulate enough money to support himself. After a short period, Cuffe was ready to leave, and the Slocums advised him to place his manumission paper "into his own Cheste and lock it up . . . take the kee . . . and put it into his pocket and carry it with him."[22] New England slave owners had commonly freed their slaves by the mid-eighteenth century. Quakers found slavery to be immoral, whereas other owners followed the common practice of manumission after a period of faithful service, echoing the case for white indentured servitude in the region.[23] Cuffe's freedom brought dramatic changes to his life. He faced new challenges of being a free African in New England where economic, racial, social, and cultural tensions meant a lifetime of uncertainty. Cuffe had his freedom, but at a cost: it existed in tension with an omnipresent slavery that permeated the Atlantic world.

Cuffe Slocum's journey toward freedom began in West Africa at the hands of his fellow Africans. Sociopolitical upheaval throughout West Africa brought tribes, villages, and empires into conflict, resulting in the rapid expansion of an internal slave trade.[24] As longstanding traders with North African peoples, sub-Saharan Africans began to redirect their efforts westward along the Gold Coast—later to be renamed the Slave Coast—toward European trading posts where large ships awaited their deliveries.[25] Slave trading in West Africa was violent and often the result of wars or connivance. As Captain John Barbot, a notorious French slave trader, recorded in his journals, "Those sold by the Blacks are for the most part prisoners of war, taken either in fight, or pursuit, or in the incursions they make into their enemies territories."[26] Others were simply stolen from their villages by West African traders, many times as children. "They carry off as many as they can seize," recalled Olaudah Equiano in his masterful slave narrative, ferrying newly captured African children "as far as they could, till night came on."[27] Lurking around each corner was the threat of enslavement for West African men, women, and children.

Tales passed from one trader to another highlighted the treachery of this deeply cynical and immoral world, including one such instance when a father tried to sell his son to Europeans. The son caught wind of his father's plan and, knowing some French, was able to convince the buyers that his father was *his* slave. He sold his father and returned to his home village with pittance for pay.[28] Such fractured human relationships, even between father and son, characterized the chaotic nature of the transatlantic slave trade. African traders themselves needed to be aware of European ship captains luring them aboard with the stated intention of bargaining, only to surprise them "as they came aboard to trade" when the ship set sail and carried away the duped Africans.[29]

Cuffe Slocum suffered a similar fate as many of the 2.7 million slaves transported by British and American ships in the Middle Passage during the eighteenth century.[30] The young boy sat in the hold of the *Charming Bell* for several months before departing from the

coast of Africa, while "scarce a day passes without some Negroes being purchased and carried aboard."[31] The cargo holds packed bodies tighter and tighter, with two hundred to five hundred captive Africans, depending on the size of the vessel, preparing for the long journey across the unforgiving Atlantic. The slave ship was a space of translation, a "potent combination of war machine, mobile prison, and factory" where the prisoners were violently transformed from free person to commodified slave during the journey across the Atlantic.[32] These floating dungeons provided the setting in which the crew—sometimes both free and enslaved persons of color—attempted to strip their sickly cargo of their humanity, making them a piece of property for sale and trade once the ship docked in Caribbean ports dotted with large auction houses.[33]

Young Kofi would experience horrid conditions on his Atlantic passage. Little fresh air infiltrated the cargo hold, with bodies increasing the heat in the already scorching quarters. "The confined air, rendered noxious by the effluvia exhaled from their bodies and being repeatedly breathed, soon produces fevers and fluxes which generally carries off a great number of them" to death. The decks of these floating prisons were "so covered with blood and mucus" that it "resembled a slaughter-house."[34] Enduring such hardships proved impossible for some—roughly 25 percent of the Africans died in each crossing.[35] Kofi's perseverance and resiliency to survive the Middle Passage signified his strength to a degree that is unimaginable for a ten-year-old boy.

Arriving in the British slave markets of Barbados was hardly a reward for surviving the Middle Passage. African slaves were offloaded in the Americas once dead bodies were disposed of in the harbor or the very ill were auctioned at nearby taverns. The bidding at slave auctions could be swift and furious, with quarrels often breaking out between prospective purchasers. Examination of the merchandise further reduced slaves to commodities. As many of the slaves contracted the flux—a form of dysentery—en route, ships surgeons were "directed . . . to stop up the anus of each of them with oakum" to stop the discharge of diarrhea.[36] Healthy slaves proved far more

valuable on the market than sickly slaves, who could fetch as little as one pound, whereas a healthy slave would demand several times that price. By now, Kofi had endured the commodification of his person and was loaded shipboard to be sent north to Newport. Considering the alternative, Kofi's fate proved to be fortuitous, arriving in a thriving port town where enslavement did not guarantee premature death as it did in many other parts of the British Atlantic world.

New England's rocky shoreline and equally rocky soil, temperate climate, and nature of its early European settlers meant they could not reproduce the tobacco economy of the seventeenth-century Chesapeake or the sugar-fueled economies of the islands of Barbados and Jamaica. Europeans had long been attracted to New England's Gulf of Maine, where fishermen had trawled the seas for the bounty of fish since at least the early sixteenth century, when Portuguese, Norman, and Breton ships often crossed paths in the deep waters off the coast of the Canadian Maritimes.[37] Gulf of Maine waters offered enough fish to feed Western European appetites, where the once cheap and lean protein source waned. More money could be made in these New England waters than farming its rocky soil.

Early European settlers focused more on disavowing local Native Americans of their lands than building plantations in a climate better suited for corn, squash, and other subsistence crops. Tobacco and its eleven-month production season was better left to the inhabitants of the Chesapeake colonies.[38] Sugar simply would not grow here. New Englanders turned to trade and manufacturing to fuel their economic development. Rather than acquiring vast tracts of land to grow cash crops, New England merchants enmeshed in the circum-Atlantic trade routes profited greatly from sugar and slaves. Port towns throughout the region capitalized by participating directly in the trade of slaves, while also developing opportunities closely connected to the trade: numerous distilleries, for example, were built to spin the waste product from sugar production into rum, the amber liquid that lubricated Britain's sailors and taverns.[39] These traders of goods, purveyors of manufactures and agricultural products, and suppliers of the lumber that built the British merchant fleets were central to the

story of slavery. New England had few plantations, but slaves provided much of the manual labor that fueled New England's artisanal and manufacturing trades.[40] Compared to the growing sugar islands and tobacco colonies, the population of slaves in New England paled; New England's role in slavery, however, did not.

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On 3 January 1745, an intention of marriage document was recorded between Cuffe Slocum and Ruth Moses in Dartmouth's official records.[41] Although recording one's intent to marry seems somewhat minor, a look inside Dartmouth Town Records reveals numerous marriages between Wampanoag women and African men, illustrating how common such unions were on the South Coast of Massachusetts. Over a year later, in July 1746, Quaker minister Philip Taber married "a Negro man" named Cuffe Slocum and an "Indian woman" named Ruth Moses, in Dartmouth, Massachusetts.[42] Cuffe and Ruth's wedding was customary along the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island at a time when Africans and Native Americans often intermarried. "With two suits of clothes, and freedom," the newlyweds "went happily away" to build a new life along the shores of Buzzards Bay.[43] These were two adults acting within the conventions of their time in a unique, culturally diverse corner of the Atlantic where race and identity were pliable, ever-changing concepts in part owing to increasing manumission rates for Africans and the ongoing transformation of Native American identity.

Ruth Moses was born a Wampanoag Indian on Martha's Vineyard circa 1720.[44] A member of the Gay Head (Aquinnah) tribe, located on the southwestern tip of the island within the Town of Chilmark, Ruth's kin had experienced nearly continuous upheaval from the moment Captain Bartholomew Gosnold landed in Buzzards Bay 118 years earlier. Gay Head's traditional Wampanoag name was Aquinnah, or "land under the hill," because one could view the entire town from nearby Peaked Hill.[45] By the time of Ruth's birth, the town had been renamed by English settlers to reflect the "gay," or spectacular red, brown, green, and yellow clay, buffeted by white sands of granite

that rise eighty feet above the waters of the Atlantic.[46] The English rechristening of the town reflected its contested past.

Relations between local Native Americans and English settlers were shaky, sometimes cooperative but more often filled with bloody conflict and wars. By the early seventeenth century, Ruth's ancestors wore European articles of clothing and knew some English words from past encounters with Europeans.[47] By the time English Puritans arrived in 1620, the New England Indian population had been decimated by European diseases contracted when Captains Bartholomew Gosnold and John Smith explored the coastline. Indians in New England suffered significantly because their immune systems had little ability to fight the European strains of these diseases. Nearly 90 percent of Indians had disappeared from the shores of New England during the smallpox and influenza epidemics, which were followed by severe tuberculosis and pneumonia outbreaks.[48] This limited contact of New England's Indians with Europeans was their first lopsided encounter with what historians call the Columbian Exchange.[49] Smallpox and other viruses were the first volleys in what would become a centuries-long battle for control of the seashores and woods of colonist John Smith's bountiful New England.

The Wampanoags, a tribe of Native Americans inhabiting the South Coast of present-day Massachusetts and parts of Rhode Island, suffered such great losses in the outbreaks of disease that they welcomed English settlers with the hope they would become allies against an increasingly strong Narragansett Indian presence just to the west. This relationship would soon find the Wampanoags Christianized by John Elliot and his Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, missionizing Puritan colonists seeking to remake Indians in the image of Englishmen.[50] By 1674, many Wampanoags had gathered into a church, preaching the gospel throughout the Cape Cod area, including Gay Head, but within eighteen months, Wampanoag Indians were at the center of New England's largest, bloodiest Indian-English conflict known as Metacom's War.[51] Wampanoags and Narragansetts united against English settlers throughout New England, waging war to preserve their culture and halt further encroachment

by whites. As friendly as the relationship between Wampanoags and English settlers appeared prior to the war, that friendship was tenuous at best, quickly disintegrating as Metacomet and his followers rejected the colonists' Christianizing efforts.

Metacomet, the son of Massasoit—a sachem, or paramount chief, known for accommodating English settlers at the supposed first thanksgiving—ascended to sachem of the Wampanoags upon the death of his father and brother.[52] The war broke out in part as the result of Metacomet's decision to no longer yield to English demands. This bold stance would cost Metacomet his life and the Wampanoags much of their land. Wampanoags and their allies captured in battle were exiled to Deer Island in Boston harbor or sold into slavery in the West Indies—a fate that meant certain premature death. The Wampanoags would never recover from their act of resistance, and during the next fifty years, their lands were claimed, bought, and sold by the English.[53]

Along the South Coast, where Ruth Moses's kin lived, authorities created a reservation, or "plantation" as they were called, for the remaining Wampanoags and other Indians who fought alongside colonists in King William's War in the late seventeenth century. At the same time, a Wampanoag preacher, William Simons, performed services in Dartmouth where he brought together numerous Native American families. The reservation—rooted in Simons's extended parish and a product of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's increasing attempts to corral local Indians so as to provide space for its expanding English population—was part of a system of plantations that provided subjugated Native Americans with lands to farm and rivers and saltwater flats to fish.[54]

As Ruth Moses came of age in the eighteenth century, numerous Native Americans lived behind the frontier of colonial settlement in Massachusetts, unlike the relocation of Indians that took place in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Native American tribes intermarried and lived in clusters sometimes referred to as Indiantowns or by their specific names, such as Troy-Watuppa, Gay Head, or Betty's Neck Indian reserves, often within the borders of English towns. Even after

one hundred years of colonization, some of these villages were struck by smallpox epidemics that saw one settlement fall from eight wigwams to one in the span of a few years.[55] Conflict with colonists and the spread of disease ravaged Native American populations and culture, yet Wampanoags found some stability along the warm waters of Buzzards Bay during the eighteenth century. Small communities persisted, welcoming Africans as kin who also suffered in the face of European expansion across the Atlantic. Together, these two groups would remake Native American and African identities on the South Coast and in the wider Atlantic world.

It is along this rocky coastline, in the small Indian reservation within the town of Dartmouth, that Ruth Moses lived at the time she met Kofi Slocum. Although many of the historical records of Dartmouth's colonial period were destroyed in a fire, it is possible to understand the world in which Ruth Moses—a Quaker Indian—lived.[56] Gay Head Wampanoags like Ruth were known to be "well instructed in reading" and accepting of Christian teachings, often moving from one settlement to another along Buzzards Bay according to work or family needs.[57] Ruth and her kin faced an uncertain future. Born into a community in transition, Ruth witnessed the erosion of centuries-old social and political traditions and the reconfiguration of traditional power structures. Wampanoag communities intermarried free and runaway contrabands who sought anonymity on Massachusetts's Indian plantations scattered throughout Cape Cod and the islands. This was not a society where slavery strictly defined social structures as it did in Virginia or Maryland.[58]

By the middle of the eighteenth century, roughly half of the approximately fourteen hundred Indians in Massachusetts lived in Plymouth and Bristol. Chief Westamore, sister-in-law to Metacomet, governed an Indian town bordering Fall River in the late seventeenth century, but within a few short decades 227 acres of the town would be carved up and turned into an Indian reserve known as Freetown.[59] By 1764, 33 of 134 Wampanoags previously counted remained in Dartmouth and Freetown.[60] Along with a settlement in Mashpee, just inside lower Cape Cod on the south shore, Native Americans

in southeastern Massachusetts thrived when compared with other Native Americans slowly being pushed westward into the backcountry of western Pennsylvania and the Ohio River Valley.[61]

Quakers widely converted Native Americans to their faith, yet Indians and colonists coexisted along Buzzards Bay, with a degree of tolerance that was perhaps unusual in eighteenth-century New England. As evidence from the Waldo Farm site suggests, Wampanoags in Dartmouth were given traditional Christian burials that differed from other sites in New England, where Christianized Indians were buried with some incorporation of traditional Indian rites.[62] This suggests Dartmouth's Wampanoags integrated more thoroughly into English Quaker customs and culture than did some of their neighboring villages. Additionally, the spotty records that remain from this period in Dartmouth reveal legal protections for local Indians. Ebenezer Allen, for example, was asked to leave the Dartmouth meeting when fellow Quakers discovered he had beaten and abused a local Wampanoag.[63] Such actions mimic Quaker intolerance for the poor treatment of enslaved African people during this same period.

Society along the south coast of Massachusetts during the eighteenth century was not easily divided into succinct racial categories. As pressures from European colonization eroded traditional agriculture and cultural practices, Native Americans in southern New England were forced to confront changing realities, often having to venture outside their own reservations to work, as did Ruth.[64] Increasingly, as Indian plantations transformed, welcoming African newcomers while Native populations shrank, it became increasingly less clear to colonial officials just who was an "Indian" and, to a similar degree, *what was an Indian*? Daniel Gookin's Indians in his 1792 report to the Massachusetts History Society did not include the fifty-nine "mixed-bloods" living in Freetown.[65] Another historian recorded a "negro and a squaw" living in one wigwam but failed to comment on other mixed-race persons or couples he encountered.[66] Gookin likely followed the conventions of his colonial predecessors in not identifying mixed-race Indians as *Indians* but resorted to the accepted term of "mustee," which generally meant a person of Indian heritage who

shared African or European ancestry or both.[67] The term came into frequent use in New England, most specifically to refer to persons of Indian-African ancestry during the eighteenth century.[68] The emerging Indiantowns along Buzzards Bay burst at the seams with mustees, signaling the most dramatic shift in Indian identity and changing demographics since the end of Metacom's War in 1676.

Cuffe Slocum faced hardships post-emancipation, working diligently to afford to wed Ruth Moses and have a family. The Slocum family, like many Quakers at the time, did not simply release the newly freeman with no provisions. Still, Cuffe encountered a new world where food, clothing, and shelter were not guaranteed and the competition for jobs could be ruthless.[69] The wharves of New England were alive with free and enslaved Blacks, mulattoes, mustees, Portuguese, and Native American peoples eager to improve their lot in life as the expanding fishing, whaling, and trading industries of southern New England drew migrant workers from around the Atlantic. The skills Cuffe learned as an enslaved person positioned him well, but he would need to draw on the work ethic he had developed since he was a young boy arriving in this strange new world.

Not all revolutionaries joined the Sons of Liberty or fought in wars; rather, some simply and steadily built a new life that challenged broad social conventions. Cuffe learned to read and write, and upon manumission he became the de facto family historian, practicing factoring his bills, payments, and other business transactions in his Exercise Book. A common practice for colonial Americans to improve their writing and math skills, Cuffe's Exercise Book unwittingly demonstrated to the world that he was a man on the move. Farming—selling cows, sheep, and produce—would prove to be the foundation of his businesses, but he also worked as a small-scale laborer, even hiring out his own small dory to whomever could pay the fee.[70] As one of the 122 adult Black men and women in Bristol County, Cuffe blended into a diverse population of non-whites, a mélange of South Coast communities that yielded perhaps the most capable and respected maritime labor force in the Atlantic.[71] Whalemen, ships' crews, and shore workers, from sailmakers to coopers to caulkers, were chosen in

seaside communities from Dartmouth to Cape Cod, where African and Native American peoples understood that the whaling industry offered "the best means to survive the changes wrought by capitalism and colonization."[72] Within this vibrant community, Cuffe Slocum found odd jobs ashore and on the docks, working the land and the sea and illustrating the interconnected nature of farmers and sailors.

In the late 1750s, Cuffe and Ruth moved their children to Cuttyhunk Island, last in the chain of the Elizabeth Islands, a spit of land nestled at the entrance of Buzzards Bay. When Bartholomew Gosnold's ship ventured into "one of the noblest bays" in 1602, searching out lands for Queen Elizabeth's new plans to colonize North America, the islands overflowed with trees and enough wood for the company to build a fort. Evidence of periodic Indian settlement accompanied the abundant strawberries and deer on Cuttyhunk Island, and by 1693 Peleg Slocum had purchased Cuttyhunk—Anglified from its Wampanoag name of Poocutohhunkunnoh—for £315 from a trio of English colonists.[73] The Slocum family harvested timber and eventually built a farm on the island. The lone house on the island, the farm would become the responsibility of Cuffe Slocum's family.[74]

In the 1750s, the overharvested island was a windswept rock jutting out into the bay. Standing atop Lookout Hill, 154 feet above sea level, provided a commanding and astonishing view of the waters buzzing with fishing, trade, and whale ships heaving their loads to and from the bay. Just eight miles north/northwest from Cuttyhunk was Dartmouth, Cuffe and Ruth Slocum's former home. To the south/southeast, Ruth Slocum's ancestral home of Gay Head lay just over six miles away.[75] Ruth must have gazed often across the sound at her home that the giant Moshup made for her people, scanning Gay Head's magnificent cliffs for signs of her kin.[76] Although isolated, Cuttyhunk provided opportunity for Cuffe Slocum to escape the challenges of the mainland, to live frugally, save money, and grow his family. Having arrived with four children, Cuffe and Ruth would add five more children while living on the island.[77]

Tending the farm provided subsistence for the family, but Cuffe Slocum found ways to earn additional income on the island,

reportedly selling fresh water to ships as they sailed slowly in and out of Buzzards Bay on their way to Dartmouth and other small ports. Launching his dory from Cuff's Rock, as it came to be known, the entrepreneurial former enslaved person found any way he could to make money with the dream of someday buying his own farm on the mainland.[78] Carpentry skills honed while enslaved proved to be the most reliable source of income for Cuffe while living on the island. An itinerant carpenter, a common situation for skilled laborers, Cuffe was hired out in Dartmouth and other port communities to build homes or structures and to work on ship repairs. His own records indicate he built a second home on Cuttyhunk while living in the original Slocum farm.[79] Cuffe traveled for work because he required multiple sources of income to ensure food, clothing, and shelter for his family.

On 17 January 1759, the salty air of the bay was cracked by the screams of Ruth and Cuffe Slocum's sixth child as he entered the maritime world of eighteenth-century Massachusetts. Born miles out to sea on this enormous rock, Paul Slocum was ushered into the multiracial communities of Buzzards Bay, smelling the salty air and comforted by the sounds of the waters in his first few days of life.[80] Now a vulnerable infant laying in his Wampanoag mother's arms, the fourth son of Cuffe Slocum spent the first five years of his life on Cuttyhunk Island, hidden from the dangers of a world where tension between slavery and freedom meant limited access to liberty and opportunity for a Black person like himself. The few people gathered at Cuttyhunk Island on that joyous day had witnessed a profound, paradigm-shifting moment in American history that went beyond the birth of a lone child. Along these same saltwater paths, these same rocky shores and harbors, Paul Slocum would become the most famous, wealthiest, and well-respected Black sea captain in the Atlantic world.

By 1764, Paul Slocum and his family had moved to Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard, where his mother's kin resided. The move marked a return home for Ruth. Lured by the promise of work, room, and board, Cuffe Slocum oversaw a small crew of men responsible for providing sails, rigging, and needs for ships leaving the mainland in

Dartmouth. The steady work significantly increased Cuffe's income, making it possible for him to buy a 116-acre farmhouse in Dartmouth from the Brownell family for 650 Spanish dollars in 1766.[81] Although not allowed to officially join a meeting, Cuffe and Ruth continued to adhere to Quaker core values such as frugality, hard work, sobriety, and faith.[82] Twenty years prior, Cuffe Slocum had purchased his freedom through hard work and frugality, knowing his Quaker master would free him. Now, he had achieved property ownership, marking an economic independence few Black men in the American colonies could imagine. Cuffe Slocum lived in a small corner of the Atlantic world where a unique confluence of circumstances enabled him to succeed. Few other places in the British Empire seemed to somewhat overlook race and status in the pursuit of profit and expansion of trade; instead, New England's South Coast welcomed anyone who could contribute to building what would become the epicenter of international whaling by the turn of the century.

CHAPTER TWO

A Farmer Takes to the Sea

Throughout his childhood, Paul Cuffe witnessed his father work diligently to become literate. At the top of several pages of Cuffe Slocum's tattered Exercise Book, his former slave scrawled, "a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, I, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z," methodically writing his way into the historical record.[1] Like any child learning his letters in the British Atlantic world, Cuffe followed the Alphabet Method, learning to write letters, moving on to syllables, forming words, and advancing to partial and then full sentences. Cuffe appears to have practiced often as he filled the parchment pages of the Exercise Book, improving from the barely legible scribbles of his first entry in May 1763 to words that recorded the birthdays and names of his children, among other personal information.[2] The Exercise Book represented a dreary chore to Euro-American colonial children who worked on their letters daily, guided by a schoolmaster, mother, or father. For Cuffe Slocum, a man in his fifties when he first began to use this Exercise Book, forming letters, syllables, and words into meaningful phrases and sentences was a triumph of freedom over slavery, a crowning achievement for a man who once had nothing but the ragged clothing draped over his anxious eleven-year-old body as he arrived in Newport to be sold into bondage.

Although Exercise Books belonging to Euro-American colonists in the eighteenth century are considered mundane sources, Cuffe Slocum's provides one of the few historical documents created by his own hand. Most Africans in America were illiterate, leaving few, if

any, records, but this Exercise Book provide glimpses into his daily life and activities. In Cuffe's distinct hand, the practiced letters are soon joined by "Coffe Slocum," repeated until the letters are clear, and repetitious phrases—"I know a man," for example—which give way to short religious verses written with improving penmanship.[3] Cuffe Slocum referred to himself as "Coffe" instead of "Cuffe" on several pages of his Exercise Book when practicing his name, but most legal documents refer to "Coffe" as "Cuffe," including those pertaining to his death and estate. He often substituted an *o* for a *u* when practicing, writing "boshel of corn" instead of "bushel," for example. Even though Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*, published in London in 1755, was one of the first widely used spelling guides, most American colonists did not adopt his standardized spelling.[4] In this way, Cuffe Slocum was like most other literate men in the American colonies, opting for phonetic spelling when in doubt.

Later, as Cuffe's family grew and his work became increasingly varied, he began to use the Exercise Book to record business transactions and other important information. In 1764, Cuffe recorded a transaction with Daniel Jeter: "one bushel half corn, 5–8 . . . sheep skins" for "16 pence legal mony."[5] Similar records are tucked into whatever blank spaces Cuffe could find, sometimes covering practice letters and words as the book became filled with writing. According to the book, he frequently bought and sold corn, wood, tobacco, and other commodities, participating in local small-scale trade of goods from around the Atlantic world. Whether farming or working the docks of colonial Massachusetts, Cuffe Slocum found his way in the newly emerging offshore whaling economy. As a free African and former slave, the elder Cuffe possessed "great industry and economy" to support his family, while blending into a diverse population, including Cape Verdians, Indians, mulattoes, mustees, Africans, and Basque.[6]

Cuffe Slocum died in March 1772, leaving his Exercise Book to his nearly fourteen-year-old son, Paul. In a hand distinguished from his father's, with long sweeping letters organized in clean, straight rows, Paul entered several passages. Paul Cuffe's entries included ruminations on taxes and sketches of petitions to local officials. Tucked

away at the bottom on one of the last pages in the book, with letters entered upside down from other entries that seem to be written in Cuffe Slocum's hand, Paul wrote a short, but powerful meditation. "Paul Cuffe," he wrote, "of Dartmouth in the Province, [and] Plantations . . . of Massachusetts . . . Musta is my nature."[7] In one brief passage, he revealed the complex nature of identity in New England's southern coastal communities, using the locally relevant "musta" to describe his mixed-race ancestry.[8] Even though officials recorded him and his siblings as "negroes," Black, or "all other free persons," he understood it to be far more complex: persons of color in the Atlantic world were not simply African but often a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds.[9]

Paul Cuffe's entry in his Exercise Book shows how people of the period engaged with the complex racial and ethnic identities prevalent in the region and broader Atlantic littoral. Euro-American authorities may have seen racially bifurcated communities, but most others did not. Shortly after Cuffe Slocum's death, his wife, Ruth, and nine children rejected their slave surname of Slocum, adopting Paul's Anglicized African name of Cuffe. This bold move reflected the power and influence women held in Wampanoag culture.[10] Rechristened, Ruth Cuffe's sons Paul and John, now proprietors of the family farm, took ownership of their African ancestry. This did not make Paul's proclamation of being musta any less authentic; rather, escaping the shackles of the surname of his father's owner meant the family disassociated themselves from slavery, reinforcing their liberty as free-born persons of color in a state ready to challenge accepted norms. They did not abandon their African identity.

Paul Cuffe came of age in a world seemingly turned upside down. Throughout the revolutionary era, freedmen and -women led calls for abolition and vocalized their discontent with civic political bodies, and whites spoke of being enslaved themselves by an oppressive king and Parliament. Beginning in 1773, a series of petitions were passed to the Massachusetts General Court asking for freedom from enslavement and, in some cases, passage back to Africa for the newly freedmen.[11] Over the course of the next decade, several petitions would arrive at

town meetings and state legislatures as freedmen and enslaved people grew increasingly vocal about their rights of liberty and freedom within the rhetoric of America's movement toward independence.[12] Africans and African Americans rose to prominence, such as the widely selling poet Phillis Wheatley and Benjamin Banneker, a scientist who traded letters with Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Rush. New churches explicitly for Africans and African Americans were founded along with the creation of schools for children of color.[13] Yet, for most freed Blacks, the promise of the revolution would go unfulfilled. For Paul Cuffe, he rode the rhetoric of liberty and freedom, carving a niche in the maritime world of Buzzards Bay, a training grounds of sorts where he acquired the skills, knowledge, and fortitude to enable his later, highly successful ventures into the flourishing Atlantic economy.

Dartmouth, Massachusetts, thrived in the burgeoning whaling industry of New England and the broader Atlantic world just prior to the American Revolution. Since they first settled in seventeenth-century North America, English colonists learned from Native Americans how to harvest drift whales—those mammals who washed ashore, some dead, some stranded in shallow waters. Passengers aboard the *Mayflower*, on first landing in Massachusetts, reported the spectacle of Native Americans carving up dead "grumpuses"—or pilot whales—in strips five to six paces in length. The *Mayflower* crew immediately understood the worth of the large mammals, lamenting, "If we had instruments and means to take them, we might have made a very rich return."[14] Just as the Pilgrims turned to local Indians for agricultural advice during the first few years of their arrival, they sought advice for the proper techniques to kill and harvest the whales which frolicked in seeming abundance just offshore.

Indians used these animals for food and the bones for tools. The English never acquired a taste for whale meat but instead focused on rendering the animals' copious blubber into valuable oil, creating one of the most important exports from seventeenth-century Massachusetts.[15] As quickly as settlers exploited this found commodity, Indians began to lose access to whaling. English colonists owned the means

to access the pods of the whales just offshore, utilizing indentured Indians and workers but saving the profits for themselves. Tensions increased over land use, and access to traditional waterways and its resources was now being encroached upon by the English.[16] By the mid-eighteenth century, Indian and English shoreline whalers with approximately 3,025 whales harvested in one thirty-eight-year period along the Northeast coast of the American colonies, leading industrious and entrepreneurial Indian men to the cold waters of Long Island Sound, Cape Ann, Cape Cod, and the Gulf of Maine in search of the large mammals.[17]

Although the decline of drift whaling led to the shackling of many thriving port businesses, the arrival of deepwater whaling and fishing vessels during the mid-eighteenth century reinvigorated local microeconomies of New England's shoreline. In 1765, Joseph Rotch, a Nantucket whaler and businessman, moved his operations to Dartmouth, sparked by the need to expand his business. In cooperation with Joseph Russell, a large landholder in the town, the two men embarked on a plan to "to make a whaling port at this strategic" spot where the Acushnet River emptied into Buzzards Bay.[18] Within ten years, Rotch and his associates would carve a new seaport out of this section of Dartmouth, renaming it the Village of Bedford, later to be called New Bedford, and providing the rapidly expanding whale fishery of southern New England a new base of operations.

New Bedford's fortunes surged as news arrived of expansive whaling grounds off the coast of Brazil. New England's whaling industry was poised to enter a frenzied period of growth leading into the American Revolution. From 1768 to 1772, whaling replaced furs, fish, and timber as New England's key export to Great Britain, with £40,443 in oil and other whale products sold. During this same period, whales and fish would account for 49 percent of the £439,101 of products sold throughout the Atlantic world by New England's merchants and producers.[19] Dartmouth's whale fishery, although smaller than Nantucket's, witnessed some sixty vessels per year being outfitted for whaling, with 1,040 seamen employed and approximately 1,400 barrels of oil sold in the early 1770s.[20] By 1774, a reported 360 vessels sailed from

fifteen port towns in New York and New England, surpassing the harvesting capabilities of the drift whaling industry and leading to an entirely new infrastructure—both at sea and on land—to support it.[21] The Cuffes took advantage of the opportunities whaling and its "linked industries" offered, managing the hauling of rigging, sails, and anchors to and from the wharves of Dartmouth and Martha's Vineyard.[22]

Many Africans and Indians participated in this labor market as an alternative to the long-gone drift whaling, reshaping the livelihoods and culture of free Blacks and Indians living along Massachusetts's South Coast. Crispus Attucks—a previously unknown whaleman who likely appears in the historical record only once before he was killed at the Boston Massacre in March 1770—exemplifies the kind of men who worked in the burgeoning industry. A runaway slave in 1750, Attacks took to the sea, like many newly freed or runaway enslaved persons, traveling around the Atlantic laboring aboard ships and calling the Bahamas his home. He returned to Boston in 1770, in the midst of the four- to five-hundred-year period known as the "Little Ice Age," awaiting his ship's outfitting for a trading voyage to North Carolina. Proving to be among the coldest winters on record in Boston, exasperated citizens were angry at the presence of British troops, and the endless cold and deep snowpack did nothing to diffuse the growing tensions between the British and Americans. On 3 March 1770, violence erupted with the killing of five men after a mob gathered with clubs and snowballs and threatened a small group of cornered British soldiers. Attucks, in the middle of the crowd, was "killed on the Spot" with "two Balls entering his Breast." This "martyr" of the revolution emerged from the mélange of typical "mulatto" sailors in eighteenth-century Massachusetts.[23] Although Paul Revere felt it necessary to white out Attucks in his etching to gain more sympathy for killings, it's clear that reports throughout New England identified the sailor as a mulatto man.[24] Indeed, Africans, Indians, mulattoes. and mustees were vital to the developing offshore whaling industry of Dartmouth/New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, and all of New England.

Shortly after his father's death in 1772, Paul Cuffe embarked on his first journey aboard a whaling vessel from Nantucket seeking the rich grounds of the Gulf of Mexico. The rocky, windswept soil of the family farm yielded little profit. As many young men in his era, the teenage Cuffe left the farm and went to sea, joining a crew of experienced and novice seamen mostly from the South Coast region, including Indians, mixed-race peoples, and Africans.[25] Whaleships came and went daily, some venturing far away into the South Atlantic. These young men's maiden voyages "never fail to harden their constitutions, and introduce them to the knowledge of their future means of subsistence."[26]

When not at sea, Cuffe returned to the wharves of Buzzards Bay and Narragansett Bay, loading and unloading ships. This work was difficult—carrying heavy loads across the vessel's threshold—but the pay was decent. Captain Nathaniel Briggs paid Cuffe five pounds for unloading his sloop, *Union*, in Tiverton, Rhode Island, a short distance from Cuffe's home. Briggs recorded his payment to Cuffe and others who unloaded *Union*, including Newport, an enslaved man, and an Indian man named Richard Amos.[27] Working alongside other persons of color, Paul encountered complicated identities that did not fit neatly into colonial authorities' bifurcated ideals. Rather, these men from diverse races and ethnicities, young and old, shipboard and in port, provided foundational labor for the burgeoning whale fishery.

The arrival of America's War of Independence brought the rapid growth of whaling to a halt in New England. The epicenter for the early years of the war, Massachusetts saw its maritime industries shrink in the face of British blockades. Aimed at starving out the radicals of the commonwealth, the British Navy also effectively cut the whaling fleets' access to the prime fishing waters in the Gulf of Maine and beyond. Additionally, those vessels that made it past the blockade were often boarded as the British impressed American sailors into service aboard their vessels. With such an important part of New England's economy so deflated, the American Revolution brought untold suffering and hardships to the people of New England.

Whalers were captured at sea, sometimes sent away with warnings by British vessels patrolling the waters; often, the men were forced into service or imprisoned on mastless ships, like the *Jersey* or *Rising Sun*, whose wood was rotten, leaving the ships listing in New York Harbor and filled with diseased prisoners. Most prisoners were freed from their floating prisons within six months, but some remained for several years in dire conditions aboard these immobile vessels, where their best hope for reprieve was to be allowed on deck for fresh air once or twice per day. In addition to the loss of sailors, remaining whaleships that managed to dodge the British Navy were forced to take their oil to London for trade.[28] Whaling was Nantucket's largest industry; the blockade shuttered the island for several years.[29]

Americans' popular imagination holds a special place for firebrands in Boston and other port cities hosting sects of the Sons of Liberty for their rhetoric and ideals that spawned a new nation. Yet small towns joined the fracas early and often. In Dartmouth, residents voted in 1774 to ban the importation of British goods, resoundingly joining the revolutionary cause along with numerous other Massachusetts towns in that same year. In the town meeting on 18 July, councilmen sought relief from the "Bondage and Slavery" thrust on them by "unconstitutional acts" of Parliament. Turning away from their "brethren and friends in Great Britain and Ireland," the townspeople of Dartmouth "unite with our American Brethren" against the British.[30] Without mincing words, Dartmouth embraced the abolition of Great Britain's constitution, instead preferring a new economic and political structure to emerge from the battle between commonwealth and empire. From this cradle of liberty sprang Cuffe, fueled to cross the dangerous, blockaded waters of Buzzards Bay and Nantucket Sound by visions of citizenship and self-government.

The peoples of south coastal New England experienced a different sort of struggle during the war years. Dartmouth was attacked by British forces in 1778 and now faced serious physical and economic damage, looking down a long path of rebuilding because of both its vocal opposition to Britain and its service as a major port for patriot pirates.

Still, the people of the South Coast held high ideals about American independence, yet blockaded by the most powerful navy in the world, most were forced to tend to the basic needs of communities under martial law. The rebels faced the hardships of blockade by cutting back on purchases and acquiring their goods through illicit channels. Privateers capitalized on the new opportunities and needs of Americans by raiding British ships for an estimated £18,000,000 of goods during the blockade.[31] Under even more extenuating circumstances on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, residents were hit hard by the blockade and turned to peat moss and underbrush to burn for heat and food preparation. Islanders were especially vulnerable to the watchful eyes of the British Navy, forcing them to engage in the dangerous game of illicit trade under the cover of night in small boats to resupply their communities with necessities such as salt, wood, and oil.[32]

With Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard isolated from much needed supply chains, Paul Cuffe saw the opportunity for economic gain and, perhaps as important, adventure. Paul's father was known as a self-starter in the Buzzards Bay waterways, who at various times turned to farming, carpentry, and laboring to outfit New Bedford's and Dartmouth's ships in port.[33] Paul followed his father's lead during the war years when he built a dory, an open boat likely based on a South Coast original design with cedar siding for lightweight and added speed. Cuffe delivered goods to the islanders swiftly and in near silence with the vessel avoiding British blockades at night. He joined the unorganized fleet of privateers that ran goods to and from waiting Americans, eager to purchase clothing and goods during these difficult times. Driven by opportunity, the resourceful young Cuffe dared the watchful sailors in His Majesty's Royal Navy to catch him.

Something else motivated Cuffe to row across the rough waters of war: faith, family, and friendship. Raised in the Quaker faith—although he would not officially join a meeting until 1808—Paul and his brothers did not join their local militia as did thousands of other persons of African descent. Quakers "utterly deny all outward

wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons," leaving Cuffe to choose to fight the British through other means.[34] As a child on Cuttyhunk Island, Paul Cuffe would have spent hours gazing across Vineyard Sound to his mother's home of Aquinnah, or Gay Head, with its spectacular cliffs on the southwest corner of Martha's Vineyard. His kin were in peril and suffering under the British blockade, compelling Cuffe to aid the islanders. Nearby Nantucket became home once again to the Rotch family after being chased from Dartmouth by the British. Deeply connected, the Rotches and Cuffes would come to aid each other often during Paul's lifetime. Hunkered within his small dory, sheltered from the waves by the high sides of the craft, Cuffe smelled liberty in the air, wanting to come to the aid of his family, friends, fellow sailors, and their communities.

Growing tired of the New England's revolutionary privateers like Paul Cuffe, the British sailed into Buzzards Bay in 1778 and leveled the "rebel nest of privateers" based in Dartmouth.[35] Having seen his town pillaged and burned, Paul Cuffe mustered the courage to traverse the increasingly dangerous waters of the bay and sound, choosing firmly to side with the patriot cause. Dodging the Loyalists and British naval patrols was no easy task for the now skilled sailor, but his luck would wear thin in 1779 when bandits trolling Buzzards Bay caught Paul and his brother, David, commandeering their cargo.[36] Soon, David left his younger brother's side for the security of the family farm. Paul resumed his nighttime treks across the bay, eluding the British patrols long enough to profit from his coastal escapades.[37] The confidence Paul gained from these raids likely coursed through the young man's veins as the war carried on along the coast of New England, soon spreading southward down the East Coast of the American colonies.

Daring voyages during the war helped Cuffe gain a deep love for the sea that must have been accompanied by a desire for adventure as he dodged in and out of the British blockade and patrols in Narragansett Bay and Nantucket Sound to embark on trading ventures along the Connecticut coast. Captured in 1779 and imprisoned on the *Jersey* in New York Harbor, Cuffe soon realized what kind of hell

awaited him. British prison ships were known for their horrid conditions, but *Jersey* was among the worst, with excrement piled as high as the hatches to the upper deck. Approximately ten captives died per day from starvation and diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, yellow fever, and smallpox.[38] Cuffe escaped disease and was released three months later in seemingly good health. He remained convinced that the sea held opportunity. His memorialist agreed: "By assiduity, he learned to read and write in a few years, and made some proficiency in arithmetic," and "by the assistance of a friend, he afterwards acquired a good knowledge of navigation."[39] He left a mind that was "all Black as midnight" for one that saw "a little gleam of light" through his studies of the sea. "There were always three things that I paid attention to," Cuffe reportedly said, "latitude, lead, and lookout."[40] Like his father, Paul Cuffe understood the importance of education in expanding opportunities, using literacy and hard work to learn the maritime trades quickly.

The south coast of Massachusetts buzzed with Loyalist bandits raiding the shores of American rebel towns. As Loyalists fled the American colonies, they began to take out their frustrations on New England's coastal settlements. Perhaps hardest hit by these marauding Tories were the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard and the towns of Buzzards Bay. In April 1779, Loyalists raided Nantucket, taking £50,000 of whalebone, iron, and other goods. Organized into small fleets, these men periodically captured towns until local revolutionaries fought back, battling the privateers in the latter stages of the war. Prominent citizens, such as William Rotch, traveled to New York to negotiate an end to these hostilities with British officials, who had little control over the privateers' actions.[41] Others, like Paul Cuffe, took matters into their own hands by aiding the islanders. Cuffe, a privateer of sorts, turned to his small dory not strictly for profit but also to support his fellow whalemen, Indians, Africans, and Quakers. Indeed, several voyages resulted in cargo lost to bandits or little financial gain, but his desire to help kin in Aquinnah surpassed these negative consequences.

Running blockades enabled Paul Cuffe to contribute directly to the war effort while also adhering to his Quaker principles of nonviolence. By 1778, when Massachusetts attempted to pass a state constitution, Cuffe's participation in the revolutionary era would expand, turning to the written word to effect change. Calls for a new state constitution were met with delegates creating a document that specifically excluded persons of color from voting and participating in government, sparking ridicule and derision across the commonwealth. As a result, the draft constitution was deemed "ridiculous, inconsistent, and unjust" for not reflecting the principles that Massachusetts men were fighting and dying for on the battlefields.[42] The battle to define liberty and what it meant to the men and women of the commonwealth took place in political offices, newspaper editorials, taverns, and streets.

The struggle included Paul Cuffe and other Black men who had petitioned Massachusetts officials for their freedom and enfranchisement. Boston's Black population adopted the rhetoric and methods used by the Sons of Liberty and others in the revolutionary era as early as January 1773, when an enslaved African named Felix petitioned the Massachusetts General Court for freedom, setting a precedent that would see several more petitions submitted by free and enslaved Blacks throughout Massachusetts and New England.[43] Some of these men would become veterans of the war and were not content with the slow pace of reform in Massachusetts. Since those early petitions were first forwarded to the Massachusetts General Court, free and enslaved Blacks grew increasingly vocal about their rights of liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement. These petitions helped shape the constitutional discussion in 1778, adding the previously unheard voices of Black men to the political forums.

A new draft of the constitution took form in the fall of 1779. "A Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts" included fundamental ideas for what a republican government should look like—such as three separate branches of government that included checks and balances—and protection

of individuals' freedom and liberty. John Adams set to work framing the draft constitution after returning from a diplomatic mission to France. Adams's document reflected the debates throughout the Massachusetts countryside, with perhaps the most important clause being Article I, which proclaims: "All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential and unalienable rights."[44] The delegates—numbering over three hundred men from nearly every town in Massachusetts—eventually approved Adams's draft in March 1780, delivering on their revolutionary rhetoric by directly protecting liberty in the state constitution. The convention turned the document over to the citizens for ratification, with town meetings being held as the heavy snows from the winter began to melt. Taverns pulsated with criticism as well as praise that spilled onto the streets of port towns and rural communities throughout the commonwealth.

Not all were patient with the slow process of ratification. Just one month prior to the convention approving the new draft of the constitution, Paul and his brother John Cuffe decided to address their disenfranchisement directly. In "the petition of several poor negroes and mulattoes," Paul Cuffe wrote to the Council and House of Representatives of the State of Massachusetts, arguing for equal rights and protections for Black men. "That we being chiefly of the African extract," the petition exclaimed, "have been deprived of enjoying the profits of our labors or the advantage of inheriting estates from our parents, as our neighbors the white people do." Cuffe continued, "we apprehend ourselves to be aggrieved" because "we are not allowed the privilege of freemen of the State, having no vote or influence on the election of those who tax us." Cuffe's petition incorporated a main theme of the revolution—taxation without representation—arguing that they should not be taxed if they could not exercise these same rights as whites, and that being taxed has "reduce[d] us to a state of beggary."[45] Cuffe and his fellow petitioners boldly claimed their rights and identified the hypocrisy of white authorities who were at that same moment debating the merits of the proposed constitution.

Dartmouth's Black petitioners further appealed to the patriotic sympathies of Massachusetts government officials. "Many of our

colour (as is well known)," Cuffe asserted, "have cheerfully entered the field of battle in defence of the common cause."[46] If Blacks were willing to fight and die for America's independence, they should be justly rewarded with enfranchisement and protection of their property. The liberty experienced at sea for persons of color was not reciprocated on land, and these men wanted redress. *We fought in the war, we work hard without interruption, we deserve equal rights*, they argued. Numerous petitions during the 1770s echoed these sentiments. Finally, by June 15, 1780, the constitutional convention announced the ratification of the Constitution with two-thirds of towns voting in favor, making it the law of the commonwealth. Paul Cuffe and the 582 other persons of color in Bristol County, Massachusetts, could have rejoiced, realizing the rhetoric of liberty that buzzed along the wharves and waterways of New England would soon be law, rewarding those Black Americans who fought for the patriot cause in the war. Equality seemed to lay on the horizon.

Yet in the mind of Paul Cuffe, the newly ratified state constitution fell short of the promises of the revolution. Although Dartmouth was one of the towns to approve the document, officials "recorded that there was 'no Negro, Indian, or Mulatto' among her voters."[47] To those men who had signed the petition, it was clear that words on parchment meant little for those on the ground seeking fair and equitable treatment. Seemingly mocking the new constitution's clause of "free and equal" was the omission of an abolition clause. It would take three more years for the constitution to include a provision outlawing slavery in the commonwealth after a series of court decisions amended the original document.[48]

Frustrated, Paul Cuffe and his fellow petitioners turned to local government and engaged in civil disobedience. Through the rhetoric of natural rights bandied about coastal New England during the era of the American Revolution, from Paul Cuffe's hometown council in Dartmouth to the numerous petitions to the General Courts, whites and Blacks both sought to acquire liberty. Surrounded by the American revolutionaries' cries against Great Britain's unfair taxation, Cuffe focused on laws that provided tax-exempt status of Indian

lands, status that did not apply to lands owned by Africans of African Americans. For men like Paul Cuffe, *liberty* meant basic civil rights as well as equality. Along with his brother John and others, he sought the same liberties white Americans claimed that the British had stolen from them through unfair parliamentary acts and blockades of the Massachusetts coast. In a nation where freedom for a Black man was tenuous at best, Paul Cuffe courageously tested his legal status, demanding his voice be heard and requests be met.

In a 1780 petition to the Bristol County, Massachusetts, General Court, the brothers Cuffe identified themselves as "Indian men" who "by law [are] not the subjects of taxation for any estate."[49] Choosing a different tactic, the two men exploited their Indian identity for the sake of avoiding paying taxes. The state responded by taking them to prison. The Massachusetts courts later released the two "Indian" men, as the state referred to them, from jail owing to a writ of habeas corpus in 1781 after William Rotch intervened on their behalf. The brothers navigated the intricate web of multiracial identity in America and the English-speaking Atlantic world, convincing authorities to change their legal status from "Negro" to "Indian," at least for the sake of taxation.[50]

Cuffe's racial and cultural heritage provided a two-pronged argument for citizenship and suffrage. On the one hand, born of a Wampanoag mother, he was afforded special status and the option to not pay taxes. On the other, being of African descent, the son of a formerly enslaved man, he joined in the fight for liberty with the hope that a new nation would include persons like him in their new society. He boldly stated his claims, and given the mixed populations along the south coast of Massachusetts, he would not have been seen as contradictory in making these two arguments simultaneously. Paying taxes logically afforded him the right to vote, in his mind; yet *not* paying taxes was also a commonwealth-granted right for all Indians. As a budding entrepreneur and small businessman, avoiding taxes—especially if he could not vote and influence town or commonwealth trade and economic policy—would increase profits. Cuffe's ideological calls for liberty intertwined with his pragmatic, profit-driven business acumen.

Cuffe's courageous petition may have been the most important paper penned by a Black man during the revolutionary era. Town leaders eagerly debated the points made by Cuffe and his fellow petitioners. A community with a large Quaker population, Dartmouth's authorities followed the lead of the church whose own leadership often argued against the justness of slavery. Although Cuffe was not a member of any particular Friends meetinghouse at that moment, his Quaker leanings were inherited from his parents as well as the Rotch family, who mentored him and supported his early business endeavors.[51] Cuffe learned the core missionary values of the Quakers and their efforts to fight slavery during his youth and teenage years.[52] Bristol County General Courts found in favor of the Black petitioners and "passed a law rendering all free persons of color liable to taxation . . . all the privileges belonging to other citizens."[53] The General Courts ruled that enfranchisement resided with the individual town and a hefty bill for three years of back taxes awaited the Cuffe family, although an out-of-court settlement reduced the debt.[54] Additionally, the petitions influenced Massachusetts, which altered voting laws to no longer exclude Black men, although it would prove very difficult for persons of color to actually vote for at least another one hundred years.[55]

Amid the turmoil of the revolution, as Dartmouth's most prominent citizens went about the task of rebuilding their estates and businesses, the Cuffe-led petitioners turned to a public forum to plead their case. Writing in Dartmouth toward the end of a long, cold winter, they appealed to the General Court's sense of patriotism while being careful to remain deferential to the white authorities. "Contrary to the invenerable [*sic*] custom and Practices of the Country we have been & are taxed both in our Poles and that . . . we are not allowed in voting in the town meetings—nor to Choose an officer of neither." Upon his death, Cuffe would be described by various memorialists as knowing his place as a Black man in America, but on this occasion—as well as many others throughout his life—that description is patronizing, degrading the boldness of the petitions and his willingness to attach his name to such a public document. With increasingly

assertive language in the petition, some deference remained as a way to defray potential criticism by white town leaders. "We pray that these" words "may give no offence at al [*sic*]," Cuffe and his fellow petitioners wrote, "by no means but the most honourable Court will take into Consideration as if it were their own Case."[56] Despite the possibility of liberty being within reach, these were still a legally dependent people who needed to act within the social, cultural, and political conventions of their day.[57]

The Cuffes' ability to self-identify as Indian in certain situations and as African in others illustrated the complex process of social and racial change taking place in revolutionary-era Massachusetts. State officials gradually redefined Indians as "mustee," then "Negro," and finally "Black" during the early national period in southern New England.[58] Historical records do not necessarily reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the region during this era. In the 1790 Census for Westport, Massachusetts—Cuffe's town of residence, which separated from Dartmouth in 1787—listed 1,138 "Free White Males," 1,159 "Free White Females," and 56 "All Other Free Persons Except Indians Not Taxed."[59] Outside of these simple, bifurcated racial constructions, multiracial peoples had no choice in their racial identity or what local authorities ascribed to them. Men like Paul Cuffe were transformed from Indian to Black in the records of the commonwealth.[60] Paul Cuffe would emerge from his "mustee" heritage as a Black man based on his own terms and not simply the opinion of a local court, while many of his relatives chose to identify with their Native American heritage. His cousin Michael Wainer lived in an Indian settlement, and his brother John, who earlier opted out of Paul's illicit trips across the bay to the islands, returned to Gay Head in Martha's Vineyard to live in their mother's former Indian town.

These war-torn teenage years of Paul Cuffe shaped his adult life in two ways: he realized the potential of undertaking trade routes few others desired, and he learned that a Black man could challenge the status quo within the American social, cultural, and legal systems. Seeking—like many of persons of African descent—"good fortune" by going to sea, Cuffe quickly grew his own personal wealth by taking

advantage of the limited freedom a Black man could gain from a maritime life.[61]

Cuffe's assertion of Black identity in 1780 illustrates his continued evolution along the path of refashioning himself from a "musta" man to an African. Other well-known Africans in the diaspora, such as Olaudah Equiano, clearly portray themselves as men of the Atlantic, narrating memoirs that name Africa as their home, as opposed to any American port.[62] Cuffe, in contrast, anchored himself in Massachusetts and the United States, even though he would become a man of the Atlantic world. These early examples of Cuffe's nebulous identity show his connection with the region of his birth that was not yet reshaped by his later travels in the wider Atlantic. As his business acumen sparked more travel from one Atlantic port to another, Paul Cuffe became African in ways the young "musta" boy could not have imagined.

CHAPTER THREE

Pulled from the Darkness

The South Coast communities in Massachusetts were devastated during the war, faced with the necessary reconstruction of towns and lives as the War for Independence waned and the second Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783. Buried in the darkness of the period, where a fledgling maritime economy greeted the victors of the war, Paul Cuffe turned to the vice that led to the demise of thousands of his Native American brethren: alcohol. Liquor and spirits corrupted Native Americans from the moment the English colonists introduced the drug to them in the seventeenth century. Whether providing lubricant for unfair treaty negotiations or destroying the families and kinship networks of Indian tribes, alcohol dramatically reshaped the culture of Indians.[1] The young, war-hardened Paul Cuffe could not escape the allure of liquor, being Indian, of the sea, and a maritime man where "a Quarter for the money" earned at sea was spent on "liquor."[2] Booze and seamanship were conjoined; Paul Cuffe fell into the trap at an early age.

The public house culture of eighteenth-century Massachusetts and the broader Atlantic world accommodated excessive alcohol consumption among the authoritative class.[3] The working poor or the lower economic end of society did not necessarily fit the binge drinking scene of William Hogarth's 1751 work "Gin Lane," in which commoners were carousing and strewn about London's streets in drunken stupors. For many common men and women, excessive drinking simply cost too much money.[4] For Quakers in New England, the

spirituous activities of the Puritan elite ran counter to the Friends' professed sobriety.[5] Described as the "vigilant moral guardian of the family," John Cuffe, Paul's Quaker-leaning brother who had left his side to farm during the blockade running in the 1770s, kept a journal and noted a change in his younger brother toward the end of the war. "Excess of Drinking Burns up Beauty," he commented about his younger brother's penchant for spirits. John lamented further that liquor "hastens age, makes a man a Beast, a strong man weak," and, he warned, "a Wise man a fool."[6] The sense of potential loss John must have felt on seeing the promising young man become sidetracked by alcohol would have enraged him.

John's observations went beyond familial criticism of an immature brother. John described himself as a farmer, "a mustee man . . . being of molasses colour" trying to make a humble living from the land.[7] John, like Paul, was self-educated and understood the context of Paul turning to drink, seeing it within the historical reality of alcohol's decimation of Indian communities throughout the South Coast. Deciding to return to Gay Head meant John firmly identified with and immersed himself in his Wampanoag heritage. In 1783, John married Biah Cooper of Gay Head (Aquinnah) on Martha's Vineyard, affirming his place in the island's Native community, the same one his mother, Ruth, belonged to before marrying Kofi.[8] At Gay Head, John Cuffe understood the ill effects of alcohol and the long shadow that alcoholism cast over what one seventeenth-century observer called "the drinking tribe" of Indians.[9] English settlers looking to convert the Wampanoags of Martha's Vineyard to Christianity variously described the "dark and declining times" created by the import of "strong drink," considering alcohol binges "the National Sin of our Indians."[10] With alcohol came violence. The Native women of Martha's Vineyard sought counseling among other Christians on the island about how to deal with violent, contentious alcoholic husbands. It was not uncommon for wives and husbands to be caught in a vicious cycle of "sore contentions betwixt them" as each of them drank to excess and fought.[11]

Further adding to the problem was the strong presence of alcoholism among the general population. Although alcoholism and violence

resulting from excessive drinking were rampant among the dwindling Indian populations of southern New England, English settlers dealt with the ill effects of liquor as well. Thomas Mayhew's son, Samuel, was known for the trouble he found himself in as a result of alcoholism, and treaties signed by drunken Indians were often challenged by those same Indians once sober.[12] Among African and African American communities in colonial America, alcohol was used in rituals and celebrations, but generally, laws prohibited the dispersing of strong drink to enslaved peoples. Despite alcohol's widespread use in Africa for ceremonial and religious purposes, Blacks in America frowned upon excessive drinking.[13] With this deep history of alcoholism in New England, John Cuffe held fast to his Quaker convictions that dictated sobriety. For his brother to allow himself to become enamored with drink countered John's moral predilections. John could not tolerate one of his closest kin falling under the spell of the "deadly medicine."

War destroys lives and landscapes, reshaping entire societies and cultures. Americans flamboyantly celebrate their War for Independence, choosing to remember it as an overwhelmingly positive event in America's past, lighting vast fireworks displays and parading in red, white, and blue clothing during the national holiday. It was, after all, the founding moment of what would become one of the greatest superpowers in world history. As with most founding mythologies of great societies past, Americans have become enamored with the victories of the war, choosing to forget the suffering and pain caused when brother fought brother, cousins killed one another, and entire towns or landscapes were destroyed. *Historical amnesia*, as historians term it, allows the American public and scholars alike to forget "those ordinary people who did most of the protesting, most of the fighting, most of the dying, and most of the dreaming about how a victorious America might satisfy the yearnings of all its peoples."[14] Individual lives were dramatically impacted by the war, and not all who suffered were killed or wounded in the conflict. Indeed, Paul Cuffe would enter a brief dark period in his life before rising to become a man of hope and enlightenment, as people across the Atlantic would come to view him.

In 1781, the world had been turned upside down in Yorktown, Virginia, where British forces surrendered to the Americans and French. Three years prior, in 1778, the British sacked Dartmouth for being a nest of patriot pirates. During the revolutionary period, the town proved to be a hotbed for patriot dissent, mustering hundreds of militias, building a fort to guard the port, and provisioning fighters all over Narragansett Bay.[15] In those years, Dartmouth and its leading citizens attempted to resurrect the whaling industry that emerged just prior to the outbreak of fighting between Massachusetts militiamen and the famed redcoats of the world's most powerful military. Down to approximately 80 ships from a prewar high of 309, the American whale fishery "changed places" with England's. Weary of losing this position, Thomas Jefferson believed, "We have still the precious remains of seamen, educated in this fishery, and capable by their poverty, their boldness and address of recovering it from the English in spite of bounties."[16] This industry in distress could be revived, claimed the financiers, shipowners, politicians, and nearly anyone connected with the fisheries. Prospects on the South Coast were bleak at this moment, but hope remained. Hundreds of wharf workers, sailors, and others associated with the whaling and fishing industries faced uncertainty and barely subsistence-level incomes, with dire prospects unless Jefferson's words served as the rallying point they were intended to be.

The Massachusetts economy was in tatters. Towns argued with the Massachusetts General Court over who collected taxes and at what rates, deflation reduced the value of money, and the new state attempted to pay debts, which led to massive tax increases across the board. The Cuffes faced the economic climate together on their father's old farm. Crops were sowed and cattle maintained as the two brothers relied on their small farm to see them and their family through these tough times.[17]

Muster rolls reveal hundreds of Native American and Black volunteers in the Massachusetts militia, with several from Dartmouth, Falmouth, Rochester, and surrounding areas joining the fray.[18] In 1779, the Massachusetts General Court resolved that Colonel John Allan

was "empowered and directed to engage in service as many Indians as he shall think proper" to serve the Commonwealth.[19] Africans, Indians, and mustees supported the war effort: fighting, dying, and being captured alongside white soldiers. Yet, the Town of Dartmouth went about its business gobbling up Indian lands by purchasing acreage throughout the war, adding to the town footprint while reducing the size of Indian settlements by forcing Wampanoags to live among whites or remove to Gay Head or some other intact Indian town outside their own.[20] The result must have been upsetting for South Coast Indians and mustees who, on the one hand, gave their lives for liberty and the prospect of citizenship while, on the other, witnessed their communities being further reduced in size.

The teenage Cuffe faced challenges many boys would avoid until adulthood. His father had left the family in debt and with an ailing mother, and both problems fell to Paul and John to deal with. Between voyages to supply Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard during the war, Paul Cuffe returned to his family's farm along the Westport River, attempting to sow seeds into profits, but he quickly realized that the hundred plus acres of rocky ground left by his father was insufficient to support his mother, brothers, and sisters. Although not infertile soil, the coastal land was typically yielded little..[21] He looked to the sea, where on previous whaling voyages as a deckhand he saw the possibilities for financial gain, resolving to transform his small business of running the British blockade into a coastal trade operation. He wanted to sail beyond the islands, into Long Island Sound, and begin trade with communities farther afield. Cuffe envisioned being the master of his own sailing vessel, but attention to the family farm pulled him back on land. He was caught between subsistence and adventure, profits and family, during the postrevolutionary era—a time that proved difficult for the young man.[22]

On 25 February 1783, barely three months after the British and American forces signed provisional Articles of Peace to end the American Revolution, Paul Cuffe wed Alice Pequit, also of Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Records identified Paul as a "Negro man" and Alice as an "Indian woman," much like many of the marriages being

performed during that period in Buzzards Bay. Alice hailed from Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard, where Paul's brother John resided and where his mother had been raised. The tight-knit kinship networks of Indians, Africans, and mustees in southern New England encouraged this union, one that would be continued twenty-nine years later when Paul Jr. married another person "of culler."[23] The marriage appeared to be exceedingly normal for the standards of the region; the individuals involved were not.

Spurred by the success of his illicit trading to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, Paul Cuffe soon envisioned the creation of a larger vessel to carry more cargo. By the time he had built a twelve-ton boat, his voyages were increasingly profitable, sparking even more desire for the young man to expand his enterprise, yet marriage to Alice would temporarily halt his entrepreneurial progress. With a wife and soon-to-be young family to feed, Paul returned to the farm to toil, where at least he could be certain of providing food for his family, but not much more. He used this time on the farm to his advantage, solidifying his academic knowledge, especially in math, which would be useful in his future business ventures. Cuffe realized, however, that one particularly important set of skills eluded him: despite his extensive experience on the waterways of Buzzards Bay and Narragansett Bay and his travels to the Gulf of Mexico aboard a whaling vessel, he could not navigate the open waters of the Atlantic.[24] He was a coastal trader; for that to change, he must learn the ancient skills of the mariner.

Largely self-taught, Cuffe devoted considerable time to the basics such as reading and writing, realizing the direction of his adult life depended on his ability to gather information and process it efficiently. He turned to an acquaintance who provided three brief lessons over the course of two weeks on the art and science of navigation. "Paul's active mind was alive to every circumstance connected with his new schemes, he therefore eagerly received the lessons of his instructor" in order to expand his operations from the coastal trade of southern New England to farther flung destinations.[25] His new skill set seemed to invigorate Cuffe, who recommenced his coastal

trade operation, but this time with a larger eighteen-ton decked vessel whose larger cargo hold would provide, according to his plan, the necessary profits to build a larger vessel for circum-Atlantic trade.

Cuffe's farm was slightly farther from the Westport River than desired, leaving no place for him to dock his vessel. Thus he rented a small house near the port, moving his family to a former shoemaker's shop to provide easier access to his new vessel at Westport's waterfront.[26] Cod pulled Paul Cuffe from his farm to the Gulf of Maine, which historically had been the most significant fishing grounds for the whitefish in all of the Atlantic. Since the mid-seventeenth century, New England and Western European cod fishermen had caught so many fish that regulatory bodies attempted to limit how much was taken. By the mid-eighteenth century, Newfoundland and Labrador hosted the most cod fishing boats, so many that Newfoundlanders "accustomed to fishing from shore in small boats" were forced to take to the sea toward Labrador for their catch.[27] By the time of Cuffe's inaugural fishing voyage in the mid-1780s, cod stocks were on the decline, but money could be made if one were willing to sail in deeper waters off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador or the Gulf of Maine. Armed with his newly acquired navigational skills, Cuffe understood that chasing cod on the rich North Atlantic waters could provide his first real profit as shipmaster.

Seeing the potential for steady revenue in the fishing industry, Cuffe turned to kin, employing Michael Wainer, his brother-in-law, to be his first mate. Wainer's sons would eventually join the pair on their voyages east, but for now, Cuffe and Wainer steered their barque up the coast where the two men loaded their cargo hold with fish, returned home, reaped the profits from their hard work, and embarked on expanding their enterprise. Once home, Cuffe skimmed some of the voyage's profits to build a new home in Westport for his family. The winter of 1790 provided Cuffe with some downtime during which he could plan his next voyage. As soon as weather permitted, Cuffe and Wainer embarked on a second voyage to the waters off Newfoundland, where their haul proved profitable once again, inspiring them to further pursue their goals.[28]

Cuffe's entrance into the world of maritime commerce came at an inauspicious time: the American economy contracted significantly at the conclusion of the American Revolution as standard trade routes and trading partners closed their ports to ships from the fledgling nation. After a brief period of expansion immediately following the war, the 1780s witnessed a reduction in the demand for trade goods derived from American ports, primarily for political reasons. The closing of ports to American vessels meant all sorts of goods—from timber to agricultural products to fish—were commanding lower prices and fewer outlets for transaction than before the war.[29] For Cuffe, however, the move from farming to fishing was less about chance and more about carefully studying the market: the demand for fish was strong on both sides of the Atlantic, and regardless of the availability of British, Spanish, or French trading partners, New Englanders were always interested in purchasing a haul of cod.

Dartmouth, Westport, and New Bedford suffered even greater economic losses than the average American port during and shortly after the war. Many key players in the whaling industry gave their allegiance to whichever nation promised to facilitate the continuation of their businesses. William Rotch, the prominent Quaker who had moved his whaling operations from Nantucket to Dartmouth just prior to the war, traded shipbuilding materials and other goods with English merchants during the war. Rumors abounded at the time that Rotch and others were planning to move their whaling operations to Bermuda—a neutral colony in the war—which prompted Massachusetts officials to pass a law prohibiting trade with Tories or Englishmen. The "Nantucket Navigators," a collection of Patriot whalemen, sought a new port on the mainland, protected from raids by refugee pirates experienced by the islanders.[30] The poor economic conditions of postwar southern New England further motivated these eighteen men who left the island, eventually founding Hudson, New York, which became a prosperous commercial port within a few decades.[31] The once thriving and convivial whaling and fishing communities on the South Coast now appeared to be full of snakes and conniving men whose only allegiance was to profits.

Within this unpredictable environment, Paul Cuffe imagined expanding his own business. Taking the lead of his mentor, William Rotch, the early years of Cuffe's shipping business held no allegiances beyond his family and close associates. Cuffe would trade in a wide range of goods throughout his life, including cotton grown by enslaved people, proving that in some instances morality suffered in the face of profits. In the 1780s and 1790s, the self-described mustee did not intend to represent the approximately twelve thousand Black Americans in New England or the nearly one million Black Americans living on mainland North America.[32] Cuffe acted in his own best interest as a man of Buzzards Bay who saw a potential at sea that could not be matched by his farm.

These early fishing voyages served a purpose in Cuffe's plan to build his business: he was able to build another, larger vessel from his proceeds that in tandem with his relative Michael Wainer's twenty-ton boat—one of at least three boats co-owned by relatives—provided rich profits. As the money flowed in, Cuffe chose not to spend lavishly on personal items; instead, he reinvested these profits, enabling him to purchase another vessel, bringing the *Mary* and its crew into his growing fleet of four ships.[33] Soon after acquiring the *Mary*, Cuffe expanded the scope of his enterprise by entering the fiercely competitive whaling industry in 1793. Perhaps the idea came from an earlier experience when Cuffe sailed aboard a vessel out of Dartmouth for the Straits of Belle-isle, a preeminent whaling ground off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, but the opportunity to command arose from a previous trip aboard a forty-ton craft to the Carolinas, where Cuffe was exposed to the South and new items for trade. During his career, he would often return to the South, where he profited considerably from trade with southern slave owners. These experiences would mold him in a way that transformed the man later in life. For now, his voyage south led to the whaling grounds off of Newfoundland, commanding a poorly equipped vessel with a small crew and only two smaller whaleboats, approximately twenty to thirty feet in length. Normally, one of these whaleboats would hold a crew of six, equipped with several items to hasten the killing of the whale.

Aboard Cuffe's boats, one of which leaked severely, sat ten men with rusted and broken harpoons and almost no other equipment.[34] Looking out at the other ships nearby, Cuffe's whalemen looked like a ragtag bunch of neophytes.

A difficult industry, whaling demanded that captain and crew be at sea for months in search of the valuable mammals.[35] For Cuffe and his crew, whaling would prove to be an even more challenging enterprise. As they arrived in the waters off Newfoundland in late summer 1793, Cuffe was amid four other whaling vessels. The usual convention in early nineteenth-century whaling called for cooperation among ships, but the *Mary*'s Black captain was not well received by the other skippers, who were white. Demonstrating the perseverance that marked Cuffe's teenage years, the captain ordered his crew of ten to go it alone. Cuffe himself harpooned two whales, having never before heaved the spear while at the sea. Seeing *Mary*'s success, the other ships began to cooperate in the hunt. In the end, Cuffe's crew managed six whales in total.[36]

Enthused by his haul, Cuffe sailed for Philadelphia, where he used his profits to buy the hardware to build a new sixty-nine-ton vessel, *Ranger*, in Westport, which he launched in 1795. Typically, credit was easy to find for any merchant who wanted to outfit and supply a ship. The world of maritime trade was full of "risk and opportunity that fed on each other," with many left bankrupt and destitute.[37] Undoubtedly, Cuffe's relationship with the wealthy Rotch family increased the ease with which he could obtain the additional funds needed to build his first ship. The vessel allowed Cuffe to diversify his business interests by taking on cargo such as corn and other dry goods. With his money spent on the hardware and timber for the *Ranger*, Cuffe sought a partnership to laden the ship for its maiden trading voyage but instead sold his smaller vessels, raising nearly $2,000 to purchase cargo.[38] Just two years after his captaining his first whaling voyage, Cuffe now commanded his own ship capable of bringing him much desired profits. Yet the *Ranger* would become a pivotal ship in Cuffe's growing fleet of merchant traders. The vessel served as a platform of sorts for Cuffe, on which he could sail into ports far and wide as captain of his

own ship. Blacks and whites in the seaports he visited, he noted, "were filled with astonishment and alarm. A vessel owned and commanded by [a] Black man . . . was unprecedented and surprising."[39] Blacks at the helm were a common sight in ports all over the Atlantic world, but they served for a short period aboard incoming vessels as harbor pilots.[40] But Captain Paul Cuffe both owned the *Ranger* and served as its master. Port masters and customhouse officers predictably met the arrival of the Black captain with scrutiny, intent on finding flaws with Cuffe's papers. They had little recourse to stop his trading activities, however, because these papers were always legitimate.[41]

The waters of the Atlantic became even more treacherous for Black men during Cuffe's successful whaling voyages to Newfoundland. During the Revolutionary War, Congress halted the importation of enslaved people and generally supported a tepid antislavery stance.[42] With the war concluded, however, the American government refocused its efforts on keeping the states united. In Article 6 of the Northwest Ordinance (1787), Congress prohibited the spread of slavery north of the Ohio River but included a significant fugitive slave clause that allowed owners of runaways to "lawfully reclaim" their property.[43] By February 1793, a more concrete Fugitive Slave Act passed Congress, supported by southern politicians who viewed the northern states' new abolition laws as dangerous to maintaining order among their slaves; they wanted to squash any ideas that runaway slaves were free once they crossed into free states. African enslaved people could not be allowed to look to the North as a destination for liberty; instead, the Fugitive Slave Act attempted to make it clear that running away to a state where slavery was illegal mattered little for long-term freedom. Runaway slaves, upon being captured in the northern states, were to be delivered to their owners without delay.[44] For men like Paul Cuffe—born free and never enslaved—the law proved disturbing: accused fugitive slaves had little ability to fight the charges in court, thus it was not uncommon for free men to be forced into slavery. Additionally, hefty fines were levied to help deter northerners from assisting in the escape of fugitive slaves once arrested.

Black sailors were even more at risk of being falsely accused of and arrested for being a fugitive slave because of their travels to and from slave states. Impressment, or the kidnapping of sailors, would prove to be even more of a threat to free Blacks at sea. In 1788, a vessel lay in distress near an island in Boston Harbor. Upon coaxing three free Black sailors aboard to aid the stricken ship, the captain "put them in irons and carr[i]ed them of[f], from their Wives & children to be sold for slaves." The petitioner who recounted the events, Prince Hall, described how the men were taken to Martinique and sold into slavery: they refused to work, were beaten severely, and nearly killed until Massachusetts governor John Hancock negotiated the return of the prisoners to Boston.[45] Hancock yielded to pressure by both Blacks and whites in Boston to do something about the horrific kidnappings.

Despite the celebrations that occurred throughout the city on return of the three men, Prince Hall and his fellow petitioners were not satisfied. The events highlighted the precariousness of African American lives at sea after the Revolutionary War and even among former allies such as the French. "What then are our lives and Lebeties worth," Prince Hall asked the General Court, "if they may be taken a way in shuch a cruel & unjust manner as these"? The Prince Hall petitioners asked the General Court to enforce extant "Laws of this State" that "forbedes all such base axons" as the kidnapping of free men. For these petitioners, the men carried to Martinique, and the thousands of free Black sailors working the Atlantic, the kidnappings went beyond ideological constructs of *liberty*; instead, they spoke as "good seamen" who "are oblidge to stay at home thru fear" and remain unable to provide for their families. Rather than earn a "hanceum livehud for themselves and theres," they loiter "about the streets for want of employ."[46] Clearly, the petitioners sought to prevent future kidnappings, but they also were demonstrating their willingness to work, to not accept almshouse benefits, and to become productive members—if not citizens—of the American nation. If guaranteed freedom by the Commonwealth, free Black sailors could be relied upon to expand the economy and fisheries of Massachusetts.

An already tricky landscape became increasingly difficult to navigate for free Blacks in the early republic. Cuffe knowingly and willingly commanded his ships in this environment, where fear and anxiety about possible impressment or kidnapping reigned. The 1796 Congressional Act for the Protection and Relief of American Seamen aimed to relieve some of these pressures for sailors by creating a registry with US Customs collectors whereby sailors could prove their citizenship when British ships attempted to impress them.[47] African American sailors began to use the registry to prove their free status, carrying Seamen's Protection Certificates on their person in case they were kidnapped and sold into slavery. It is unclear if this strategy was effective.

Still, Paul Cuffe remained determined to exploit any opportunities he could to grow his business. While anchored in Norfolk, Virginia, Cuffe learned of the Eastern Shore of Maryland's extensive corn stocks, ready for shipment to the New England, and he responded in the only way he knew. Without hesitation, Cuffe steered his vessel northward in the bay toward the Nanticoke River, which stretched as far north as Delaware. What greeted him and his crew was the site of plantations, worked by hundreds of slaves, toiling and sweating in the agricultural fields of Maryland. Stark contrast between the slaves' quarters and the sprawling homes of the planter elite must have raised the ire of the Black crew. For these New England born and bred men, southern slavery resonated deeply of what their lives *could* be like if their homeports had not supported the abolition clause in the state constitution. Instead of the relative liberty they enjoyed shipboard, refuge could be small quarters with leaky roofs and rough floorboards. Surrounding them were reminders of the status of Africans in America.

Captain Cuffe elicited an anxious response from the residents of Vienna, Maryland, when he steered the *Ranger* into port because he represented the culmination of their two greatest fears: conspiratorial free Blacks moving about the South and his inspirational possibilities among enslaved Blacks. In short, this small port town midway up the Nanticoke River, founded in 1706 and built on trade, slave-grown

tobacco, and shipbuilding, watched the *Ranger* sailing smoothly in from the Chesapeake Bay, carrying a changed world. Crewed entirely by persons of color, the *Ranger* was not a simple trading barque looking for goods to exchange; it brought fear of a different world.[48]

"On arrival the people were filled with astonishment and alarm," with the local people confused by what unfolded before their eyes.[49] In these parts of the Atlantic world, free Blacks piloted ships safely into port, but under the watchful eye of a white shipmaster.[50] *Ranger* arrived with no such safeguard. "The white inhabitants were struck with apprehension of the injurious effects which such circumstances would have on the minds of their slaves."[51] Ideas of conspiracy appeared rational to a white population still reeling from desertion of thousands of slaves when Lord Dunmore offered emancipation to those willing to fight for Britain during the war. Further increasing tensions between the white and Black populations was the emergence of a fairly influential Maryland Abolition Society, which pushed for laws against the importation of slaves into the state and helped pass a law in 1796 limiting the ability of Marylanders to sell free Blacks into servitude.[52] Additionally, the state's large free Black population was often accused of harboring stolen property and runaway slaves, which led to much distrust. Perhaps, as one observer reported, "they were still more fearful that, under the veil of commerce," Cuffe had "arrived among them with hostile intentions."[53]

In his widely read *Notes on the State of Virginia*, published in 1785, Thomas Jefferson proposed a solution to what he foresaw as the coming problem of emancipation. "Among the Romans," he wrote, "emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master." Jefferson continued, "But with us a second [effort] is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture."[54] Thomas Jefferson, among others, feared the perceived dilution of Anglo-American blood with free Africans, but he also identified the greatest fear of slaveholding Americans: rebellion. With northern states beginning to abolish or gradually emancipate their slaves just after the American Revolution, southern slaveholders faced an

unknown future, where questions abounded about the future of bonded labor and, as Jefferson signaled, the potential violence that would ensue when these slaves were emancipated.

In our twenty-first-century minds it seems simple: abolition is the moral and equitable thing to do. Emancipate your slaves and much human suffering—that of enslaved people and those who would fight in the future civil war—would have been avoided. To eighteenth-century Americans, the question of abolition was much more complex. No great emancipator—the man owned at least two hundred slaves—Jefferson understood that slavery must be abolished in the United States. His first draft of the Declaration of Independence included a clause calling the slave trade a "cruel war against nature," which was later struck from the text to make sure southern colonies would support the document.[55] Jefferson surmised that Africans, once freed, would turn violent against their former masters, killing them and their families. His solution was simple: remove emancipated Blacks from the United States to remote parts. Later, Paul Cuffe would adopt Jefferson's thinking on African colonization by advocating for freed Blacks to resettle in West Africa, but for different reasons.

Jefferson's fear of Black rebellion percolated throughout the southern states as the first decade of America's independence revealed growing tension over the difference between the North's and the South's views of liberty. For southern slaveholders, fear of internal conspiracies on their own plantations were matched only by theories of external conspiracies where free Blacks from outside southern states would inspire rebellion. In 1829, David Walker's *Appeal* meant to illicit such a response, calling on all Blacks, bonded or free, to raise up in arms against slavery.[56] Yet, forty years prior, Paul Cuffe drew suspicion as he entered Vienna, Maryland: Was this free Black man from the Massachusetts here to incite rebellion?

The residents of Vienna grounded their fears in real events. Slaves across the southern states petitioned local and state legislatures for freedom, protection, and justice. One South Carolina petition sought the ability to use the court system, claiming "the Rights of Free

Citizens" by being able to go to trial and include the "Testimony of Slaves."[57] Although laws prohibiting the teaching of slaves to read and write existed, many literate slaves lived on the plantations and small farms of the southern states. Literacy, as many southerners seemed to correctly fear, gave way to the communication of plots and conspiracies. Numerous letters communicating plans to revolt were intercepted by southern authorities during the early republic period, serving to alert southerners to the mischievous and potentially deadly plans of their slaves.[58] Vienna, Maryland, bore witness to this changing world, where the Constitution seemed to protect southern states from abolition, yet free and enslaved Blacks were bold enough to petition southern state legislatures for liberty and equality. Now, to add to the sense of losing control, the *Ranger* ties up on their wharf.

Additionally, some ill will toward Cuffe's crews and ships likely still existed on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In early 1799, Samuel Sloane, a Maryland slave owner, bought a runaway slave advertisement in New Bedford's *Medley or Marine Journal*, claiming that Thomas Wainer—nephew to Cuffe and captain of one of his ships—"carried off" one of his slaves to Westport, Massachusetts.[59] Such allegations would have soiled Cuffe's reputation in ports with enslaved people, which could explain why there is little evidence of Cuffe or his ships being involved in trafficking runaways. Gaining a reputation for providing access to freedom for enslaved individuals would not be good for business.

Captain Paul Cuffe combated the fear and anxiety created by his appearance in that sleepy southern port town by simply comporting himself in the least threatening way possible. The captain "conducted himself with candour, modesty and firmness, and all his crew behaved." Clearly, the goal was to avoid any negative scene, preferring to comfort locals by being deferential. "Not only" did Cuffe and crew act "inoffensively, but with conciliating propriety."[60] Reports suggest that within a few days of arriving, Cuffe and crew were accepted by locals, even dining with one of the "finest" families in town. Cuffe skillfully deflected the tension, transforming his presence from a hostile, oppositional moment to one that invoked curiosity among

Vienna's inhabitants. This trait was one that Paul Cuffe would become known for throughout the Atlantic: converting people's minds and perceptions of what was acceptable for a Black man in the maritime world. Undoubtedly, the wharves of Vienna had seen Black sailors aboard ships before, yet they had never seen a ship crewed entirely by Black men. These were Atlantic Africans—unlike their land-bound brethren—shaped by their experiences in the broader littoral. Cuffe, Michael Wainer, and the other mixed-race and African peoples from the port towns along Buzzards Bay began to change the face of authority in the Atlantic, aboard ships and among customhouse officials. They challenged preconceptions without force but through kindness and certainty in their actions. Cuffe did not back down when questioned, preferring instead to let his papers speak for him.

Three weeks later, Cuffe arrived back in Westport, having sold his goods and carrying another three thousand bushels of slave-grown corn to sell at market in Westport and New Bedford. Profiting approximately $1,000 in the transaction, Cuffe returned to the Chesapeake Bay, this time to Norfolk, Virginia, to reload with cargo. Cuffe loaded gypsum for plaster and sailed on to Delaware, where he sold it to such success that his ships returned often for a similar run a few times each year.[61] It may seem odd that Cuffe and his all-Black crew would trade in commodities grown and produced by enslaved people, but he was an opportunist, especially in business dealings. Getting his start running through the British blockade on midnight runs to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard proved profitable for Cuffe and also demonstrated to him that sometimes danger and profit could mix in a positive way. In a sense, Cuffe pursued this same avenue in venturing to ports of the South. Grains composed at least 26 percent of the £756,128 of exports from the Chesapeake region; Paul Cuffe wanted a part of that market. Indeed, the Chesapeake offered over £1,046,883 of exports in total, including the gypsum Cuffe carried on several voyages but tied mostly to tobacco, iron, and agricultural products that New Englanders needed.[62] Just like Cuffe's earliest forays in trading during the war, he developed a basic supply and demand for the products readily available from these southern ports.

Within a year, Cuffe's ships would travel along the coast of Maine to trade with another Quaker, James Brian. Based in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, the Briton traded plaster of Paris from Nova Scotia with Cuffe, who agreed to haul the cargo south to Delaware. Cuffe and Brian continued their partnership for the next few years according to the Port of Wilmington's local press, which recorded Cuffe's arrivals and departures.[63]

During these heady days of the latter part of the 1790s, Cuffe found great success in his trading, not by being single-minded but instead by rolling with the tides. When corn was to be had and a market in Buzzards Bay demanded it, he carried loads to and from Westport. But he was careful not to saturate his home markets with too much of a good thing, trading in whatever goods he felt were most marketable. Indeed, Cuffe's business acumen should not be overlooked in his profitability. In addition, the man did not waste his money. By 1797, Cuffe had invested in a shoemaker's shop, bought a new farm for $3,500, and continued to buy into and/or build new vessels.[64] These purchases were neither fleeting nor for status; rather, they were meant to provide more income and provisions for his growing family.

The close of the eighteenth century would see some of Paul Cuffe's greatest investment gains realized as his Westport-based shipyard constructed four ships for service in his name. Shipbuilding in New England was a major business, with the main required resource—timber from oak, maple, pine, and cedar trees—readily available at reasonable prices. Skilled laborers such as sailmakers, carpenters, and the rest of the jack-tars were abundant in New England's port towns, even small ones like Cuffe's Westport. The *Ranger*, the first vessel Cuffe owned solely, was followed by *Hero*, a 160-plus ton brig meant to trade further afield than his previous ship, including the potential for transatlantic voyages. *Alpha* was perhaps his greatest shipbuilding achievement, displacing 268 tons, designed for whaling or other transatlantic business ventures. *Alpha* became his signature ship by 1806 when Cuffe took full command of the vessel. The seven-man crew, all of whom were related to Cuffe, were either African or mixed-race, making the ship's travel to Europe all the more intriguing. Eventually,

Cuffe surrendered the ship's captaincy to Thomas Wainer, allowing his trustworthy kin to sail the ship back and forth from Russia to England to Savannah to Delaware and back to Westport once again. The young Wainer proved capable, piloting the flagship vessel without incident.[65]

These vessels served as the backbone for Cuffe's shipping enterprise for years to come, with *Alpha* and *Traveller* featuring in his efforts to colonize West Africa during the 1810s. For his immediate future, however, the ships built and repaired in his yard proved economical and rallied financial support from local kin and Quakers. Maintaining at least a 50 percent share in each of his ships, Cuffe shared ownership with investors from around Westport and beyond, including prominent Quakers such as John James, a Philadelphia merchant who would correspond with Paul Cuffe until his death in 1817. Most of Cuffe's economic support came from family. The Wainers, for example, invested in Cuffe's ships while also serving on board. Cuffe sought investment as well in other's ships, including *Hero*, a schooner that sailed between New Bedford and Philadelphia.[66] The vessels sailed often. A stagnant ship did provide the desired profits, which meant the ships were repaired and returned to service as soon as new cargo could be found and loaded.

As Cuffe's shipping enterprise grew in size and scope, he found enough time to focus on his growing family. After July 2, 1787, Westport split from the larger Town of Dartmouth, forming its own municipality and annexing more lands in 1793, 1795, and 1805.[67] With a population of just a few thousand sailors, farmers, and artisans, the community had a schoolhouse available for white children in town, but Cuffe found it reprehensible that his children—mixed-race like himself—could not have the same privileges. In the same year of the Westport's founding, 1787, Prince Hall led a group of African Americans in Boston in their call for educational equality. Hall, previously imprisoned with Cuffe during the war, a Methodist minister, and the founder of the African Masonic Lodge in Boston, petitioned the Massachusetts General Court, urging them to consider building schools for Black children. "We are of the humble opinion," he wrote,

"that we have the right to enjoy the privileges of free men." "Our children," he continued, "receive no benefit from the free schools in the town of Boston, which we think is a great grievance, as by woeful experience we now feel the want of a common education."[68] The war's end brought abolition in the Commonwealth, but free African Americans understood there to be more needed to become full citizens, and education formed the bedrock of their efforts to achieve liberty. The petition from Boston's free Blacks enthused and motivated others in the Commonwealth to join in calls for equal education.

In 1797, irritated that his children would be placed at a disadvantage, Paul Cuffe proposed to the people of Westport to build a school for Black children in town. Frustrated by opposition, or at least apathy, toward the project, Cuffe built a schoolhouse on his own property and allowed it to be used for the schooling of all children, including Sunday-school services.[69] "I am one of those," he commented, "who rejoice to see good institutions established for the instruction and reformation of our fellow creatures." As he would later write, "I approve of the plan for educating men of color" because knowledge improved character.[70] Demonstrating character—knowledge, morals, sobriety, Christianity—would convince men like Thomas Jefferson of the potential for African Americans, while strengthening Cuffe's argument for liberty and citizenship for persons of color.

Early in 1799, Cuffe's profits allowed him to acquire more property, with his total ownership growing to two hundred acres.[71] With such diverse properties as a grist mill, the family farm, a windmill, and the like, Cuffe turned to his trusted shipmate and brother-in-law, Michael Wainer, asking him to take care of the properties. By 1800, Cuffe's worth had grown more than $10,000. Considering the average household income hovered near $278 per year in New England, Cuffe was easily among the top 1 percent of all New Englanders, white or Black, with just one or two successful voyages from New Bedford to the Chesapeake Region having occurred at that time.[72] Not only did he emerge as an important and influential Black merchant in his home port of New Bedford but he also became a prominent member—regardless of race—in the region's economy by employing

countless sailors, stimulating trade, transacting real estate deals, and building vessels in his own shipyard in Westport.

As one biographer calls him, this "Black Yankee entrepreneur" emerged from the veil of race as a mixed-race sea captain.[73] Cuffe used his ships as a vehicle to rise out of the ambiguous legal status of Blacks in Massachusetts, where taxes were determined by race and voting rights and citizenship were ascribed to whites only. He was now captain and master of several vessels that gained notoriety wherever they—and their commander—traveled, proudly and boldly displaying their all-Black crews to the public. Protected by the thin pieces of paper that proved their port of registry and certificates of freedom, Cuffe and his crews engaged in the language of the Atlantic—trade—proving that when profits could be attained, race sometimes took a back seat to business. Key to Cuffe's success on the seas were Atlantic-wide communities in which he could trust, owing to his religious beliefs. Quaker Friends were most often the men with whom he traded, dined, and found support during his travels. When Paul Cuffe's life's pursuit would arise in the early 1800s—his commitment to African colonization and the settling of Sierra Leone by free African Americans—he found his greatest supporter in the community of Friends. From Philadelphia to Newport to London to Africa to New Bedford, Quakers rallied behind Captain Paul Cuffe and his quest for abolition, liberty, and the building of a free Black nation.

Paul Cuffe described himself as a proudly independent islander, "born 9 miles from the main," where there was "but one house."[74] At the age of twenty-four, on a small piece of a page in his scrapbook, Cuffe acknowledged confronting the "monster of intemperance" in his youth.[75] His father had passed away ten years prior, and "since that time I have shifted for myself."[76] Cuffe's use of *shifted* apparently has two meanings to which he alluded: In nautical or sailing terms, it can simply be used to signify the change of wind in a ship's sail or the movement of a vessel's ballast or cargo from one side to the other. In Shakespearian vernacular, the term can refer to a snake that has changed its skin.[77] Cuffe's youth and early adulthood certainly can be characterized in these two different ways, but in 1811, when writing

these words in reflection of his young adulthood, he was likely referring to two significant changes to his "snake skin" that occurred: pulling himself from the potential downward spiral of alcoholism, and the speech he would make later at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia where he realized his life's calling to colonize Sierra Leone with Black Americans.

CHAPTER FOUR

"All kinds of abominable things"

The headwaters of the Delaware River begin in Upstate New York, with the east branch originating in the Catskill Mountains and the west branch in Scoharie County, an area known as the breadbasket of the American Revolution because of the grains grown by its farmers, which fed the Continental Army. Not much more than a large stream in places, the river wends its way over three hundred miles, growing into a behemoth whose watershed area stretches over fourteen thousand square miles, developing into a major river that finally pours into the Atlantic Ocean through Delaware Bay. It is just north of this bay where the Delaware River has witnessed the development of one of the world's most dynamic cities, Philadelphia. Founded by William Penn in 1682 at the confluence of the Delaware and Schuykill Rivers, this fledgling colonial town served as safe haven for the often-prosecuted Quakers being pushed from England by their Puritan adversaries, and it is these pious peoples who understood they needed economic development for their little colony to succeed.

Although set inland by some eighty-seven nautical miles, the well-protected Port of Philadelphia emerged as a bustling center of trade and immigration in the eighteenth-century.[1] The city's denizens saw the location as a prime trading point, where goods and services could be bartered, swapped, or exchanged and distributed inland via the waterways of the region. The city quickly grew to a major port in the North American colonies as English and German colonists streamed

in to farm the rich soils of inland Pennsylvania. It was here that a level of religious toleration emerged unmatched elsewhere in the Atlantic world. A 1756 engraving by George Heap—a noted Philadelphia artist who had previously won praise for his rendering of the statehouse—depicts the spires of several churches that dominated the skyline of the town, including Christ Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Dutch Calvinist Church. Nestled somewhat modestly below these protruding pronouncements to God sits an early version of the Quaker Meetinghouse.[2] Philadelphia lay at the center of American Quakerism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with Friends seemingly on a pilgrimage to the enlightened city that is often called, in modern vernacular, the Cradle of Liberty. Here, the Founding Fathers of the United States debated independence from Great Britain, facing accusations of treason and disloyalty to the Crown as members of Continental Congress in the mid-1770s. The city was so revered by revolutionaries for its role in the war, and conveniently located near the geographic center of the new United States, that it was chosen as the temporary capital of the nation while enslaved people and other laborers constructed Washington, DC, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Paul Cuffe often visited Philadelphia's thriving port and vibrant free African American community.[3] In addition to the city's draw for his shipping business, Philadelphia's Quaker meetinghouses provided Cuffe with a refuge of sorts from the prying eyes of celebrity. He traveled extensively, navigating the chilly and dangerous waters of the Atlantic, plying his cargo as the captain of a merchant fleet. From these voyages and his business acumen, abolitionists held Cuffe in the highest esteem as representing the potential of all persons of African descent once widespread emancipation occurred. Cuffe's celebrity—replete with paparazzi-like newspaper reports of his activities at each port he visited—weighed heavily on the middle-aged seaman.

In port on business during the late spring of 1808, Cuffe decided to attend a meeting at the Arch Street Friends Meeting House, perhaps seeking shelter in this sacred space. Built in 1804 and enlarged in 1811, the brick building bustled with a diverse segment of Philadelphia's

Quaker population, as well as visiting Friends from around the corner and broader Atlantic coastal region. Located near the Arch Street Wharf, a main point of arrival for goods and people, Cuffe walked a short distance to the meetinghouse where the thick wooden doors and Flemish-bonded brick kept the outside world at bay.[4] It was here in the Georgian-styled building that Cuffe found himself—as typical for even the socially progressive Quakers—seated in the upper gallery among other men of color. The gallery, supported by simple yet elegant columns, clearly delineated the Black and white spaces in the austere house of worship, spaces that metaphorically represented life outside. All reports suggest the lower level of the meetinghouse was filled with some of Philadelphia's most respected white Quakers, a community known for its antislavery views and promotion of abolitionism.[5]

Such a visit to the Arch Street building would not have been extraordinary for this man steeped in Quaker ideology. He and his parents attended Quaker services much of their adult lives, but his next move on this particular morning proved unusual and provocative. After sitting quietly during services, as an anonymous observer noted, Cuffe rose among his brethren, working his way down from the gallery seating to the front of the house for an unscheduled sermon. The surprised audience listened intently as Captain Paul Cuffe, now famous, began a gruesome, yet cathartic oratory intended to mark his transformation from a merchant whose budding fortune had been made, at least in part, from trading cargo grown and produced by enclaved people, to a leading abolitionist with the nearly obsessive goal of transporting his brethren to freedom in Africa.[6]

"At a time when" Cuffe was "very low in his mind & much cast down & being very disconsolate," the observer recorded, "there appeared before him the form of a Man." Cuffe, a well-read forty-nine-year-old man known for carefully parsed words, continued with lengthy sentences suggesting both a nervous and impassioned speaker. Using terms familiar to Quakers who believed strongly in dream interpretation, "What ail'd him?" the Form asked.[7] Cuffe responded with no firm answer, but his soul was no longer satiated with a life of celebrity,

wealth, and status. Just a few months prior to this meeting in Philadelphia, Cuffe requested and was granted membership in the Westport Quaker Meeting, after a lifetime of supporting the Friends' community on the south coast of Massachusetts. The simple yet elegant wooden meetinghouse of Westport was symbolically replaced by the expansive brick and mortar structure a few blocks west of the wharves of the Delaware River. Captain Cuffe searched to reconnect with his spiritual roots in the middle of bustling Philadelphia.

Why this sudden shift from building his business to focusing on formalities such as becoming an official member of a Quaker meetinghouse? He learned the answer in his dreams. The "Form told him," Cuffe bellowed to the Philadelphians, that "disease was in his heart." Before Cuffe could react, it "took a sharp instrument, separated his heart from his body & laid it before him." Cuffe "was greatly terrified" upon viewing his disembodied heart, "it being very unclean & contained all kinds of abominable things."[8] The stunned man stood before the Form, and now a large audience of his peers, viewing his diseased soul as it lay before him.

Cuffe faced a terrifying moment in front of this audience, allegorically staring down at his heart while a sea of white faces looked on, seated in front of him. At least 795 Africans were still enslaved in Philadelphia at the time of Cuffe's oratory, twenty-eight years after slavery began its gradual decline with the passage of a weak emancipation law in 1780—the same year Paul and John led petitioners to demand the right to vote in Massachusetts.[9] The enlightened Quakers who fought for abolition for Cuffe's brethren also harbored lawful slavery, forcing men like this famous Black sea captain to live amid the ever-threatening possibility of bondage. There is no doubt Cuffe was among friends here, but he was not entirely free in a state with slavery. The liberty to say whatever he desired, to criticize the laws of this Quaker state, did not exist.

Courageously and skillfully, Cuffe stared down the specter of slavery that haunted him and all persons of African descent when he boldly continued his story, using Quaker dreamscapes to explain his sudden personal transformation. "The Form," Cuffe continued, "said

he could never be heal'd till he submitted to have his heart cleansed." Cuffe responded, "I fear I never shall be healed," but he allowed the Form to cleanse his heart "with a sharp instrument." The surgery commenced as the Form "separated all that was vile. Then closed up the heart, replaced it & healed the wound." The "remarkably powerful sermon continued" as Cuffe stood before the engrossed audience, announcing his rebirth.[10] "Thus he said he felt himself a changed man & new creature & then recommended the young Men to that Physician who could heal them all [because] their state was ever so deplorable."[11] One can imagine Cuffe's eyes gazing at the Black men seated in the gallery—the audience to whom this sermon was partially intended—who occupied a tenuous position of freedom in a nation where slavery still thrived despite cries for liberty by American revolutionaries just thirty years prior. A fervent Cuffe implored all in attendance to adhere to his Quaker vision, to cut out the disease of slavery from the hearts of men. He shared his vision with the Arch Street audience to motivate his fellow Quakers to be bold, to construct a path that would destroy the inhuman trade and use of humans as captive labor. On this stage Paul Cuffe announced his intention to lead the fight against slavery, using his celebrity status and associated power to convince American and British politicians to back existing abolition laws and to introduce new, stronger bills to fight the institution in America, as well as at the origins of the trade in Africa. Cuffe wanted to put in motion Thomas Jefferson's longstanding ideas regarding the transportation of free Blacks to Africa, removing them from American society and allowing them to build free Black nations abroad and to practice a benevolent imperialism in which Black Americans would teach Africans Christian values, industry, and sobriety in an attempt to convince them to stop the slave trade.

Cuffe continued his sermon after offering a brief but poignant interpretation of his dream, moving from this nighttime vision to the recollection of a moment from his youth. When he was "about 12 years of age he lived upon an island, where there was no house but of his Father." Spending his youth on Cuttyhunk Island, young Cuffe

worked hard, and one can imagine he might seek a secluded corner of the island now and again to avoid chores or his parents' watchful eyes. As he embarked on an errand alone one evening, he "became afraid that he should meet with some wild beast that would attack him." He skipped over a fence where there lay some wood from which he could fashion a stick for self-defense, "but after cutting it the thought occurred that he was not on his Father's ground & as he had no right to the stick it was not likely it would serve to defend him." A weapon gained through dishonesty, he reasoned, would not be effective. Young and venerable, Cuffe "laid it down, near the place he had [taken] it from," taking a risk as he was now defenseless against the nighttime creature of fantasy. Upon "recrossing the Fence," the young boy's integrity paid off as he "laid his bare hand on a loose piece of wood, which was on their own ground, resting against the fence." God had awarded his honesty and faith, according to Cuffe, as the loose wood "proved to be a Club, which he took up & went cheerfully on his way."[12]

Cuffe's recollection of this pivotal event in his youth served an important purpose in that moment as he stood at the front of the Arch Street Meeting House. Even as a young boy entering adolescence, which can be some of the most mischievous years of childhood, he put his faith in his god to guide him, and that faith was rewarded. And, proving his worthiness as a Friend, the young Cuffe demonstrated honesty in a moment when he was frightened by the all-consuming darkness around him. He could have easily kept the piece of wood he carved into a weapon, but he chose to risk encountering a wild beast instead of taking property that did not belong to him. Cuffe pronounced himself an honorable man before his audience. He identified himself as a Friend, worthy of inclusion in the Quaker community. He showed himself to be a Black man this white audience could trust.

With these two brief stories before the audience of Friends, Cuffe skillfully used the tradition of "Quaker dreamworks," a term used by historian Carla Gerona to describe the centrality of dreams to Quaker worldviews. Quakers "venerated" dreams, using these nighttime journeys

to make meaning out of and interpret the world around them.[13] In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the American Revolution and the resulting changing social, political, and cultural order of the new United States and broader Atlantic world made dream interpretation even more important for Quakers. Cuffe's world seemed turned upside down in 1808, as he clearly began to contemplate his role in this fluctuating landscape. He turned to his dreams, as most Quakers would, to help guide the way forward.

Cuffe met the Form in his dreams just as he was challenged by fellow Quakers to take the lead in a new movement to colonize Africa with African Americans. Driven by Friends and other abolitionists in the United States, Great Britain, and France, the African colonization movement sought an African American leader, someone who could stand at the public forefront of a movement funded and organized primarily by white men. Paul Cuffe was that man. Yet, he did not readily accept this position. Only after his extensive correspondence with other emigrationists over the course of a year did Cuffe agree. As with anything the captain did, Paul Cuffe did not simply agree; he became the true leader of a back-to-Africa movement. He struggled to meet the demands of white Quakers and other emigrationists while trying to gain the favor of Black leaders in free African American communities along America's East Coast.

With some of these pressures relieved as he concluded his sermon on Arch Street, Cuffe left the front of the house, feeling the touch of William Savery as he passed by. A prominent traveling preacher who had been "arrested by the powerfully convictive evidence of the Spirit of Truth" in 1778, Savery invited the captain to sit in a vacant space beside him in the white section of the meetinghouse.[14] Savery's spirit was aroused once again as he heard the captain's testimony. Cuffe ignored the invitation and proceeded back to his original seat in the gallery among his brethren. His words resonated in the grand hall of the building, no doubt impacting the men seated in the building, and it was not the last time Cuffe would have to make a choice between embracing clearly supportive white men and taking a place among his African brethren.[15]

The deliverer of the sermon proved to be most affected by the story, a man born again in the tradition of Quaker visions and dreams who would focus exclusively on arresting the spread of the transatlantic slave trade from that day forward. Paul Cuffe shared his encounter with a healing Form, simultaneously revealing a long-held guilt resulting from the profit gained in transporting goods produced by enslaved people and constructing a penance for his success. Building schoolhouses on the south coast of the free state of Massachusetts no longer seemed substantial enough for the reborn Paul Cuffe; now, he wanted to attack the slave trade in Africa. He wanted to civilize native Africans—the people he saw as needing the influence of literate and Christian African Americans. He wanted to halt the spread of disease in his now cleansed heart, doing so in the only way he knew how: introducing trade, honest labor, and commercial success to Sierra Leone, a British colony where former slaves were promised land, self-government, and freedom but had yet to attain any one of them.

In February 1808, Paul Cuffe took the somewhat uncommon step to apply for membership to the Westport Friends Meeting. Although it may seem like a predictable action, with his parents having attended Friends' meetings in Dartmouth and Martha's Vineyard throughout their lives, Black *membership* of Quaker meetings remained rare in antebellum America. The Slocum family, previous owners of Paul's father, Kofi, held deep roots in the south coastal communities of Quakers. The Slocums migrated from Rhode Island in the mid-seventeenth century, investing in acreage in Dartmouth and bringing with them a penchant for nonconformity as one of the family members proved to be the sister of Anne Hutchinson, the well-known ex-communicated Puritan firebrand.[16] In the seventeenth century, George Fox, the founder of Quakerism and semi-itinerant preacher, traveled the English countryside trying to "turn people to that inward light, Spirit and grace, by which all might know . . . that Divine Spirit which would lead them into all truth."[17] Little did he know the impact his words would have over three thousand miles away among North America's free Black communities where Quaker towns flourished

with commerce and bloomed with ideas that challenged the status quo of the Atlantic world.

At a time when African Methodist Episcopal churches were being built in urban centers of the northeast, Quakers routinely welcomed Africans, African Americans, and Indians into their meetings by the 1770s.[18] As early as 1676, Quaker slaveowners in Barbados brought their slaves to meetings to instruct them in the teachings of Fox, while in the mid-eighteenth century, Philadelphia Quakers voted for special monthly meeting times for Blacks.[19] In New England, perhaps the experiences of the Boston Martyrs—a group of seventeenth-century Quakers who had ears amputated, were lashed, and eventually hung—enabled their spiritual descendants to feel empathy toward marginalized Africans and Indians, eventually opening their monthly meeting memberships to persons of color at the turn of the nineteenth century.[20] The Westport Meeting's vote to include Paul Cuffe in their membership fit well within the parameters of changing social and religious mores in American Quaker communities throughout the Atlantic.

Even though Cuffe had earned the praise of his peers and members of the local Quaker community, in part because of the free school he had previously built, meeting members considered his request for membership to be a difficult decision. As wont in the modern world, a subcommittee was formed to study the proposition, to "visit him and take a Solid opertunity [*sic*] with him in order to Discover the Motive and Sincerity of his Request."[21] By the end of March, Cuffe learned that both the men and women of the Westport Meeting voted to accept his request for membership. Cuffe's lifetime of hard work, honesty, and devotion to God served him well. This proved to be a shrewd maneuver for the Westport Friends because in 1813 Cuffe led the effort to build a new meetinghouse that stands to this day in the small seafaring community.[22] Soon after his acceptance into the Westport Friends Meeting, Cuffe began to receive letters from several prominent friends from around the Atlantic littoral, imploring him to work with them on the issue of abolition.

Quaker communities in New England and Philadelphia became focal points of the growing abolitionism in the Atlantic world by the turn of the nineteenth century. Quakers strongly advocated for the banning of the transatlantic slave trade as one step toward the ultimate extinction of the institution. The congruence of public sentiment building against the slave trade, with Quakers, Evangelicals, and Enlightenment thinkers identifying the practice as counter to natural rights, supported repeated efforts to legislate it away.[23] When the United States and Great Britain passed legislation in 1807 that outlawed the trade, a key step toward emancipation had been achieved.[24] This legislation fueled Quaker ideology, laying the foundation for the argument that emancipation could be achieved more effectively and efficiently once the influx of slaves from Africa could be permanently halted. Such a movement, however, would require a unique leader, a figure Blacks and whites, farmers and merchants, legislators and town officials, ministers and doctors could envision as trustworthy, capable, and strong enough to bear the enormous weight of the project on their shoulders.

Quakers throughout the Atlantic world emerged as leaders in the abolition movement as early as the late seventeenth century. Vocal critics of bonded labor came from Philadelphia as English colonists transformed their fledgling tobacco and indigo operations in Barbados to thriving sugar plantations, no longer using indentured servants from Ireland or England, instead favoring cheaper and supposedly more disease-resistant Africans.[25] George Fox visited the Caribbean in the 1670s and was disturbed by what he saw, warning the followers of his Quaker religion to treat their slaves well. In the next twenty years, Quakers published pamphlets and openly spoke against slavery, including George Keith, a Scottish-born Philadelphian who outright condemned the practice of slavery. Although Keith quarreled with members of the Quaker community about the direction of the religious sect—eventually becoming an Anglican minister—his thoughts on slavery represented a growing contingent of Quaker abolitionists.[26] The common thread among those bold antislavery Quakers was

exposure to the cruel institution: upon visiting from the West Indies from the mainland colonies and London, many were moved by the violence and degradation they witnessed.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the French-born Quaker Anthony Benezet made Philadelphia a leading center for the nascent abolition movement. Benezet, who lived most of his life in Philadelphia, founded the Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage. Born a French Huguenot but joining the Quakers once he arrived in America as a young man, Benezet served as the transatlantic voice bridging British and American Quakers, who increasingly saw slavery as immoral and against their religious beliefs. His prolific letter writing connected the two groups, often sharing ideas with Quaker abolitionists while trying to determine the best ways to bring about the end of slavery and the slave trade.[27] Benezet's many publications on the topic of slavery made him perhaps the most well-known abolitionist of the mid-eighteenth century.[28] By the time of the American Revolution, the Philadelphia-based Pennsylvania Abolition Society, founded in 1775, served as a powerful influence in the debate over slavery and freedom, marking African bondage as an insult to the liberty American colonists claimed to fight for during the war.[29]

The war years saw the specter of abolition looming as Vermont and other states moved to make slavery illegal in their new constitutions. No person "born in this country, or brought from over sea," stated the 1777 constitution, "ought to be holden by law, to serve any person, as a servant, slave or apprentice."[30] The phrase made it clear that slavery would be illegal in this newly defined territory between New Hampshire and New York, but it also provided that gradual emancipation would be the rule of the day as men and women would only be freed once they turned twenty-one and eighteen years old, respectively. Even in the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, slaveowner and Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, included a passage criticizing King George III for waging a "cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's [*sic*] most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying

them into slavery in another hemisphere."[31] What dominated the national debate over emancipation was not questions of morality or even necessarily the politics of slavery—of course, Virginia and other southern states would not have voted for independence if Thomas Jefferson's antislavery clause had been left in the original Declaration of Independence—but rather what to do with the masses of free slaves that would result from widespread abolition.

Quakers were early supporters of transporting freed Africans away from the United States. Thomas Jefferson's widely read *Notes on the State of Virginia*, published in 1785, proposed a solution to what he foresaw as the coming problem of emancipation. From the moment of its publication, *Notes on the State of Virginia* made removal of free Africans integral to the discussion of abolition. Quakers, African Americans, and all others who supported the abolition movement debated the viability and morality of removal as a solution to questions lingering over what would happen if and when widespread emancipation occurred. Thomas Jefferson, often maligned—and rightfully so—for his extensive slaveholdings, also supported emancipation because he believed slavery to be immoral and potentially disastrous to the new nation. For him, however, emancipation could not occur without a negative financial impact or a separate place for newly freed Africans to live.[32]

A Black man succeeded in doing what President Thomas Jefferson failed to accomplish: a decade after Jefferson's failed negotiations for the right to send African Americans to Sierra Leone, Cuffe consummated a deal with Zachary Macauley, Sierra Leone's former governor who was emerging as one of the most vocal and well-known abolitionists in the entire Atlantic world, to allow free Blacks from America to settle in the African colony. Macauley served as secretary in the African Institution, London's leading antislavery society, which included William Wilberforce among other prominent members. Macauley joined with other abolitionists in supporting Cuffe's newfound interest in Africa. A courtship developed, with Cuffe being sweet-talked by men he had never met through correspondence and networks of Friends and business acquaintances.

In the middle of 1808, Cuffe began receiving letters that tried to convince him of his value to the colonization project. "Since thy last being in this city [Philadelphia,]" wrote James Pemberton, "the rememberance [*sic*] of thee has so frequently occupied my mind as to excite an inclination to write to thee, and particularly respecting thy sympathy expressed with the poor afflicted inhabitants of Africa."[33]James Pemberton appeared the most eager to convince Cuffe of his importance to the cause. The Philadelphia merchant understood the difficulty of the fight abolitionists had on their hands. As a Quaker, he was exiled during the American Revolution, accused of treason for his stance against war in general—a value many Quakers held throughout the colonies. Pemberton also founded the Pennsylvania Hospital and became president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.[34] His battle to hold true to his moral and religious convictions made his voice speak ever more loudly to Cuffe. Pemberton, a man well connected with Sierra Leone's former governor, believed the entrepreneurial Cuffe fit the plans of British moral organizations that were trying to strengthen the fledgling colony.

Prominent men like Pemberton moved in the same circles as other high-profile supporters of colonization, including Benjamin Franklin, James Fothergill, William Thornton, and the London "Saints."[35] These Saints—William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, and Granville Sharp, among others who belonged to the Clapham Sect—were intimately connected with Quaker efforts to support the colonization of Sierra Leone, and although sect members were evangelical Anglicans, their passions overlapped with Quakers across the Atlantic, proving to form an effective front against slavery.[36] The Clapham Sect developed into a powerful force in British politics during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Of their many social and political foci, the sect paid especial attention to Sierra Leone, with member Zachary Macaulay and others driving the attempts to revitalize and reorganize the colony. Evangelism drove their actions and ideas to make the world around them more perfect, reformed to reflect enlightened and civilized values.

Quaker and Anglican abolitionists sought examples of "enlightened" and "civilized" Blacks in their quest to end slavery in the Atlantic world.[37] Paul Cuffe fit the bill. Pemberton described to Cuffe how the Quakers planned to use colonization to abolish slavery: "The prohibition of the Slave trade may be improved for their benefit," he wrote, "by promoting the civilization of the people of that country [Sierra Leone and surrounding environs]." The London Saints—the group of elite and well-known Londoners who funneled money and government favors toward the abolition movement—"formed an Association and raised a considerable sum of money to engage persons of sobriety and other necessary qualifications to go over to Africa to instruct them in the art of Agriculture and other proper employments."[38] Religious instruction alongside teaching the mechanic industries, farming, and trade would lay the foundation of any free Black nation in West Africa. Paul Cuffe was intimately familiar with these areas of civilization, having educated himself, labored on a farm, built his own business, and now being an accepted member of the Westport Quaker Meeting. Who better to demonstrate to Africans what embracing these American and British ideals could do for one's future?

Cuffe met these qualifications, known around the Atlantic for his honesty, intellect, business acumen, and skill as a captain, but also because of his knowledge of agriculture and philanthropic activities on the South Coast of Massachusetts. "In the example of Paul Cuffe," one writer exclaimed, "the free people of colour in the United States may see the manner in which they may acquire competency and reputation. It is the beaten path of industry and integrity."[39] Not only would Cuffe command respect as a Black sea captain sailing into Freetown, Sierra Leone, but would also bring with him a unique skill set that could identify deficiencies in the colony coupled with sufficient wherewithal to get the job done. White men wanted Cuffe to lead because he embodied Black business and moral success—the very "success" Anglo-Americans, particularly the Quakers, had in Christianizing Native Americans.[40] Cuffe offered a unique perspective

borne from experiences that eluded white elites who advocated abolition in the Atlantic world.

Rather than delve into the details of such a mission, James Pemberton's letters attempted to assure Cuffe that his safety would be guaranteed by Zachary Macaulay.[41] Macaulay suggested Cuffe bring with him African American colonists "of good conduct [and] religious principle" to "offer their personal assistance" in the colony filled with turmoil.[42] Cuffe recognized the men's attempts to conceal the monumental task that lay before him, claiming his old age and business would keep him from committing to the cause. Yet shortly after Pemberton's flattering letter arrived in Cuffe's hands, he responded with temperance to the idea of leading this expedition to Africa's northwest coast. By first acknowledging Pemberton's willingness to "rise to our [Africans' and African Americans'] assistance Without Whose provedencial hand We must Ever miserabel," Cuffe remains within the racial conventions of the period, clearly identifying himself as the deferential person in the exchange. Although Cuffe continues, expressing his desire to help liberate "my Brethren the afferican Race" from the continued illicit slave trading by other nations, he considered himself too "febel and all most Wornout in hard Service and uncapabel of doing much."[43] Still, Cuffe recognized that he had a role to play in the abolition movement because if "god . . . Lay upon me to make an Insterment of me for that Service . . . I Desire Ever to be Submissive that his Will may be done & c."[44] With a curious tone, he ended his letter to Pemberton by asking him to send updates in case Cuffe found the strength to contribute directly to the colonization of Sierra Leone. He supported the recent abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, believing it would be the most effective way of liberating slaves in America and the Atlantic, but relying on this and Great Britain's new laws seemed to guarantee the failure of the Quakers' mission. Although the 1807 (British) and 1808 (American) laws abolishing the trade were important milestones in the fight against slavery, their enforcement proved difficult. Indeed, Great Britain and the United States were, by some accounts, overwhelmed by illicit traders who continued to load their vessels with human cargo.[45] Instead,

Cuffe believed, the most effective way to accomplish this goal was to strike at the heart of the trade in Africa. This mission, so it seemed in the middle of 1808, would have to occur without Cuffe at the helm.

Cuffe's apprehension to join the Sierra Leone project failed to discourage James Pemberton. He quickly elaborated on more details of the project, hoping to pique Cuffe's interest further. "I perceive," he wrote, "they are earnestly attentive to pursue the laudable object of promoting the civilization of Blacks in their own Country [Africa] with a view to draw them off from the wild habits of life to which they have been accustomed by instructing them in arts of Agriculture, mechanical labour and domestic-industry."[46] Before Cuffe's eyes was a succinct description of his own life. Abolitionists wanted Cuffe for what he represented: a man who thrived by adopting American values, Christian ideals, and engaging in trade, the cornerstone the economy of the Atlantic world.[47] Indeed, in reading Pemberton's letter, Cuffe saw before him the ideas he'd been grappling with since the Form met him in his dreams. Through benign imperialism, Cuffe and other African Americans would educate Africans about the moral depravity of the slave trade and discontinue the practice, thereby cutting off the source of slaves to the United States. Once the source had been shut down, Cuffe and others reasoned, slavery would end, and America would adopt more respectable forms of labor.[48] Then, Cuffe predicted, Blacks would prove themselves worthy of citizenship by their actions in Sierra Leone, demonstrating their ability to prosper in that Black nation, and—by extension—in the white nations of the Atlantic. This plan depended on colonizing West Africa with African Americans who shared the Quakers' and Anglicans' values of sobriety, yeoman-like hard work, and evangelizing.

Pemberton endeavored to convince Cuffe to rethink his reluctance to join the cause, assuring him that the most prominent and respectable citizens of London—a city that had long admired Cuffe—were on board with the plan. He identified Prince William Frederick, the Duke of Gloucester and nephew to the king, and others who supported the African Institution and their plan for Sierra Leone, which stood against royal opposition to abolition. Appearing optimistic,

Pemberton recounted the recent victories of abolitionists in both the United States and Great Britain with the abolition of the slave trade, but he conceded to Cuffe that more needed to be done to the "benefit of those poor Inhabitants of Africa." Citing the success of the Quakers in leading American colonial settlement, Pemberton reminded Cuffe—a half-Indian man—that the Sierra Leone project is a "plan as nearly similar to that which Friends are engaged for Civilization of the Indians on the borders of these American States."[49] Pemberton respected Cuffe's accomplishments as a Black man in a white man's world. His friend, William Allen, also noted that Cuffe exemplified the fact that "mere possession of knowledge will not enable a person to change his rank or situation in society, unless he employs that knowledge to the benefit of the community."[50]

Pemberton continued to push Cuffe, telling him of his associates in London who "have with this laudable view formed an Association and raised a considerable sum of money to engage persons of sobriety," a key trait of any good Quaker, "and other necessary qualifications to go over to Africa to instruct them in the art of Agriculture and other proper employments." While there, "they may be readily effected to great advantage if the Natives can be gradually brought to a right disposition to change their former course of living." Pemberton referred optimistically to precedent, noting that Americans, and Quakers in particular, "[have] in some degree promoted with a favourable prospect of further success among Indian natives of this Country [America]."[51] The great success in civilizing savages in Pennsylvania, as Quakers viewed it, could be replicated in West Africa where some of the inhabitants—the former Black Loyalists from America who had arrived in the colony several years prior—were already Christianized.

Pemberton, like many supporters of African colonization, assumed similar success for African Americans dealing with African natives.[52] Indeed, he suggested, the Quakers have civilized others before, so why not stick with the successful course of action? As a Christianized half-Indian, the successful Cuffe understood how prosperous "civilized" Indians could be. He based much of his abolitionist beliefs

on the idea that Blacks could indeed assimilate into American society, as many Americans believed to be the case with Indians. Convinced he had struck at Paul Cuffe's heartstrings, appealing to Cuffe's sense of duty to aid his African brethren while reminding him of his Quaker roots as a part-Indian man whose faith resulted from previous Quaker imperialistic schemes, Pemberton let Cuffe know that the offer of leading this expedition remained open.

Toward the end of this transformative period for Cuffe, his rebirth as an Atlantic African—a man of the Atlantic world and inextricably tied to Africa—emerged fully in the summer of 1809.[53] Shortly after James Pemberton's death, Cuffe wrote to John James and Alexander Wilson, Philadelphia Quakers who had become acquainted with and admired the captain, explaining his decision to join the cause. Expressing his "real desire that the inhabitants of Africa might become an enlightened people," Cuffe identified his desire to "establish" Africans in "the true light of Christianity." As "I am of the African race I feel myself interested for them and if I am favored with a talent I think I am willing that they should be benefitted thereby." Cuffe committed to the expedition, but he had one more request—one that illustrates his business acumen, as well as his interest in profiting financially from the expedition to Sierra Leone. Cuffe asked that the Philadelphia Quakers ensure that he could "carry the productions of the duty free to England."[54] A spiritual yet practical man, Cuffe saw opportunity in the colonization of Sierra Leone, forming a vision of free Blacks providing labor to grow and produce goods desirable in the market of the Atlantic world. Cuffe would pour most of his money onto the Sierra Leone project, fulfilling his moral and ethical responsibilities, but he also set his goal on opening new trade routes and partnerships with the goal of one day seeing his shipping enterprises grow to unprecedented levels.

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Within a few short months after the sermon describing his transformation in front of a Quaker audience in Philadelphia, Paul Cuffe rose to become the undisputed Black leader of America's burgeoning

back-to-Africa movement. It was time for Cuffe to act: he profited from slavery for too long while turning his back on his African brethren. Although he held no grand plans to be the governor or president of this free Black nation in Sierra Leone, Cuffe listened to his Quaker peers and elders who worked to convince him of his centrality to the cause. Cuffe's correspondence makes clear his long support for the idea of colonization, but his reluctance to lead the movement is understandable. Indeed, the aging Cuffe still had a family to support and business to oversee, but the call of philanthropy and the chance to advance his religious ideals overcame his trepidation to leave Westport for eighteen months at a time while he ventured to Africa.

The sermon at the Arch Street Meeting House was one step in Cuffe's transformation from celebrated entrepreneur to abolitionist leader, while his unusual courtship with prominent white Quakers and Anglicans around the Atlantic proved to be the other key component. Convinced he needed to change on a personal level, the London Saints, Philadelphia's Quakers, and former officials of Sierra Leone illustrated the impact Cuffe could have on their attempts eradicate slavery from the Atlantic world. Promising godly and financial support, as well as the ability to trade without restrictions in British waters, Atlantic abolitionists did everything they could win over this Atlantic African. Now, with the full support of white Quakers in Philadelphia, Newport, Providence, London, and Liverpool, Paul Cuffe would pour his heart and wealth into the project of transporting free African Americans to Sierra Leone, where they hoped to found a new nation, built for free persons of African descent. It would serve as his legacy, yet it would also become an obsession for the aging sea captain.

CHAPTER FIVE

"To my scattered brethren"

On the first day of 1808, the United States and Great Britain codified their moral and ethical stance against the trade, outlawing their citizens from participating in it while devoting naval resources to enforce the new ban. The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade was a monumental achievement for a nation unwilling to confront the systemic nature of slavery that was so imbedded in American life. Peter Williams Jr. stood before the St. Philip's African Church of New York to commemorate the recent legislation that ended America's participation in the transatlantic slave trade.[1] This son of an educated free man and a Revolutionary War veteran and West Indian indentured servant mother understood the precariousness and complexities of freedom on the margins of the Atlantic world. The prominent leader in the city's African American community organized St. Philip's and founded the antislavery *Freedom's Journal*.[2] Self-described as "a descendant of Africa," Williams told the audience how "benevolent men" worked to "stop the source from whence our evils flowed," using the language of "human rights" in celebrating the moment *and* reminding everyone not to be complacent.[3]

New York did not seriously entertain emancipation until 1799, when the first manumission laws were passed, and it wasn't until 1827 that the last slave was finally freed in accordance with the law's gradual emancipation provisions.[4] Williams's speech urged his parishioners to change from ardent supporters of abolition to fighters willing to battle for human rights. Abolitionists recognized the importance

of the moment, immediately having Williams's words printed and circulated around the Atlantic world in celebration of the new laws, but they recognized this as but one victory, with many more needed. Various versions of this scene would unfold in other American cities as Black communities gathered to mark the glorious day. Williams emerged as one of America's leading Black ministers.

Throughout 1808, as the winter air chilled churches and meetinghouses, similar celebrations erupted in the port cities of the Atlantic world, with perhaps none as large or powerful as those along North America's eastern coast. In Philadelphia, Absalom Jones, the first African minster in an American Episcopal Church, gave a thanksgiving oration on 1 January 1808 in St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in which he called on Africans in America to deliver the sermon, or God's word, to enlighten their brethren in Africa.[5] At sixty-four years old, he bought his way out of slavery during the American Revolution, since then residing in Philadelphia where he cofounded the Free African Society. His church, St. Thomas' Free African Church, was the first of its kind in the city, opening in 1794 and becoming a beacon for many freemen and -women. Philadelphia's Black citizens were among the most active abolitionists in the Atlantic world, with hundreds gathering to celebrate the abolition of the trade. His sermon reflected the city's strong voice that had reached across the Atlantic for decades to unite with their African brethren. Blacks in Philadelphia were not ardent supporters of African emigration as were African Americans in Newport, Rhode Island, or New York, but the desire to aid Atlantic Africans ran deep in the community.[6]

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the streets of Boston, New England's largest city, were not bursting at the seams with abolitionists as they would be in a few short decades, its citizens seemingly more concerned with the marketplace and wharves. This would change as the city's recently constructed African Meetinghouse hosted a joyous and "orderly" celebration of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.[7] Approximately two hundred of Boston's Black citizens processed through the humid summertime streets of Beacon Hill, winding through Joy Street and the surrounding narrow alleys

of the neighborhood during the late morning of July 14, 1808, as celebrants conducted themselves in accordance with white Bostonians' expectations. The music "prepared principally by the people of colour," religious exercises, "and the subsequent festivities of the day" were deemed to have the "appropriate degree of seriousness, sobriety, order, and decency," which proved to be "highly creditable to these Africans."[8] Services were led by Dr. Jedidiah Morse, a white pastor from Charlestown, who gave an address and was likely on stage, alongside other whites, to remind the audience of their place in the city. Avid supporters of abolition, these men did not seek equality and inclusion.

These sermons and public celebrations demanded more action, not to rest on the laurels of congressional legislation but to press onward with the fight to end slavery in the Western Hemisphere. Implied, if not spoken, these Black and white messengers of God wanted to spread Christianity to the shores of West Africa, the origin and heart of the slave trade's illicit exchange of human beings. The significant legislation that abolished the trade in enslaved people simultaneously reinforced the social status of Blacks in America, as seen by the way whites kept a keen eye on their celebrations, but the moment also provided free Blacks a podium from which to proclaim their identity and to reiterate their commitment to their brethren in the diaspora.

Paul Cuffe emerged as a leading soldier in this fight. Black and white abolitionists from around the Atlantic envisioned this sober, reliable, and venerable Quaker man to navigate the 1808 abolition of the slave trade toward African soil where pagans, Muslims, and Atlantic Africans could be shown the light of the Lord. "Having been informed that there was a settlement of people of colour at Sierra Leone under the immediate guardianship of a civilized power," wrote Paul Cuffe in 1812, "I have for these many years past felt a lively interest in their behalf."[9] On that stage in Philadelphia, where he presented a conversion story from coastal trader to transatlantic abolitionist, the Form's healing of his heart would begin the final stage of Cuffe's journey from musta to African.

Cuffe wanted to show other inhabitants of Sierra Leone the "vital spirit of devotion," which he suspected was "more form [than]

substance" in the colony.[10] He worried that the colony did not adhere to the Quaker values that so dominated his world, values that Paul Cuffe imagined could be spread to surrounding African communities involved in the slave trade. Since the emergence of the transatlantic slave trade, African slave traders had reoriented their internal trade from the previous West Africa to North Africa route to the West African coast where European slave ships gathered.[11] After centuries of profit, convincing Africans to shift to other means of financial and political gain would be difficult. In Cuffe's mind, making Sierra Leone commercially and morally successful by engaging in legitimate trade and spreading Christianity could build a strong community that would strike at the heart of the slave trade. Through exposure to Christian values Africans involved in the slave trade could see the error of their ways, coming to terms with the evil trade much as the American and British governments had when banning the trade.

Paul Cuffe knew there was more at stake than the challenge of rebuilding a colony. Sierra Leone had been a thorn in Britain's side for years since its establishment in 1787 as the Province of Freedom.[12] Disorder, violence, and revolt occurred often as free Black colonists demanded the acreage they were promised and resisted corrupt British officials who governed. This colony that intended to showcase the civility of Africans and African Americans seemed to outside observers to only highlight their inability to live peacefully in a free state. By the early nineteenth century, little had changed in the colony, and those who supported it were desperate for change. Paul Cuffe understood his role in this drama: lead it from chaos and violence to productivity, faith, and industry.

Driven by ideas and religious conviction, Paul Cuffe's first concern with any transatlantic voyage to West Africa was financial: Could such a voyage pay for itself or even possibly turn a profit? The Embargo Act of 1807—which was intended to halt Britain's impressment of American sailors and ships but instead crippled the American economy—put a damper on Cuffe's plans for trade during his voyages to Africa. Tense Anglo-American political relations deadened transatlantic commerce, yet supporters urged him not to abandon

his objectives.[13] William Allen, a well-known and widely respected Quaker, knew of Paul Cuffe's intentions for Africa. "Provided he met with sufficient encouragement," Allen noted, Cuffe would "sail from America to Sierra Leone, with a cargo likely to be suitable for the place." Upon arriving, Cuffe would become an anthropologist of sorts, observing what "would enable him to judge whether he should do right to encourage some sober families of Black people in America to settle among the Africans, and if so, he intended to convey them in his own vessel."[14] Cuffe's opportunism was not simply a quest for profit because he "believed trade was aid."[15] Through free trade, the province's citizens could labor honestly, supporting themselves and building the economy of their own lands. Cuffe resisted the temptation to rely on the benevolence of others—white and Black abolitionists who donated funds to alms societies—and instead intended to build a culture of self-reliance. He believed the citizens of Sierra Leone could mimic his own story of success.

The Embargo Act, and later the Non-Intercourse Act, may have prevented Cuffe's use of trade to fund his first voyage to Sierra Leone, but generally, it did not throttle his business. From 1807 to 1808, Cuffe considered sending his ships off the coast of Africa, near Cape Verde and the Azores, to whale alongside Portuguese vessels where he could lay the groundwork for developing whaling ventures in Sierra Leone.[16] Other markets proved profitable as his brig *Adventure* engaged in the fish trade as far afield as Suriname.[17] Cuffe determined not to sail to West Africa and instead chose to circumvent the embargo by voyaging to Scandinavia, where the market for his goods was strong and where he could carry back desired goods.

"Upon the broad Atlantic's briny bosom," wrote Paul Cuffe Jr. in an account of his father's first transatlantic journey, "all the sails fluttering in the balmy breeze, and all hands full of hope and buoyant with expectation," the *Alpha* made its way across the sea.[18] Cuffe's reputation as a coastal trader along the American coast was set in stone, so firm that he could slide in and out of ports brimming with enslaved men and women without fear of being captured or sold into slavery himself. Yet Cuffe knew that for him to pursue his newfound

passion to free his brethren across the Atlantic he had to cross the ocean, where his name did not necessarily offer him protection from slavers and slave traders. As much as his son characterized the waters in storybook fashion, the long, complex journey to trade and make contacts in Europe would not be easy.

The journey began in Maine in May 1808 "on the morning of a pleasant day," where the *Alpha* loaded plaster of Paris for shipment southward. Manned by sixteen hands on deck, as well as the young Cuffe, who found "novelty attending a sea voyage" for the first time, the ship returned to Westport before embarking to Wilmington, Delaware. After a sixteen-day voyage along the coast, Cuffe's crew took on ballast and three hundred bushels of apples before setting sail for Savannah. Once in port, the *Alpha's* cargo was off-loaded to be replaced by cotton, logwood, and rice. These items proved far more appealing to the European buyers who awaited their arrival in Liverpool. Once the *Alpha* disembarked from Savannah, the ship followed the Gulf Stream to the Grand Banks on "a long, tedious voyage" before "we steered away for the northern coast of Scotland."[19]

The main port the elder Cuffe steered his ship toward during this journey was Gottenburgh (now Gothenburg), "a flourishing town in West Gothland in Sweden." Variously controlled by the Dutch and the Swedes, Gottenburgh was seen in the eighteenth century as an important fishing port, but it began to emerge as a center for trade with China by the early nineteenth century. Here, "we lay six weeks, sold our lading, and took in a load of iron, steel and hemp."[20] The iron and hemp were the main prizes Cuffe searched for because of a standing order for hemp from William Rotch Jr.'s sail and rope making business. Gottenburgh was a center of raw materials import and export, bringing in flax seed, raw silk, and hemp to export out to the wider Atlantic trade.[21] After a brief stop in Denmark to take on passengers, the *Alpha* set sail for Philadelphia, where it arrived eighteen months after first setting sail.

Although the first half of the journey seemed easy, described in the most romantic terms Cuffe Jr. could muster, the hostile waters of the Atlantic would soon take their toll on the *Alpha*. On the final

leg of the journey, prior to the young Cuffe being matriculated at a Quaker school for two years in Philadelphia, the difficulties of the sea and whim of the Atlantic impacted the *Alpha*. "During this voyage," he wrote, "we had much rough weather" that "compelled" them "to throw overboard fifty tons of iron while on the Grand Banks." Additionally, the weather turned so violent that "during this gale we lost our fore-top-mast, jib-boom and long boat."[22] The trials suffered by *Alpha*'s crew in the autumn of 1809 reflected the difficulties the elder Paul Cuffe would endure on his next transatlantic crossings, where life as a simple coastal trader in North America must have, at times, seemed comfortable. Having experienced a transatlantic crossing, Cuffe would be called upon to help rebuild Sierra Leone from the outside in and inside out: bring in *worthy* Black American colonists while teaching the current population how to be industrious, Christian, and sober.

"It has been asserted that the negro is naturally indolent and improvident," observed Wilson Armistead, a man whose words reflected the widespread sentiments of the early nineteenth-century America and the wider Atlantic world. "Amongst the many proofs that might be adduced to the contrary," he continued, is the story of Paul Cuffe's redemption from the Black sea captain and trader of slave goods to a man recognized for "the exertions" that "entitles him to the esteem of the world."[23] It was this story of Paul Cuffe's that many hoped would turn around the situation in Sierra Leone.[24] Born in the wool-trading center of Leeds, England, Armistead emerged as an ardent abolitionist, writing popular tracts on the worthiness of persons of color in the larger Atlantic world.[25] This Quaker's writing focused on stories of uplift, biographical sketches that characterized Black men, in particular, as every bit as intelligent, hardworking, and pious as their white counterparts. For most white Americans and Britons, Paul Cuffe emerged at the end of the first decade of the 1800s as a savior of sorts, a financially successful Black man who was educated, skilled, well-mannered, and religious. Praised for being "inclined to the pursuit of commerce" in this rapidly emerging proto-capitalist economy, Cuffe turned away from his business enterprises to focus

on his brethren, his fellow Blacks, whom he could uplift through his entrepreneurial prowess.[26] Cuffe saw Sierra Leone as a unique financial opportunity for himself and others of African descent. The colony—although corruptly administered—appeared to be a blank slate in many ways, a space where he could profit financially while helping to build business, manufacturing, and agricultural opportunities for its Black inhabitants. He had long shared his success with Wampanoags (including his nephews) and mixed-race laborers by employing them on his ships. Now, he turned his attention to Africa.

With reports questioning Sierra Leone's stability, Cuffe and Friends knew they had to act quickly to avoid the colony's dissolution into chaos. The embargo limited their options. "Inform" English officials, Cuffe asked colleagues John James and Alexander Wilson, "that I wish to take with me" items that Sierra Leone's "inhabitants might be benefitted both with agriculture and commerce."[27] Cuffe's Friends also schemed to find a way to allow him to navigate to England prior to Sierra Leone, where he could procure freight to be traded.[28] Beyond simply setting up trade, members of the African Institution and the Quaker network of abolitionists and supporters of African colonization looked to Paul Cuffe for leadership and to symbolically represent the potential for those who would resettle along Africa's West Coast.

The ideal situation in many antislavery minds around the Atlantic was for Cuffe to bring his family to Sierra Leone, demonstrating his commitment to the cause. Zachary Macaulay, the former governor of Sierra Leone who now resided in London as member of the African Institution and the Clapham Sect, believed "A person like Paul Cuffee [*sic*] would most unquestionably be a desirable accession to the population" of the colony.[29] Pressure mounted as antislavery activists urged the man to be among the first African American settlers in the nineteenth century, paving the way for thousands more Black American colonists. Despite the rhetoric, the captain's commitment to his ideals, and the deep-seated connection he felt with his fictive African kin, reality set in. For nearly one hundred years, the Cuffe/Kofi name had roamed the shores of Massachusetts, carving out and harvesting a patch of freedom on the soil of slavery, and now in this

new era of freedom in the Commonwealth, Cuffe faced uncertainty: would Cuffe uproot his family and ship them more than three thousand miles to a foreign land, with foreign peoples where violence was commonplace?

John James, the Philadelphia merchant and Quaker Friend of Cuffe, shared many letters with him. Their joint investments were often the topic of conversation, but in 1809, James's tone evoked a new level of seriousness when matters concerning Sierra Leone were discussed. James was among those Friends to appeal to Cuffe to move as soon as Cuffe began to think about the Sierra Leone project and weighed relocating. "If I concluded to settle there," Cuffe pondered during the summer of 1809, "I would wish" to establish duty-free trade between the colony and England.[30] His concern seemed to focus on whether he could resume his trade and fishing businesses once resettled in Sierra Leone. Cuffe's concern with his family's financial health took precedence over his philanthropic goals, but others suggested the man visit the colony prior to deciding on the fate of his family.

Macaulay wanted Cuffe to "minutely inspect . . . the state of things" in the colony before deciding the move. During his five years as governor of Sierra Leone from 1794 to 1799, Macaulay witnessed continual violence, poor living conditions, and disease that he felt would make life difficult for Cuffe and his family.[31] Cuffe now faced a major decision that could potentially drag his family from the safety of their established farms and homes along the Acoaxet River (known as the Westport River today) and deliver them to a chaotic milieu where former American slaves, deported Jamaican Maroons, and native Africans challenged Euro-American notions of a harmonious African nation. Paul Cuffe adhered to Macaulay's advice, deciding to visit the colony to assess the situation on the ground before deciding how to resettle in West Africa and who should do so. At home in Westport, the captain drew plans for his first transatlantic crossing in over a year, a reconnaissance trip that would open his eyes to a world that he could not have imagined in the safety of his Massachusetts home. Even the widely traveled seaman appeared shocked at what awaited him in the Province of Freedom.

In late December 1810, Paul Cuffe sailed for Sierra Leone with a crew of eight Black sailors and one white apprentice seaman aboard the brig *Traveller*, chosen for this crossing because of its sturdy nature and ability to withstand the Atlantic's force. After a reasonably uneventful fifty-eight-day crossing ending in April 1811, Cuffe scanned the coast of Sierra Leone, unsure of what and who awaited him in Africa, beyond the information contained in the numerous letters sent to him describing the colony. Cuffe's stay lasted a few months, during which time he gained important insights about the colony and its inhabitants, devising plans to infuse hope and sobriety in the colony that he would soon see to be in disarray.[32] Later in 1811, Paul Cuffe left Sierra Leone for London to trade the remaining goods he had aboard his brig, bringing with him an apprentice seaman from the colony. Cuffe was met with fanfare when he arrived in Liverpool, but this did little to assuage concerns he had for the colony and Britain's attempt to provide a home for refugee Blacks from around their Atlantic empire.

"The dust of Africa," Paul Cuffe reported, is "lodged on our rigging."[33] While sailing from Westport en route to Sierra Leone via Philadelphia in January 1811, his brig's intricate web of rope, sails, and masts soon became coated in the soil of his native land—a land that he had never been to—symbolizing Cuffe and his crew's aspirations and idealism of the Atlantic In the relatively calm equatorial waters, Cuffe and his crew "judged the land [Africa] to be about twenty-five leagues," or seventy-five miles, away.[34] This distance would take almost two weeks to cover, slightly longer than on a typical voyage, but this ship was not just another off the coast of the African continent. The *Traveller* carried the dreams of America's wealthiest Black man—a man whose family history and lived life epitomized newly emerging groups of Atlantic Africans whose influence and power reached beyond that of their predecessors.

On 11 November 1810, the *Traveller* left Westport, Massachusetts, en route to Philadelphia, where the ship would be outfitted for the journey across the Atlantic. The passenger list read as a who's who of Cuffe relations, with brother John, Paul Wainer, Paul Cuffe Jr.,

William Cuffe, and Paul's "Aprintace Boy" Abraham Rodean. Listed as the "owner of the Brig and Supercargo," Cuffe did not captain the ship, instead leaving that position to Thomas Wainer, his nephew who had garnered experience leading some of Cuffe's other vessels on whaling adventures in the South Atlantic.[35] The sea that day portended the voyage in general as the *Traveller* met with "Well Wind at North . . . Pleasant Weather and Smooth Sea," conditions that would greet the brig throughout much of the journey.[36] Less than two weeks later, the vessel arrived in Philadelphia, ready to take on more crew and cargo, but it would not be an easy stopover for the ship's owner.

Conflict awaited the fifty-one-year-old Cuffe as he disembarked from the *Traveller*. Cuffe returned to the Arch Street Meeting House—the site of his conversion from dealer in slave-grown goods to savior of his African brethren—where he met with Philadelphia's Friends who supported his Sierra Leone adventure. He and partner John James disagreed immediately on the grander purpose of the voyage. James possessed a cargo of corn that he had saved for Cuffe to carry across the Atlantic, urging him to load it aboard the waiting ship. Paul immediately objected, informing James "that Was not my business" and it "Reather apeard to me" that the voyage "Was Not for the Prospect of Gain."[37] The two made amends almost as quickly as the bickering began. Paul reasoned the only profit to be made should pertain to funding the venture—an idea that James agreed with, allowing the two men to focus on other, more pressing matters. Yet, the skirmish in Philadelphia would expand, including an argument over whether Alexander Wilson, former business partner to both men, would be included in the Sierra Leone project. When James reneged on the deal to include Wilson by writing to London while Cuffe was en route, the usually moderate-tempered Cuffe considered James's duplicity "a great trial over me."[38] James cut Wilson out of the project. The two men would never quite be on even terms again.

Former governor Zachary Macaulay had warned Cuffe of abject conditions in the colony, but along the bustling wharves of Philadelphia, he heard alternative views. "Falling in With a man who Came from Sierra Leone" two months prior, Cuffe recorded in his ship's log,

he gave a "flatering accont" of the colony, causing the tension filling Cuffe's mind to ease a bit, as he considered what Sierra Leone might indeed be like upon arrival.[39] The ship and crew spent just under one month in port, fitting the brig with hardware and cargo, loading the midsize vessel with enough food to cross the Atlantic and enough trade goods to pay for the voyage.

During the first three weeks of the voyage, Cuffe reported little other than calm seas and favorable winds. By day twenty-five, the first gale force winds were recorded, but little alarm seems evident in the logs. Six days later, as the brig sailed near the Azores, the *Traveller* narrowly escaped disaster. High winds shook the vessel, opening leaks in the hull that required a barrel of pitch to be opened to stop the leaking. The winds increased overnight, thrashing the ocean waters into frothy, crashing waves that washed John Masters overboard during the storm. Masters grasped some loose rigging at the last instant, pulling himself back where he would "Regain the Ship" and take shelter from the tempest.[40] Despite the events of those two days, Cuffe evinced little emotion, instead dutifully recording the longitude and latitude even as heavy rain and more squalls heaved the ship back and forth in the middle of the Atlantic, just over the halfway point in their journey.

The *Traveller*'s crew spent a lonely two months on the boat, encountering only three other ships while at sea, two Portuguese and one British trading vessel bound for London or America. By early March, much to the delight of Cuffe, the voyage encountered "Gentel Breezes" on most days, which allowed him to revisit Thomas Clarkson's "Records on Abolishing Slavery."[41] Cuffe coveted the book that he claimed "Batized my mind" on antislavery and the colony of Sierra Leone, sparking many conversations with Friends "at home" that "Would Land Very over my head but . . . afford me Consolation and Comfort."[42] Clarkson's work on the abolition of the slave trade proved to be very popular among the Quaker and Anglican antislavery networks of the Atlantic. Considered a friend of the slaves, Clarkson advocated early on for abolition, writing a university thesis on the dissolution of the institution based on human rights and natural law.

For men like Cuffe, Clarkson was *the* crusader against slavery to the extent that he was temporarily considered a traitor to King George III by some as he vocally supported the French Revolution.[43]

Just four days from Africa, the crew's good fortune continued. With small winds and a hot sun, they "Caught 1 Dolfin and many suker fish So We had an Excellent fish Dinner for the first time Since We Sailed from America."[44] Nearing the coast of West Africa, Cuffe observed the bounty of the coastal waters. Fish jumped, tortoises proliferated, and many other vessels were encountered. Within a few short days, the *Traveller* entered Freetown's harbor, spotting two vessels captured for illicit slaving and British frigates undoubtedly there to patrol the waters in support of the recent laws abolishing the transatlantic slave trade. After fifty-eight days at sea, Paul Cuffe and his crew, following the command of his nephew, arrived safely in Sierra Leone, unsure of what to expect and cautiously optimistic that this would be the start of a long-term commitment to revitalizing the colony.

On this first trip to Africa, Cuffe hoped to lay the foundation for future mass migration of free African Americans to Britain's West African colony. There they could set up trading outposts, organize a representative government, and practice Christianity. Cuffe imagined a Black republic in West Africa that guaranteed the liberties and freedoms Great Britain and the United States failed to deliver to the former slaves. He arrived in Africa, one contemporary observed, a "strange and animating spectacle," a "free and enlightened African entering as an independent trader, with his Black crew into that port which was so lately the Nidus of the slave trade."[45] Now in his fifties, Cuffe triumphantly entered the harbor in Sierra Leone as an African from America.

Cuffe's stay lasted a few months, during which time he gained important insights into the colony and its inhabitants. A systematic thinker, he immediately took a census of people living under the guardianship of a "Civilized power [Great Britain]."[46] Reprinted below exactly as it appeared in Cuffe's published account of the trip, the census meticulously recorded the ethnic and geographic composition of Sierra Leone (see table 1). The easily recognizable differences between ethnic groups

suggest a highly stratified or segregated community based on Black ethnic origins. Furthermore, the ethnic groups described in the table reflect what can best be described as African Atlantic ethnicities. Of the four Black groups listed, two—Nova Scotians and Maroons—were collections of West African ethnic groups united by their experiences in the Atlantic. Cuffe's census recorded the essence of the transnational African Atlantic experience by noting the changing composition of African ethnicities. It also revealed how an elite Black man envisioned differences of class within the Black Atlantic community.[47]

Table 1: Sierra Leone Census.

	MEN	WOMEN	CHILDREN	TOTAL
EUROPEANS	22	4	2	28
NOVA SCOTIANS	188	295	499	982
MAROONS	165	195	447	807
AFRICANS	20	43	37	100
CRUE MEN	601			601
			TOTAL POP.	2518

SOURCE: Paul Cuffe, *A Brief Account of the Settlement and Present Situation of the Colony of Sierra Leone* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1970).

According to Cuffe's census, whites represented just 1.1 percent of the population, making this truly a settlement of persons of color. Most of these whites, or Europeans, however, were involved in government affairs on various levels, reflecting the "civilized power" that oversaw the colony. Cuffe viewed England in a similar manner as Boston King did a decade earlier: a nation of intellectuals and morally upstanding men whose presence in Sierra Leone could only aid in the advancement of its Black residents.[48] These white elites oversaw a stratified community of Blacks where common laborers, such as the Crue Men and "Africans," literally occupied the lower rows on Cuffe's chart. Meanwhile, the semiskilled and skilled Nova Scotians and Maroons represented the mid-level social and economic group.

The "civilized power" proved multilayered for Cuffe, though. Beyond the white government, Cuffe noted that seven to eight schools had

been built, existing churches were well attended, and five courts of law had been organized for Black inhabitants. For a Black man who had worked within the institutions of white America—schools, Christian churches, and the power of the courts—a "civilized power" remained central to the long-term success of any free Black settlement. This framework for a lawful, educated, and Christian colony satisfied Cuffe, who optimistically reported that residents "generally . . . encourage new settlers for the purpose of cultivating the land or engaging in commercial enterprise."[49] Crue men were from a specific group of Africans hired for their skills in building and labor. They were not from the immediate area surrounding the colony and thus were considered separate from native Africans. The Crue (also known as Kru or Grebo) served as itinerant workers for British traders and officials. Some scholars trace their relationship with the British to 1799, lasting throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These skilled and unskilled laborers generally hailed from present-day Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ghana, but Crue leaders were willing to recruit workers from virtually anywhere along the West African coast. Workers often arrived in canoes holding four or six men, traveling along the coast until reaching the designated work zone.

Met with petitions by the inhabitants of Sierra Leone that called for "foreign brethren" to migrate from America and Britain to the colony, Cuffe realized that his goal of opening trade with Africa was a distinct possibility. He seemed willing to overlook negative reports, such as one that claimed an educated Black Englishman was "fe[eling] inclined to return among his old comrades" in England instead of remaining in Africa.[50] Teachers and ministers were the foundation of any attempt to build a successful colony, much less to "civilize" Africa. Reports of even a handful deserting the mission alluded to instability that could make it even more difficult to establish a free nation.

Although optimistic about the potential of Sierra Leone to become a self-supporting Black nation, the habits of the resettled Black Loyalists (or, Nova Scotians) concerned Cuffe. The Quaker viewed these former slaves with disdain. Despite their desire to "establish commerce in Sierra Leone . . . it appears that there is not so much industry

as would be but . . . the people of the colony are very fond of the spirituous liquors." Their drunkenness caused the "industry on their farms [to be] much neglected"; meanwhile, "their young men are too fond of leaving the colony" to become "seamen for other people." The itinerancy of the core of the colony—industrious young men—made it difficult to build a stable, long-term economic and physical infrastructure. Cuffe turned to commerce as a method of moral improvement because it "might have this good tendency of keeping the young men at home, and in some future day qualify them to become managers of themselves."[51] Commerce had enabled Cuffe to rise from an agrarian background to become perhaps America's wealthiest Black man. Certainly, he reasoned, it could help establish some semblance of order in the rowdy multiethnic milieu of Sierra Leone.

Nearly twenty-five years after the first group arrived in Sierra Leone, the Nova Scotians still lived in wood-framed grass huts that looked primitive to Cuffe. Even though he saw "no reason why they may not become a nation to be numbered among the historians' nations of the world," issues of class and ethnic difference colored Cuffe's observations. The task was clear: the Nova Scotians must become "thus qualified to carry commerce" by becoming sober and staying in the colony to establish ties with American and British merchants.[52] No colony in the Americas, Cuffe inferred, had flourished with drunken settlers. Indeed, only upstanding Black men like himself could succeed in an Atlantic system where Blacks typically worked for white captains. Furthermore, the Nova Scotians must settle down, "introducing trade for the natives" to help "prepare their minds for the reception of better things, etc."[53] As he set sail for England, before returning to America, disappointment in the state of the colony lingered. The Quaker lamented, "I am in the hopes some sober families may find their way to Sierra Leone"; otherwise, the "civilization of Africa" may prove elusive.[54]

Additionally, Cuffe seemed perplexed by the native Africans he encountered on trips upriver and inland. Impressed by inland tribes' ability to "acknowledge by words, the existence of a Deity," Cuffe also remarked that "so accustomed are they to wars and slavery that . . . it would be a difficult task to convince them of the impropriety [of

these] pernicious practices." Stopping the slave trade would not be easy. Furthermore, the Muslims encountered by Cuffe only hindered his larger goal of abolishing slavery and the slave trade in West Africa, as they favored the enslavement of non-Muslim Africans, according to Cuffe, proving that the Islamic "education had taken too firm hold of their minds to admit much effect [of] reason [regarding]" the subject of abolishing slavery.[55] Cuffe believed their banning alcohol in the community illustrated Muslims' strong commitment to morality. Still, a frustrated Cuffe determined the Muslim tribes unsupportive and unfriendly in building a free Black, Christian colony.

Upon leaving Sierra Leone in 1811, Paul Cuffe left an address: "To my scattered brethren and fellow countrymen at Sierra Leone." In it, he said, "Come . . . let us walk together in the light of the Lord" because "in so doing you will find a living hope which will be as an anchor to the soul and a support under afflictions."[56] The idea was admirable, but Cuffe himself realized that he was hardly African after this visit to Sierra Leone. Infighting, politics, and a lack of funding, coupled with disease and warfare with native Africans, soured Cuffe's goal to "civilize" Africa.

In Cuffe's mind, hard work lay ahead: native Africans, Nova Scotians, and the Maroons must be converted or, in the case of those already baptized, made humble, practicing Christians. Until then, Cuffe's common use of "brethren" veiled a divide in the Black Atlantic community. Nearly 40 percent of Sierra Leone's population was just a few decades removed from America, but their experiences in the diaspora had changed them, inviting Cuffe's contempt. They were "brethren," linked as members of the "African race," but not yet unified for a common purpose as Cuffe envisioned.

CHAPTER SIX

English Celebrity

In the days before the *Traveller* pulled anchor to set sail for America, a letter arrived in Freetown from William Allen that would change Paul Cuffe's plans.[1] Allen—the noted London Quaker and antislavery advocate—promised Cuffe six months duty-free trade with Great Britain if the man sailed for England instead of America. The goal for Allen was to lure Cuffe to the English coast to meet the Saints, or those members of African Institution and Clapham Sect who so ardently supported the man's journey to Sierra Leone. Once arrived, Cuffe would meet Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce—the catalysts for the abolition laws governing the slave trade. Cuffe responded to Allen's invitation with enthusiasm, promising to set "Sail the Day I Received Licence" enabling him to "Endeavour" at "Commercial intercourse."[2] Preparations were underway, with the change of course causing Cuffe to search for cargo to trade to England and the decision to leave behind Thomas Wainer, captain of the *Traveller*, to ensure a "Small intercourse between America and Sierra Leone" be kept open.[3]

As the crew prepared for the voyage to England, Cuffe wrote Allen a letter to be shared with the rest of the African Institution that described his experiences in Freetown, as well as his concern for the future of their project. "This countery is a Countery of fertility," proclaimed the experienced farmer, where corn, sugarcane, cotton, and rice all prospered.[4] Cuffe marveled at how coffee grew in the wild in the desert of the country, which lay just south of town. His optimism

faded as he turned to other matters, especially when discussing the "infirmities" that are "more frequent in Affrica," causing many people to either leave the colony or perish, including a missing schoolteacher who had lived among native peoples in their inland villages.[5] Perhaps most troubling to Cuffe was the lack of godliness and sobriety. A few days prior he mentioned that too many people, especially those "Professors of Mahomet," dealt in the trade of spirituous liquors, making them wealthy and lazy to the point they were "very fond of having a Number of Servents about them."[6] Although Quakerism had a long history of dialog with and tolerance for Muslims, Cuffe viewed this particular community in and around Sierra Leone with disdain.[7] For the colony to exploit its rich, fertile soil, these types of activities needed to be eradicated.

On the 10th of May 1811—just a few weeks after receiving Allen's letter—Cuffe ordered the crew to weigh anchor and set the sails for a northwesterly course to England. The brig briefly followed the Sierra Leone River northwest past Bullom Shore on toward the Middle Ground Shoal and out to the stormy Atlantic Ocean, whose waters rolled and heaved during the late spring and early summer. The *Traveller* sailed north/northwestward into the northeast trade wind, steering west of the Portuguese-owned Cape Verde islands, to "shape a course for the English channel."[8] Much concerned the seaman's mind—How was his family in Westport? How well were his business interests being tended to in his absence?—but none more so than the question of Sierra Leone. Now, as he set course to meet with his chief supporters in the most powerful empire on earth, he returned to the comfort of shipboard routine. For the next sixty-two days the *Traveller* encountered heavy seas and storms that foreshadowed Cuffe's remaining years: he would struggle to find government financing and ideological support from the African American community for the Sierra Leone project.

Just two days out, the *Traveller* encountered "Very heavey Rain" that would turn into a thunder and lightning storm for the next twenty-four hours.[9] When not raining, the "Jumbel Seas" rolled the ship, which proved to be "Very trying for [the] Sales" leading to a

dismal experience for the crew.[10] The winds proved unfavorable as well, with headwinds that slowed the voyage. Yet, as Cuffe was apt to do, he found the positive in the situation: seeing a number of large sperm whales that appeared to be in a "Very good moode," hailing numerous other ships encountered, and finding small symbols of hope when he saw a "Rainbow at Night Which God Placed as a token that the World Should not be Distroyed with a Deluge or overflow of Waters again."[11] Cuffe joined many others—such as Napoleon—in viewing the Great Comet of 1811 as a portent of good, perhaps the reason he referred to it as a—symbolic—*rainbow* at night. Still, bad news seemed to follow the *Traveller* on this voyage as its crew learned of the battle between USS *President*, the USS *Constitution*'s sister ship, and HMS *Little Bell*. In a preamble to the War of 1812, the two ships had encountered each other off the Carolina coast on 14 May 1811, with the *President* taking on little damage but inflicting severe casualties on the much smaller *Little Bell*, which suffered nine dead and twenty-three injured in the attack.[12] The event increased tensions between the United States and Great Britain, but not so much as to interfere with Cuffe's affairs in England. Cuffe expressed relief to find the "British Government" would "let merchants . . . Pass unmolested" despite giving orders to His Majesty's "Ships of War" to hunt down American naval vessels.[13] With a formal declaration of war still a year away, merchants like Cuffe were welcomed in British waters.

As the brig approached the English coast, numerous ships passed by the *Traveller*. Cuffe did not flag down each ship, but he was always interested in whatever information he could gather, noting the style, masts, and sails and estimating the draft of the vessels. Cuffe was a student of the seas, which grew more crowded at the same time the weather turned foul once again. The crew was forced to fire their small cannon in heavy fog to alert any ships nearby of their location, just as Cuffe reported hearing "Voises with the horn Drum and fireing of the Cannon" from other vessels trapped in the thickening air. Approaching Liverpool harbor from the Irish Sea and passing River Dee which lay just south of their destination, the captain decided to wait out the fog. Setting still in the Sea Lake—a pool of water between the sea

and Liverpool's River Mersey—the eerie calm allowed the crew time to slaughter an African pig for "a good Cook."[14] Like the voyage from America to Africa, this journey would end with a feast to celebrate safe passage north from the Grain Coast.

"On the first of the present month of August, 1811, a vessel arrived in Liverpool, with cargo from Sierra-Leone," announced the *Liverpool Mercury*, which chronicled the activities of the powerful city's harbor.[15] The *Traveller* being piloted down the River Mersey "must have been a strange and animating spectacle to see this free and enlightened African" entering the port "as an independent trader, with his Black crew." As the observer noted, Cuffe's entrance into Liverpool's harbor was an especially ironic and transcendent occurrence, given that port "was so lately the *nexus* of the Slave Trade."[16] At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Liverpool stood as a beacon to merchants and mariners for trade throughout the globe. To refashion its image, the city now feted the Black sea captain and his Black crew, at least for the time being.

Liverpool accumulated its wealth as the center of the transatlantic slave trade in England, even though the first slaver did not leave its port until the trade was well established at the end of the seventeenth century. By the turn of the eighteenth century, when England—soon to be Great Britain with 1707's Act of Union—accounted for approximately 37 percent of the total slaves transported across the Atlantic, investors and mariners in Liverpool saw opportunity. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Britain's foothold in the trade remained steady at 41 percent until the American Revolutionary War, when England's share in the trade plummeted to 23 percent as France and the United States poached the flow of slaves from Africa to America. Ironically, at 748,612 individuals transported, this twenty-five-year period of 1776 to 1800 would see Great Britain haul the second largest number of enslaved people in any twenty-five-year period since the trade began.[17] Long resistant to the abolition of the slave trade, Liverpool's members of Parliament played a significant role in fighting the legislation only to face the shuttering of its most reliable source of profits in 1807. Grand houses, several churches, and even the town

hall were built with the money that flowed in from the trade and Liverpudlians' investments in sugar plantations in the Caribbean. By 1811, when Cuffe and crew arrived in the harbor, the city faced the challenge of rebuilding its economy, finding new ways to thrive in this post–transatlantic slave trade economy.

The nineteenth-century British press indulged themselves, with at least five major newspapers and journals reporting on *Traveller*'s arrival to an eager public all over the British Isles.[18] London's press represented nearly one-third of the newspapers published in England during the nineteenth century, but regional papers also had strong readership eager to follow Cuffe's adventures.[19] Cuffe's celebrity preceded him to England as people lined the docks of Liverpool awaiting the arrival of the *Traveller* from Sierra Leone in mid-July 1811. The ship's entrance into Liverpool's harbor that summer reinforced the "two-ness" of being Black in the Atlantic world: he and his crew could be enslaved by insidious traders on the high seas or be met with fanfare in the world's most nefarious port city. Cuffe brought his crew to England to meet with the leadership of the African Institution in order to plan the most effective method of colonizing Sierra Leone with free African Americans.

The crew worked for thirty six hours to land the *Traveller* and were immediately boarded by the press-gang, a common occurrence in this region. The gang "came onboard my Vessell and let me know that they had 2 of my men, and over hawled the Remainder of the Crew." Aaron Richards, the African apprentice Cuffe had taken onboard in Sierra Leone, was also impressed and "Claimed . . . as a British Subject."[20] Richards, the son of a wealthy African who encouraged Cuffe to take him to England, encountered an alternative form of bonded labor that created a rift between the United States and Great Britain: impressment.[21] British press-gangs routinely boarded American ships, claiming members of their crew to be British citizens and therefore compelled to serve His Majesty's navy. Cuffe seemed little surprised by the press-gang's action, commonly aimed at both Blacks and whites during the War of 1812, but the Richards's case bothered him because he had effectively delivered the boy from freedom in

Africa to bondage in the wider Atlantic world. This son of an enslaved African would not rest until the boy was freed.

Amid the commotion, another of Cuffe's ships arrived in port, the *Alpha*. Cuffe co-owned the ship, which began landing a cargo of 532 bales of cotton into the warehouses of Quaker merchant agents William and Richard Rathbone, of the widely known Rathbone family of Liverpool whose successful trade ventures could be traced for several generations. The cargo had been loaded in New Orleans, whose deep harbor and multinational population made it an emerging center of trade for products and agriculture produced by enslaved labor.[22] Cuffe's participation in the transatlantic economy reveals the inescapable and systemic existence of slavery.

With the *Alpha* nestled into port, busy with selling its cargo, the captain was able to focus his attention on his impressed men. He went immediately to "get the two men first mentioned, but they would not let Aaron go," because Richards had no recourse as an African lacking documentation in the form of a Seaman's Protection Certificate.[23] Issued to tens of thousands of sailors in America, this African could not prove his citizenship. Irritated, Cuffe appealed to the Board of Admiralty and enlisted the aid of Wilberforce and Allen, who worked their legal connections to have Richards returned to Cuffe.[24] Without the young African back aboard, but with a promise from Liverpool's regulating officer to keep Richards in the city until the matter could be resolved, Cuffe embarked on an overland trip to London to meet with Friends and members of the African Institution. Although Cuffe's London visit was the main purpose for his visiting England, he now planned to take advantage and appeal directly to the Saints himself for the release of his apprentice.

Including stops to change horses every ten to fifteen miles, the stagecoach ride from Liverpool to London averaged 6.5 miles per hour, lasting 32 hours and covering 208 miles. Introduced to the custom of tipping on the journey, Cuffe seemed to marvel at the idea of giving the "Sarvents in the public houses" a "present."[25] The stagecoach traveled the rain-washed roads of the English countryside, following the path of the modern M1 or M69 motorways, passing through

Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton or Birmingham, and near Oxford before finally stopping in the "Great City of London."[26] The turnpikes or toll roads that Cuffe's coach traveled that day were remnants of changes that occurred in transportation technology in the 1790s. Roads were better; travel times and speed increased. Within just a decade or two of Cuffe's visits, even newer roadbuilding technology in the form of the macadam method—where a layer of rock kept the surface smoother and less marred by ruts—would halve travel times and provide better comfort for the passenger. Aiding in this rapid development of transportation technology was Parliament's new interest in building better roads, and by 1830 some twenty-two thousand miles of roads were constructed and maintained in England. By the 1840s, the stagecoach would be replaced by an extensive railway network connecting Liverpool to London via Manchester.[27]

Still, this ship's captain and transatlantic voyager settled into the comforts of his coach. "This Day passed," wrote Cuffe, "With plesant prospect of travelling through a Well Culterveted and Very fertile" countryside, "my mind" became "Enlivened With the peaceful Disires that this Land and people" enjoy in "universal and tranquil peace." Thirty-two hours of bouncing along rutted roads may seem like an arduous, exhausting prospect, but for Cuffe it was a chance to reflect on this nation that supported his efforts to aid his African brethren, oftentimes more strongly than his fellow Americans. He peered out his coach window, breathing deeply the smells of the countryside, noting the different customs of the people and experiencing little racism from those he encountered.[28] Indeed, Cuffe makes no mention of being treated differently from his fellow white travelers at the turnpike's various taverns and inns. Just a year later he would have different experiences in America on a stagecoach journey from Baltimore to Westport.

London's 1,009,546 residents made it the largest city in Europe in 1811.[29] Sprawl and dense population meant the streets buzzed with action—sometimes of a nefarious sort—that undoubtedly overwhelmed Cuffe, who on checking into his inn decided to visit William Allen at Plough Court, the pharmaceutical company Allen joined in

the 1790s. Once returned, he chose to rest the remainder of his first day in London. Surrounded by people who lived on meager earnings of £100–300 per year, Cuffe encountered a city whose inhabitants were described as a people with great industry.[30] Despite his awe of the city, Cuffe immediately set to work on the "liberation" of Africa, contacting his Quaker Friends and asking for aid in the process.[31]

Just a few days later, Cuffe heard discouraging news about Aaron Richards. William Allen received word that he was moved from Liverpool and sent to the Royal Navy dockyards where impressed sailors often were assigned to new ships. The situation, as Cuffe noted, became much more serious, and time was of the essence, especially now that officials in Liverpool had broken their promise. While awaiting word on the next step in freeing the young African apprentice, Cuffe visited Joseph Lancaster's successful school in Southwark, a borough in southeastern London that is also home Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Cuffe likely heard of Lancaster or perhaps even met him in Philadelphia as the innovator traveled the Atlantic espousing his ideas for a new system of education where peer tutoring drove the classroom. Once students learned material, they were expected to then teach younger students the same. Many abolitionists and progressive thinkers supported the system, including Paul Cuffe, who marveled that "1000 Schoolers" could be taught "by one master."[32] Lancaster established a similar school in Philadelphia in 1808. Perhaps Cuffe planned to institute this system at the school he had started in Westport some years earlier.

While in England, Cuffe received a warm welcome from Friend William Allen and abolitionists such as Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and the former governor of Sierra Leone, Zachary Macaulay—all with intense interest in seeing the colony succeed. The men aided Cuffe by informing the Board of Trade, an arm of Lords of His Majesty's Privy Council, that he was an honorable man of good intentions and to not interfere with his return to Sierra Leone and subsequent trip to America. They admittedly had to "put all springs in play" to protect Cuffe, but in so doing they demonstrated a high degree of respect for the American.[33]

Much to Paul Cuffe's thrill, he met with Thomas Clarkson, famous abolitionist, and the man whose writing on the subject he much admired. On this day, however, the meeting concerned Aaron Richards. "If God permitted," Cuffe remarked, "I should have the hapy [*sic*] opportunity of Returning Aaron to his parent and fellow Citizens of Sierra Leone."[34] With the help of the Saints—some of whom were members of Parliament—the young African boy would be sent back to Liverpool, where he awaited Cuffe's return. Although Cuffe intended this trip to London to be focused on business and discussion of the African project, he was consumed by the plight of the youngster he brought into harm's way. Richards's story must have haunted Cuffe: plucked from the shores of his home and carried to a foreign place only to be imprisoned, waiting to be forced into service for the king's navy. Although Richards was not being sold into slavery as Kofi had been nearly one hundred years prior, the similarities were extraordinary.

Once the Richards's affair seemed resolved, Cuffe spent a great deal of time meeting and dining with Zachary Macaulay, William Allen, William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and many other members of the African Institution who led him on a tour of London and asked him for his thoughts on the viability of Sierra Leone becoming a prosperous free Black colony. Clearly not intending to move to Sierra Leone, as the African Institution wished, he spoke optimistically about the potential for the colony. Cuffe reported to Allen that Sierra Leone seemed to be suitable for growing sugarcane and other agricultural products. Moreover, "I am in hopes that Some Sober famileys [*sic*] may find their Way to Sierra Leone more Especialy if the Whale fishery Can be Established."[35] Cuffe noticed the large pod of sperm whales on the voyage over, likely adding to his optimism for the whale fishery. The entrepreneurial Cuffe knew business opportunity, and this, it seemed to him, would anchor any attempts to settle West Africa. Cuffe's responses excited the men, especially Allen, who noted, "I have not been disappointed in the information" provided by him.[36] The men envisioned a prosperous colony where free Black men and women labored virtuously, attended

church or meetings, and promoted the social and cultural values of America and Great Britain.

Cuffe seemed relaxed in England, strolling various cities' streets and remarking on the unique character of the bridges in London. His tourism revealed his admiration for England. A few weeks after arriving in London, Cuffe visited the mint works, about which he writes the largest and most detailed entry of his logbook, describing the operations as "Great and Wonderful."[37] Continuing on that same day, Cuffe visited a zoo where he encountered animals such as the lion, baboon, monkey, parrot, and a host of others. Amid meeting his many supporters, he was careful to take the time to enjoy the city, but what most interested the Massachusetts native were the West Indian docks and their three-mile length—the docks' width he estimated at one-half mile—that lined the river Thames. Cuffe was "Exseeding[ly] gratif[ied]" by the sight.[38] The commerce that unfolded before his entrepreneurial eyes must have excited him.

Moreover, he became a celebrity in England. On his arrival in Liverpool, the *Times*, of London, and other newspapers ran serials chronicling the Black captain's comings and goings. Cuffe experienced an early version of the British public's well-documented thirst for celebrity news. As expected, the *Liverpool Mercury* ran an extensive story on Cuffe, maintaining the tradition of a port city newspaper chronicling any interesting news from abroad, while other newspapers also ran features on Cuffe. These stories always commented extensively on Cuffe's industry. "He began to trade in a small boat," read one article for Scotland, "and after a while, almost by himself, built a larger vessel, in which he worked some years with assiduity."[39] The author continues to expound on Cuffe's respectability, comportment, and impressive connections in Britain's Parliament and among the elite of London. This man, son of Kofi and Ruth, had clearly "made it."

What seemed to impress the British press the most was the same thing that impressed Americans in their own ports of call: Cuffe's race. The *Traveller*, "commanded by . . . the son of 'Cuffee,' a negro slave, imported into America . . . and all her crew are negroes," didn't stun so much as it uplifted the English audience.[40] When Cuffe and

crew arrived in port in America, the tone reflected concern and astonishment, a cautionary tale to supporters of slavery who imagined this to be the norm if abolition took hold. Alternately, amazement that a ship could be successfully crewed entirely by people of African descent proved admirable in England. The abolition movement expanded rapidly at the end of the eighteenth century, reaching all corners of Parliament, and extended to the major sects of Christianity and the learned classes, unlike in America where the movement took hold almost entirely among Quakers and evangelical Christians.[41]

Unfortunately for Cuffe, such a reception did not await his return to America. Indeed, from his departure in 1810 until his return in 1812, the region's largest newspaper, the *New-Bedford Mercury*, ran one detailed story on his activities abroad.[42] The *New-Bedford Mercury* reported on Cuffe's departures from port to port and published a letter to the captain that the New York Colonization Society sent to him during the trip. The American public seemed to lack the intense public interest in his daily activities apparent in England.

The lack of interest was shared by Cuffe, himself seemingly uninterested in America outside of his family and news of the conflict between the United States and Great Britain. The latter issue piqued Cuffe's interest primarily because it could—and already did—impact his ability to trade with Sierra Leone unless he received special accommodations from the Parliament and the Board of Admiralty. By late July, Cuffe embarked on a thirty-nine-hour return coach ride to Liverpool from London, tired of waiting for news of his trade license and growing weary of being away from his ships and crew for too long. Although the ride was uneventful, it gave him time to consider the present situation and to reflect on his options if a trade agreement could not be reached. With two of Cuffe's vessels in port, the *Alpha* or the *Traveller* could potentially develop a significant trade between Sierra Leone, England, and America. Cuffe pondered rerouting both ships to the colony in order to carry as many passengers from England to Sierra Leone as possible, while also enabling him to load extra cargo for sale. His ideas became moot as the *Alpha* was denied a license to trade and ordered to set sail for America as soon as it was ready.[43]

Despite his relaxed nature and favorable view of England, Cuffe seemed to long for the home he hadn't seen in nearly nine months. He considered piloting the *Alpha* home and transferring that ship's captain to the *Traveller* to sail to Sierra Leone and pick up Thomas Wainer as promised. He worried about his family and expressed concern about his farm and business being properly attended. Still, once he returned to Liverpool, Cuffe realized more immediate concerns demanded his attention.[44]

Merchant ship crews are notorious for their salacious and often violent behavior. Crews of the *Alpha* and *Traveller* were widely applauded for the comportment and ability to remain steady, but one of Cuffe's kin—Zachariah, John Cuffe's son—"Behaved Very unbecoming in keeping unbecoming Company."[45] In a letter home to John, Paul noted his nephew's stellar behavior and work ethic on the ship, but once on shore, he fell into stereotype, drinking and whoring. Yet Paul did not mention what troubled him the most about the young man, that is, his inability to remain sober, both in terms of drinking and religious convictions. "Drinking to Excess and . . . Speaking Lite of Jesus Christ" to the extent that he "Wishes to have him by the hind Leggs."[46] John's view of alcohol was well documented within the family. Perhaps Paul shielded his brother from the sins of his child to worry him as little as possible.

On 7 August, the *Alpha* went out to dock and awaited the weather, anticipating clearance from authorities before departing for America without Cuffe. Within days, as the *Traveller* was being cleaned of barnacles, Cuffe's other ship would enter the Irish Sea bound for home and carrying news of Cuffe's exploits to his family and the local Quaker community. In Liverpool, Cuffe's attention turned back to matters of trade and securing a license to carry cargo to Africa. With Aaron Richards back aboard the *Traveller* and realizing he could do little to gain the license in Liverpool, Cuffe returned to London where he would embark on several meetings with members of the African Institution, pressing them to issue the all clear. Rather than simply strolling the docksides and visiting technological marvels as he did on his previous trip, Cuffe seemed more focused this time,

sensing that this was an urgent matter. Regardless, he still found time to visit factories and see new innovations like light extracted from sea coal, but his attention rarely wandered beyond trade.[47]

By early September, Cuffe had returned to Liverpool and began to load the *Traveller* with goods. Cleared by Great Britain and now promised the same by the American ministers in England, Cuffe began "provisioning Sundries" and "Buying shoes . . . and Drygoods, etc."[48] Within days, the *Traveller* was ready for its voyage to Africa, also carrying special human cargo, including missionaries intending to help Christianize the colony and a native of Sierra Leone, an African boy named Bango Burso, who had traveled to England to learn farming techniques and navigation.[49] Cuffe, although concerned about just who would pay the boy's way, happily took him along, envisioning him as an example of the kind of transformation he wished Sierra Leone to experience. With passengers, crew, and cargo aboard and secured, the *Traveller* was "Cleared from the Customs house and Received our papers from the American Council," setting sail for Sierra Leone before returning to America.[50]

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Sickly Colony

In August 1811, Paul Cuffe boarded the *Traveller* in Liverpool's harbor, loaded with cargo bound for Sierra Leone. He did not intend to have a long layover in the African colony; rather, the plan was to land some trade goods and return Aaron Richards to his family, inspired with his new skills and knowledge of the world outside the African coast. Pulling anchor, the anonymous harbor pilot guided the brig along the Mersey River, where Cuffe witnessed "a great many" people gathered to watch the all Black crew leave.[1] The fanfare fizzled after a few hours, and as the vessel neared the Irish Sea, the pilot turned the ship over to its captain, ordering "us to Stear NW b N" toward a "fine breeze" and with "all hands Employed in Clearing Ship."[2] Immediately, the *Traveller* met with a perturbed North Atlantic. The winds were not favorable for a full week as the brig lay "beating about in the Irish Channel."[3] Once clear of the channel after the winds turned, Cuffe set a course for Madeira, a small Portuguese island off the Moroccan coast, passing westward of the island to pick up the strong westerly winds that pushed the vessel on a starboard tack to Sierra Leone's shore. With any luck, Cuffe would encounter winds driven by monsoons to the southwest, shortening the trip by driving the vessel more quickly through the warm waters.[4] Such luck would not follow Cuffe on this voyage, nor would it accompany him on land once he arrived in the colony where he hoped to help build a free nation for Africans and African Americans.

Although becalmed for long stretches of the voyage, when the *Traveller* did make progress, it often heaved back and forth on the rough ocean, rocking its passengers and crew about the vessel. The riled seas carried many threats to the safety and well-being of the crew and passengers. The Napoleonic Wars meant French ships lurked in the Atlantic waters, privateering and potentially impressing British and American sailors. "At 12 Meridian there Was a Schooner," spotted "on our Lee beem Dist 3 leagues," wrote Cuffe. "We Ware apprehensive that She Was an Enemys Vessell for She gained on us apace."[5] Some of the brig's passengers—including a Methodist schoolteacher and missionary—noted the ship in their diaries, identifying it as one of Napoleon's privateers attempting to overtake the *Traveller*.[6] Although Cuffe's own log described the incident with little emotion, the passengers were fearful, "commend[ing] ourselves by solemn prayer to the Divine protection." The French ship gained "with all possible celerity" over the next twenty-four hours, raising the passengers' anxiety in the increasingly rough waters.[7]

The weather, as much as it sickened the missionaries and made life difficult for the crew, rescued Cuffe's brig as the privateer "Was Nearly in our Wake 1 League off but there Came a very thick heavey Squall Which lasted until the night."[8] Within thirty minutes of the winds whipping at the sails, stirring the ocean, and lashing the hull, the *Traveller*'s crew lost sight of the schooner. Once the storm passed, the French ship no longer trailed the *Traveller*, having disappeared from the horizon. Relief must have been pungent as the all Black crew could have been taken captive by the vessel and sold into slavery since Napoleon's France did not conform to the slave trade abolition laws passed by Great Britain and the United States. The incident intensified the uncertainty caused by the unpredictable weather. The missionaries Paul Cuffe ferried to Sierra Leone became seasick, while the ship became damp, the air thick with trepidation amid the stale, humid, and stagnant cabin environment because the crew was unable to ventilate spaces below deck due to the high waves.[9]

A few weeks into the voyage, the illness of the missionaries began to pass as the seas calmed and they adjusted to the rolling of the hull.

"Our Passengers are giting in better Spirits and Apitite," noted Cuffe, as attention turned to a different specter chasing them, this time in the sky.[10] The Great Comet of 1811—also known as Napoleon's Comet because he believed it to portend grand victories for his armies—first appeared in the sky in March 1811, identified by French astronomer Honoré Flaugergues, and it burned for months, easily visible for the rest of the year.[11] The comet inspired literary and visual artworks and journal articles, and its appearance excited the scientific community across the Western Hemisphere. "A blazing star," as a schoolteacher in America referred to it, followed the *Traveller* from north to south as the vessel rolled in the cross seas, but it did not seem to worry Paul Cuffe, who simply recorded the position and his observations of the comet in many logbook entries during the voyage.[12] In only one instance from Sierra Leone to Liverpool had Cuffe noted the comet, but now that he possessed a telescope, gifted to him by William Allen, his interest in astronomy increased on the return voyage.

By the time the *Traveller* reached the Cape Verde islands, just west of the archipelago after thirty-nine days out, Cuffe steered the vessel south/southeast toward the African coast. With the comet still burning on the horizon, the ship's fortunes began to turn, although Cuffe was ambiguous about attributing this to the heavenly fire. "At 10 AM Charles Derror trew the harpoon into a Large Bank porpos" that "measured 10 feet in Length," remarked a pleased captain, whose crew caught a second porpoise that a shark tried to steal away until Cuffe "Shot the Sharke Deade."[13] Cuffe's men usually ate well at sea. During the remaining ten days on board, the brig sailed in somewhat fair waters, encountering plentiful fish and other sea life on which to feast, all while the comet burned overhead like a torchlight leading the ship and its crew to Africa's shores.

Paul Cuffe could feel how close he was to Africa, even if he could not yet see the coastline. "Calm and hoot African Like weather" descended on the vessel, warming the man's soul and igniting a fire in his mind.[14] On the fiftieth day at sea, Cuffe spotted land, steering the brig toward Freetown, where they dropped anchor and were boarded by the British brig *Protector*, which patrolled the waters of

the African coast in search of slave traders violating abolition laws. Thomas Wainer—the ship's captain who had stayed behind to take care of business while Cuffe sailed to Liverpool—also boarded the *Traveller*. A relieved Cuffe saw that he was in good health and spirits. As the afternoon faded to evening, Cuffe went to shore with Wainer and the missionaries he had brought from Liverpool. The group met with Governor C. W. Maxwell, who arrived in July and received Cuffe and the missionaries in "a very affable manner."[15] From there Cuffe led the group to the Nicholls's family home—a local white merchant and friend of Cuffe's—where the Methodists would lodge before establishing their own home.

By nightfall, Cuffe and Thomas Wainer returned to the *Traveller* for sleep.[16] As eventful as the journey from Liverpool to Freetown's harbor had been, the brig's arrival seemed almost anticlimactic. Unlike in England, Cuffe received little fanfare and was not greeted by a waiting public along the shores of the colony's capital. Indeed, for Cuffe it must have been deflating to return to the colony he held such hope for, even if he did not always seem to hold the colony and its people in much esteem. Cuffe and Wainer undoubtedly shared stories from their past months apart as they dined and retired for the night. After thirty-six hours maneuvering the *Traveller* into port, Paul Cuffe may have been tired, but the next day he would rediscover his enthusiasm for the colony, immediately attempting to draw plans for rebuilding the Province of Freedom with African American colonists.

When the *Traveller* docked in Freetown in autumn of 1811, Cuffe disembarked into a sea of challenges. He faced three significant problems: corrupt white officials, illness, and a lack of cooperation among the settlers such as the Jamaican Maroons, liberated Africans such as the Black Loyalists, and native Crue men in the colony. Cuffe had experience dealing with uncooperative and suspicious peoples such as those he encountered in the colony, but the sheer volume of them in Sierra Leone could have overwhelmed the man. It did not. Cuffe met these challenges and emerged with renewed enthusiasm—if not more realistic expectations—for the building of West Africa's first free Black nation.

Yet Cuffe grew concerned regarding the mood in the colony. Nearly a month after arriving, the Governor's Council agreed to the Militia Act to create order in the chaotic colony. According to the act, one would be required to sign an oath of allegiance to Great Britain and the King or leave the colony. Such oaths were commonly deployed throughout the British Empire in an effort to have colonized peoples assert their loyalty to the Crown.[17] Citizens and settlers were encouraged to join the militia to defend the colony in the event "Enemies, Pirates, and Rebels" attacked from "both at Sea and Land."[18] Some settlers believed the act also required them to serve in the navy abroad, a misunderstanding that led to even further tension between the settlers, native Africans, and colonial authorities. The act described an "infant colony" on the edge of chaos. Yet, the Royal Navy routinely patrolled the waters off Sierra Leone, and HMS vessels were in port virtually every day of the year. Confused, the settlers asked how a ragtag militia composed of disaffected thirteen- to sixty-year-old boys and men could protect the interests of the colony better than these ships. Instead of defense of the colony, what the governor and his council sought was law and order. The act threatened deportation to those who did not comply, but more importantly, by setting "an example of disaffection and insubordination," those who did not adhere to the law forfeited every "right and title to all and every species of property."[19] Settlers and recaptives alike responded with their feet: reportedly, over one hundred pieces of property lay abandoned by people unwilling to become subjects of King George III. Cuffe would comment frequently while in port on the combative reaction the act caused among the settlers.

Beyond the oath controversy, the Royal Navy routinely delivered liberated slaves to Freetown, where locals exploited them for labor. The Maroons and Nova Scotians remained in conflict with British authorities regarding misallocated land and resources. Perhaps what most inhibited the development and prosperity of the colony was the common perception—and reality—that whites were there only to make money. The combustible setting seemed to be in turmoil during the captain's visits in 1811–12, as the settlers and recaptives vied for the

limited resources made available by corrupt government officials.[20] Indeed, as authorities moved in to reclaim properties abandoned by people trying to avoid the Militia Act, remaining settlers grew increasingly upset with what they perceived as corrupt agents looting the town as they observed the government confiscating the property of absentee citizens. Many still had not received their promised allotments, but the newly vacated lands were not being redistributed to them. A mixture of desperation, fear, and vice emerged in the colony, marring the landscape and adding tension to Cuffe's arrival from England. The amount of corruption aggravated Cuffe.

Alexander Smith, a British merchant and sometime judge living in Sierra Leone, embodies the ways in which greed often impeded development. Cuffe traded two hogsheads, or nearly two thousand pounds of tobacco and some satin with Smith shortly after arriving in the colony. Claiming the product was subpar, Smith refused to pay Cuffe on multiple occasions, instead offering him some camwood that he could trade in America. Camwood could be used as an ornamental wood or its red color for dye, but Cuffe refused to take it as payment, citing his uncertainty there would be a market in the states. Cuffe's consternation grew because he "Considered it all Cash," but Smith insisted on bartering, which "Sheweth he means to take the advantage."[21] The conflict continued throughout Cuffe's stay in the colony. Smith periodically claimed he would pay Cuffe after the tobacco matured, but whenever he called on the judge to make payment, he only offered wood. Smith perhaps thought he could take advantage of the American; Cuffe resisted.

Men like Alexander Smith were hardly unusual in colonies like Sierra Leone. Smith's superior, Chief Justice Robert Thorpe, arrived in the colony after spending his professional life in Canada, building his law career, and progressing through the British colonial system when he was appointed to the empire's least desirable outpost, Sierra Leone, in 1808. With the abolition of the slave trade, Thorpe would hold tremendous power and authority in prosecuting the captains and crews of illegal slavers because captured vessels were brought back to Freetown under Royal Navy escort. Although his title was impressive,

Thorpe could not have been excited about his newest position in a colony known for violent revolts and high mortality rates. Sierra Leone had been called both the "pest house of the world" or "the white man's grave" by contemporary British observers, and Thorpe's attitude toward its people, whether of British or African origins, was reprehensible.[22] The man was noted for "hot-headedness, lack of moderation, and ill-temper"—all qualities that Paul Cuffe loathed.[23] That he used his position in the colony to line his pockets and pilfer money surprised few people. Efforts by the Sierra Leone Company and the African Institution to suppress Thorpe's behavior led to his authoring several pamphlets against their poor management of the colony.[24]

Alexander Smith learned from a master thief. As acting judge when Thorpe couldn't adjudicate, Smith collected customary fees. When Thorpe returned to the colony, he demanded the fees be paid to him despite not having worked the cases. These sorts of abuses of power occurred frequently in the years Smith served as Thorpe modeled the behavior of other officials in the colony. Eventually, Thorpe was dismissed in 1813 for health reasons, leaving in his wake a legacy of mistrust, thievery, and greed.[25] Sierra Leone was not seen as a place of wage justice for these men; it was a site to garner wealth and exploit recaptive Africans. The arrival of a sober, ethically sound Quaker from Massachusetts alarmed some of the shady colonists and officials. Captain Paul Cuffe brought with him a sound reputation, a penchant for social justice, and the intention of rebuilding the colony in a manner that placed Blacks at the core of the structures of authority. Thorpe and Smith could not have welcomed the man without fearing for their skimming operations.

Such men as Paul Cuffe who are widely praised and celebrated are bound to draw the ire of jealous outsiders. Rumors began to swirl about Cuffe's dealings in Sierra Leone, suggesting he had been less than equitable to the Black inhabitants of the colony. The origins of such rumors are unknown, but that did nothing to halt the gossip among Liverpool's merchant class. Cuffe's friend and fellow Quaker William Allen had recently learned of the whisper campaign to discredit the captain as it swept the English countryside, originating in

Sierra Leone and accusing Cuffe of being untrustworthy. Such rumors traveled quickly throughout the North Atlantic. The assault on his character arrived in letter form the same day as Cuffe, albeit on a different ship that had set sail a few days prior to the *Traveller*. What followed was a campaign to besmirch the captain and his efforts to liberate Sierra Leone from its current state of decay and depravity.

Alexander Smith wrote to his friends in Liverpool and London, wishing them to be "on . . . guard against any representations that Captain Cufiee might make, as no credit whatever should be attached to any thing he might say."[26] Smith seemed intent on limiting the damage from Cuffe's probable reports of corruption in the colony when he met with the African Institution. He clearly feared any negativity the respected sea captain might relay to powerful men in London that might result in his cozy position being terminated. As a result, Smith launched a character assassination of Cuffe. After treating him with "great kindness on his arrival" and rendering "him most essential service," Smith wrote, "the result was, that he had never known a more mercenary or unprincipled man, except perhaps a slave-trader."[27] Smith was being dramatic by making that powerful analogy of Cuffe's ethics being on par with the now illegal practice of trading enslaved people, but the charges were serious, and William Allen felt compelled to investigate.

William Allen warned his fellow supporters of the Sierra Leone project, including the former governor, Zachary Macaulay, to reserve judgment against Cuffe until evidence could be found to support Smith's allegations. The African Institution received several letters that reiterated their own convictions in Paul Cuffe's good character. William Rotch wrote Allen to describe "Captain Cuffee . . . as a person highly esteemed" in New Bedford, while another ship's captain proclaimed "that a person of greater integrity and honour in business, [I] never met with."[28] Without solicitation, many abolitionist supporters emerged, praising Cuffe without knowledge of accusations made by Alexander Smith.[29] The African Institution put great weight on these spontaneous depictions of the man, and by the time Cuffe left Liverpool for his return voyage to Sierra Leone in

September, Allen made it clear they believed Smith's allegations to be false. Cuffe's character had been saved by a lifetime of good deeds and upstanding citizenry.

Cuffe spoke mostly positively about what he encountered in the colony, choosing—at least publicly—to focus on the possibilities of a developed Sierra Leone and not the current situation, of which the African Institution was most certainly aware. Indeed, much of their continued support of the colony rested on Cuffe's positive reports. What Alexander Smith failed to realize was that members of the African Institution conferred multiple times and concluded that Cuffe's reports on the colony would help determine if the project proved worthy. If the organization found Cuffe to be corrupt—the one man that Quakers and abolitionists saw as the most ethical, morally fastidious man of African descent in the Atlantic world—then the project would fail. If Africa could sully Cuffe, then no one could resist its allures. Alexander Smith's selfishness could have dismantled his system of kickbacks, but he still did not learn. Once Cuffe returned from Liverpool, Smith cut the unfair deal for the tobacco, striking the fatal mark against British colonists in Freetown. It is unclear if Cuffe ever knew of the devious letter sent by Smith, but his personal dealings with the man were enough for the Quaker to dissolve their relationship.

The Methodist missionaries Cuffe brought with him from England may not have practiced his own faith, but they were pious, sober, and eager to help build the Christian community in Sierra Leone. When given the choice between water and wine at their hosts' home, they exclaimed, "The water was extremely good," a sentiment that no doubt pleased the Quaker. Regardless of sect, the goal for these missionaries was to spread the Methodist mission and instill a sense of "Divine Favour" in the estimated four thousand citizens of Freetown, especially among the "Black and Coloured Inhabitants."[30] Yet Cuffe might have argued that many white inhabitants needed as much instruction in the Bible as the Blacks there. The missionaries, however, found their place in the colony very quickly, meeting with current Methodists and hosting classes and gatherings to spread their word in the six-hundred-seat main building or among

the three chapels around the town. While attending a Methodist meeting, Cuffe noticed "12 of the Native Captives [from Africa] come in" enabling "some of the movements of truths to touch their minds," wearing English clothes and carrying books.[31] These people adopted English ways readily, finding solace in the gospels and comfort in traditional European dress. Part of making this nation successful, in the minds of many, was transferring Euro-American culture to Sierra Leone and assimilating as many of the Black inhabitants as possible. In that sense, one of Cuffe's charges by the African Institution—to ferry these pious souls to Africa—was successfully completed.

Other challenges awaited. Paul Cuffe and other Black businessmen created the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone in 1811 with the goal to promote trade, industry, and economic growth in the colony. John Kizell—an African American merchant and passionate Christian—took the helm of the society during the first year of its existence, acting as a diplomat of sorts in negotiating for land and attempting to settle disputes in the colony. In the autumn of 1811, Kizell and the society faced a "much Distressed" native African who claimed maltreatment and the need for clothes among the group of over one hundred children in his care in the name of the local missionaries.[32] These types of complaints occurred often as the Black residents of the colony repeatedly felt cheated of resources. Kizell would gain much experience in these matters, providing him with the foundation and knowledge in the future to lead efforts by the American Colonization Society—an American organization founded in 1816 by prominent white politicians—to resettle African Americans in the region.[33] The Friendly Society gained the support of the African Institution, making it the most important Black-led organization in the colony—a group Cuffe pledged to return annually to help.

Still, with every advancement made in the colony, more challenges awaited. Captain Thomas Wainer, Paul's nephew and cherished partner at the helm of the *Traveller*, took ill soon after the ship landed in Freetown. Long considered a graveyard for foreigners because of the high mortality rates, which reached 48 percent by 1819, Wainer was but another seemingly healthy man brought down by the illnesses of

the African coast.[34] In early December he was "attended With the feavour," confining him to bed as many persons of color in the community are "taken off" their "Legs with Reumatick Complaint."[35] As others fell ill, Thomas lay stricken with fever and unwilling to see a doctor. Cuffe grew frustrated with Thomas's attitude, observing the fluctuations in his health each day: some days he appeared to be improving, while others he did not. In addition to the fever, Wainer began to experience dizziness and hear "Roaring and Rushing nois in his head."[36] The symptoms are consistent with rheumatic fever or yellow fever, both of which often show improved symptoms within days. For Wainer it was likely rheumatic fever because his joints swelled. The disease proved difficult to shake: sometimes he "Swets Terribel and is Chilley," sometimes seemingly able to walk around without aid, but he remained weak for several weeks.[37]

Wainer's condition clearly worried Cuffe to the point where he forced health care on him. By Christmas Day, Thomas's knee was so swollen that Cuffe thought it best to drain the joint. He ventured out on a warm day to find "Som Leaches" or "Blood Suckers" to affix to the joint. Viewed as the single best treatment for a wide range of diseases, bloodletting was commonly practiced during Cuffe's era.[38] Once the leaches "have filled themselves they Will let goe then have a plate With Little fine salt. Put them in the plate and touch them to the Salt." Cuffe continued to describe the process, demonstrating his depth of knowledge and experience on the matter. "They Will immediately [throw] out the Blood and be Come lank." This freshwater cleansing made them ready for reapplication. The swelling was reduced quickly as the leaches kept the "Blood Runing for 6 hours."[39] Within days, Wainer began to feel better, relieving Cuffe of his concern and allowing Thomas to resume helping his uncle collect payment and sell their goods.

While Wainer recovered, other crew members from the *Traveller* fell ill. Cuffe told John Smith to use fifteen drops of turpentine to cure the bleeding of his stomach, while he sent others to shore to seek medical help. Vice dominated the colony, in Cuffe's mind, and this was nowhere as evident as the impact it had on his crew. He decided

to visit the two crewmen he sent to hire a nurse for themselves. Upon arriving at the home, the two men were nowhere to be found, which seemed odd to Cuffe given that they were ill. Evidence left at the scene, however, suggested they had been drinking rum. Cuffe heard a great commotion and rowdiness at the house next door, where he saw the two men drinking and carousing, causing him to remark, "It Was not Worth my While to hier a nurse [or] a Doctor & for men that Was Well Enough to attend houses of mirth."[40] Prostitution was rampant in ports throughout the Atlantic; Freetown proved no different. Often laywomen with supposed professions crossed over into prostitution, holding both legitimate jobs and selling themselves, but it is unclear if the nurses Cuffe sought to hire were the women with whom his crew caroused.[41] Clearly frustrated, the sober man saved his money by not hiring the nurses and refocused his attention elsewhere. Such behavior by his crew would emerge once again shortly before the *Traveller* weighed anchor for the United States.

Cuffe turned to the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone, which emerged as a body of moral reckoning by the turn of the new year. Cuffe protested the decision by the judge—likely Chief Justice Thorpe or his stand-in, Alexander Smith, whom Cuffe already despised—to fine the Methodist missionaries for holding extra meetings. Having paid £20 in fines, the missionaries and Cuffe lamented the developments. "I fear this Will have a tendancey to Stagnate the Civilization of Africa," Cuffe wrote, "then to premote the good Cause."[42] Consequently, the society adjusted its role to spread moral advice to Black residents. In a letter to John Kizell, Cuffe firmly suggested the "necessity [of] Encouraheing industy and Discourageing the use of ardent Spirits."[43] The new charge for the society's members mixed social justice and business, filling in the gaps when British authorities limited the reach of churches.

Paul Cuffe observed the moral debauchery that seemed to infect so many residents of the colony. By January 1812, the *Traveller*'s crew routinely fell from grace. Samuel Hicks left the ship often to "grow in Sin," engaging in drinking and prostitution. Men can continue a straight path toward morality or, as some of his crew did, "become

more the Child of Evil."[44] Disillusioned, Cuffe realized that if he could not control his own men, then it would prove difficult to instill his sober values on the colony at large. As the African Institution, Methodist missionaries, Quaker Friends, and Cuffe himself imagined, his example would spur the adoption of principle and industry among the general population in the colony. By early 1812, it did not seem like such values would be the outcome. In addition, George Warren, a man Cuffe described as "my friend," shorted Cuffe on his bill and other business partners in the colony refused to pay him for his goods, frustrating Cuffe and Wainer even further.[45] It became clear that they needed to leave the colony for America sooner rather than later.

A transatlantic crossing requires extensive outfitting of any sailing vessel. Cuffe and Wainer began to prepare for the voyage by settling their accounts and taking goods on board, which included the two tons of camwood that Alexander Smith provided to pay for his bill. Cuffe remained unhappy with this resolution. He also learned that he would lose crewman Samuel Hicks to Africa, as the sailor decided to remain in the colony. In turn, Cuffe took on more indentured people, even adding a crewman that would be indentured on one of John and Paul Cuffe's other ships or on their farm once they arrived in Westport. As part of his final preparations, Cuffe surveyed his new mill site, finding the water flow more than sufficient for year-round use, satisfying the captain and making his investment seem wise.

Little had gone well during Cuffe's second visit to Sierra Leone. He encountered vice around every corner, dealt with corrupt authorities and merchants from England, found it difficult to develop the land because of a lack of infrastructure, and experienced disease that was rife in the hot region. Cuffe must have been frustrated by the time he and Wainer made their final preparations to shove off and head for home. He had left Westport over one year prior, seriously considering relocating his family across the Atlantic to live in Sierra Leone. Now, as the two men made and collected final payments, Westport offered warmth and comfort, the familiar. Sierra Leone's chaotic state made it unattractive to Cuffe, who would no longer discuss resettling there, even though he had bought a house and invested

heavily in grist- and sawmills. Instead, he promised to visit the colony every year with a cargo hold of African American settlers and trade goods to help expand the economy.

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At 9:00 a.m. on February 3, 1812, the *Traveller* weighed anchor and set sail for America. Hoping for an uneventful voyage, Paul Cuffe, Thomas Wainer, and crew—including Samuel Hicks, who had requested to stay in Africa but returned to the ship at the last minute—navigated the brig out of sight of the African coast. Although the United States and Great Britain abolished their transatlantic trade in enslaved peoples, the French, Portuguese, and Spanish still actively pursued the exchange of humans along the Gold Coast, placing men like Cuffe and crew at risk of being boarded, captured, and hauled into bondage. The *Traveller* sailed with the goal to avoid being intercepted by such vessels, but Cuffe was confident their papers and legitimate cargo would protect them. The first three days proved uneventful, much to the captain's delight.

By the morning of day four at sea, Paul Cuffe's ship encountered the danger of a kind he could not have foreseen. A sloop of war, the HMS *Sabrina*, pulled alongside the *Traveller*, sending its lieutenant on board to inspect Cuffe's cargo and papers. Launched in 1806 by Britain's Royal Navy, the *Sabrina* carried twenty guns while it hunted for illegal slavers along the African coast. The sloop's Captain Tillard was charged with enforcing abolition, which caused him to be suspicious of two of Cuffe's crew, Aaron Richards and George Davis, crewmen from Sierra Leone who had indentured themselves to Cuffe.[46] Having deemed the situation suspicious because the lieutenant did not believe Cuffe's paperwork to be sufficient, the *Traveller* was ordered back to Sierra Leone for proper inspection. From 1807 to 1860, the Royal African Squadron, charged with monitoring illegal slaving activities off the coast of West Africa, liberated approximately 150,000 slaves aboard nearly sixteen hundred captured ships.[47] Now they targeted Paul Cuffe's merchant vessel. Much to the chagrin of the captain, he followed the course of HMS *Sabrina*, but while on the

vessel he convinced Captain Tillard of his honest motives regarding the two crewmen, which prompted Tillard to allow him to reboard the *Traveller* and set sail for America once again.[48]

A relieved Cuffe pulled away from the sloop, turned his brig and attempted to put the *Sabrina* in its draught. Much to Cuffe's surprise, the *Sabrina* changed direction with the *Traveller*, staying approximately three to four miles from it to the windward side. The sloop quickly caught Cuffe's vessel, boarding her once again when Captain Tillard claimed Cuffe had no right to go freely. "The Capt . . . Seemed to be more Strongly Conformed that I Was in a Clandestine trade."[49] The two ships turned eastward and sailed for Freetown. An incredulous Paul Cuffe grew frustrated as the two ships approached the African coast.

Once in port, Paul Cuffe met with the governor, who clarified the legitimacy of his crew members, especially the two men in question, and offered—perhaps to mollify the captain—an additional ten-year-old boy for indenture on board. Cuffe took the African boy on board, accepting paperwork from the governor that "Will Satisfy all Enquireing people that all is Right and honourabely Conducted and Will Suffer us to pass unmolested."[50] While in port, Samuel Hicks left the crew and did not return to the *Traveller*, finally deciding to settle permanently in the colony. Disappointed, Cuffe also expressed some relief, describing Hicks with reference to the Bible as "the Man of sin—Who wicked hath been . . . Run his Race but got no grace."[51] The evening before Cuffe planned to leave for America, Captain Tillard visited, apologized for his error in judgment, and wished the Black captain well on his voyage. Satisfied, Cuffe thanked him and turned his attention back to the Atlantic crossing.

Delayed several days now, the *Traveller* made decent speed on its course from Sierra Leone to the West Indies, where the captain would steer his vessel north using the Gulf Stream to propel them back to their safe harbor of Westport, Massachusetts. On course for Bermuda, Thomas Wainer fell ill with a fever and body aches. Although it appears he may have had influenza or a strong common cold, he did suffer a "hard fit &c."[52] Wainer quickly regained his health as

the voyage remained uneventful during the first month at sea, except for their spotting fresh lumber floating several hundred miles off the coast of Bermuda. The suspicious wood could have been from another ship, either lost overboard or from a broken-up vessel. On day thirty-four, the vessel encountered strong storms that caused significant damage to the ship, but a string of calmer days enabled the crew to repair the harm without incident. Routine is what sailors desire, and this voyage was nothing but routine as even the storms seemed complacent compared with some of their more recent encounters.

Making good time, the *Traveller* passed several vessels, exchanging information with some, while others chose not to communicate. Having reached Bermuda and now sailing northward along the east coast of North America, Cuffe learned of French frigates in the area and other potential dangers lurking in the United States' active waterways. Being so near home, but still out of sight of land, did little to make the all-Black crew safer. One French frigate could board and commandeer the *Traveller* if they were to see each other, perhaps leading to the crew's enslavement. Other perils existed in these waters. News reached Cuffe as he lay anchored near Philadelphia that the Non-Importation Act had been passed in mid-April and was being enforced considering the looming war between the United States and Great Britain.[53] Cuffe understood the potential of his cargo being seized given that he was carrying a load from Sierra Leone, a British colony and thus off-limits to commerce for US vessels. Concerned for his financial well-being, Cuffe weighed anchor after sending letters ashore to his Friends in Philadelphia, setting course for Block Island, then sailing on to Buzzards Bay, where he took on a harbor pilot by the name of Daggett.[54]

After nearly eighteen months at sea, Paul Cuffe, Thomas Wainer, and crew neared New Bedford harbor where they would tie up and land their cargo for trade in the bustling port city. Weary from their travels, the men were excited to return home to their families and friends, but a bad thunderstorm and squall would delay their arrival in New Bedford, forcing them to alter course and dock in Westport, Cuffe's hometown. Happy to be home, he remained focused

on transferring his brig to New Bedford, guiding the vessel to that port the next day. It took nearly sixty days for the ship to cross the Atlantic, with delays caused by an overzealous Royal Navy sloop. In those sixty days, Cuffe prepared for the worst, imagining the scenario that was about to play out along the east coast of the United States. During this crisis, Cuffe would gain even more respect from lawmakers, abolitionists, and others, while confronting the challenges of living in a nation where slavery was still legal. This Atlantic African encountered little racism while in Europe, but that would change once he returned to America.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Struggling for Support

"To our Supprise," Paul Cuffe wrote in *Traveller*'s logbook, "Apeared to be in possession of the Cutter of the Customs Capt John C Hoare."[1] Cuffe detailed his plans to sell the cargo held on his brig, but those plans hit a snag when the US government seized his ship in accordance with the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809. Cargo from Sierra Leone, a colony of Great Britain, violated the act, making Cuffe's activities illegal and subject to impoundment. Although largely ineffective and not easily enforceable, the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809 impacted Cuffe's plans in a dramatic fashion.[2] Upon arriving along the Massachusetts coast, Cuffe played it safe, deciding to take a pilot boat to shore from *Traveller* as the ship sat anchored in Buzzards Bay. It was then the "Revenue Cutter fell in with the *Traveller* took hur and Carred hur in and Libelled her for Condemnation for Coming from an English Colony With a Cargo."[3] Captain Hoare, the local customs official sailing out of Newport, Rhode Island, informed Cuffe that he had no recourse to regain possession of *Traveller* unless he went to Newport to the customs collector. Cuffe immediately traveled to the port, an easy day's sail from Westport and New Bedford.

This was a "trying Seircumstance."[4] The man had spent a great deal of money on his reconnaissance of Sierra Leone, England, back to Sierra Leone, and now on his return to the United States. The cargo he held was not for profit so much as it was to break even. As Cuffe noted a few days later, he was going broke quickly as bad luck befell his once-thriving enterprise. The ship *Alpha* sank on a voyage, losing

lives and costing Cuffe $3,600—or, in today's money, $75,000—and another vessel failed to return from a Pacific Ocean whaling voyage.[5] It was becoming crucial that he sell *Traveller*'s cargo. Still, Cuffe "rejoiced" at the chance to see his family and share in their good health and well-being during his brief return to Westport.

The next morning at 7:00 a.m., Cuffe met with Newport's customs collector. William Ellery, a former member of the Sons of Liberty, Harvard educated and a lawyer, loudly expressed his opposition to the looming war between Great Britain and the United States. The meeting between the two men is a study in contrast, with self-trained Cuffe's substantial height and weight shadowing the well-educated and diminutive Ellery.[6] The customs collector's antiwar stance did little to aid Cuffe's situation: Ellery told Cuffe to petition the secretary of state because the matter was no longer under his control. He gave Cuffe his support, but he could not return Cuffe's cargo to him on that day. When Paul Cuffe encountered political challenges in England, he turned to his longtime Friends and supporters of the African Institution to help free Aaron Richards from the clutches of the press-gangs. Now, in America, Cuffe's network of support would be tested: How helpful would his prominent American Friends be?

Cuffe immediately boarded the next packet to Providence. Packet ships followed the fixed-schedule cargo routes originally created to carry the mail—a vital connection between port cities in the nineteenth century. Beyond the cargo aboard, one could pay a small fee to be ferried from one port to another. Cuffe's packet left Bannister Wharf in Newport at 10:00 a.m. and arrived at 2:00 p.m. in Providence, where he gained letters of recommendation and support from William Rotch Jr. and members of the esteemed Brown family—prominent Rhode Islanders who made their fortune trading in, among other "cargoies," enslaved Africans—and visited a judge, who spoke with the attorney general. By the time Cuffe left Providence by stagecoach, he carried these letters in addition to a petition signed by the leading politicians of Massachusetts, including Lieutenant Governor Simeon Martin; Constant Tabor, a well-known Newport judge; Congressman and Judge G. C. Champlain; and many others. He aligned

support from a veritable who's who of New England politicos. While in Providence, Cuffe reconnected with local Quakers by attending meetings and met with his son Paul before turning his attention to the "seat of government" in Washington, DC.[7]

The journey from Providence to New York followed the old Boston Post Road, built in the seventeenth century, and proclaimed to be the "King's Best Highway" on which mail was ferried between towns. Turned into a stagecoach route in 1785, the Boston Post Road provided an efficient way to travel overland during the early nineteenth century.[8] On the fourth day out from Providence, Cuffe arrived in New York after a routine journey southward along the coast. Cuffe dined and slept along the way at a variety of taverns, making sure to stay rested despite the desire to speedily recover his cargo. In New England he experienced very few problems—at least, that he recorded—along his route until he arrived in New York. At one tavern along the route, Cuffe encountered the sort of racism he had not seen during his adventures on the wider Atlantic. "The Servent came and towled me my Dinner Was Ready in the other Room. I told him," Cuffe wrote, "as I Rode With the Company I Could Eat With them So We all Set Down and Eat at one table."[9] Cuffe brushed the encounter aside, remarking on the poor character of some people, but his convictions and optimism regarding race in America would be tried often during his journey to Washington, DC.

From New York it took Cuffe fifteen hours to arrive in Philadelphia, where he met with long-standing Friends who awaited news of his voyage to Sierra Leone. Locals John James and others provided support for his efforts to pry his cargo from the holds of the government, but he had little time to stay and socialize. Cuffe once again hopped a stagecoach, heading for Baltimore, continuing to his destination. Now in the South, in traveling through the Country I Perceived that the People Seemed to have great knowledge of me &c." He seemed pleased that his name preceded him even in the heavily enslaved southern states of America. The total journey took 100 hours, 85 hours in transit, and 15 hours resting or eating—a 405-mile journey that averaged 5.8 miles per hour.[10] The coach's speed appeared

to be less than his journey from Liverpool to London. Unlike Cuffe's London travels, this journey saw more social difficulties. His reputation and celebrity status was growing in the United States, yet it did little to shield him from racism.

Armed with letters of support and a sense of urgency, Paul Cuffe immediately set to work in Washington. By eleven o'clock the morning following his arrival, he "wated on the President" for an audience, and when that did not happen, he turned his attention toward Albert Gallatin, the secretary of state.[11] Gallatin, the longtime politician who served many presidents and founded New York University, proved receptive to Cuffe. The looming war made Gallatin's life stressful because he was concerned about the nation's ability to pay for the war.[12] Yet, he lent Cuffe an ear, hearing his objections to the impoundment and seizure of his cargo. Gallatin and others inferred the situation "look[ed] favourable and the People Seem friendly inclind" to aid Cuffe in his appeal.[13] Two days later, amid a very stormy and rainy week in the nation's capital, Cuffe was invited into Secretary Gallatin's office, where a friendly and lively conversation ensued. After a few minutes, the secretary informed Cuffe that "all of my property Was Remited or to be Restored to me With out Reserve."[14] A relieved Cuffe thanked Gallatin, feeling satisfied his hard work and boldness paid off. It was rare for an African American to broach the halls of the nation's seat of power, but Cuffe would not be deterred.

As the two men sat in the secretary's office, Cuffe could not have imagined where their conversation would focus next. President James Madison had long supported the colonization of Africa with African Americans. He, along with other southern slaveholding politicians like Thomas Jefferson, argued that the only way emancipation could occur would be for newly freed slaves to have a place to live outside the United States. Former slaves could not, they reasoned, live around their former masters without violence ensuing. Gallatin echoed the president's support for Cuffe's plans in Sierra Leone, telling him that "any thing that the government Could do to Premote the Good Cause that I Was Presuing, they Would Certenly be alwas Readey to Render me their help."[15] On that day, 4 May 1812, Paul Cuffe's heart must

have pounded as he heard representatives of the federal government pledge their support for his plan of civilizing Africa. Additionally, Cuffe left the office with an additional promise that the United States would aid Cuffe directly in suppressing the slave trade. Suddenly, Cuffe's cause emerged from the halls of Quaker meetinghouses and African American churches into the limelight of Washington, DC, politics. That same day, the unflappable businessman spent little time celebrating his victories, choosing instead to board the next stagecoach to Baltimore and resume his journey home. After his meeting, he now had cargo to sell in New Bedford—and sell it he must if he were to resume his plans for repatriating Sierra Leone.

Cuffe's return to America found him deeply committed to the emigration cause, convinced African Americans could aid their "brethren" in Africa. After years at sea, however, Cuffe felt like a stranger in his own land. He had been well received in Sierra Leone. His stature was above reproach in England. Yet, in white America, he was just another Black man, confronting the everyday realities of racism in America throughout his travels. In the minds of many whites, Cuffe was still that young teenager the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had legally written off the record. He was not a self-made, entrepreneurial businessman, sober Quaker, or international celebrity—he was simply Black. While traveling from Washington to Baltimore on the first leg of his return to Westport, a white man demanded Cuffe "come away from the Seat" because Blacks were supposed to sit in the rear of coach, not near the women and gentlemen.[16] Cuffe did, in accordance with custom, offer the women his seat. He demonstrated to all on board that he knew proper etiquette. To the white man he remained firm, given that "I was no Starter and Set Still," but the white man took his seat beside "me but Shew much Evel Contempt."[17] For the rest of the journey, Cuffe was peppered with comments from the man who "openly accosted me."[18]

Cuffe wrote at length in his journal about the experience. "I believe if I am favoured to keep my place, my Enemies Will Become friendly."[19] After a lifetime of such encounters, Cuffe knew better than to think the rest of his journey would be free from conflict. The abuse did not

cease on the stagecoach. Once in Baltimore, "they utterly Refused to take me in at the tavern or to git me a Dinner unless I Would go Back among the Servants." Cuffe maintained, "I Refused not as I thought myself better then [sic] the Servants but from the nature of the Cause thought it not advisable."[20] Cuffe was deeply saddened by the treatment he received throughout his travels back to Massachusetts. In Baltimore, he decided to leave the tavern and stay with a "Real friend to the people of Colour."[21] These experiences weighed heavily on Cuffe throughout his remaining years, while convincing him to continue his fight toward liberating his brethren and civilizing Sierra Leone. Perhaps African Americans could find true liberty only in a nation they built in their ancestral homelands.

On his travels from Washington to Westport, Cuffe stopped in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York to enlist the aid of Black abolition societies. His ideas were met with enthusiasm. Cuffe pronounced the "Epistle of the Society of Sierra Leone" to his audiences in which he called for the liberation of Blacks, for them to "enjoy liberty that God granted unto all his faithful Saints."[22] He visited with prominent African Americans and whites to develop more support for his African plans. In Baltimore, he was impressed with Daniel Coker's African School where 107 Black children were taught.[23] Coker would become one of the most prominent Methodist preachers to emigrate to Sierra Leone after Cuffe's death. He felt broad support for his colonization plans in the African American communities along the East Coast. In Philadelphia, Cuffe attended the familiar Arch Street Meetinghouse, where he reconnected with old Friends and acquaintances. Here, he also settled accounts with John James and others, conversing about Sierra Leone and continuing to gain more local supporters for his cause. Within a few days, Cuffe boarded another coach for New York, where he made his greatest gains in support among African Americans.

Paul Cuffe had long held connections with Philadelphia, Newport, Providence, and other Quaker communities along the East Coast, but New York was a new ground for him to gain support from. On a stagecoach layover, Cuffe toured the city and its African School

House, where they taught one hundred children. He met with noted abolitionists who decided along with Cuffe to form a body to support the "permotion of Africa of which Sierra Leona at present Semes to be the principel Established colony."[24] Approximately twenty Quaker Friends joined the new society on that day, bringing New York into the fold of Cuffe's supporters.

Still, in the multiethnic, multiracial milieu of New York—a city some historians view as the center of the development of American culture—Paul Cuffe experienced the racism inherent in America.[25] Cuffe encountered two Methodist preachers who did not believe or understand that he spoke English. Viewing him as an African, perhaps a native of Sierra Leone, the preachers clearly degraded Cuffe in a way that he could not have imagined. Although Cuffe claims to have simply bid the men farewell, he must have been rattled by the encounter.

The stop in New York provided Cuffe the opportunity to learn about conditions slaves in the Atlantic world endured. Briton Dr. Ross, who had served for seven years in Jamaica, brought the horrors of plantation slavery to Cuffe. Born free, Cuffe never witnessed the violence inherent on a slave plantation, but Ross made sure he understood the extreme pain and torture African slaves experienced. "He saw most terrible abomination inflicted on the Slaves" in Jamaica, where they were "Jibetted, Launced on a Plank Down a Steep Place Whiped hanged Burnt and racked."[26] The public display of bodies, or gibbeting, often occurred prior to the nineteenth century for both Blacks and whites, but the practice began to fall out of use during Cuffe's time—except on slave plantations where runaway slaves or disruptive African slaves would be tortured and then paced in the gibbet, a cage-like device hung to publicly display the dying or dead body of the convicted.[27] Stunned by the reports, Cuffe could only respond with a prayer: "Lord have mercy I Pray Thee."[28]

The next day on Long Island, Cuffe, while preparing to take the packet ship to Rhode Island, feverishly wrote and reported the minutes of antislavery meetings he had attended in New York City. It seemed the details Dr. Ross revealed to Cuffe reinvigorated and

energized him. While on the packet, Cuffe encountered Captain Barber "that has taken great Pains to find me."[29] The man wanted to thank Cuffe for taking care of him during difficult times. Although Cuffe did not appear to remember the circumstances surrounding the captain, he offered his well wishes and remarked on the importance of doing good deeds as a Black man in America. The packet boat passed Block Island at 1:30 a.m., arriving in Newport at 8:30 a.m. By the time Cuffe returned to Newport on 6 May 1812, William Ellery had received orders to release the ship and cargo to Cuffe, but he still owed the government money for docking fees and the like. Almost immediately, Cuffe sent out notes of thanks to his ardent supporters, informing them of the good news.

Much like Liverpool, England, Newport was the heart of the slave trade in America, where hundreds of slave ships left the harbor to engage in the trade prior to the abolition law of 1808. On this day, an African American retrieved his ship and belongings, illustrating the dramatic swing in fortunes for Black people in America. Yet, Cuffe's travels from the seat of power in Washington, DC, reminded him of how difficult it was to be Black in America. Many people would resign themselves to this problem, feeling helpless and hopeless in the face of such challenges; Cuffe did not. His experiences prompted him to work harder to improve African Americans' lives by resettling them in Sierra Leone—a colony, in Cuffe's eyes, that appeared to be near chaos, rife with debauchery and godlessness. Finding freedom from racist America in West Africa trumped the potential negative impact these trailblazing African Americans may experience.

After his return to Westport, Cuffe received visitors and letters urging him to figure out a way around the embargo to transport free Blacks to Africa, but he lamented often about the outbreak of war and its impact on his plans. He wrote to friends in England to try to convince them to help him obtain a license to travel to the British colony despite the two nations being at war. He received little help. The Saints and others were forced, as politicians, to put aside their philanthropic activities until diplomatic matters were settled. A private-sector entrepreneur like Cuffe could not relate. "Not With Standing the declaration

of war between the 2 Counterys," he wrote, "I hope that . . . Chain of Brotherly union in the true Church is not shortnd."[30] To Cuffe, war was simply an obstacle that could be overcome.

Other barriers to settling Sierra Leone assumed priority for Cuffe. Citing his limited funds and the few possibilities of extending trade via his ships, Cuffe understood that outside finances needed to be brought into the fold. "It is growing to be very hazardious for me to keep this path open," he wrote to William Allen, especially with embargo restrictions in place. "It is Stated to me," he continued, "that tobacco pork beef Butter Soap Candles and dry goods is prohibited."[31] In addition to the limited trade opportunities with Sierra Leone, Cuffe experienced reduced income from his other ventures as the embargo restricted his previously prosperous trade with Jamaica. Yet, he persisted, repeatedly stating his intention to sail for Sierra Leone as soon as possible.

While awaiting news from the war front, Paul Cuffe stayed in Westport to develop his plan to make Sierra Leone a viable and successful colony. For this self-made man, it all started with the triumvirate of industry, education, and the fishery. Among the most important items needed in the colony were more, proper sawmills. As he had previously stated while in Africa, sawmills would greatly enhance the ability of colonists to build new homes and industrial structures, while also facilitating the repair of the current buildings. He began to search for a sawyer and a millwright to erect and maintain the structure as not one, to his knowledge, remained in the colony at the time. Sawmills were estimated to cut nearly ten times the amount of lumber as handsaws, making them critical to building the infrastructure of a relatively bare landscape such as Freetown.[32] Sawmills in Paul Cuffe's New England played an integral role in the development of towns, especially in his hometown of Westport, where a small river turned into a bustling center for shipbuilding and whaling owing to its sawmills, including Cuffe's own, which proved instrumental in building his and others' ships.

Education represented the second of the three main ingredients to building a strong colony in Africa. Cuffe's record of supporting

educational efforts for children of color in his hometown of Westport was proven as he had paid for and built a free school for all the town's children on his own property. He planned to carry this same philosophy of openness and accessibility to Sierra Leone. Despite his current increasingly difficult financial status, "I have the 9 Africans" he brought with him from Sierra Leone "at School Regular Which if the War Should Continue for any Length of time will be a bill of Considerable Expence."[33] He committed to the undertaking, paying for it himself if the African Institution in London could not reimburse him—and it would not. The Quaker community in New Bedford pitched in to help, with William Rotch Jr. supporting Cuffe in his endeavors to educate African adolescents.

Trade formed the third focal point Cuffe believed critical to the success of the African colony. I think "Well of Establishing mercantile intercourse on the" coast "of Africa to Replace" the trade in Africans, he wrote, coaxing African traders themselves to "trade in Lawful and Leaguall terms."[34] Cuffe's expertise in whale fishery would provide a pivotal starting point, which could establish trade connections between England, the United States, and Sierra Leone. Part of bringing the nine young Africans to the United States was to teach them how to fish, navigate, and whale successfully. As much as Cuffe understood the potential for a flourishing fishery off the African coast—he had witnessed large sperm whale pods near Africa during his voyages—it was but one portion of trade that would fuel the development of the Black colony. Other products would need to be produced for trade and must be desirable in the overseas market. Slave trading was worth its weight in gold, even with Great Britain and the United States attempting to curb the trade. Whatever replaced it would have to produce prosperity on a similar level.

Paul Cuffe appeared particularly motivated to embark on another trip to Africa, leading a group of free Black settlers from America to Sierra Leone, the longer he remained in Westport, where he received numerous letters and visitors urging him to do so. Cuffe saw the Nova Scotians settled in West Africa as likely unable to construct the colony he envisioned. In just a few generations removed from America,

in his mind, they had been corrupted by their experiences in Africa. The Nova Scotians' exposure to native African religion—which included pagans who "adore the new moon" and Muslims who, Cuffe noted, wrote in a strange manner "from the right to left"—revived a missionary zeal in the Quaker.[35] Whereas the first voyage to Sierra Leone focused on ascertaining the viability of three-way commerce between Africa, Europe, and America, more voyages would further "promote the improvement and civilization of the Africans."[36] Cuffe planned to bring with him aboard the Black-crewed *Traveller* men of industry and labor who could cultivate the land, producing tobacco or rice for export. Aaron Richards, the African apprentice impressed in England, represented just such a man. Cuffe taught Richards the art and science of navigation, hoping that it would ignite in him a passion for the sea as it had in Cuffe as a teenager. He intended for Richards to bring the knowledge he gained in the diaspora back to Sierra Leone to teach the Kru men and other native Africans.

Cuffe was well-versed in his contemporaries' ideas about African colonization. Two copies of a letter from Thomas Jefferson to an elderly John Lynch could be found in Cuffe's personal possessions at this time.[37] As early as 1782's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson advocated for emancipation only if the former slaves were transported away from the white population to avoid potential violent retribution. Although Cuffe and Jefferson had dramatically different reasons for supporting colonization, some commonalities can be seen in the well-circulated letter Jefferson wrote to Lynch, a Virginia entrepreneur and founder of the city of Lynchburg on the James River: "Going from a country possessing all the useful arts, they [African-Americans] might be the means of transplanting them among the inhabitants of Africa, and would thus carry back to the country of their origin the seeds of civilization which might render their sojournment and sufferings here a blessing in the end to that country."[38] Jefferson summarized the sentiments that Cuffe would begin to advocate in his efforts to develop a plan for colonization. Possessing two copies of the letter suggests the importance Cuffe assigned to them. Did these letters serve as a guide or outline for Cuffe's developing his colonization

scheme? The letters reflected a transformation in Cuffe's thinking on emigration that began after his initial landing in Sierra Leone and continued during his discussions with the African Institution in London, further stimulated by his egregious encounters with American racism after his return. As Cuffe himself noted in Sierra Leone, Africans needed a civilizing influence. Jefferson's words strengthened his conviction and desire to embark on a plan to accomplish this goal. And, Cuffe determined, who better to "carry back to the country of their origins" the seeds of civilization than African Americans. Since returning from Sierra Leone in 1812, Cuffe began to turn from an emigrationist to a colonizationist with a benevolent imperialistic agenda.

Meanwhile, Paul Cuffe remained in Westport trying to sell the load of camwood he brought back from Sierra Leone when a tobacco deal went sour. As he struggled to rectify his business ledgers, scrounging to make sales of his cargo, he continued to lament the wartime limitations placed on the fishing industry, a previously reliable trade. The prices were dismal, as was the quality of goods he could obtain from New York.[39] Cuffe remained in contact with the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone in an effort to rectify outstanding bills and debts owed him by members of the colony, asking James Wise Clark of the society to collect on his behalf.[40] In addition, he reported on the progress of the young Africans he schooled in Westport, assuring society members that plans to return to Freetown were progressing. He made sure they knew he hadn't forgotten his brethren.

Throughout 1813, Paul Cuffe busily prepared for what he hoped would be an upcoming voyage back to the African continent, this time with a boatload of emigrants. Indeed, "I have had Communications with the People of Coulour of Boston, Providence, New York, Philadelphia &c.," and in Boston, "thay appear Verry Sealou for the Cause."[41] These men and women offered widespread skills that could help build and organize the colony, but Cuffe also desired some free Blacks from the American South whose knowledge in rice, tobacco, sugar, and cotton cultivation would provide agricultural know-how to aid in diversifying the colony's exports. For Sierra Leone to be competitive required a diverse array of products for the marketplace.

Momentum for a second voyage from America to Africa grew, compelling the sea captain-turned-benevolent imperialist to press federal officials further on granting him a license to trade with the British colony during this time of war.

Growing frustrated by his efforts to obtain a license to trade with Sierra Leone, Paul Cuffe turned to a fellow Friend, Baltimore Quaker Hannah Little. Cuffe knew Little was friendly with Dolly Madison, the president's wife, and he asked her to help convince James Madison to grant Cuffe a trading license. The African Institution, Cuffe explained, "wish to know the minds of the leading men of our government in uniting With the British Government in granting Liberty for a Vessell to pass from American [sic] to Sierra Leone in Africa."[42] Cuffe was careful to assure Hannah Little that his main goal was not to profit from the trade but rather to "Carry Peopel of Cullour to Africa."[43] Gaining the support of the president rested on this important detail: Madison advocated emigration of free Blacks to Africa, and Cuffe believed obtaining a license to ferry "Several families" to the British colony would start the flow of migrants. Little advised Cuffe to formally request such a license, prompting Cuffe to pen a memorial to Congress and ask for their permission to ferry African Americans to Africa.

In June 1813, Paul Cuffe submitted his memorial via James Madison. The document is a milestone because few African Americans of the time approached Congress to resolve their concerns, thus doing so spoke to Cuffe's belief in the men in power. Some may have been slave owners, others undoubtedly racist, but his cause was a concern for the nation that simultaneously spoke to a wide variety of special interests. Pennsylvania's legislature proposed a bill in 1813 that infuriated men like Cuffe and such fellow Black Quakers as James Forten, Cuffe's longtime friend and a rising voice in America's African American community. The bill aimed to quell white Pennsylvanians' growing concerns over an increasing postwar free Black population by requiring Black immigrants into the state to register with local authorities. Failing to do so resulted in their removal from the state. Forten penned a "Series of Letters by a Man of Colour" in protest at

approximately the same time as Cuffe wrote his memorial to Congress. These two Friends did not hold contradictory ideas: Forten saw the bill as having the potential to rob Blacks of one of few free places in America in which to live, whereas Cuffe asked Congress to support a voluntary outflow of Blacks to Sierra Leone.[44] The Pennsylvania legislature's bill represented a way to control the Black population as opposed to providing an impetus for free Blacks to control their own lives and destinies.[45]

The "Memorial of Paul Cuffee," as it came to be known, was heard just after the New Year when the Massachusetts 9th District representative Laban Wheaton presented it to Congress on 7 January 1814. Wheaton, a friend of William Rotch Jr., received a request from the influential Quaker businessman to take Cuffe's petition seriously.[46] Wheaton listened, leading the effort to pass the bill through both houses of Congress. With Congress in session as the War of 1812 raged in the background—a war that would see Washington burn at the hands of the British in August of the same year—the mood was surprisingly receptive to Cuffe's petition. Cuffe asked for financial support from the United States government for his colonization scheme.[47] Cuffe's finances had suffered greatly from his last voyage to Sierra Leone. Left with a single ship, the *Traveller*, he was determined to return to Sierra Leone with a load of colonists on a larger, 200- to 250-ton ship. Cuffe also sought aid from the African Institution in London as part of a comprehensive approach to funding. Both sources failed to materialize.

Cuffe's memorial served as the first public record of his transformation from emigrationist to a Jefferson-like supporter of colonization. Cuffe asked Congress for "the patronage of the Government of the United States, in affording the aid in the execution of a plan, which may . . . ultimately prove beneficial to his brethren of the African race within their native climate." He continued, restating his support for the civilizing of Africa and the accomplishment of his final goal, stopping the slave trade, but he revealed a new side of his thinking on how to accomplish the complex plan. Cuffe asked Congress to fund the trip "to keep up an intercourse with the free people of

colour in the United States," in the "expectation that some persons of reputation be sufficiently interested to visit Africa, and endeavor to promote habits of industry, sobriety, and frugality of the natives of that country."[48] This pathway between the United States and Sierra Leone would act as a conduit for the exchange of goods, ideas, and free people of color in the diaspora.

Cuffe's vision emphasized the positive impact as being mostly one-sided: the civilizing influence of African Americans on their "brethren." The memorial made it clear that the colonists differed from Prince Hall's "Affricans" from the 1787 petition. Rather, Cuffe's memorial and his use of the term "brethren" established a cultural and racial link between African Americans like Cuffe and native Africans, but it also made clear the distinction between the two groups. African Americans' mission in Cuffe's mind was to improve the condition of what he believed to be the sometimes uncivilized and often immoral Nova Scotians, Maroons, and native Africans in Sierra Leone. In building a sawmill, for example, the population could rebuild and improve their dwellings, transforming them from rickety dwellings to solidly built wood structures. In providing wagons, Africans Americans could show native Africans a new method of transporting goods, relieving them of having to carry heavy items on their heads. Cuffe's colonists would remake the culture of Sierra Leone in physical, as well as philosophical and religious, ways. They were not "returning" to their birth continent like many of Hall's fellow petitioners had envisioned; Cuffe's men intended to build a new, more enlightened space for Black people in the Atlantic world.

Although Cuffe foresaw a mostly one-way trade from America to Africa, he understood that Sierra Leone must provide the United States and other white Atlantic nations with valuable manufactures and produce. Rice, cotton, coffee, and tobacco seemed most likely to succeed in the colony's climate. More important, these crops were often in high demand on the market.[49] At the very least, he reasoned, vessels returning from Sierra Leone could carry enough legitimate cargo produced in the colony to pay for the voyage.[50] Thomas Jefferson, much like Cuffe, supported incorporating trade to pay for

the expense of colonization, which made it a popular solution to the funding predicament.

Members of Congress were not necessarily concerned with the long-term health of Sierra Leone as their necks were on the line with the current war against Great Britain, a war that America seemed to be losing. Cuffe understood, deciding to appeal to the congressmen's philanthropic and religious concerns. "Being a descendant of Africa," he wrote, "and early instructed in habits of sobriety and industry," he sought to "relieve the sufferings of his fellow creatures." The memorial cited the support of the African Institution, pointing to religion as a key tool in the promotion of abolition. With proper religious and moral instruction, "he could but view the practice of his brethren the African race of selling their fellow creatures into the state of slavery for life as inconsistent with that Divine Principle." Cuffe wanted to appeal to the congressmen's anti–slave trade stance and moral compasses rather than focus on his goal of building a free Black nation in West Africa. Their support, Cuffe tried to convince them, would benefit the US efforts to abolish the slave trade. In addition, Cuffe was careful to deny any sort of personal profits coming out of the deal. "Without a little aid from the trifling commerce of that country," he concluded, the expense would fall too heavy on your petitioner."[51]

Three months later, on 18 March 1814, a bill was introduced in Congress in support of Paul Cuffe's memorial. A "diffuse" and lengthy discussion ensued as Congress debated the merits of federal support of Cuffe's plan to sail to Africa. Ironically, just under two years after seeking the release of the *Traveller*, Cuffe once again asked for an exception for his desire to trade with Great Britain. It proved to be a bold move, but members of Congress took the suggestion seriously. Both sides of the debate—those for the bill and those against allowing Cuffe a license to trade with Sierra Leone—agreed on "the excellence of the general character" of the petitioner, but little other common ground arose in the debate.[52] Supporters of Cuffe cited the "benefits to humanity" of the plan, most important that it "would invite the emigration of free Blacks, a part of our population which we could well spare, &c. &c."[53] Cuffe's argument clearly convinced

several congressmen, even if their approval was partially fueled by Jeffersonian ideas to rid the nation of a perceived potentially dangerous free Black population.

The opposition to the Cuffe bill countered, arguing that it was unfair to grant him permission to carry out trade with the enemy when Congress did not allow the same for American fishermen or coastal traders. In addition, they thought it "improper" to allow him to carry cargo for sale, citing it as a nonnecessity in spreading the word of the gospel. The *Niles Weekly Register* reporter in the audience witnessed the debate take on "considerable controversy and something like asperity" when the debate turned toward the character of Great Britain's Saints and whether it was appropriate to provide free Black Americans to help build a British colony. The multilayered debate in Congress consumed considerable amount of the legislative day, which proved to be typical of a split delegation, but perhaps not so typical of a nation at war. Although Paul Cuffe's efforts to alleviate his brethren's condition in Africa seemed on the surface to be unrelated to the war, it became clear that even the small discourse of trade in his petition was enough to provoke further scrutiny. By the time the debate ended, the Senate forwarded an amended version of the bill to the House. Turning in a vote of sixty-five for and seventy-two against, the bill to license Paul Cuffe's voyage to Sierra Leone failed.[54] Of the yay votes, only two came from states where slavery remained legal, and of the remaining votes, very few arose from representatives outside New England. The nay votes proved far more mixed in their origin, with delegations from Pennsylvania and New York widely supporting the restriction of Cuffe's license.[55] Over the next year, Paul Cuffe turned his attention away from Washington, DC, working to find private funding for his second transatlantic crossing from America to Africa rather than rely on government support.

CHAPTER NINE

Final Voyage to Sierra Leone

Dark shadows overspread the United States in the months after the War of 1812 ended. The British were defeated for the second time in thirty years on American soil, but both victories left a sour taste in the mouths of average Americans who were left to pick up the pieces of destroyed families, bombed-out and ravaged landscapes, and an economy in tatters. As with any American war (then or in the future), most local Quakers did not support the violence. Paul Cuffe recognized the cost of war to life and finances when he wrote long-time friend James Forten, "All merchantabile business seems to wear a gloom of Death."[1] The war had seriously delayed Cuffe's plans to colonize Sierra Leone, where he hoped to strike at the heart of the remaining slave trade and build trade relationships between the colony and America; every day that passed meant more lives were lost to the sinister business of the trade. Cuffe's endeavors, in his mind, rose above war and moved beyond politics—a subject of which Cuffe rarely spoke—to the fundamentals of life, death, and liberty.

Wartime ravaged the American economy and landscape, and as with the previous war against Great Britain, African Americans were optimistic in their search for liberty. Thousands of Blacks, many of whom were already free but some who fought in exchange for emancipation, joined the war alongside whites. As in the American Revolution, freedom was dangled, incentivizing enslaved African Americans to join the service in "valorous support" of the American cause.[2] The future seemed bright to many enslaved and free African Americans as

the war's end neared and the nation turned its attention to rebuilding. Yet, promises of liberty were often false. Approximately six hundred slaves were enticed off Louisiana plantations by Andrew Jackson with promises of freedom in exchange for military service. As these men returned to their postwar plantations, they realized Jackson planned to leave it up to individual holders of enslaved people to emancipate the men who fought in New Orleans. His promises were duplicitous. Paul Cuffe knew that feeling of being deceived. As discussed above, by the end of the Revolutionary War, it was clear he would not gain access to the vote in Dartmouth, and so he refused to pay taxes. Little changed after his protest, but he expressed his discontent publicly and boldly. Decades later, at the end of the War of 1812, he still did not have the right to vote.

Paul Cuffe continued to write letters, but now to supporters in response to the seemingly vast interest in his next voyage to Sierra Leone. Looking for industrious men and hardy women, Cuffe appeared to have both in great numbers based on the scuttlebutt he received throughout 1814 and 1815. Although growing sentiment among African American community leaders throughout the Northeast trended toward staying in America to wrestle freedom away from the growing slavocracy, a vocal minority emerged from the shadows of war to support Cuffe's emigration plan. They would become Black American colonists in Africa.

In early 1815, Cuffe traveled to Philadelphia to begin preparations for his voyage to Sierra Leone, during which he searched for colonists. First, however, he needed to settle pressing financial matters that delayed his planning. Co-owned with John James, *Alpha* proved to be a hardy ship in the Cuffe fleet, carrying him on his full transatlantic voyage in 1810 when he tested the waters of commerce with European partners. The vessel survived several tough storms on that journey, delivering her master and crew safely to Westport. *Alpha* routinely sailed on coastal trading routes as well as down to the Gulf of Mexico, where it occasionally ran into trouble. Now, at William Rotch Jr.'s urging, Cuffe was forced to sell her, seeking $10,000 to help John James resolve his financial issues and to put toward his

voyage to Sierra Leone.[3] "Neither of us," lamented Cuffe, "can buy each other out." With James broke and Cuffe needing money for his voyage, the vessel "hangs very heavy on our hands."[4] The war squeezed the usually easily available credit in the maritime world; now, Cuffe was forced to look for alternatives. Hoped-for funding from the government and local colonization organizations never materialized; the captain tapped his resources so as to ensure the voyage occurred after two years of waiting, even sacrificing a beloved ship he had built at his Westport yard.

Using his contacts with James Forten and John James, among others in Philadelphia, Cuffe learned of two men, Anthony Surveance and Thomas Wilson, along with their wives, who were committed to the project and desirous to sail with Cuffe. After receiving word of their good character, Cuffe agreed to include them. He assumed the families would pay their way but confided in his English Quaker Friend, that he appreciated the African Institution "making Some provisions" for these families when they arrived in Sierra Leone.[5] In a letter home to his wife, Alice, Paul warns her that when the *Traveller* arrives in Westport, he will not be aboard, but these four Philadelphians will be, arriving early to prepare for the transatlantic crossing, which he hoped would commence by the end of October. His time in Philadelphia nearing its end, Cuffe told Alice of the need to travel to New York City to recruit more families for the voyage. Despite multiple trips to Wilmington while anchored in Philadelphia, Delaware provided little aid and no colonists. Disappointed, he remained optimistic, telling his family that "Likely we Shall bring Some pasangers home with us &c."[6]

As large as New York's Black population was at the time—which he estimated at eight to ten thousand people—Cuffe found it difficult to find volunteers to colonize Sierra Leone.[7] Cuffe was eager to draw interest, but his visit was to no avail. In the city, however, he was approached by Charles Collins, among other white merchants, who wished to capitalize on the trade between Africa, England, and America that Cuffe promised with Sierra Leone. A member of the New York Meeting, Collins sought profit through ethical trade,

encouraging Cuffe to bring back a cargo of coffee, cotton, and sugar if he was able to find sources for these products that did not use slave labor to grow or produce them. "Be this as it may," Collins wrote Cuffe, "how much more culpable must it be to contribute to the Suffering of our fellow creatures by making use of the fruits of their labour of which Shall we not Say they are robbed?"[8] Collins recognized the need to support labor not carried out by enslaved people to advance their cause, but he also saw Cuffe's plan to open free intercourse with Sierra Leone as critical to striking at the heart of slavery: profit. He and other merchants could sell select merchandise produced by freemen to a degree, but their sources were limited. Developing Sierra Leone into a sustainable source could shift the balance of the marketplace.

Boston proved to be a more enthusiastic environment in Paul Cuffe's search for colonists. After his arrival home from his first voyage to Sierra Leone, Cuffe received periodic letters or persons calling on him at home to express their interest in moving to Africa. Several free African American families pledged their commitment to Cuffe's project, which marked the first broad commitment the Westport native encountered. Including families in the project spoke to the long-term commitment these settlers held. Boston's commitment to African emigration was well rooted, with Prince Hall and other prominent Black Bostonians publicly announcing their support for emigration as early as 1773. But the question of financing remained the challenge.

With an eye toward funding his colonial efforts, Cuffe worked to find a load of plaster of Paris to sell if the *Traveller* were to make a brief trade run to Maine, where he could appeal for public financing.[9] Then, while contemplating this short coastal trade voyage, a positive break developed. Joseph May, a prominent Boston abolitionist and spokesman for a group that included William Guinn, Perry Lockes, Thomas Jarvis, Peter Wilcox, and Robert Rigsby, announced in a letter that they are "all free Black people now resident in Boston," who will travel with their wives and children to Sierra Leone aboard Paul Cuffe's ship, *Traveller*. Their intention was to settle in Sierra Leone

permanently, but they lacked financial resources to do so. In a demonstration of extreme humility, the families "beg the aid of the wealthy and charitable" to "defray the expenses of their necessary outfits, sea-stores and passage money."[10] In an act of good faith, the settlers pledged small amounts of their own money to the cause, with sums ranging from $3.00 to $7.00, far too little to pay their way aboard Cuffe's vessel. As desperate as the public announcement seemed, it produced results.

"Last night I received a letter from a friend of mine in Boston," William Rotch Jr. informed Cuffe. "He has money deposited with him for the 'purpose of preventing the horrible traffick in human beings.'"[11] The letter arrived just two days after Joseph May's document went public. The Black Bostonians cobbled together $32 for expenses, but it was well short of necessary funding, of which labor accounted for nearly 41 percent.[12] As Cuffe scrounged for money to pay for the voyage to Sierra Leone, he sometimes received small gifts, like the $100 offered by an anonymous source to defray the cost of bringing colonists to Africa, or as William Rotch reported, "Thou may hold it until some opportunity may offer while in Africa to dispose of it in such a way as thou may think best conform to the views of the giver."[13] Still, supporters of colonization understood Cuffe's plan to be in jeopardy because of financial duress. Those who could support it through donations often did, but many whites simply saw an opportunity for commercial exploitation.

Writing to his longtime supporter and dear friend William Allen, Cuffe sought financial aid from the African Institution in London, but the organization was still reeling from the reports of corruption Cuffe provided in 1814. Allen reported to Cuffe that a new organization—the "Society for the encouragement of Black Settlers at Sierra Leone and Natives of Africa generally in the cultivation of their Soil and by the Sale of their produce"—was created by members of the African Institution to deal with matters of colonization.[14] The African Institution delicately handled Sierra Leone after Cuffe's reports, disallowing members who traded with African agents to become involved in colonization.[15] Nevertheless, Allen promised Cuffe some aid in

obtaining a trade license, even encouraging him to sell the *Traveller* once he arrived in Freetown to buy a British-registered ship to help with trade. Although relations between Allen and Cuffe appeared to remain amicable and supportive, it became clear to Cuffe that dissent within the African Institution would strain their relationship. Unfortunately for Cuffe, he could not gain the promise he needed to ensure whatever cargo he brought to Africa could be converted into profit to pay the way of the *Traveller*.

As summer turned to autumn, Cuffe planned to disembark from Westport in October for Sierra Leone with passengers, crew, and some cargo for trade to make up for the clear monetary deficit he faced in operating the *Traveller*. Despite Thomas Wainer scouring the coastal communities for cheap or donated cargo along with trying to call in debts owed to the Cuffe family, Paul faced the sobering realization that an October departure would be difficult: the logistics of organizing colonists' arrival in Westport and funding the voyage lagged. The arrival of the Great September Gale in early fall proved to be a significant factor in delaying Cuffe's preparations. The storm came ashore in the middle of prime hurricane season, on 23 September, landing first in Connecticut and near Providence, Rhode Island, cutting a swath along the coast into the interior of central New England with storm surges at or above eleven feet, marking this as one of the most powerful storms on record in New England. Cuffe described the havoc and destruction from the storm with calm amazement. New Bedford witnessed all but two vessels in the harbor driven aground, with reports throughout southern New England of ships floating down the streets of port towns, while others came to rest in the gardens and yards of homes ten to twelve feet above the tide line.[16]

Cuffe's descriptive account differs little from other accounts throughout New England. "The dreadful gail" caused "many of his fellow creatures" to suffer much, "some by death and none we may say escaped of some damage." He continued to describe the relentless devastation of the storm: "I my self had my ways, the bridge part and piers carried away the half of my store went all to pieces and the other part removed of its place & the wood timber much damaged."

"In deed," he recalled, "my orchard not so much injured as many others" while feeling blessed that he and his family survived despite "2 men" from town who were "drowned in this river trying to save their hay."[17] The hurricane rocked the coastal communities, forcing many during this harvest season to scrounge for replacement supplies and products to repair their buildings. After dealing with the aftermath of the storm, in mid-October Cuffe requested an absence from Westport's Meeting, asking for his fellow Quakers' approval for his business in Africa. Ideally, approval would come rapidly, but Westport's was a monthly meeting, making the response by Quaker elders impossible until November. Cuffe would use the additional preparation time well.

Cleanup from the storm continued throughout the fall, and Cuffe faced the dual tasks of rebuilding his properties and supplying his brig for the crossing. Worries over money again became the focal point of his attention. Once it appeared the Boston families would have difficulty paying for the passage, Cuffe proposed a new scheme. "I want 3 firkins of butter and about 400 Cwt of Cheese," he wrote to his Boston merchant friend Alexander Howard, "if they have not raised the money for me on account of the African passengers, let them git these things and become sponsiabel for the payment."[18] Ever resourceful, Cuffe turned his attention to barter and exchange, providing an alternative if Bostonians couldn't raise the cash needed to fund the passengers' crossing. To that end, Cuffe enthusiastically reported to his dear friend James Forten, "I arrived from Boston 2 days ago am carrying 6 familys 32 in number! They are to be in Westport in 2 Weeks from this date to imbark for Africa." Despite his growing excitement for the voyage, Cuffe's mind could never wander far from finances. He considered it important for the colonists to have enough money to provide for themselves for the first six months in Freetown, which meant "the Bostonians" should "raise about $3000" while Forten should raise $400 for the four Philadelphia passengers.[19] By the time Forten received the letter from Cuffe, the numbers had grown, up from thirty-two to forty passengers, including the four from Philadelphia and two additional passengers from New York.

Including crew, the ship would leave with fifty people aboard, perhaps not fully funded but optimistic the African Institution would come through with a license to trade by the time they reached Sierra Leone.[20] Between the fundraising of the passengers, donations from anonymous supporters, and cargo donations, Cuffe believed strongly that the money could be garnered. Peter Williams wrote Cuffe, offering additional donations of cargo to help fund the voyage. "We have put on board the Sloop *Butter* . . . two kegs of tobacco . . . weighing as per bill two hundred and ninety eight pounds net which we wish you to take with you to Sierra Leone and dispose of to the best advantage. We wish you," he continued, "to employ the proceeds therof in trade as though it were your own property."[21] These added resources turned Cuffe more optimistic about the potential for the success of the voyage. Even better news arrived in mid-November, when Cuffe received word from the Westport Monthly Meeting that his trip had been approved. His Quaker Friends found his philanthropic efforts "Laudable" to the extent they promised to repay him the money he had loaned for repairs of another Quaker Meetinghouse in nearby Rhode Island.[22] Cuffe seemed to have donations flowing in to an extent that his voyage now seemed possible.

Cuffe and his supporters intensified preparations for the voyage in mid- to late November as a seemingly endless string of delays continued. Alice's weather-related health problems resurfaced as temperatures fell through the month of November, increasing Cuffe's stress levels significantly as he readied to make way across the Atlantic. "My wife is confined to her room and considerable so to her bed," he reported to his Quaker Friend James Brian as he anxiously awaited the arrival of the Boston settlers, who were supposed to have arrived some weeks earlier. With the *Traveller* nearly ready for the voyage, Cuffe remarked, "I shall endeavor through permission of God to sail soon after their arval" from Boston.[23] Although Alice was ill, Cuffe knew she would make it through the winter so long as she remained indoors, as in previous years. Comforted by this knowledge, he turned his attention to the sea, waiting for the bulk of his passengers to arrive via a packet vessel from Boston. Over the next two weeks, the

Traveller lay in port ready to weigh anchor at a moment's notice per Captain Cuffe's decision. Every moment without passengers made him wonder if they would be true to their word.

The extended wait for the Boston passengers afforded Cuffe the opportunity to settle perhaps the most important detail of what would be his final voyage to Africa: the medicine chest. For $23.71—equivalent in price to a modern-day doctor's visit without insurance—Dr. James Taylor outfitted Cuffe's chest with "many new articles [to replace those] which had totally perished through age and I was obliged to throw them out and replace them with new ones. Many of the Philes," he continued, "were entirely empty, others partially, &c. I have filled up everything agreeably to the book of directions."[24] Although ships carried medicine chests as a matter of routine, a voyage to Africa required a deeper level of seriousness when it came to having on hand the right remedies for the various fevers and illnesses that newcomers found in Africa. Cuffe's last visit to Sierra Leone had seen several of his crew members, including his nephew, become severely ill with malaria, rheumatic and yellow fevers, plus the usual common colds and other ailments. His experience meant that he wanted a fully stocked chest to treat whatever sickness that was sure to arise in their first few months in Freetown. The chest included powdered rhubarb and cream of tartar to treat digestive ailments, laudanum pills for pain and cough suppressing, tinct bark" for fevers, and various splints and "blister plasters" to deal with external or overuse injuries as they may arise during the voyage.[25] What Cuffe clearly foresaw, however, was illness striking the vessel: it was nearly unavoidable once in Freetown, and he did not want anything to stop the successful settling of these African American colonists.

By the dawn of December, the Boston passengers had arrived in Westport, enthusiastic about the adventure that lay before them. Although lacking the level of funding and state-sponsored support Cuffe had hoped for, the *Traveller*'s return trip to Africa commenced on 10 December 1815. The brig left Westport, sailed out of Buzzards Bay eastward across the North Atlantic during some of the coldest and potentially stormiest weather of the year. Captain Cuffe cared

little for the *possible* problems they might encounter at sea, preferring to sail during the winter months to ensure they arrived early enough for the settlers to be able to plant new crops and begin farming immediately upon their arrival. If unable to support themselves beyond an initial six-month period, Cuffe reasoned, it would be tenfold more difficult for them to survive. Tempting the fates of winter weather seemed like the better deal.

The voyage took fifty-six days, with the *Traveller* arriving in Freetown on approximately 4 February 1816.[26] The decision to leave during winter may have haunted Cuffe as the brig encountered "the most Trimondous weather that I ever remember exspearencing of." The ship and crew "Seemingly were in Jeopordy" most of the voyage, with nearly all person aboard becoming ill and in need of medicine. The medicine chest Cuffe had restocked proved to be worth every penny spent as he credited the remedies with aiding his crew's rebound to good health, adding the experience made him "truly humbled before the father and fountain of all our mercies." The well-prepared Cuffe wrote of the experience, but it was clear that much of the health of his crew and passengers was due to his own expertise. As the vessel sailed into Freetown, he reported that "they all recovered and now are injoying perfect health."[27]

Cuffe carried onboard the usual provisions for the thirty-eight passengers and a dozen crew, but the *Traveller* also held commodities—such as sperm soap, several hogshead of tobacco, candles, flour glass—that he intended to sell for profit.[28] Of the eighteen men and twenty women and children traveling to Africa to acquire land on which to farm, Cuffe described the men as "Industrus" and "hard working."[29] The people aboard the *Traveller* were "all common labers, they were no mechaniks but are Inclined to cultivate the Land."[30] "Those who labour in the earth," as Thomas Jefferson described yeoman farmers, "are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue."[31] They represented a virtuous America, the values and ethics Paul Cuffe hoped to transfer to Africa through his colonization plan. The men got to work immediately upon arriving

in Freetown, clearing and burning fields for planting. Some of the men turned to growing tobacco, a plant with a strong market around the Atlantic, whereas others went to work at the governor's plantation. Among other pursuits, one man, Anthony Survance, planned to return to his native Congo while working as a mason or to "stand on his own ground" through independent labor. Another passenger wished to learn the art and science of navigation but "on the Count of his sea sickness," Cuffe thought it better he choose a different path.[32] The others became small farmers, choosing to follow their Methodist faith and remain humble in the town.

Thirty-year-old Perry Lock, a Methodist preacher from Boston, and his wife and four children were especially committed to Cuffe's desire to instill Christian values in the native population. Lock planned to spread the word of Methodism to the residents of Freetown and beyond, even if Cuffe believed he "has rather a hard voice for a preacher &c."[33] The composition of the Philadelphia passengers, two from New York, and the remainder from Boston pleased Cuffe to no end as he was assured by numerous prominent supporters who vouched for their character, and once in Africa, according to initial observations, the passengers seemed to live up to their reputations as thirteen colonists joined the Baptist church. Cuffe felt optimistic about this first group of settlers leading to long-term changes in the colony. Perhaps these were the type of people who could help end the corruption he witnessed during his first voyage.

Arriving in Sierra Leone in February 1816, *Traveller* was denied permission to anchor in Freetown's harbor, but by the next morning the brig received permission to do so for the next month. Cuffe was received by Governor McCarthy and the local Friendly Society, yet his overall reception among the locals was somewhat cool. He had been critical of Sierra Leone's white government since learning of mismanagement and corruption a few years prior. The men he encountered in the colony were less than pious, con men who sought personal gain instead of working for the colony's development. Now, it seemed his critical words originally intended for a Quaker audience in Philadelphia and London had reached Sierra Leone's authorities.

This, coupled with hefty duties assessed to his cargo, forced Cuffe to return to America after just two months in port.[34]

The newly appointed governor of Sierra Leone, Charles McCarthy, welcomed Paul Cuffe with cautious optimism. Although the first Crown governor of the colony who was not linked to the African Institution, McCarthy was still in regular correspondence with William Wilberforce as he attempted to rebuild the infrastructure of the troubled British outpost. Rarely did an elite officeholder seek a post in what were considered backwater, tropical holdings, and McCarthy was no exception: although a well-respected man, he was born in Ireland of French parents and never fully accepted into the high rankings of military leaders. He joined the Royal African Corps in 1811, governing other African outposts before moving to Freetown to replace Governor Maxwell, who had focused so extensively on finding and arresting the slave trade at sea that he overlooked the development of the colony on land. By many accounts, McCarthy attempted to rectify the brief period of oversight by sparking a flurry of building that included schools and churches, but he was perhaps coming to a troubled colony too late.[35]

Although McCarthy was another in a long succession of governors to the colony, his administration stuck around long enough to enact significant changes. John Clarkson, Thomas's brother and member of the African Institution, saw McCarthy as tremendously beneficial. Had it not been for Governor McCarthy's stern but seemingly fair authoritative hand, "The colonists might have gone on for a century on the old plan and the hateful distinction between Black and white," he wrote of Nova Scotians' and Maroons' propensity to rebel.[36] McCarthy also rid the colony of many corrupt officials, taking the trust of government to the people by appointing several Black or mixed-race men to positions of power, including the mayor and sheriff. Cuffe and McCarthy held common perspectives, as the governor believed strongly that the only traits Black citizens of Sierra Leone needed to possess were loyalty to the Crown and the Christian religion. Cuffe clearly had no loyalty to the Crown, but the idea that a pious populace would propel the colony to civilization connected the

two men. Upon arrival, Cuffe must have been impressed with the governor's efforts to support new churches, along with his attempt to build a college in this fledgling West African outpost.

Cuffe arrived in Sierra Leone and immediately dined with the governor and judge who had replaced Thorpe—the corrupt man Cuffe had encountered during his first trip to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone still held the 4 percent tax levied on goods at Freetown based on a Colonial Act from 1812, but Cuffe hoped the governor would rescind the tax to allow the *Traveller* to offload cargo.[37] Despite Governor McCarthy being "very kind to me" and taking a great "interest in showing me every favour he could [that] did not too much point Directly against The British navigation act etc," it became clear early on that this trip would produce even more financial hardships.[38] The governor was handcuffed to a large extent, and no amount of support for Cuffe's efforts in Sierra Leone would allow him to disobey colonial law for the sake of Cuffe's financial health. The *Traveller* sat in port, laden with approximately half its cargo with no willing buyers identified.

Still, Cuffe held out hope for Freetown. New schools housed approximately 150 students, mastered by Thomas Hull, a teacher Cuffe had ferried from England in 1812. Cuffe approved of the governor's plan to build roads linking interior tribes to one another and the colony and to build factories—places to exchange goods—because he saw this as beneficial to expanding commerce. He noted over twenty slave trading sites nearby. Perhaps these factories emphasizing ethical commerce would help transition local slave traders to other commodities. In Cuffe's mind, legitimate trade would fuel the recovery and growth of Sierra Leone.[39] Governor McCarthy also granted the colonists Cuffe carried to the colony lands on which to farm, providing them a foothold in the strange land.[40] Favorable reports of the McCarthy administration seemed accurate to Cuffe, as he surveyed the activities surrounding him.

Yet disappointment seeped into Cuffe's reports from the field. "As to the practice of dealing in sperits," Cuffe wrote, "in my Simple opinion is and ever has been much against the true interest of the

Inhabertence of Sierra Leone."[41] In the small colony of only about two thousand inhabitants, Cuffe counted twenty-two licensed taverns or houses serving liquor. "Much of this comodity Comes in Captured slave vessels," he reported to William Allen, infusing Cuffe's two most hated vices: slavery and drunkenness.[42] The abundance of slave traders in the region resulted in an exceptionally high flow of alcohol. In April, Cuffe saw at least two vessels brought to harbor under the direction of the Royal Navy. *Three Brothers* of Newburyport, Massachusetts, and the *Rebecca* of New York were condemned and "found guilty of carrying on the Slave trade contrary to the laws of God and man."[43] Three more brigs and three more schooners were taken while the *Traveller* lay in port, perhaps lifting Cuffe's spirits regarding the fight against the transatlantic slave trade, but undoubtedly jolting him with a dose of reality: that slavery remained just too profitable for law, morality, and ethics to stop it.

The scene in Sierra Leone simply had not changed enough for Cuffe since he last visited in 1812. Three and a half years later and immorality was rampant in the streets, little progress had been made in building monuments to industry like a sawmill and grist mill, and few inroads had been made to convincing inland Africans that slavery was wrong. Whether Muslim or pagan, Cuffe believed strongly that Christians needed to teach them the error of their ways, and years after his first visit, poor travel conditions still inhibited missionaries' work. He knew his efforts to "clear up many unfavourabul reports that was Spread among the peopel of Colour Concerning Sierra Leone" would be a tall order once arrived back home to America, but he would have to try.[44] The *Traveller* left Freetown, returning to New York on 28 May 1816, limping into the harbor after brushes with more Atlantic storms, manned by a disappointed crew. Trade restrictions between the United States and England prevented the brig from trying to salvage the financial disaster of a trip, leaving Cuffe the only choice of returning home to America. It would be his last trip abroad.

CHAPTER TEN

The Year without Summer

After returning to America—almost as soon as he entered New York Harbor—Cuffe began to imagine a new scenario, one that involved Haiti and the resettlement of free Blacks in this free Black nation. Frustrated by the lack of progress in Sierra Leone, Cuffe revealed a final shift in his thinking on African colonization in correspondence. The fluidity of his thoughts integrated the heart of Jeffersonian colonization schemes: that newly freed Blacks must live separately from whites, while spreading American virtue, liberty, and ideals to foreign parts of the Atlantic world. At home in Westport in the summer of 1816, alone with Ruth and tending to his crops, Cuffe emerged as one of the chief counselors to the burgeoning colonization movement in Washington, DC. Jefferson served as another. Cuffe was now the most knowledgeable man in America regarding Sierra Leone, making his advice invaluable to the founding members of the American Colonization Society (ACS). The ACS was initially named the Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America when founded by Robert Finley in 1816. The Presbyterian minister from New Jersey was joined by prominent white politicians and businessmen who believed in ferrying Blacks from America to Africa under the auspices of creating a free Black nation. Such men as James Madison, Henry Clay, and other slaveholders were strong advocates for the organization, subscribing in one form or another to Jefferson's idea that free Blacks and former slaves could not live peacefully side by side with whites and their former owners. Many

Blacks saw the ACS as a sinister, racist group, not philanthropic as they described themselves but bent on removing free Blacks from American society.[1]

Cuffe may not have directly supported the ACS founding members, but he was willing to advocate further that the idea of colonizing West Africa was the only way to stop the slave trade, arguing much like the ACS would that widespread emancipation in America depended on removal. "It appears that many [slaveholders] are willing to manimit their Slaves," Cuffe wrote Samuel J. Mills, one of the founders of the American Colonization Society, "if Thay could Do it on Safe Ground."[2] He reasoned that removing these manumitted slaves ensured the ground to be safe, allowing Blacks to find freedom elsewhere.

Cuffe's African brethren differed from African Americans on many levels—class, religion, and education—but his main objective remained emancipation of all Blacks in the diaspora. "Why not," he asked, "provide the means to effectualy [sic]Abolish the Slave Trade and free their Slaves and colonyze them either in America or in Africa or in both places?" (insertion in original).[3] Once accomplished, perhaps all Blacks in the diaspora could be incorporated into the Atlantic system dominated by whites and their powerful nations. Cuffe was steadfast in his belief that schooling, religious instruction, and free labor would advance the colonists in Sierra Leone to the point of civility. Expanding on this idea, he contended that free Blacks could live anywhere in the Atlantic, separate from whites, provided they subscribe to the American values that served as the springboard to Cuffe's own success.

His ardent emigrationist mission opened Cuffe to criticism among African Americans. Yet, white leaders of the soon-to-be-renamed American Colonization Society sought Cuffe's advice repeatedly on how to launch an effective colonization program. Cuffe responded in kind, offering, "I believe if thare could be Mercantile Correspondence opened between the African race in America and Africa it would have good tandency to keep open the Communication and bring them aquainted with Each other." Passage could then be obtained

by Blacks who "wishd to visit that Country."[4] Cuffe was still talking about emigration for free Blacks, whereas it soon became clear the ACS intended to force Blacks from America—a key difference in philosophy that the captain could not resolve before his death.[5]

By the end of 1816, Cuffe had sensed that whites' anxieties over racial mixture and a large free Black population in the Atlantic world prohibited his vision of a free and commercially viable Sierra Leone from coming to fruition.[6] It did not matter where free or enslaved Blacks lived in the broader Atlantic, for they were widely considered as an extant threat to established order and norms." Cuffe's continued efforts to free America's slaves, removing them to Africa to help stop the illegal slave trade conducted by ships originating from Charleston, South Carolina, and other ports in the United States. Blacks in the diaspora were too diverse and different from one another to simply unite; they must first focus on gaining freedom, becoming sober, subscribing to Christian religious values, and developing free labor systems to provide goods for the Atlantic marketplace. After these values were learned, agriculture cultivated, and industries developed, Cuffe maintained, Blacks could then begin to think about uniting under God's hand and become "acquainted" with one another.

Cuffe experienced a level of *décalage*, as most of his Atlantic African brethren, it seemed, were not entirely aligned with him in terms of culture, behavior, or ideals. His fellow Africans' experiences differed dramatically from his own: where he moved fluidly between white and Black communities, others found conflict. Where Cuffe found mostly honest and fair government officials or trade partners, other Atlantic Africans found corruption, deception, and hostility. When Cuffe refused to cave in to segregation on a stagecoach or at a tavern dining hall, others encountered violence for such defiance. For many of his brethren, using similar language and promoting similar ideas as the ACS signaled Cuffe as a conspirator, siding with white slaveholders and not necessarily acting in the interest of free African Americans.

Experiencing some pushback from free Blacks in America, Paul Cuffe turned to his friend and protégé Prince Saunders, an "agent of the Haytian government," who published the *Haytian Papers* in

London in 1816.[7] Born in Connecticut in 1775 and baptized in Vermont in 1784, Prince Saunders epitomized New England's antebellum educated free Black men. Dartmouth trained, Saunders traveled extensively to teach school to Black children in Connecticut and Boston, concurrently becoming active in the emigration movement. Saunders became known for his advocacy of Black education, even convincing some wealthy whites to donate several thousand dollars to his schoolhouse in a free Black neighborhood in Boston, known then as "Nigger Hill."[8]

Already an advocate for African colonization, Saunders became connected with America's preeminent emigrationist by wedding into the Cuffe family in 1815. In late March of that year, he wrote Cuffe from Boston in support of the captain's Sierra Leone voyage: "If I can make an arrangement to go with you to Africa I should like it." He continued, "There are several families who are very desirous to go to Africa to live," and "they wish me to request you to write particularly when you shall probably be ready to go, on what conditions you will carry them, &c. &c." Citing his doctor's orders to "go to sea for my health," Saunders' letter reveals another motivation. He believed the time had come, "when men every where shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; and when men every where shall become affectionately united in contributing to the welfare improvement and happiness of their brethren." Although the language seemed generically addressed to whites and Blacks, Saunders' reference to the spear indicated the men he spoke of—as he called them, the "candid enquirer after the truth"—resided in Africa.[9]

That same year, as Cuffe sailed to Sierra Leone, Saunders crossed the Atlantic to meet with William Wilberforce and other members of the African Institution in London. There he gained the favor of Great Britain's elite in part by not correcting the popular assumption that he was descended from African royalty. So enamored with Saunders were London's elite that the "Countess of Cork could not have a party without his highness Prince Saunders."[10] He also proved to be an important counsel to the African Institution and its director, Thomas Clarkson, backing Cuffe's assertion to the organization that

more schools must be built in Sierra Leone to ensure the proper education of its residents. In 1816, Saunders agreed to become a liaison between Great Britain and Haiti, which led to the publication of the *Haytian Papers* in that same year.[11]

Saunders became a key figure in the Black emigration movement with the publication of the *Haytian Papers*. He shared Cuffe's frustrations with racial prejudices in America, but he took his own route in efforts to relieve free Blacks from their oppression. By 1816, the same year the ACS was founded, Saunders had become friends with Haitian emperor Henry Christophe. Experiences in Haiti changed his views toward emigration in a dramatic fashion. As much as Cuffe saw the need to civilize Africa, Saunders believed Haiti to be a beacon of liberty for Blacks.[12] In what he viewed as a truly revolutionary mix of old world European political values and new world American-inspired social values, Saunders touted Haiti as a civilized bastion of Black independence, organized under the "liberal principles of the Government."[13] He supported Cuffe's changing ideas towards colonization, advocating for Haiti to be the new Sierra Leone, a place where free Blacks could gather in liberty and industry.

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As the summer began to wane, Paul Cuffe, his wife, Alice, and his brother David ventured from the mainland on a short day sail to the island of Martha's Vineyard, calling on his other brother, John, and their relatives at Aquinnah. Cuffe's journey to the island may have had familial overtones, but on arrival, the visit took on a much more diplomatic tone as he was drawn into a dispute between the Guardians of Aquinnah's Indian Plantation and the proprietors, as the Indian residents were called by the commonwealth. The dwindling population of Wampanoag Indians, numbering roughly 150 adults, asked Cuffe to help them deal with increasing pressures from white Americans on the island.

As early as 1747, the Wampanoag Indians sought redress in courts and from the government to intercede on their behalf for "breaches of trust" by colonial authorities. In this case, a corporation had been

developed to serve as landlords over the "tenants" of the Indian lands. Colonists saw opportunity for the corporation to control land and fisheries; Native Americans saw corruption and favoritism.[14] By 1789, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued new measures to protect Native Americans living on plantations, or early versions of reservations, by appointing "guardians" who were typically prominent lawyers or other such men in the state.[15] The efforts of the guardians have often been seen by white Americans as "the Long Apprenticeship to Civilization," whereby Native Americans would be taught American values and profitable skills and educated.[16] The guardians hardly fulfilled their promises of civilizing Native peoples but instead took advantage of their positions of power. Indian residents approached the commonwealth to ask for aid in limiting trespassing and encroachment on native fisheries; the state responded with a scheme for guardians who would bring self-interest to the forefront. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many guardians were known to be corrupt, often selling Indian lands at the state's various plantations and pocketing the money for themselves. If there was a way to profit financially from their position, it seemed, many of the guardians found it. The case was no different at Aquinnah when Paul Cuffe arrived in 1816.

Connected to the Wampanoag Indians as kin through his mother and linked to the business and political world of the mainland, Cuffe occupied a unique place in the debate between Indians and their white overseers. Much as mixed-race go-betweens had during the eighteenth century, Paul Cuffe understood both perspectives as the two worlds collided over the issues of land encroachment and fishing rights.[17] In addition, many of the Wampanoag Indians held African ancestry because of marriages between Indians and Blacks, as did most Indian communities in the commonwealth, making Paul's involvement in the conflict part of his larger service to his African brethren. From this position, one would think, Cuffe possessed power. The Wampanoag Indians also assumed he sympathized with their cause, but they could not have been more wrong.

Joel Rogers, a representative of the Wampanoag Indians, took the bold approach of claiming forged Indian signatures on some of the original petitions that asked for the guardians to be put in place. He expressed urgency in the situation as he wrote Cuffe to please "do all you can to get the law that was made against us repealed" because it is the basis on which a "gang" of whites "throughout the Vineyard" seek to "impoverish us and get our land sold or out of our possession."[18] Deep mistrust between Wampanoag Indians and their supposed representatives in Massachusetts became evident to Cuffe as he delved deeper into the fray. This well-traveled man who was familiar with deceit and corruption stemming from men he should have been able to trust proved wary upon reading Rogers's words. But he was not so easily convinced. On his visit to the island, he became disillusioned over what he saw as incompetence or, worse, laziness emanating from the residents of the plantation.

Cuffe contacted the Indians' lawyer, Ebenezer Shiff, when he returned from Martha's Vineyard to gain his perspective on their complaints, wondering if what he saw on the island was accurate.[19] Much like in Sierra Leone, Cuffe left Martha's Vineyard unconvinced that the community could maintain its own affairs because of possible corruption and impudence. Shiff knew Cuffe from other dealings, which made him the ideal contact as Paul tried to figure out the solution to the concerns in his brother's community. Cuffe asked "whether it would or would not be best to have the Guardians continued" or if there was another way to resolve the dispute.[20] Shiff replied fairly quickly to Cuffe's enquiry, suggesting the Wampanoag Indians to be an "improvident people," but he questioned the idea that the band of Indians was only capable of immorality and lacked virtue. This white lawyer defended, to a degree, his clients as well-intentioned people who were caught in a mix of corruption by state officials and unscrupulous individual native residents. But "I would not be understood that there is no vice prevailing among" the Indians, he cautioned, "nor that immorality has not increased since the appointment of the Guardians."[21] Shiff seconded what appeared to be

Cuffe's conclusions about the situation—that the Indians may not be ready to handle administration of the plantation on their own—but he certainly did not believe their problems to be solely of their own accord. Shiff sympathized with the Wampanoag Indians on a level Paul Cuffe could not.

Corruption among the Guardians was apparent, but the Wampanoag Indians should not sit idly by, according to Cuffe, waiting for others to resolve their problems. Much as he believed to be the case in Sierra Leone, Cuffe told Rogers that it was their duty to get their own affairs in order. In Cuffe's own life, he did not seek aid when the solution could be found in hard work. "Consider whether they do or do not stand in need of nursing fathers and mothers," he scolded Rogers, "whether they are not too much in an Infant State for self government."[22] Just as Cuffe witnessed the impact of government corruption in Sierra Leone as colonists allowed their homes to fall into disrepair, where Nova Scotians and Maroons drank away their days and failed to evolve farming practices to raise cash crops, where Christianity took a back seat to prostitution, he saw something similar unfolding at Martha's Vineyard. "I saw your fields destroyed for want of weeding," he wrote, while also criticizing the Indians' poor business practices of not putting monies collected from selling their valuable clay into the community's treasury. Wasteful practices also seemed rife in their fisheries, as Cuffe's remonstrations increased in fervor as he wrote to Rogers, "What is more destructive to a society of people than excessive drinking and idleness?"[23] Cuffe could not simply blame corrupt commonwealth authorities for the problems of the Wampanoag Indians.

Cuffe could see a lack of virtue and industry all around him, whether in Sierra Leone or Martha's Vineyard, and it bothered him considerably. Why couldn't these people who faced enormous challenges, he asked, rise to the occasion and fend for themselves rather than rely on others' aid? Cuffe's sentiments may seem harsh, but his own brother's words when Paul was a much younger man lay at the heart of his view. John Cuffe, now resident with the Wampanoag peoples, reminded Paul to avoid idleness and the spiritous liquors

and to lead a productive life. It seemed Paul was returning the words of advice, if not to John then to the community he worked so hard to maintain. Hard work, piousness, sobriety, and frugality must be sought before blaming greedy landlubbing officials. It was the way he conducted himself throughout his life, why shouldn't his brother's neighbors—some of whom were his own kin—do the same?

As Cuffe returned from his visit to Martha's Vineyard, he faced ever-increasing pressures at home and from afar that would severely impact his family's health and well-being. The environment shaped Paul Cuffe's life in profound ways, especially in the summer of 1816, when he once again was confronted with significant challenges brought on by the natural world. Several months prior to Paul Cuffe's voyage to Sierra Leone at the end of 1815, the small but densely populated Asian island of Sumbawa witnessed a volcanic eruption like few previously recorded. Located north/northwest of Australia, Sumbawa's Mount Tambora exploded multiple times in early to mid-April 1815 with enough force to register an estimated 7 on the volcanic explosivity index—a modern scale used to rate the destructive power of a volcano's eruption—thrusting ash eighteen miles into the atmosphere, killing over 100,000 people, and launching a period of climate change causing cholera outbreaks that killed tens of millions of people in Asia. The eruption was heard as many as 800 miles away in Java, where the British governor there, Sir Thomas Raffles, believed the sound to be a cannon fired in the distance. By the next morning, layers of ash fell from the Javan sky, "the sun faded; the warm, humid air grew stifling, and everything seemed unnaturally still," Raffles noted. It "seemed to forbode an earthquake."[24] Part of the seismic Pacific Ring of Fire, Mount Tambora devastated the Dutch East Indies and Oceana almost immediately, but it would have a far-ranging impact on the world, especially in North America and Europe, in the years to follow.[25] The volcanic event ushered in unprecedented swings in weather systems and patterns at a time when the well-documented Little Ice Age was winding down in the early nineteenth century.

New England and Upstate New York encountered perhaps the worst climactic effects of any region outside Mount Tambora's

immediate geographic sphere. In this year without a summer of 1816—enough time to allow the particulates from the ash to spread throughout the global atmosphere, carried by the conduits of various jet streams—reports of snowstorms in June and summertime frosts dominated Americans' correspondence. Northern New England saw upward of eighteen inches of snow, trees snapped from the cold, and freezing temperatures killed crops during the summer months. Heat waves settled in just days after the frosts, only to be displaced by further winter-like weather. Simultaneously, the overall increase in the world's temperature caused icebergs to break apart in the North Atlantic, alarming whalers and other mariners who thought some work of biblical calamity was afoot. The weather had become topsy-turvy to even the most seasoned farmer or mariner. The impact of the climate change on wheat and corn had such a lasting effect in the United States and Europe as to usher in the Panic of 1819, America's first sustained economic depression, due in part to massive investment losses in Western agriculture.[26]

The Cuffes were not immune to this dramatic period of weather, with their family feeling the impact of the cold summer in much the same manner as other Americans, adding to the challenges Paul Cuffe and his family already faced. Cuffe's niece and nephews on the Wainer side of the family moved to Upstate New York in 1815, as many New Englanders were doing in the early nineteenth century, in search of affordable land and agricultural opportunities that could not be had in an increasingly expensive Massachusetts real estate market. The Wainers' first year in New York went well, until the ash particles from Mount Tambora's eruption disrupted weather patterns. Gardner Wainer wrote Cuffe, recounting "frost in every month, which cut off our corn so that I had not one bushel to grind." Although some wheat remained, the Wainers planted thirteen acres of corn—not unusual for Upstate New York farms that at the time were known for providing much of the wheat and corn for the Northeast—leaving them with nearly nothing to show for their efforts once the weather killed off much of the crops. Unlike brothers Michael and Thomas Wainer, Gardner proved to be a bit more resolute about surviving

the winter, informing his uncle "I am not discouraged" by the poor growing season.[27]

The families moved to Upstate New York without selling all of their property in Westport, and when hard times began, they wrote to Paul Cuffe to ask for his aid in converting the unsold property to much needed cash. Of course, Westport and New England were experiencing their own economic crises as the Summer without End caused prices to increase and made "money . . . scarce." The market for the unsold property was weak at best, with land possibly "fetch[ing] $25 per acre but this [is] not Certain."[28] Michael eventually traveled to Westport to attempt to sell the property, but he found it difficult. Little was gained by Michael on his trip home, yet he likely found some relief in being surrounded by family and seeing the poor crop yields in New England, ultimately releasing him from any doubt he may have held regarding his own farming skills. The Summer without End hit everyone hard during an era where feeding one's animals was nearly as important as making sure your own family survived the typically harsh winters.

Thomas Wainer, former captain of the *Traveller* during the 1812 voyage to Sierra Leone, also wrote to Cuffe from Upstate New York, complaining of the poor harvest, little money, and the need to collect on debts. Thomas's situation differed slightly because, as one historian notes, Cuffe favored Thomas over other nieces and nephews, and because he had invested in some of the cargo sold in Sierra Leone whose credit notes were never collected.[29] He asked his uncle to help him collect from his business acquaintances in Africa, but Paul could only produce payment for a brass compass amounting to $8.00. Cuffe advised Thomas to "put our trust in his Providence and I believe we shall be provided for."[30] The advice may seem rather vague, especially for a hard-nosed problem solver like Paul, but the words alluded to his belief that Thomas was not sufficiently pious, a sentiment that would ring louder later in his letter when Paul admonished his nephew for past indiscretions.

Lamenting the cold summer, and always aware that such climactic disruption could be a heavenly message, Cuffe implored Thomas to

"see to this before it is too late," to "awake to industry, deal honestly, live frugally [and] prohibit thyself from all unnecessary expenses." As much as Cuffe loved his family, and Thomas in particular, he knew his nephew's weaknesses and he understood such desires based on his own experiences early in life. "I take the liberty of inquiring of thee whether thou makes use of intoxicating liquor. If so," he continued, "my candid advice to thee is to take up a firm resolution and leave off making any kind of use of it unless for sickness." As Cuffe reminded the younger Wainer, he did not appreciate the sins of the flesh his nephew committed in Sierra Leone: "Confine thyself at home," he cautioned, "don't go after strange flesh."[31] On the macro level, Cuffe had long represented Africans, living a humble, pious, and sober life; now, on a micro level he was again guiding his family through crisis, and the way to successfully navigate these treacherous waters was through faith. As people of color in America and the wider Atlantic world, the Wainers needed to be careful about how they lived their lives, regardless of where they lived. Cuffe made sure his own voice was heard when the Wainers stepped out of line.

Cuffe spent much of 1816 in crisis management mode: nieces and nephews needed money, the estate of Thomas Wainer (Senior) needed to be settled, and his sister Ruth became ill. As the patriarch, it was Cuffe's duty to sort out these matters. Ruth moved in with their brother John at Aquinnah, while Paul promised his niece, Mary Marstens, to dole out the property as requested in the will in a timely manner. Such family problems appear rather normal, but at his advancing age and during a particularly stressful period of his life, Cuffe undoubtedly wished he did not have such concerns, yet he made good, making sure when he couldn't offer financial aid to at least offer spiritual and emotional encouragement. He was, in a manner, providing the same sort of intellectual and emotional leadership to his own family that he also provided to Africans and abolitionists. Trust in God, he asserted, live one's life right, and things will work out.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Passing toward the Grave

"Look about thy self Awake to Industry," wrote Paul Cuffe the day after Christmas in 1816, a holiday Quakers and certain other New England protestants did not celebrate.[1] Cuffe shared sage words of advice meant as parting advice to his nephew Thomas Wainer, the man he had entrusted with various ships' captaincies and with whom he often partnered on trading ventures and the most important project of his life: the settling and civilizing of Sierra Leone. Because of their decades spent together in business and at sea, Thomas had undoubtedly heard bits and pieces of Paul's philosophy on living as a Quaker, but it was a time of turmoil in the Cuffe household, when death, illness, financial losses, and past-due mortgages coalesced with disappointing results from the most recent African expedition to make for a very bleak future. Still, in the face of such adversity, Cuffe held to his ideals, such as encouraging his nephew to maintain temperance.[2] Fourteen years younger than Paul, in his midforties, Thomas Wainer was in his prime as a ship's master and head of his household. Cuffe hoped to impart some of the lessons he had learned over the years to aid Wainer.

The letter marks the moment when Paul Cuffe seemed to know his health was beginning to fail and that his mortal life may be nearing its end. Although he did not appear to be sick, Cuffe concluded his letter with the haunting words, "These are the Sentiments of thy aged Uncle who are faster passing toward the grave."[3] The next nine months would mark a period of thoughtful activity during which

Cuffe scurried to get his affairs in order, pay his debts, and try to support the Sierra Leone project as much as possible, hoping to convince members of the newly formed African Colonization Society to carry on his legacy and complete what he had begun with his first voyage to Africa in 1810. Since arriving home in the late winter of 1813 from this first trip, Paul Cuffe had encountered seemingly endless personal, business, and philanthropic challenges. His faith in God, his conviction in improving his African brethren's lives, and his commitment to family remained strong, proving to be the bedrock of Cuffe's legacy. But as his health began to fail in the winter and spring of 1817, Cuffe called on all his closest friends to come to his aid, not to nurse him but to ensure his legacy and life's work be continued as the benevolent African American colonizer of Africa.

As he attempted to settle the growing turmoil in his private life, the public appeared to be drifting away from Cuffe's views of Africa. The burgeoning colonization movement sparked an intense debate among African Americans, causing Cuffe to be frustrated with his fellow Black emigrationists. They seemed content to let whites wrestle control of the emigration movement away from Black benevolent societies. Beyond the influence of prominent whites, Paul Cuffe imagined the African Diaspora in a different way from some of his African American peers—such as Prince Hall—had before him. A simple turn of phrase, from Hall's "Affricans" to Cuffe's "brethren," reveals a significant difference in their perceptions of other Blacks in the diaspora. Black emigrationists like Prince Hall in the 1770s–1790s were men who envisioned a "return" to Africa, the continent where as many as 10 percent of free Blacks in America had been born. Cuffe, however, imagined the colonization of Africa conducted by educated, industrious, and religiously committed free Black American families. Black Americans would not *return* to Africa in the real or symbolic manner that Hall and his contemporaries advocated; rather, Blacks would instruct native Africans on civil ways of living that echoed the values of Cuffe and other Americans, whether Black or white. For Cuffe, the focus was on emancipation, ending the slave trade, and making Blacks in the diaspora resemble African Americans.

Cuffe's experiences in America would convince him that his quest to "civilize" Africa must be accompanied by the option of mass emigration for African Americans. Even the venerable Paul Cuffe faced racial barriers around every corner. If a Black man could not rise above a racist society through one of the most American of endeavors—capitalist enterprise—then what hope lay ahead for average Blacks? The conundrum angered Cuffe, causing him to consider the Jeffersonian contention that Blacks and whites could not live side by side in the United States. His childhood and his adult success had made him think otherwise; now, he realized a new truth. Established free Blacks like himself could remain in America to fight for emancipation, but "the slumbering world seemeth awakened, and making many inquiries where people of color may be colonized were a general manumission to take place."[4] Cuffe contended that masses of free Blacks must be sent to Africa, as Jefferson also argued, for the peace and stability of the United States and long-term welfare of the former enslaved Africans.

An imagined pan-Atlantic Blackness motivated African Americans to transform emigration into a new kind of colonization, just as whiteness compelled Americans' support for colonization. Cuffe and other Blacks envisioned an African American nation in West Africa, void of Black Muslims and pagans, and linked via trade to the civilized white nations of the Atlantic world. Ironically, the Black nationalism Cuffe is credited with founding did not exist in his era and in Black-led colonization schemes in the early nineteenth century because profound differences divided the Black Atlantic community. Enslaved people, Nova Scotians, and Maroons all had the right to be free, as African Americans did, but Cuffe argued they must be schooled on the virtuous manners, customs, and practices of Americans. He would continue this argument throughout the spring and summer of 1817, restating his case for African Americans to become benevolent imperialists, bringing with them American values and the belief that economic development underlay the moral, religious, and cultural advancement of Africans. His ideas, for many African Americans, smacked of whites' influence to a degree that

led to significant divisions between himself and many of his friends, including James Forten and Richard Allen, and associated Black benevolent societies.

Paul Cuffe's escapades across the northeastern United States sparked murmurs of discontent among merchants, abolitionists, and Quakers. He traveled from city to city, amassing debt and capitalizing on the general good name he had manicured over the past several decades. Friends of Cuffe often reminded him of the high esteem in which others held him.[5] Now, it seemed to some witnesses that later in life Paul Cuffe had decided to loosen his ethics just a notch, extending large amounts of credit and acting like a man newly acquainted with wealth by spending lavishly and calling out favors owed by associates and friends of friends. To others, Cuffe's behavior was perplexing and simply out of character. Meanwhile, Cuffe traveled about Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, leaving a wake of disillusion among a public who knew only of the celebrated, venerable, sober Quaker.

Despite the war ending in the previous year, the American economy staggered to recover from related embargoes even as attempts were made to resuscitate trade with Great Britain. When Paul Cuffe arrived in Boston purporting to carry letters of credit from William Rotch Jr. for nearly $900 worth of goods, the local merchant became suspicious, withholding the goods until he could verify the credit with Rotch. He knew Cuffe's reputation, but such an order without proper forewarning from the New Bedford merchant seemed odd. With the economic impact of the war, the Boston merchant could not risk sending these goods if Rotch did not want them. When word came back that Rotch had not sent any person to buy these goods, the merchant cut ties and demanded an explanation from Cuffe. A clearer picture of this strange behavior would soon emerge, astounding onlookers but hardly surprising anyone familiar with the early nineteenth century's urban underworld.[6]

There was "a great Scoundrel and his name Varied" as he went from city to city, sometimes proclaiming to be Richard Allen's son, Paul Cuffe's son, and even Paul Cuffe himself.[7] In his letter to James

Forten, Cuffe made it clear the man roaming the Northeast—taking out letters of credit for $10,000 in New York City, staying free of charge at taverns and inns which were acquainted with Cuffe's name, and purporting to be visiting Congress to put forth another memorial for Sierra Leone—was a hooligan. Later identified as Samuel Bailey, the con man took on several identities throughout the winter of 1816–17. Upon learning of the con man's activities, Cuffe urged his friends to "be very Cautious of Sutch Impoisters."[8] Thankfully, concerned friends of Cuffe's identified the man as such, helping to limit the damage to the real Paul Cuffe's reputation and alerting others to verify anyone who claimed Cuffe's good name and character.

The man then traveled to New Bedford to bilk William Rotch Jr. directly, but the wealthy merchant managed to capture him, effectively making a citizen's arrest for theft and fraud. Rotch kept him in his office until he could find authorities to jail the imposter, but the man managed to escape, fleeing to New York, where he demanded several thousand dollars of credit. Suspicious authorities arrested him, forcing him to leave the city in exchange for his freedom. From there he traveled upstate to Albany. Ira Potter, a local merchant who may also have been a war pensioner, took in the man for one month, providing him with food and clothes in exchange for work. The imposter stole Potter's $200 horse, with the "villin" making his way south into Pennsylvania where he was caught and jailed in York.[9] The fake Cuffe left a trail of misdeeds and hurt pocketbooks as he skipped from one town to another.

The man's reputation eventually caught up to him as he attempted to bring his pilfering ways to the mid-Atlantic. The real Paul Cuffe warned numerous friends throughout the nation of the imposter's presence with the hope that they would not be swindled by the man. By January 1817, the con man could not escape authorities in York, who attempted to find out his true identity after jailing him but quickly realized "that he has had So many names, that it is hard to Say what his name is." He was, according to Cuffe, a "Great imposture" who should rot in jail for decades.[10] Although a bit harsh in this assessment, it is easy to understand how difficult this affair must have

been for Cuffe. Word traveled less quickly in 1817, and it would take him months to sort out the supposed loans and lines of credit opened in his name as tales of the imposter's misdeeds trickled in via mail to his Westport home. In addition, such fraud challenged Paul Cuffe's most treasured qualities of being humble, dealing honestly, and living frugally. This great imposter flaunted his disdain for such ideals, soiling the proud Cuffe's name in the process.

The story of his imposter reveals two important elements of Cuffe's life in 1817. First, Paul Cuffe and his reputation for sobriety and ethics was widely known. People, even if they did not personally know him, trusted anyone who claimed to be a family member or associated with him. Second, his celebrity surpassed his ability to mitigate his broader public persona. In an age before public relations assistants and firms managing one's image, Paul Cuffe was at the mercy of this con man who knew he could capitalize on the aging sea captain's fame. Cuffe warned James Forten to "beware of wolves in Sheeps Clothing" posing as Cuffe. [11] Cuffe witnessed much debauchery and many misdeeds in his day, especially in the colony of Sierra Leone, but as he remained in Westport attempting to reconcile his debts and order his affairs, dealing with the imposter proved to exacerbate his financial situation.

Cuffe held deeper concerns regarding the imposter's impact: the damage the man's actions would have on the colonization movement. For Cuffe, the crimes of the imposter struck more than "against me as an individual, in that I Should not have lemint the Cause so much," but he saw the thief's actions as "a national Concern."[12] In fifty-eight years of living in America, he understood that African Americans—especially free Blacks—were held to a higher standard. Whereas white criminals were rarely given as the example of average behavior for their race, the misdeeds of African Americans were frequently used to illustrate just how untrustworthy they could be. When discussing the imposter's effect, Cuffe implicitly asked, Why free the enslaved if society cannot trust them to behave within social norms? "It is a Stain to the whole community of the African race," he protested. "Let me tell thee," he continued, "that the manumission of 1,500,000 Slaves depen[d]s on the faithfulness of the few who have obtained their freedom."[13] Throughout

his life, Cuffe carried the weight of the African race on his shoulders, not content to simply make a good name for himself or his family but choosing to serve as the example for all persons of color in the Atlantic. He would be the beacon, willingly, that white men whispered about and judged, possibly swaying their opinions for abolition and colonization. Humble, yet not shy; frugal, yet rich with passion: Paul Cuffe embraced his iconic role in the emerging colonization movement in America. This imposter who, while in custody, claimed to be Cuffe's son John—a son who did not exist—shook the foundations of the legacy Cuffe had built over a lifetime of piousness, threatening to take down all for which he had worked.

A month later, as Cuffe continued to try to resolve outstanding debt and receive payment from merchants who owed him, the weight of the fledgling colonization efforts and the recent kerfuffle surrounding the imposter began to take its toll. He recounted being "seized with a very ill turn" while dealing with the news of the imposter.[14] Struck by a fever on 18 February and being sick in the afternoon and later toward midnight of that day, it took Cuffe some time to return to normal health. Ruth also fell ill during the winter months and was required to stay indoors when the days were coldest. The bout of flu further reminded Cuffe of his age. "Above all things may we Seek one to come whose builder is god," he wrote, "that when we put off this body of Mortality we may be Cloathed with the Spirit of immortality."[15] In an earlier year, such an illness may not have caused Cuffe to pause his daily activities, but with advancing age, the brief encounter with mortality clearly shook him. Much of his correspondence that late winter and spring mentioned his and Ruth's illness, making sure to address his thoughts on mortality and piety to the many friends he wrote. This health scare also prompted Cuffe to turn his attention back to African colonization and to rectify outstanding disagreements he may have had with his fellow Black supporters.

News coverage of the imposter threatened to turn the public's attention away from Paul Cuffe's efforts to commence the colonization of Africa. In early 1817, Cuffe wrote to the noted Methodist missionary, Samuel John Mills, who became an early agent for

the American Colonization Society (ACS), to encourage his participation in the burgeoning colonization movement emanating from Washington. Knowing that his health would limit his ability to return to Africa, Cuffe sought the aid of longtime supporters to advance his cause. Mills believed the establishment of Sierra Leone and the Haitian Revolution signaled that "a brighter day is rising for these neglected people," who were "drained" from their homelands in Africa.[16] Mills eagerly listened as Cuffe told him he could help awaken African Americans to their duty. Speaking of the African Institutions in New York and Philadelphia, two Black-led organizations, "I Wish these Instertutions to be brought as much into action," for the "Coloured Peopelation of the large Cities Would be more awakened" to aid their brethren in Africa.[17] In calling for these institutions to act, Cuffe asked Mills to help him convince Peter Williams Jr. and James Forten, the respective leaders of these organizations, to encourage their members to support the cause. The success of the movement, Cuffe reasoned, depended on free African Americans.

Cuffe returned to the idea that colonizing West Africa was the only way to stop the slave trade, but now he began to argue, much like the ACS would later in the year, that widespread emancipation in America depended on the removal of free Black Americans. "It appears that many [slaveholders] are willing to manimit their Slaves," Cuffe wrote Samuel J. Mills, "if Thay could Do it on Safe Ground."[18] He returned to Jefferson's idea that removing these manumitted slaves ensured the ground was safe.

As his health began to fade, Cuffe grew more impatient, considering the "removal of the People of colour" to a variety of different areas, including near the Cape of Good Hope and in unsettled parts of the United States.[19] Sierra Leone offered certain challenges to colonization of free African Americans that frustrated Cuffe. He no longer had tolerance for politics and governments interfering in what he saw as a transnational movement. The "African race" was spread throughout the Atlantic, he contended, and it was necessary to effect colonization wherever possible for the good of peace and emancipation. If the question of emancipation ultimately rested on colonization, then

any "fertile" land would prove suitable in his mind. Yet Sierra Leone remained the critical point of contact with the slave trade. "To more effectucally put a Stop to the citizens of the United States being concerned in carrying the Slave Trade," he argued, we must request "the Govoner [of Sierra Leone] to detain our citizens and deliver them to our Government as Prisoners taken in clandestine trade."[20]

In contrast, James Forten privately agreed with Paul Cuffe's increasingly aggressive stance, but publicly he could not support his friend and business partner. Reporting to Cuffe in 1817 that the African Institution's meeting at Richard Allen's church featured a lively debate on African colonization, Forten informed him: "In deed the people of Colour here was very much fritened at first; they were afrade that all the free people would be compelled to go."[21] Whites and Blacks in Philadelphia banded together to oppose the question of African colonization raised by Cuffe and the newly formed ACS. To many Philadelphians, the all-white society smacked of forced deportation, an idea that limited African Americans' liberty, forcing them back to Africa against their will when many wanted to stay and build a free nation in America. "My opinion," Forten told Cuffe, "is that they will never become a people until they come from amongst the white people, but as the majority is decidedly against me I am determined to remain silent."[22] Richard Allen and James Forten argued that free Blacks are "by birth entitled to all the rights of freemen" and should enjoy full "participation of the enjoyment of Citizenship."[23] Despite the emigration and colonization movement gaining support among Blacks during the early republic and antebellum periods, many African Americans opposed the idea. With those words, Cuffe lost his most public and perhaps well-respected African American supporter.[24] On this late winter day, sick and nearing the end of his life, Cuffe grew increasingly aggravated. "I have been asked the question again and again concerning Colonization of the free People of Colour," Cuffe noted, "but it is quite useless to give thee my opinion on the Subject."[25] As a ship's captain and owner, he was used to having his orders followed by his all-Black crews at sea. Back on land, free African Americans had more leeway.

Regardless of his growing irritation with America's free Black leaders, Paul Cuffe relentlessly tried to sell his colonization ideas in Philadelphia, a city that he clearly viewed as the center of Black intellectual and political life in America. Colonization offered opportunity that he believed was unavailable in the United States. "It certenly would be best to obtain a peaceful and quiet possession in whatever part of the Globe we might pitch," he wrote to James Forten.[26] Cuffe understood that as much as he wanted Sierra Leone to become the hub of freedom for Atlantic Africans, the challenges of rebuilding that colony remained exceptionally large. "I have Suggested of Setteling 2 Colonies," he reminded Forten, "1, in the united States, and the other in Africa." The challenge, he reiterates to Forten, is that "if the free people of Colour would exert themselves more and more in industry and honesty, it would be a great help towards the liberateing those who Still remain in Bondage."[27] Cuffe seemed to finally admit that he could not bring colonization to fruition alone.

Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister, heeded Cuffe's words, choosing to meet with key Philadelphia Black leaders including James Forten, as well as Richard Allen, at Absolom Jones's home. Finley sought approval by Black leaders for the newly founded American Society for Colonizing Free People of Colour and he received it expressly from all three men. Forten pointed to Haiti and "declared it as his opinion that their people could not always be detained in their oppressive situation" in America. Furthermore, if the society created a colony in West Africa, then "their people [Blacks] would become a great nation" on the eastern side of the Atlantic.[28] With strong separatist urges, Forten agreed in principle with the society's designs for colonization. Allen also agreed, considering "the present plan of colonization as holding out great advantages for the Blacks who are now young."[29] After their meeting with Finley, however, Allen and Forten knew it was unlikely they could convince their fellow Philadelphians to support the society.

Cuffe grew concerned with younger free Blacks who seemed to spend more time asking for his advice and planning emigration

schemes than executing them. He was discouraged and advised Forten, "If the free people of Colour would exert themselves more and more in industry and honesty, it would be a great help towards the liberateing [*sic*] of those who Still remain in Bondage." Used to being a man of action, Cuffe's illness, advancing years, and shrinking assets imprisoned him in his Westport, Massachusetts, home, making him especially critical toward his younger protégés. Just as Jefferson did in a similar exchange of letters in his final years, Cuffe questioned the need to repeat his well-known thoughts on the topic because his sickly body would not allow him to captain another voyage across the Atlantic. Cuffe could not resist providing his friends with the details of his emigration schemes, enabling "the Sons and daughters of the race of Africa" to "stretch forth their arms to God, and unite."[30]

Losing traction among his Black Friends and friends in Philadelphia, Cuffe turned to his white Friends, chiefly John James, who owed him copious amounts of money but whom Cuffe still respected. "The African Cause Still Lives in the View of my mind," he wrote, informing James that it was his chief goal to see free Blacks in Philadelphia join the Washington society. As he fought the fever and chills common with the ague—a sometimes malaria-based illness common among Americans in the period—he understood his options were limited. "It is out of my power to Do much for Two Special Reasons," he wrote. "First is that the Government do not furnish with the Aid that is much Needed in order to enable one to Step forward in Safty." Cuffe's supposed support from the federal government had waned since his first meeting with the secretary of state in 1812. Second, his "funds being Small" made it necessary to seek alternative sources of financial support.[31] Private organizations such as the Presbyterian Synod Society of Newark, New Jersey, donated some money, but it proved too little to support the sizable endeavor Cuffe envisioned. Yet he remained an ambitious thinker.

Two protégés of Paul Cuffe worked with the American Colonization Society to land colonists in Africa. In 1820, *Elizabeth* set sail

from Philadelphia for Sherbro Island, near Sierra Leone, with ninety African American immigrants prepared to establish the region's first American colony. Among those on the ship was Daniel Coker, an African American preacher. Coker, along with John Kizell, illustrated the impact of early Black emigration movements on the ACS. Kizell, a "native of Africa," became an important liaison between the ACS and local Africans in Sierra Leone, building some twenty huts in preparation for the first colonists. He was educated in America and "returned to his own country" where he "built a house of worship, and is himself a preacher of the gospel among the natives. He became a zealous friend and guide" to Reverend Samuel Mills and Ebenezer Burgess, a math instructor, on their expedition on behalf of the ACS in 1818.[32] Both Coker and Kizell were old friends and supporters of Paul Cuffe.[33] Even after Cuffe's death, they remained committed to the colonization movement. Yet, Coker and Kizell were two very different men who would be pitted against each other in the battle for control over the first settlement. Both played an integral role in settling this next generation of African American colonists in West Africa.[34]

By the summer of 1817, Paul Cuffe was experiencing significant health setbacks that appeared to be more serious than the passing flu he had contracted during the winter months. Another bout with fever and severe body aches "left him . . . very weak" in his Westport home. Paul's nephew, David, reported to his Aunt Freelove, Paul's sister, that the illness was severe enough to convince them of Paul's imminent passing, yet within about one week he recovered enough to sit up in bed and to take occasional walks around his property. Cuffe was well-known for his hardiness and strength. "We feel much incouraged about him," relayed David, but his optimism soon turned sour as he realized "he is now attended with weakness in one of his hips" and "I fear that the fever is about to settle there." David continued, detailing Paul's growing illness, but also dryly adding news of Ruth's "probably fatal illness" and his Aunt Lydia's recent death in what can only be seen as a terribly tragic summer for the Cuffe family.[35]

It was clear by August that Paul himself understood the end was near. He wrote letters asking for friends to join him to say their final

goodbyes and to aid in bringing medicines to his bedside. Doctors were expensive, and although they were available to travel to one's bedside, the frugal Cuffe seemed to resist calling on a physician until his final few weeks.[36] As summer waned, Cuffe finished his will and readied himself for his passing. After months of illness, which "he bore . . . with patience and through the whole thing was awake to the last moments," he "fell asleep in death and is gone home to glory."[37] John, Paul's brother, wept at the passing of his brother, and he now faced the duty of conveying the morose news to the rest of his family and the wider Quaker community. The fifty-eight-year-old Paul Cuffe left the mortal world as he lived it, with grace and dignity, not clinging to a life that was clearly seeping from his body but instead embracing the afterlife and his eternal place in heaven. He simply closed his eyes and faded away on 7 September 1817.

A massive gathering followed Cuffe's death, as Quakers and other locals met in the early afternoon to attend his funeral. Paul Cuffe was buried at the Westport Quaker meetinghouse he helped build, expand, and renovate, home to the same meeting he became an official member of in 1808. Typical of a Quaker grave during the period, his was marked with a simple stone, no engravings or name to it, next to his wife's grave. Described as being "decently buried," the ceremony was simple and concise. This celebrated Black sea captain was afforded no special treatment from other recently deceased members of his community—an act Cuffe would have approved.

The plainness of his final resting place spoke to how Paul Cuffe viewed himself: a yeoman, a man of good, efficient, and useful service.[38] He worked individually to improve himself, building an unparalleled Black-owned shipping business. He built and strengthened his community by adding sawmills and schools, as well as developing the shipbuilding and whale fisheries in Westport, Dartmouth, and New Bedford. His yeomanry worked on a broader scope as well, as he fought to end the slave trade, to gain equality for his fellow Africans in the Atlantic world and, especially, at home in America. Most significant is Cuffe's belief in a life of service: God sent him to this earth, he often wrote, to convey and uphold the values his Quaker beliefs

espoused. By living an exemplary life that included sobriety, frugality, and honesty, by being pious and thoughtful, he proved that persons of African descent were worthy of inclusion in the natural law of liberty that reverberated throughout the Atlantic world, a world that remained inequitable to persons of color.

EPILOGUE

"Paul Cuffe is dead."[1] With this laconic sentence, the *New Bedford Mercury*, local newspaper, ensured months-long memorials to the legendary sea captain and pioneer for Black Americans and other persons of African descent in the Atlantic world. A humble man, Paul Cuffe's life had been a study of integrity; his death would elevate him to iconic status among all kinds of people, the impoverished and the wealthy, Quakers and Catholics, seamen and landlubbers, serving as a model for abolitionists who sought examples of what free Africans could be once emancipated. In the minds of prominent men like Thomas Jefferson, free Blacks were inherently violent and unstable, unlike how they viewed Paul Cuffe.[2] He wished to die quietly, but his yeomanry would not let him.

The sea captain represented the aspirations of African Americans, New England's Indigenous peoples, Quakers, and locals from Dartmouth and New Bedford, Massachusetts, as much as abolitionists in America and the British Empire. Cuffe accepted—even, at times, welcomed—these obligations, seeking to liberate his fellow Africans from slavery and oppression while building material wealth beyond most people's wildest imaginations. Still, amid the pressure, Paul Cuffe was a man from the South Coast of Massachusetts, of the seafaring and farming population in this diverse corner of the commonwealth where the peoples of the wider Atlantic world converged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, seeking success through fishing, whaling, manufacturing, or farming. The

allure of the expanding harbors and streets of New Bedford, Westport, Dartmouth, and similar towns in nearby Rhode Island charmed a diverse population to try their luck in the waters of Buzzards Bay. The resulting interracial unions wreaked havoc on New England officials' attempts to neatly define racial identities as "Indian," "white," or "Negro."[3] Out of this motley conglomeration of peoples and cultures arose the story of Paul Cuffe.

Paul Cuffe represents the ultimate American success story. Born to a former African slave, Kofi Slocum, and his wife, Ruth Moses, a Wampanoag Indian, in 1759, he possessed the utmost "human character . . . to observe the gradual progress of man," beginning in a "low rank, break[ing] through the restraints of poverty, withstand[ing] the currents of popular prejudice, and acquir[ing] wealth, reputation, and public confidence."[4] Memorialized hundreds of times throughout the Atlantic, word spread quickly of Cuffe's death on 7 September 1817. He proved to be a crossover celebrity, idealized in the Atlantic as someone who broke barriers in racially complex and problematic America. "His great civility," accompanied other "noble traits," including being "well-proportioned, robust and athletic," with his "deportment . . . grave, humble, unaffected and conciliating."[5] This stature could support the enormous weight of his brethren during his lifetime.

"Personally known in many parts of the U. States," Captain Cuffe stood out among the many African American leaders in postrevolutionary America.[6] James Forten and Richard Allen, among several others, entered America's consciousness as Black voices representing their various coastal African American communities in America at the turn of the century.[7] Although sharing traits such as being self-made and possessing deep religious convictions, Cuffe differed from these men for a variety of reasons, with two emerging as the most important. Cuffe's leadership and renown spread from the United States throughout the Atlantic littoral, affecting abolition movements in the British Empire, Africa, and, to some degree, Haiti. His international appeal was undeniable, as his exploits received press coverage in Charleston, Liverpool, Freetown, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and, of course, his home ports in Massachusetts.

In addition, he proved to be the ideal man that whites could point to as "the example" to "free people of color" who "may see the manner in which they may acquire competency and reputation."[8] Far from Thomas Jefferson's vision of less intelligent and emotionally inferior Africans, Cuffe was a successful Black man despite the social norms and rules intended to hinder his success. He took his nephew aside prior to the young man's first sail as mate on a voyage with a white captain. The protective uncle warned, "Thou art not insensible how much this captain has suffered in his feelings before he could consent to receive thee, a person of colour, to be his Mate, to sit at his table, and to have a share in the government of the ship."[9] Empathetic toward the apparent risk the white captain was taking by hiring a Black shipmate, Cuffe made sure his nephew understood. "Now I advise thee," he continued, "as a part of thy duty; to be so much more modest, respectful and condescending in thy deportment towards him, as to counterbalance this sacrifice of private feeling."[10] With these sage words, Cuffe revealed all that he learned in his lifetime of living in a racist Atlantic world. The rules of the sea dictated, however, that the most skilled men held the most important positions, regardless of race. When faced with precarious circumstances on deck, necessity overpowered social constructions of race and class to escape the harrowing ordeals of the sea.

After his death, Cuffe's life was exploited for purposes of social instruction, aiding the construction of the "virtual amnesia" about slavery in the northern United States.[11] Cuffe provided a figure whom white abolitionists and others could rally behind in constructing the narrative of a free North while implicitly criticizing other parts of the Atlantic shores, especially the southern United States, for their continued support of slavery. "The beaten path of industry and integrity" underpinned Cuffe's farm, "guided his own ship," failing to spend his money in excess or wasting in idleness, possessing an "established reputation as a sober citizen and an honest man . . . Temperate, industrious and discreet." Here was a man who "rose from poverty, ignorance and obscurity, to wealth, intelligence" by his own "industry, perseverance and uprightness." Memorials around the Atlantic pronounced

Captain Paul Cuffe to be the "example . . . capable of imitation by every free person of colour."[12] Though he died that autumn of 1817, reverence for him and what he stood for became larger than life in the hands of editors, clergy, politicians, Friends, and even members of his own family.

The final days of Paul Cuffe's life, however, provide a stark contrast to the man celebrated by newspapers. After returning from his final voyage to Sierra Leone in 1816, Cuffe's health and wealth began to slowly decline as his African project and his imposter sapped him of energy and money. "It was as broken a time as was not even known amongst us," wrote John Cuffe to his sister Freelove in New York City, "and he seamed [*sic*] to long to go with angels and with souls of just men and women in the heavens above to receive the reward of the Righteous."[13] With a heavy heart, John had informed his sister of Cuffe's death just a few days prior at two o'clock on the morning of 7 September 1817. At fifty-nine years old, "my works," Cuffe reportedly to his brother, "are gone to Judgement afore hand."[14] In his final months, the tall, athletic Paul Cuffe had withered to an old man before the eyes of his family and friends. Colitis likely struck Cuffe, weakening him as he struggled to reconcile his failed attempt to colonize Sierra Leone with free African Americans—a project that he proclaimed to be his life's work. He seemed to care little for his lifetime's accomplishments as a revolutionary war soldier, ship's captain, businessman, Quaker, farmer, father, and husband in his final days as he scrambled in appeals to his Friends, colleagues, and nearly anyone who would listen to continue African colonization as he was unable to fulfill his promise to liberate his brethren through Christianity and industry. Now, as he lay in his bed dying, Paul Cuffe retained his sound mind and sharp intelligence, still a prolific letter writer. Cuffe's periodic fever and lean appetite—"a little pork . . . revives him" now and again—left him unable to make more physical effort than sitting up for one to one and a half hours a couple times per day.[15] By early September, "he still kept failing from day to day" and on "some days [he] took no nourishment at all or medesian Except cold water."[16] Paul Cuffe, a man who made tremendous noise during his lifetime as

the most well-known and respected African American in the Atlantic world, accepted death calmly, stating "to the nu[r]se that he was But little more than a dade man . . . Let me go Quietly away."[17] With those words, he died.

Since his days as a blockade runner in the early years of the American Revolution, Cuffe had built himself a shipping empire, trading in dry goods and slave-grown cotton, defying the expectations placed on persons of color in ports throughout the Atlantic. Although the "Sons of *Neptune*" were long considered "every inch a *man*," Black seamen retained anonymity until Paul Cuffe emerged from the cacophony of liberty seekers in the American Revolution to become a lone voice, in many ways, that united Blacks and whites seeking emancipation for enslaved Africans.[18] Cuffe's Quaker values eventually overpowered his entrepreneurial spirit in 1811 when he experienced a dream that led him to focus solely on the business of preparing his people for "self-government" and to lead his African brethren to "leave that monstrous evil, intemperance, behind them."[19] At this moment, Cuffe transformed from a successful businessman of mixed racial descent to an Atlantic African, navigating the waterways of the Atlantic world while negotiating his and his brethren's identity amid volatile racism and social limitations. In the wider Atlantic, he united oppressed free Africans, as well as those in bondage, seeking freedom for his brethren in building a free Black nation in West Africa.

In these final years, this demanding role likely shortened his life. Yet, Cuffe remained the focal point for the burgeoning African colonization movement, revered by thousands of people around the Atlantic world. "A large crowd of people of all societyes" gathered at Paul Cuffe's funeral, the size and diversity of which "I do not remember . . . at anny funeral before."[20] Just where did this man of all people come from? How did this son of a formerly enslaved father and a Wampanoag mother from the small port town of Dartmouth, Massachusetts, become likely the wealthiest, most venerated person of color in the Age of Revolution? There were hundreds of mixed-race boys and men like Paul Cuffe in New England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but Cuffe was different, emboldened

by cries for liberty and revolution at a time when challenging traditional power structures infected men and women, enslaved people, freedmen, midwives, farmers, Indians, and others on the margins of the Atlantic world. Paul Cuffe chose not to sit idly by, watching his opportunity for freedom and mobility pass by; instead, he rose to his feet, acted, and did not stop fighting for his brethren until he passed, quietly, in his bed at his farm in Westport, Massachusetts.

Notes

TERMINOLOGY

1 "Native Knowledge, 360°," National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian, https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/impact-words-tips#:~:text=American%20Indian%20or%20Native%20American,would%20like%20to%20be%20addressed.%3C1.%20I.

2 Marjorie Gomez O'Toole, *If Jane Should Want to Be Sold: Stories of Enslavement, Indenture, and Freedom in Little Compton, Rhode Island* (Little Compton, RI: Little Compton Historical Society, 2016), 9–10; see also Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

3 Caitlin Roper, Ilena Silverman, and Jake Silverstein, eds., *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (New York: One World, 2024).

INTRODUCTION

1 Exercise Book, vol. 2, Paul Cuffe Papers, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA (hereafter NBFPL).

2 See Henry Noble Sherwood's articles in *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 2 (April 1923): 155.

3 Carter G. Woodson "The Relations of Negroes and Indians in Massachusetts," *Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 1 (January 1920): 46.

4 Ruth Wallis Herndon and Ella Wilcox Sekatau, "The Right to a Name: The Narragansett People and Rhode Island Officials in the Revolutionary Era," in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850*, ed. Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), 426–28.

5 Herndon and Sekatau, "Right to a Name," 426–28.

6 See Alexander Starbuck, *History of America's Whale Fishery, from its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876* (New Jersey: Castle, 1989), and Eric Jay Dolin, *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

7 Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship:*

America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600–2000 (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 87.

8 Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 87.

9 As early as the 1770s, African Americans asked to be returned to Africa as part of their petitions for freedom. See Herbert Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People of the United States: From Colonial Times to the Civil War*, vol. 1 (Charleston, SC: Citadel Press, 1975). For another group that consider emigration to Africa, see William H. Robinson, *The Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society: Newport, Rhode Island, 1780–1824* (Providence, RI, 1976).

10 Cuffe operated within the broader context of Black abolitionism, alongside the "Black Founders" of the Revolutionary generation, but he was neither a published author nor a minister, as many were. Rather, he spread abolitionist ideas through business and financial success, being celebrated in most ports he entered, and in the numerous letters he wrote to and conversations he had with other Black abolitionists. See Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), and Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016).

11 W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 36.

12 Lamont D. Thomas's *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986) portrays Cuffe as a virtuous man, focusing mostly on his attempts to resettle Black Americans in Africa and advocacy for the African voice. Thomas's work serves as a corrective over previous biographies published in the prior two decades, in which Cuffe is oversimplified by historians. In more recent years, several historians have discussed Paul Cuffe within the context of an emerging Black Atlantic world, identifying him as an important leader in building African American identity and communities throughout the littoral. Yet no scholar has yet devoted more than a few chapters to larger studies of the Black Atlantic. See James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Sherwood's articles in the *Journal of Negro History*, 153–229. For older books, see Sheldon H. Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), and George Salvador, *Paul Cuffe: The Black Yankee, 1759–1817* (New York: Reynolds-DeWalt, 1969). An excellent biographical sketch and collection of Cuffe's writings from later in his life can be found in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996).

13 Paul Cuffe repeatedly used "brethren" to refer to his fellow persons of color. The term suggests an implied masculinity in his worldview, but there are many examples in general of the term being used to describe male and female members of a group with shared experiences. For example, it is not uncommon for the term to be used to refer to all members of a religious group or even by English colonists to describe enslaved Native Americans. Cuffe used the term in this manner, not strictly as a masculine noun. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "brother," https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1153528478. See also Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by*

Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and Origins of American Slavery (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

14 The colonization or recolonization of African and African American people to Africa proved to be a complicated idea. African Americans, as well as white Americans, were divided on the issue, with some seeing it as antislavery/abolition in nature, whereas others viewed it as anti-Black and racist. Colonization efforts generally emphasized any Black colony being physically separate from the United States, preferably on an island, along the West Coast of North America or, in this case, in Africa to separate emancipated Africans and African Americans from whites. Additionally, the concept of colonization highlights complex questions regarding the "right to remain" in the United States during the era of gradual emancipation. For more on these aspects of colonization, see Beverly C. Tomek and Matthew J. Hetrick, *New Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017); Brandon Mills, "Colonization Doctrines," in *The World Colonization Made: The Racial Geography of Early American Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 36–64; Samantha Seeley, "'A Good Citizen of the Whole World': Colonization in the Era of Gradual Emancipation," in *Race, Removal, and the Right to Remain: Migration and the Making of the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 173–208; David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and Bruce Dorsey, "A Gendered History of Colonization in the Antebellum United States," *Journal of Social History* 34, no. 1 (2000): 77–103.

15 Cuffe was seen, both during and after his life, as a unique person—a uniqueness enhanced by his ascribed racial identity of Black. For more, see "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee, the Interesting Negro Navigator," *Belfast Monthly Magazine* 7, no. 39 (31 October 1811), 284–92.

CHAPTER ONE

1 The nature of slavery in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world means that complete archival records for individuals are often difficult to find. Of the estimated 10–15 million enslaved persons exported during the transatlantic slave trade, millions are lost in the records of the colonial world, identified by their race or owner, but not often by individual names. The most recent estimates, according to the authoritative Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, put the figure at 12,521,336. See SlaveVoyages, 8 July 2019, http://www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/kGcjZ4te. This complicates the exact reconstruction of an individual's experiences, but it does not mean Kofi's story cannot be told. For three biographies that wrestle with the question of sources for African American lives, see Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: A Biography of a Self-Made Man* (New York: Penguin, 2007); Nick Salvatore, *We All Got History: The Memory Books of Amos Webber* (New York: Vintage, 1996); and Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3.

2 Yams were the primary food that captains fed enslaved persons on the Atlantic crossing, often supplemented by rice and other starches, as well as a sauce made from palm oil, flour, pepper, and water. Alexander Falconbridge, *An Account of the*

Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa (London, 1788), in *African American Mosaic: A Documentary History from the Slave Trade to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. John H. Bracy and Manisha Sinha (New York: Pearson College Press, 2003), 22.

3 *Boston News Letter*, 5 June 1721, in *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 3, *New England and the Middle Colonies*, ed. Elizabeth Donnan (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1932), 116.

4 For more on Rhode Island, Newport, and trade, see Jay Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700–1807* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

5 French slave traders introduced brandy to the African slave trade, but by 1725 New England produced rum, which was higher in alcohol content and surpassed brandy in demand. See Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 12. The going rate for men, women, boys, and girls fluctuated on a number of factors, including age, health, constitution, and size of the person being bought or sold. Women and girls often cost more. See "Accounts from an African Tradebook, 1733–1736," in Donnan, *New England and the Middle Colonies*, 123.

6 It is unclear which slaving vessel Kofi arrived on, but only two captains left Newport for Africa in 1727, Captain John Thurston and Captain George Scott. Scott proved to be among the most prolific slave traders of Newport's captains in the early eighteenth century, and his ship, *Charming Bell*, made a similar voyage in 1729, making it likely he was the captain of the ship carrying Kofi. See "Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database," SlaveVoyages, accessed 11 July 2016, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search#. Quotes are from two Rhode Island captains surrounded by French slavers in Sierra Leone, in Rappleye, *Sons of Providence*, 16.

7 Rappleye, *Sons of Providence*, 14–15. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "factory (n.), sense 2.a," March 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9320047309.

8 Between 1701 and 1800, at least 745 ships left Newport, RI, for Africa. See "Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database," SlaveVoyages, accessed 11 July 2016, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search#.

9 For more on Newport, the slave trade, and distilleries, see chapter 1, "The Port," in Sean M. Kelley, *The Voyage of the Slave Ship Hare: A Journey into Captivity from Sierra Leone to South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

10 The landed elite of Narragansett County grew vegetables and tobacco, but most of their enslaved people tended to dairy operations and bred horses. One such farm is reported to have been two miles wide by four miles long. These estates were an exception in New England, where owners typically held one or two slaves. Lorenzo Johnston Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620–1776* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 103–7.

11 For more on the "commodification" of Africans into slaves, see Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

12 William A. Wing, *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches, Number 3* (New Bedford, MA: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1903).

13 Kathryn Grover, *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 44.

14 *United States Coast Guard Pilot: Distances between United States Ports* (Washington,

DC: US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2012), 3.

15 Richard A. Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

16 Greene, *Negro in Colonial New England*, 232–33.

17 Bill of Sale, Paul Cuffe Family Papers, 1759–1817, NBFPL.

18 From here forward I will refer to "Kofi" as "Cuffe" Slocum because he often refers to himself as "Coffe" or "Cuffe" on several pages of his Exercise Book when reprinting his name while practicing penmanship. Most legal documents use "Cuffe," including legal documents pertaining to his death and estate. It appears that Cuffe Slocum often substituted an *o* for a *u* when practicing his writing. For example, he writes "boshel of corn" instead of "bushel." See Exercise Book and Accounts of Cuffe Slocum, 79–102, Paul Cuffe Papers, NBFPL, and George Salvador, *The Black Yankee, 1759–1817* (New Bedford, MA: Reynolds-DeWalt, 1969), 12.

19 For more, see Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 120–21.

20 John Sackhouse, *The History of Prince Lee Boo, to Which Is Added, The Life of Paul Cuffe, a Man of Colour* (Dublin: C. Crookes, 1820), 150.

21 *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature, 1807* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Pater Noster Roe, 1808), 221.

22 "Story of Cuff Slocum Granted Freedom," 12 February 1851, Paul Cuffe Papers, roll 2, 100–2, NBFPL.

23 Greene, *Negro in Colonial New England*, 290–95, and Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

24 This included the trade of enslaved Muslims. See Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon* (London, 1734).

25 Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 9–32.

26 "John Barbot's Description of Guinea," reprinted in Elizabeth Donnan, *History of the Slave Trade*, vol. 1, *1441–1700* (Buffalo: William S. Hein, 2002), 284.

27 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustauvus Vassa, the African* (London 1789). For more on Equiano, see Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

28 "John Barbot's Description of Guinea," reprinted in Donnan, *History of the Slave Trade*, 1:284.

29 "7 February 1701/2, Captain Bernard Ladman to the Royal African Company," reprinted in Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century* (Buffalo: William S. Hein, 2002), 1.

30 David Eltis, "A Brief Overview of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," "Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, SlaveVoyages, accessed 16 May 2024, https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/essays#interpretation/overview-trans-atlantic-slave-trade/introduction/0/en/.

31 Falconbridge, *Account of the Slave Trade*, 36.

32 Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 9.

33 On the commodification of Africans, see Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*; for more on slave ship crews, see Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2006. For additional information regarding life aboard the slave ship, see Sowande Mustakeem, *Slavery*

at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

34 Falconbridge, *Account of the Slave Trade*.

35 Mortality rates varied from ship to ship and captain to captain during the Middle Passage. Scholars estimate 50 percent of all enslaved Africans died at some point from the moment of capture to their final sale in the American colonies. Herbert S. Klein, "Transoceanic Mortality: The Slave Trade in Comparative Perspective," *William and Mary* Quarterly 58, no. 1 (January 2001): 93–118.

36 Falconbridge, *Account of the Slave Trade*, 36.

37 W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 35.

38 Benjamin Wooley, *Savage Kingdom: Virginia and the Founding of English America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).

39 Ian Williams, *Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776* (New York: Nation Books, 2006).

40 William D. Pierson, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 3–24.

41 *Dartmouth, Massachusetts, Town Book of Records for Entries of Intention of Marriage*; Carter G. Woodson, "Paul Cuffe," *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 2 (April 1923): 154.

42 Memorandum of Family Marriages, Paul Cuffe Papers, NBFPL.

43 Henry Noble Sherwood, "Early Life," *Journal of Negro History* 8, o. 2 (April 1923): 154.

44 Birth records were inconsistently recorded in Native American communities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is no known date of birth for Ruth Moses, but she was likely close to Kofi's age. For more on recordkeeping in Native American communities, see John Milton Earle, *Report to the Governor and Council, concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth, under the Act of April 16, 1859* (Boston: White, 1861).

45 "Gay Head Journal; A Town with History, but Whose?," *New York Times*, 20 April 1991.

46 Charles Edward Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard*, vol. 1, *General History* (Boston: George H. Dean, 1911), 20.

47 Christina J. Hodge, "Faith and Practice at an Early-Eighteenth-Century Wampanoag Burial Ground: The Waldo Farm Site in Dartmouth, Massachusetts," *Historical Archaeology* 39, no. 42 (2005): 75.

48 Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 12.

49 Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1491* (New York: ABC-CLIO, 2003).

50 Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, and Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1999.

51 Jill Lepore, *In the Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage, 1999), and Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

52 Dwight B. Heath, ed., *Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1986).
53 For the long-term impact of the English victory in Metacom's War, see Daniel R. Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History: Native Americans in Southern New England, 1780–1880* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).
54 Daniel R. Mandell. *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 51.
55 Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*, 6–7.
56 Daniel Ricketson, *The History of New Bedford, Bristol Country, Massachusetts* (New Bedford, MA: Published by the Author, 1858), 179–80.
57 Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, 1:250.
58 Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
59 Frederick Webb Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, vol. 2, *North of Mexico* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 270.
60 Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for the year 1792* (Boston: Munroe & Francis, 1792), 201.
61 Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1997.
62 Hodge, "Faith and Practice," 73–94.
63 Dartmouth Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1703 Dartmouth Monthly Meeting of Friends Minutes, 1684–1792, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI, as reprinted in Hodge, "Faith and Practice," 73–94.
64 Ruth Wallace Herndon and Ella Wilcox Sekatau, "The Right to a Name: The Narragansett People and Rhode Island Officials in the Revolutionary Era," in *After King Philip's War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England*, ed. Colin Calloway (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997), 115.
65 Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, 2:270.
66 Timothy Alden Jr., "Memorabilia of Yarmouth," *MHSC*, 1st series, 5 (1798): 55.
67 Herndon and Sekatau, "The Right to a Name," Notes, 136.
68 For more on the history of the term "mustee," see Jack D. Forbes, "Mustees, Half-Breeds, and Zambos in Anglo North America: Aspects of Black-Indian Relations," *American Indian Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1983): 58–59.
69 Ebenezer Slocum, Manumission Bill of Sale, 1742, in Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817. William Allen, *Life of William Allen, with Selections from His Correspondence* (Philadelphia: H. Longstreth, 1847), 110.
70 Exercise Book and Accounts of Cuffe Slocum, 79–102.
71 "Number of Negro Slaves in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, Sixteen Years Old and Upward, Taken by Order of Government, 1754–1755," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, series 2, vol. 3 (Boston, 1815), 96.
72 Nancy Shoemaker, "Mr. Tashtego: Native American Whalemen in Antebellum New England," *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 12, and also Daniel Vickers, "The First Whalemen of Nantucket," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (October 1983): 560–83, and Russel Lawrence Bash, "Colored Seamen in the New England Whaling Industry: An Afro-Indian Consortium," in *Confounding*

the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America, ed. James F. Brooks (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 76–107.

73 Daniel Ricketson, *The History of New Bedford, Bristol Country, Massachusetts* (New Bedford, MA: Published by the Author, 1858), 117–18.

74 Cuffe's own memory suggests no other house existed on the island, although this seems unlikely. Rolland Pollard, a descendant of Paul Cuffe, confirmed the family's oral tradition of there being only one house on the island when Paul Cuffe was born. Discussion with author 2 August 2011 at New Bedford Free Public Library; see also Cuttyhunk Historical Society, *Cuttyhunk and the Elizabeth Islands, from 1602* (Concord, MA: Concord River Press, 1993), 24–25.

75 George Eldridge, *Eldridge's Coastal Pilot No. 2, Southern Section, from Chatham to the Rio Grande* (Boston: S. Thaxter and Son, 1883), 43.

76 Wampanoag oral tradition recounts the giant named Moshop creating Noepe, present-day Martha's Vineyard, and teaching Wampanoags to fish and harvest whale.

77 David was the firstborn, in 1747, followed by Jonathan (1749), Sarah (1751), Mary (1753), John (1757), Paul (1759), Lydia (1761), Ruth (1763), and Freelove (1765). See Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 161.

78 Local folklore on Cuttyhunk Island has kept alive the story of Cuff's Rock down through the generations. I learned this on a visit to Cuttyhunk Historical Society in August 2015, when I was encouraged to ask any native islander about the famous rock.

79 Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 5.

80 Exercise Book, vol. 2, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817.

81 The deed identifies Cuffe Slocum of Chilsmark purchasing the land from David Brownell of Dartmouth. Chilmark was the town within which Gay Head resided. *Book of Bristol County Land Records*, vol. 50, 478, 479, as reprinted in Woodson, "Paul Cuffe," 155.

82 Exercise Book, vol. 2, Paul Cuffe Papers; Cuff Slocum Deed, vols. 2 and 5, Paul Cuffe Papers; and Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 6.

CHAPTER TWO

1 Exercise Book, Papers of Paul Cuffe, circa 1742–1963, microfilm, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Washington, DC.

2 E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 366. Each page of the Exercise Book has at least one date, if not several, written on it. The earliest date is in 1763, with dates as late 1804 appearing throughout the pages. Did Cuffe Slocum teach himself to write in his fifties? It seems likely he knew some rudimentary words and phrases, such as how to write his name, but the clarity of his penmanship increases throughout the years he uses this particular Exercise Book, making it likely that he practiced more in his fifties, as it became more important for him to keep clear records for his various business transactions.

3 Exercise Book, Papers of Paul Cuffe.

4 Jack Lynch, ed., *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary: Selections from the 1755 Work That Defined the English Language* (London: Walker Books, 2004).

5 Exercise Book, Papers of Paul Cuffe.

6 Ebenezer Slocum, Manumission Bill of Sale, 1742, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, NBFPL. Quotation in William Allen, *Life of William Allen, with Selections from His Correspondence* (Philadelphia: H. Longstreth, 1847), 110.

7 Exercise Book, Papers of Paul Cuffe.

8 The term "musta" is derived from "mustee," which was reserved for people of African and Native American descent. Variations of the term can be found throughout the Americas during this era, but "musta" was used widely across the south coasts of New England. Marjorie Gomez O'Toole, *If Jane Should Want to Be Sold: Stories of Enslavement, Indenture and Freedom in Little Compton, Rhode Island* (Little Compton, RI: Little Compton Historical Society, 2016), 9–10; see also Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

9 In the first census of the United States, 63 persons of color resided in Westport, MA, and only two of these people were specifically identified as "Negro" or Black. Paul Cuffe is listed as a "head of household," with all seven of the people living at his home listed as "all other free persons." No one in Westport is listed under the fourth category of "slaves." *First Census of the United States, 1790: Massachusetts* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1908), 58.

10 Gina M. Martino-Trutor, "'As Potent a Prince as Any Round about Her': Rethinking Weetamoo of the Pocasset and Native Female Leadership in Early America," *Journal of Women's History* 27, no 3 (September 2015): 37–60.

11 For example, see "Petition of Peter Bestes, Sambo Freeman, Felix Holbrook, and Chester Joie, Boston, April 20, 1773," in Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People*, 1:7–8.

12 *The Appendix: or some Observations on the expediency of the Petition of Africans, living in Boston, &c, lately presented to the General Assembly of this Province. To which is annexed, the Petition referred to. Likewise, Thoughts on Slavery with a useful extract from the Massachusetts Spy, of January 28 1773, by way of an Address to the Members of the Assembly. By a Lover of Constitutional Liberty*. in Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People*, 1:6.

13 For example, see Phillis Wheatley, *Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings* (New York: Penguin Classis, 2001), and Charles A. Cerami and Robert M. Silverstein, *Benjamin Banneker: Surveyor, Astronomer, Publisher, Patriot* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002).

14 Nancy Shoemaker, "Whale Meat in American History," *Environmental History* 10, no. 2 (April 2005): 269. For more on the development of whaling in New England, see Nancy Shoemaker, *Native American Whalemen and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), and Shoemaker, "Whale Meat in American History," 270.

15 Shoemaker, "Whale Meat in American History," 271–72.

16 For more on the legalities of whaling rights, see Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Living with Whales: Documents and Oral Histories of Native New England Whaling History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 32–38.

17 W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 69–71.

18 Edouard A. Stackpole, *The Sea-Hunters: The New England Whalemen during Two Centuries, 1635–1835* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1953), 55.

19 John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard. *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 108.
20 Obed Macy, *The History of Nantucket: Being a Compendious Account of the First Settlement of the Island by the English, together with the Rise and Progress of the Whale Fishery* (Boston: Hilliard, Ray, 1835), 71.
21 "Yankee Whaling," New Bedford Whaling Museum, http://www.whalingmuseum.org/learn/research-topics/overview-of-north-american-whaling/american-whaling.
22 McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 312, and Alexander Starbuck, *History of the American Whale Fishery from Its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876* (Waltham, MA: Government Printing Office, 1878).
23 Paul Revere. "An Account of a Late Military Massacre at Boston," in *Boston Gazette*, 12 March 1770.
24 *Boston Gazette*, 12 March 1770.
25 For more on whaleship crews, see Shoemaker, *Native American Whalemen*, 23–24.
26 J. Hector St. John de Crevecouer, *"Letters from an American Farmer" and "Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America"* (New York: Penguin, 1986), 132–43.
27 Manuscripts, Nathaniel Briggs Collection, Mary Elizabeth Robinson Research Center, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.
28 Stackpole, *Sea-Hunters*, 79–81.
29 Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600–2000* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 94–95; Alfred T. Mahan, *The Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1913).
30 Daniel Ricketson, *The History New Bedford, Bristol Country, Massachusetts* (New Bedford, MA: Published by the Author, 1858), 333.
31 McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 362–63.
32 Macy, *History of Nantucket*, 84.
33 Exercise Book, Paul Cuffe Family Papers, 1759–1817.
34 George Fox and others, A Declaration From the Harmles & Innocent People of God Called Quakers, presented to Charles II of England, 1660, https://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/manuscriptcollections/Peace%20in%20Friends/Peace_testimony_essay_WEB.htm.
35 Stackpole, *Sea-Hunters*, 82.
36 Henry Noble Sherwood, "Early Life," *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 2 (April 1923): 156.
37 For more, see Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 48–49 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).
38 David Petriello, *Bacteria and Bayonets: The Impact of Disease in American Military History* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2015), 98–100.
39 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 24 October 1817.
40 Sherwood, "Early Life," 155–56.
41 Macy, *History of Nantucket*, 90–119, and Stackpole, *Sea-Hunters*, 85–88.
42 Lorenzi Johnston Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620–1776* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 1942), 301.

43 *The Appendix: or some Observations*, 1:6.

44 John Adams's original draft contained the phrase "born equally free and independent," which the convention changed before passage. A Constitution or Frame of Government Agreed upon by the Delegates of the People of the State of Massachusetts-Bay, pamphlet (Boston, State of Massachusetts-Bay: Printed by Benjamin Edes & Sons, in State-Street, 1780), Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

45 Petition to the Honourable Council and House of Representatives in the General Court Assembly for the State of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 10 February 1780, MA 186, 134, MA Misc. Collection, State of Massachusetts Archives, Boston, MA.

46 Petition To The Honourable Council, 10 February 1780.

47 Emil Olbrich, "Development of Sentiment on Negro Suffrage to 1860," master's thesis, reprinted in *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin: History Series* 1, no. 2 (1912): 14.

48 There is a general sentiment among some historians that Paul Cuffe's petitions led directly to the inclusion of "free and equal" in the state constitution, as well as the future abolition amendment, but there is no quality evidence to suggest this to be the case. I believe his petitions, along with others, may have influenced authorities who were unsure of which way to proceed, but he did not directly contribute to these parts of the constitution.

49 Sherwood, "Early Life," 163–64.

50 For more on the racialization of Indians and Africans in New England, see Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to Be Red," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1997): 625–44; Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Daniel R. Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History: Native Americans in Southern New England, 1780–1880* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); John Sweet Wood, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730–1830* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

51 Wiggins, 56–57.

52 Henry Smeathman's *Substance of Black Settlement to be Made Near Sierra Leone* and other similar tracts passed through the hands of many Union Society members and Friends in Newport, RI, and along Massachusetts's south coast. It is likely Cuffe read or at least was aware of Smeathman's and other colonization tracts. See the correspondence of the Free African Union Society of Newport, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society*, ed. William H. Robinson (Providence: Urban League of Rhode Island, 1976), 21–50.

53 *Memoir of Paul Cuffe* (York, 1812), 9.

54 Wiggins, 49.

55 James Oliver Horton and Louis E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 70–71.

56 Petition To The Honourable Council and House of Representatives, 134.

57 For more, see Elaine Forman Crane, *A Dependent People: Newport in the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992).

58 Carter G. Woodson "The Relations of Negroes and Indians in Massachusetts," *Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 1 (January 1920): 46.

59 Westport Census, 1790, in "Captain Paul Cuffe, 1759–1817: A One-Man Civil Rights Movement, vol. 1, Primary Sources, ed. by Michael Westgate, unpublished manuscript, 1989, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA.

60 Ruth Wallis Herndon and Ella Wilcox Sekatau, "The Right to a Name: The Narragansett People and Rhode Island Officials in the Revolutionary Era," in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850*, ed. Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell (New York: Routledge, 2000), 426–28. As early as 1719, South Carolina's governor made it law that "all those 'not entirely Indian'" would be counted as Black. For more, see Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 152, and James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom: The Story of African America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 47.

61 According to W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Ships were a pipeline to freedom and refuge for slaves on the lam." See his *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 4. In general, life at sea offered all sailors a level of liberty not often found for workingmen on land. See Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). For more on Cuffe's confrontation with the white world of water-based trade, see Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," *Journal of Negro History* 8 (April 1923): 156–61; Petition To The Honourable Council and House of Representatives in the General Court Assembly for the State of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 14 March 1780, MA 186, 135, MA Misc. Collection, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, MA.

62 London could be considered Equiano's home away from home if one considers how many times he returned there and that he spent the final years of his life in or around the city fighting for abolition. See Robert J. Allison, ed., *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006), and Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005). For Cuffe, see Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

CHAPTER THREE

1 Alcohol use and abuse became widespread among Native Americans for a variety of reasons. As cultures that had never used alcohol, the sudden introduction of it into their societies did not allow Native peoples to develop social or cultural traditions to limit its use. Additionally, Europeans used alcohol as a trade medium, which enabled them to place greater importance on its consumption and allowed Europeans a distinct advantage when engaged in trade or treaty negotiations. Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), and Fred Beauvais, "American Indians and Alcohol," *Alcohol Health and Research World* 22, no. 4 (1998): 253.

2 Joseph Thaxter and Frederick Baylies to the legislature, 22 September 1818,

Committee and Commissions, Accounts of Indian Guardians, box 1, folder 15, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, MA, as reprinted in Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 198.

3 David W. Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1995), and "England's Booze Culture: Always with Us," *Economist*, 31 December 2011.

4 Phil Withington, "Intoxicants and Society in Early Modern England," *Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (September 2011): 631–57

5 Quakers were not entirely against drinking alcohol. An archaeological dig in Philadelphia found a commoners' tavern built on Quaker-owned land. See John M. Chenoweth. "'What'll Thou Have': Quakers and the Characterization of Tavern Sites in Colonial Philadelphia," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 35, no. 1 (January 2006): 77–92.

6 "Scrapbook," 19 February 1783, Paul Cuffe Papers, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA (hereafter NBFPL).

7 Paul Cuffe Papers, roll no. 2, frame 47, NBFPL.

8 *Vital Records of the Town of Dartmouth, Massachusetts, to the Year 1850*, vol. 2, *Marriages* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1930), 143.

9 James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 38, no. 3 (July 1981): 387.

10 English settlers interested in converting Indians to their faith, including John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, wrote often about the ill effects of alcohol among so-called praying Indians who had converted to Christianity. See James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 38, no. 3 (July 1981): 383, 387.

11 In addition, alcohol addiction may have negatively impacted conception rates among New England Indian women. Ronda, "Generations of Faith," 388; see also Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 30, 69, 86, 100.

12 Kenneth Christmon. "Historical Overview of Alcohol in the African American Community," *Journal of Black Studies* 25, no. 3 (1995): 318–30, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784640; James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 38, no. 3 (July 1981): 378. See also Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 134.

13 Christmon, "Historical Overview of Alcohol," 318–30.

14 Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Penguin, 2005), xiv.

15 For example, militia mustered in Dartmouth were dispatched to Rhode Island to protect its coastline from British forces. *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of Massachusetts Bay* [. . .], vol. 21, *1779–1780* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printer; State Printers, 1867).

16 Thomas Jefferson to William Rotch, "Observations of the Whale-Fishery," 1788, in *Works of Thomas Jefferson* (n.p.: MobileReference, 2010), Kindle.

17 Paul Cuffe Biography—Manuscript, 77–78, folio 3, box 13, Sarah Loomis Papers, New Bedford Whaling Museum Archives, New Bedford, MA.

18 Massachusetts Muster and Pay Rolls, microfilm, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, MA; *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printer; State Printers, 1898).
19 See *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of Massachusetts Bay* [. . .], vol. 20, *1779–1780* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printer; State Printers, 1867), 333.
20 *Acts and Resolves*, 21:68.
21 William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003).
22 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee, the Interesting Negro Navigator," *Belfast Monthly Magazine* 31 October1811, 284–86.
23 *Vital Records of the Town of Dartmouth*, 2:144.
24 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 286.
25 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 287.
26 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 287.
27 W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 65.
28 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 287.
29 John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 369–73.
30 Pirates and bandits sailed the coastal waters of the New England looking for easy targets. Edouard A. Stackpole. *The Sea-Hunters: The New England Whalemen during Two Centuries, 1635–1835* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1953), 98–100.
31 Eric Jay Dolin, *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 171.
32 McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 221.
33 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 287, and Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 2 (April 1923): 157.
34 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 287–88.
35 For descriptions of New England's whaling industry, see Thomas Jefferson, *Observations on the Whale-Fishery*, Early American Imprints, 1st series, Evans (1639–1800), no. 21345 (France: Jacques-Gabriel Clousier, 1788), American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA; Alexander Starbuck, *History of America's Whale Fishery, from Its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876* (New Jersey: Castle, 1989); and Stackpole, *Sea-Hunters*.
36 Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," 156–57.
37 Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 157–58. See also Steven J. J. Pitt, "Building and Outfitting Ships in Colonial Boston," *Early American Studies* 13, no. 4 (Fall 2015): 881–907.
38 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 288.
39 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 158.
40 Kevin A. Dawson. "Enslaved Ship Pilots: Challenging Notions of Race and Slavery along the Peripheries of the Revolutionary Atlantic World," in *Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World*, ed. Jeffrey A. Fortin and Mark Meuwese (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
41 William Allen, *Life of William Allen, with Selections from His Correspondence*, vol. 1 (London: Charles Gilpin, 1846), 111.

42 C. W. A. David. "The Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 and Its Antecedents," *Journal of Negro History* 9, no. 1 (January 1924): 20.
43 The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, in Leslie H. Fisher Jr. and Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro American: A Documentary History* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1967), 6:2.
44 David, "Fugitive Slave Law of 1793."
45 Herbert Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, vol. 1 (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), 20.
46 Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People*, 20–21.
47 Seamen's Protection Certificate Registry Database, electronic database, 2006, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT, https://research.mysticseaport.org/databases/protection/.
48 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 288.
49 *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature, 1807*, 22 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Pater Noster Roe, 1808), 2:335, and Brice Neal Stump, *Between the Blackwater and Nanticoke: History and Legend of Eastern Dorchester County* (n.p: n.p, 1967), 55, 96, 101–2, 225–26.
50 Dawson, "Enslaved Ship Pilots."
51 *Monthly Repository*, 2:335, and Stump, *Blackwater and Nanticoke*, 55, 96, 101–2, 225–26.
52 Jeffrey Richardson Brackett, *The Negro in Maryland: A Study of the Institution of Slavery*, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1889), 49.
53 *Monthly Repository*, 2:335, and Stump, *Blackwater and Nanticoke*, 55, 96, 101–2, 225–26.
54 Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2002), 181. As will be discussed later in this chapter, issues surround the publication date of the text, but for the sake of clarity, I will refer to this edition of the text unless otherwise noted.
55 Declaration of Independence (draft), Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.
56 For the entire appeal, see "Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829, David Walker" (Boston: Revised and Published by David Walker,1830), 88, accessed 20 May 2024, https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
57 "South Carolina Negroes Denounce Jim Crow Justice, 1791," in Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People*, 1:27.
58 See Herbert Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People*, 1:28–32.
59 "Runaway slave advertisement in the New Bedford *Medley or Marine Journal*, 26 April 1799, placed by Samuel Sloan of King's Ferry, Somerset County, Maryland," NBFPL.
60 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 289.
61 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 289.
62 McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 130.
63 Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 18.
64 Cuffe's brother was placed in charge of the family farm. See "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 290.

65 "Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee," 289.
66 Marion Kilson, "Cuffe's Social Networks and Entrepreneurial Success" (conference paper, Exploring Paul Cuffe: The Man and his Legacy, a Public Symposium, Westport, MA, 3 October 2009).
67 *Vital Records of the Town of Dartmouth Massachusetts to the Year 1850*, vol 2, *Marriages* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1930), i.
68 "Negroes Ask for Equal Educational Facilities, 1787," in Aptheker, *Documentary History of the Negro People*, 1:19–20.
69 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 7 November 1817, vol. 11, NBFPL.
70 Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe: Afro-American Interests," *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 2 (April 1923): 206.
71 Purchase agreement between Ebenezer Eddy, Rachel Eddy, and Paul Cuffe; see Edward W. Devlin. *A Man Born on Purpose: Captain Paul Cuffe of Westport, Mariner, Educator, African-American, 1759–1817* (Westport, MA: Westport Historical Society, 1997), 4–5.
72 Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "American Incomes, 1774–1860," unpublished paper, 30, accessed 19 July 2013, http://emlab.berkeley.edu/users/webfac/cromer/e211_f12/LindertWilliamson.pdf.
73 Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 19.
74 Paul Cuffe to A Friend, 1811, Paul Cuffe Papers, reel no. 1, frames 1–78, NBFPL.
75 "Scrapbook."
76 Paul Cuffe to A Friend, Paul Cuffe Papers.
77 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "shifted," accessed 26 July 2013, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/178088?redirectedFrom=shifted.

CHAPTER FOUR

1 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *Distances between United States Ports* (Washington, DC: NOAA, 2012), 11.
2 *An East Prospect of the City of Philadelphia Taken by George Heap from the Jersey Shore, under the Direction of Nicholas Scull, Surveyor General of the Province of Pennsylvania* [graphic], 1854, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.
3 For more on Philadelphia's African American history, see Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
4 The Arch Street Wharf, according to Benjamin Rush, was the main point of entry for the smallpox virus at the outset of the epidemic of 1793 in Philadelphia. Benjamin Rush, *An Account of the Bilious Remitting Yellow Fever as It Appeared in the City of Philadelphia in the Year 1793* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1794), 6–10.
5 Cuffe does not seem to have left any description of the meetinghouse in his notes and papers. For more on the meetinghouse and its place in Philadelphia's Quaker society, see Henry J. Cadbury, "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends," *Journal of Negro History* 21, no. 2 (April 1936): 151–213. See also Carla Gerona, *Night Journeys: The Powers of Dreams in Transatlantic Quaker Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2004), 227–29.
6 Testimony of Paul Cuffe at a Religious Meeting, Paul Cuffe Papers, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA (hereafter NBFPL).

7 Testimony of Paul Cuffe.
8 Testimony of Paul Cuffe.
9 Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 274–76. See also Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), and Joe William Trotter and Eric Ledell Smith, eds., *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press; Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1997).
10 Henry J. Cadbury, "Negro Membership," 198.
11 Testimony of Paul Cuffe.
12 Testimony of Paul Cuffe.
13 Gerona, *Night Journeys*, 3. See also Mechal Sobel, *Teach Me Dreams: The Search for Self in the Revolutionary Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
14 Jonathan Evans, ed., *A Journal of the Life, Travels, and Religious Labours of William Savery* (London: Charles Gilpin, 5 Bishopsgate Street, 1844), 1.
15 It is not clear if women were present at this particular meeting in Philadelphia. Many scholars have explored the manner in which Quaker women shared power with Quaker men, but women often had their own meetings. Recent studies suggest women's roles in Quaker communities are complex and ambiguous. Robynne Rogers Healey and Carole Dale Spencer, eds., *Quaker Women, 1800–1920* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2023).
16 Ann Gidley Lowry, "Quakers and Their Meeting House at Apponegansett: A Paper Read at the Meeting of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 14 August 1940," in *Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches*, no. 70 (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth, 1940): 8.
17 George Fox, *George Fox: An Autobiogrpahy*, ed. Rufus M. Jones (Philadelphia: Ferris & Lynch, 1909), 103.
18 As Thomas Sugrue pointed out, the dominant historical narrative of friendly relations between Quakers and Indians is largely inaccurate during the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries. Quakers, like other colonists in North America, often viewed Native Americans with suspicion, distrust, and disdain. "The Peopling and Depeopling of Early Pennsylvania: Indians and Colonists, 1680–1720," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 116, no. 1 (January 1992): 3–31.
19 Cadbury, "Negro Membership," 151–213.
20 For an interesting analysis of the role of the Boston Martyrs in shaping Americans' view of their history, see Carla Gardina Pestana, "The Quaker Executions as Myth and History," *Journal of American History* 80, no. 2 (September 1993): 441–69.
21 Men's Minutes, 13 February/25 March/16 April 1808, Westport Monthly Meeting, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI; see also Certificate of Membership in Westport Monthly Meeting, John Macomber (Clerk), Paul Cuffe Papers, roll 1, nos. 116–17, NBFPL.
22 Receipts indicate that Cuffe purchased a variety of materials to aid in the construction of the meetinghouse. Finished in 1814, it also serves as the site of Cuffe's final resting place. See Westport Monthly Meeting of Friends, Receipt of Purchases from Paul Cuffe, etc. to Build Meetinghouse, Paul Cuffe Papers, box 3 of 4, NBFPL.
23 James A. Rawley and Stephen D. Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 361.

24 William Hague, *William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008); David Eltis and James Walvin, eds., *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa, and the Americas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and J. R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Antislavery: The Mobilization of Public Opinion against the Slave Trade, 1787–1807* (London: Routledge, 1998).

25 Kristen Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), and Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

26 George Keith, *An exhortation & caution to Friends concerning buying or keeping of Negroes* (New York: Printed by William Bradford, 1693). Other Quakers, such as Philadelphian William Southeby, argued for a ban on the importation of slaves and bonded labor.

27 Maurice Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of American Abolitionism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

28 For a comprehensive collection of Benezet's writings, see David L. Crosby, *The Complete Antislavery Writings of Anthony Benezet, 1754–1783: An Annotated Critical Edition* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2014).

29 For more on Quakers' role in abolition, see Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Larry Gragg, *The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009); and J. William Frost, *The Quaker Origins of Antislavery* (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1980). Philadelphia would also emerge as a key site of contestation over African colonization in the early nineteenth century. See Beverly C. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

30 *The Federal and State Constitutions: Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies, Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America*, compiled and edited under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906, by Francis Newton Thorpe (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909).

31 Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, *1760–1776* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 243–47.

32 Please see chapter three in this volume and the previous discussion of Jefferson's thoughts on the transportation of enslaved Africans from the United States.

33 Pemberton to Cuffe, 8 June 1808, in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 77–78 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).

34 James Pemberton, *An Apology for the People Called Quakers,* containing some reasons, *for their not* complying *with* human injunctions *and* institutions *in* matters relative *to the* worship *of* God (Philadelphia: James Chattin, 1757); John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania: Genealogical and Personal Memoirs* (New York: Clearfield, 1911), 290.

35 The "Saints" refers to collection of white humanitarians in Great Britain who fought

for abolition and the colonization of Africa. See Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786–1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994).

36 For more on the Clapham Sect, see Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's Circle Transformed Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010). For more on Macauley in Sierra Leone, see Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786–1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994).

37 For more on these abolitionists and Jefferson's correspondence, see Sydney V. James, *A People among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), and Wiggins, 92–93 (notes).

38 Pemberton to Cuffe, 8 June 1808, Wiggins, 77.

39 "Extracts of a Biographical Sketch of Paul Cuffe," *New-Bedford Mercury*, 7 November 1817, NBFPL.

40 James, *A People among Peoples*. For a more complicated view of Quaker-Indian relations in early America, see Sugrue, "Peopling and Depeopling of Early Pennsylvania," 3–31.

41 James Pemberton and Paul Cuffe knew each other as a result of having mutual friends in the Rotch Family. A well-known Quaker family, they served as one of many hubs of abolitionist thought in the Quaker community. For more about this prominent family, see Joseph McDevit, "The House of Rotch: Whaling Merchants of Massachusetts, 1734–1828" (PhD diss., American University, 1978).

42 Pemberton to Cuffe, 8 June 1808, Wiggins, 77–78.

43 Cuffe to James Pemberton, 14 September 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, box 1, NBFPL. It is not clear what feebleness Cuffe refers to in this letter. Perhaps he was ill at the time, but it could also be that his business ventures had been tiresome and stressful, diminishing his enthusiasm for abolitionist activities.

44 Cuffe to James Pemberton, 14 September 1808.

45 For more on the formation of the Royal Navy's African Squadron for the suppression of the slave trade, see Bernard Edwards, *Royal Navy versus Slave Traders: Enforcing Abolition at Sea, 1808–1898* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Maritime, 2007).

46 Pemberton to Cuffe, 27 September 1808, Wiggins, 79.

47 Cuffe had two copies of his and Pemberton's letters that were widely published in early American newspapers. Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, NBFPL.

48 For more on Cuffe's theories of abolition, see Sheldon H. Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 13–50.

49 James Pemberton to Paul Cuffe, 8 June 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, microfilm, Special Collections, NBFPL.

50 Based on Pemberton's reports, Allen believed Cuffe could be the man to resurrect the fledgling colony. Allen, *Life of William Allen*, 86.

51 James Pemberton to Paul Cuffe, 8 June 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, microfilm, Special Collections, NBFPL.

52 There was long history of Christian, including Quaker, missionary work among Native Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Sugrue, "Peopling and Depeopling of Early Pennsylvania," 3–31; Daniel K. Richter, "'Believing That Many of the Red People Suffer Much for the Want of Food': Hunting, Agriculture, and a Quaker Construction of Indianness in the Early Republic," in

"Racial Consciousness and Nation-Building in the Early Republic," special issue, ed. Michael A. Morrison and James Brewer Stewart, *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 601–28; and Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

53 Although ethnically and culturally diverse, Africans in the diaspora often pointed to a unifying African identity. Ethnic tensions extant in Africa were reduced or eliminated as Africans confronted the challenges of slavery and racism. See Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

54 Cuffe to John James and Alexander Wilson, 10 June 1809, Wiggins, 80.

CHAPTER FIVE

1 Peter Williams Jr., *An Oration on the Abolition of the Slave Trade Delivered in the African Church of the City of New-York* (New York: Samuel Wood, 1808), 1. The introduction to the book states the sermon was delivered on 11 January, whereas the title states it was delivered on 1 January. For more on Williams Jr., see James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13, 144.

2 Co-owned by John B. Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, *Freedom's Journal*, 16 March 1827, proclaimed in its first issue: "We wish to plead our own cause," signaling a new era of African American antislavery activities and the building of community by including "every thing that relates to Africa, shall find a ready admission into our columns." For the entire archive, see http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/library archives/aanp/freedom/.

3 Peter Williams Jr., *An Oration on the Abolition of the Slave Trade Delivered in the African Church of the City of New-York* (New York: Samuel Wood, 1808), 11–12, 15.

4 For more on this history, see Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626–1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

5 Absalom Jones, *A Thanksgiving Sermon, Preached January 1, 1808, in St. Thomas's, or the African Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, on Account of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, on That Day, by the Congress of the United States* (Philadelphia: Fry and Kammerer, 1808); for more on Jones, see James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 136–37.

6 For more on one prominent Philadelphian's view of colonization, see Julie Wench, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

7 Jedidiah Morse, *Discourse, Delivered at the African Meeting-House, in Boston, July 14, 1808: In Grateful Celebration of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade* (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1808), "Advertisement."

8 Jedidiah Morse, *Discourse*; "Abolition of the Slave Trade," *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), 14 July 1808.

9 Upon returning home from his first voyage to Sierra Leone in 1812, Paul Cuffe published *A Brief Account of the Settlement and Present Situation of the Colony of Sierra*

Leone, in Africa (New York: Samuel Wood, 1812). The document was dictated by Paul Cuffe and details his view and experiences during his two-month stay in the colony. The quote is from page 3.

10 Paul Cuffe, *Brief Account of the Settlement*, 3.

11 Michael A. Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

12 For a lengthy history of the colony, see Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, vol. 1 (repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

13 See Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Vintage, 2010).

14 William Allen, *Life of William Allen with Selections from His Correspondence*, vol. 1 (London: Charles Gilpin, 1847), 86.

15 Sarah Loomis, "Captain Paul Cuffe," Paul Cuffe Biography Mss. (1980), box 11, chap. 3, 143, Old Dartmouth Historical Society in the New Bedford Whaling Museum Library, New Bedford, MA. In her unpublished manuscript, Sarah Loomis succinctly and accurately phrases Cuffe's belief that trade with Sierra Leone would benefit the province as much as the arrival of free African Americans.

16 In 1805, Americans arrived off the coast of Mozambique to aid the Portuguese in their attempts to become involved in the whaling industry; by 1810, reports suggested these men had become ill and died. Alexander Starbuck, *A History of the American Whale Fishery from Its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876* (Waltham, MA: Alexander Starbuck, 1878), 85 (unnumbered footnote).

17 Loomis, "Captain Paul Cuffe," chap. 3, 145.

18 Paul Cuffe Jr.'s narrative should be viewed with some caution, not because it is necessarily falsified or embellished but because certain facts may be altered for marketing reasons. One example is in the introduction, in which Cuffe Jr. writes that he is "a descendant of an Indian family, which formerly resided in the eastern part of Connecticut and constituted a part of that fierce and warlike tribe of Indians called Pequots." Paul Cuffe Jr. *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Paul Cuffe, or, Paul Cuffe, a Pequot Indian: during Thirty Years Spent at Sea, and in Travelling in Foreign Lands* (Vernon, CT: Horace N. Bill, 1839), Kindle.

19 Cuffe Jr., *Life and Adventures of Paul Cuffe*.

20 Cuffe Jr., *Life and Adventures of Paul Cuffe*.

21 Lars Magnusson, *An Economic History of Sweden* (London: Routledge, 2002), 87.

22 Cuffe Jr., *Life and Adventures of Paul Cuffe*.

23 Wilson Armistead, "Enterprise, Benevolence, and Christian Conduct Exemplified in Paul Cuffe, a Negro Philanthropist," Paul Cuffe Papers, box 1, MS 10, New Bedford Whaling Museum Archives, New Bedford, MA.

24 For more on Sierra Leone's early history, see Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2012), and Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

25 Armistead, "Enterprise, Benevolence, and Christian Conduct." See also his popular work *A Tribute for the Negro* (New York: Cosimo, 2005).

26 Armistead, "Enterprise, Benevolence, and Christian Conduct."

27 Paul Cuffe to John James and Alexander Wilson, 10 June 1809, in Rosalind Cobb

Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 80 (henceforth cited as Wiggins).

28 Notes of James B. Congdon, Paul Cuffe Papers, roll 1, frames 173–74, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA (henceforth cited as NBFPL).

29 Notes of James B. Congdon.

30 Paul Cuffe to John James and Alexander Wilson, 10 June 1809, 80.

31 Notes of James B. Congdon, 175–76. Congdon was the long-time director of the New Bedford Free Public Library in the nineteenth century, and he organized much of the early collections of Cuffe documents.

32 For more details on his first and subsequent visits to Sierra Leone, see Jeffrey A. Fortin, "Cuffe's Black Atlantic World, 1808–1817," *Atlantic Studies* 4 no. 2 (December 2007): 245–66.

33 *Traveller* logbook, 21 February 1811, Paul Cuffe Papers, NBFPL.

34 *Traveller* logbook, 2–24 February 2011.

35 See Wiggins, 97–99, for a discussion of the Wainer nephew.

36 *Traveller* logbook.

37 *Traveller* logbook.

38 *Traveller* logbook.

39 *Traveller* logbook.

40 *Traveller* logbook.

41 3d Day 12 1811 [meaning 3rd month, day 12], 42 Days Out, *Traveller* logbook. Beside John Masters's brief foray overboard, the journey was remarkably quiet for a midwinter crossing. Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament* (London: John W. Parker, 1839).

42 4th Day 13th 1811, 43 Days Out, *Traveller* logbook.

43 Strangely, no modern biography of Clarkson exists, but Christopher Leslie Brown discusses Clarkson often and insightfully in *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

44 The "suker" fish is likely from the family of Cyclopteridae, more commonly known as "lumpfish," which are common in the North Atlantic. 1st Day 24th, 53 Days Out, *Traveller* logbook; Catherine W. Mecklenburg and Boris A. Sheiko, "Family Cyclopteridae Bonaparte 1831 Lumpsuckers," *California Academy of Sciences*, Annotated Checklists of Fishes 6 (September 2003): 17.

45 Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe: Afro-American Interests," *Journal of Negro History* 8, no. 2 (April 1923): 172.

46 Cuffe, *Brief Account of the Settlement*, 1.

47 In this context, "class" is defined as the social and economic relations between persons of color in the African Diaspora. Cuffe must be considered an elite, or genteel, Black man because of his wealth, education, religious character, and, perhaps most important, as a captain. Influencing my definition of "class" in the early republic period, see Seth Rockman, "Class and the History of Working People in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 527–35.

Crue Men were from a specific group of Africans hired for their skills in building and labor, not from the immediate area and considered separate from native

Africans. The Crue (also known as Kru or Grebo) served as itinerant workers for British traders and officials.

48 Boston King, formerly enslaved in South Carolina and one of approximately three thousand Black Loyalists who fought for Great Britain during the American Revolution, emigrated to Nova Scotia. From there, he settled in Sierra Leone to proselytize among native Africans. He believed strongly in the mission of Freetown and the colony of Sierra Leone in many similar ways as Cuffe. See Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006).

49 Cuffe, *Brief Account of the Settlement*, 5. See also Jane Martin, "Krumen 'Down the Coast': Liberian Migrants on the West African Coast in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18, no. 3 (January 1985): 401–23, and Esu Biyi, "The Kru and Related Peoples of West Africa, Part I," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 29, no. 113 (October 1929): 71–77.

50 Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, reprinted in full in Sheldon H. Harris, "An American's Impression of Sierra Leone in 1811," *Journal of Negro History* 47, no. 1 (January 1962): 41.

51 Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, reprinted in full in Harris, "American's Impression of Sierra Leone," 39.

52 Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811.

53 Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, 39–40.

54 Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, 40.

55 Cuffe, *Brief Account of the Settlement*, 7–8. Cuffe made a few trips inland to gather information about the peoples surrounding the coastal settlements of Sierra Leone. I am unsure of how much Cuffe would have known about the tribes in West Africa before his voyage.

56 Cuffe, *Brief Account of the Settlement*, 8.

CHAPTER SIX

1 *Traveller* log/letters, Miscellaneous, Paul Cuffe Papers, roll 2, 336–480 (letter on p. 3), New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA.

2 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, reprinted in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 120 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).

3 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, Wiggins, 119.

4 Cuffe to Allen, 24 April 1811, Wiggins, 120.

5 Cuffe to Allen, 24 April 1811.

6 Cuffe to Allen, 22 April 1811, Wiggins, 119.

7 David Vasblom, "Islam in Early Modern Quaker Experience and Writing," *Quaker History* 100, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 1–21.

8 *Ocean Passages for the World* (London: Hydrographic Department, Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, 1895), 43.

9 *Traveller* log/letters, Remarks 2d Day 13 1811–Remarks 4 Day 15th 1811, Miscellaneous, roll 2, pp. 336–480, Paul Cuffe Papers.

10 Remarks 3d Day 28th 1811, *Traveller* logbook.
11 This nighttime rainbow was likely the Great Comet of 1811. Remarks 5 Day 6th 1811 and Remarks 5 Day 4th 1811, *Traveller* logbook.
12 Mark Lardas, *American Heavy Frigates, 1794–1826* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003), 17.
13 Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 27 July 1811, Wiggins, 138.
14 Remarks 5 Day ye 11th 1811, *Traveller* logbook.
15 From the *Edinburgh Review*, August 1811, as reprinted in "Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, Written for the *Liverpool Mercury*," in *Liverpool Mercury*, 4 October 1811, issue 14.
16 From the *Edinburgh Review*, August 1811.
17 All statistics drawn from Emory University's "Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade—Estimates," SlaveVoyages, http://slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces.
18 Versions of the account of Cuffe's arrival in Liverpool appeared in the late summer and early fall of 1811 and can be found in the *Liverpool Mercury*, *Edinburgh Review*, *Ipswich Journal*, *Caledonian Mercury*, and *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser, for Lancashire, Westmoreland, & c.*
19 For more on the history of British newspapers, see Kevin Williams, *Read All About It! A History of the British Newspaper* (London: Routledge, 2009).
20 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 7th mo 6th Day 1811, Wiggins, 132, 133.
21 London News, *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Scotland), 10 August 1811.
22 For more on New Orleans, see Lawrence N. Powell, *The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
23 It is likely the two unnamed crewmen were immediately freed by the British held Seamen's Protection Certificates issued by the United States. The law issuing these documents was first passed 28 May 1796, with renewals prior to Cuffe's voyage as recently as 1809. "Extract from an act, for the relief and protection of American seamen," in Early American Imprints, Evans no. 47979, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA. As W. Jeffrey Bolster notes, Seamen's Protection Certificates issued to Blacks conferred citizenship—a temporary status meant only to protect the sailors from British press-gangs. See "'To Feel Like a Man': Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800–1860," *Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (March 1990): 1175. For more on the political ramifications of impressments, see Bradford Perkins, *Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805–1812* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963).
24 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 12–13 July 1811, Wiggins, 133.
25 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 1 Day 14 1811, Wiggins, 133.
26 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 3 Day 16 1811, Wiggins, 133.
27 For an interesting description of conditions on the turnpikes and coaches, see Joseph Ballard. *England in 1815 as Seen by a Young Boston Merchant* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), and for more history on the subject, see Philip S. Bagwell, *The Transportation Revolution, 1770–1985* (London: Routledge, 1998).
28 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 2d Day 15 1811, Wiggins, 133.
29 George Frederick Pardon, *The Popular Guide to London and Its Suburbs* (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1862), 5.
30 For more on wages in 1811, see Gregory Clark, "Farm Wages and Living Standards in the Industrial Revolution: England, 1670–1850," Department of Economics,

University of California–Davis, http://www.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/gclark/papers/farm_wages_&_living_standards.pdf; see also Pardon, *Popular Guide to London*, 5.

31 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 3 Day 16 1811, Wiggins, 133–34.

32 For more on the Lancasterian System, see Joseph Lancaster, *Improvements in Education, as It Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community: With a Brief Sketch of the Life of Joseph Lancaster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); see also Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller* 6 Day 19th 1811, Wiggins, 134.

33 Based on an account of Cuffe's time in England by William Allen in *Life of William Allen, with Selections from His Correspondence* (Philadelphia: H. Longstreth, 1847), 103.

34 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 3 Day 23 1811, Wiggins, 135.

35 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, Wiggins, 120–21.

36 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811.

37 3d Day 30th of the 7th mo 1911 Remark—London, Wiggins, 140.

38 Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, 26 February 1811, Wiggins, 148.

39 London News, 10 August 1811, *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Scotland).

40 London News, 10 August 1811.

41 Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), and Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

42 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 18 October 1811, 3. For more on his celebrity, see Lamont D. Thomas, "An African Captain along Liverpool's Docks: Paul Cuffe's Atlantic Presence" (conference paper, Liverpool and the Transatlantic Slavery, Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire and National Museums Liverpool, 13–15 October 2005).

43 Several entries in the logbook account for this information. See Remarks 6 Day 26–7th Day 27th 1811, and Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 27 July 1811, Wiggins, 137–39.

44 Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 27 July 1811, Wiggins, 138–39.

45 6 Day 8th mo 1st 1811, Wiggins, 141.

46 6 Day 8th mo 1st and Paul Cuffe to John Cuffe, 12 August 1811, 1811, both in Wiggins, 141 and 144, respectively.

47 Logbook entries from 1 August to 2 September 1811, Wiggins, 46–50.

48 4 Day 11th 1811 and 6 Day 13th 1811, Wiggins, 152.

49 3 Day 17th of ye 9th mo 1811 and 5th Day 19th of ye 19th mo 1811 Remarks, Wiggins, 153.

50 5th Day 19th of ye 9th mo 1811 Remarks, Wiggins, 153.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1 6 Day the 20th of the 9th month 1811, reprinted in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 158 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).

2 6 Day the 20th of the 9th month 1811.

3 "Missionary Intelligence," George Warren to Frances Collier, 6 December 1811, in the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, vol. 35 (London: Thomas Cordeaux, 1812), 317. For more about Methodist missionaries, see John Pritchard, *Methodists and Their Missionary Societies, 1760–1900* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

4 *Ocean Passages for the World* (London: Hydrographic Department, Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, 1895), 38, 43.
5 Remarks 6 Day 4th 1811, Wiggins, 160.
6 One missionary, George Warren, kept note of the events in his diary, seemingly alarmed by the prospect of becoming a prisoner of France. See "Missionary Intelligence," 317–19. For more on the work of Methodist missionaries in Sierra Leone, see Christopher Fyfe, "Four Sierra Leone Recaptives," *Journal of African History* 2, no. 1 (1961): 77–85.
7 "Missionary Intelligence," 317.
8 Remarks 6 Day 4th 1811, Wiggins, 160.
9 See Remark 7 Day 9 mo 1811–Remarks 1 Day 20th 1811, Wiggins, 158–63.
10 Remarks 10th mo 2 Day ye 7th 1811 and Remarks 6 Day 4th 1811, both in Wiggins, 161.
11 Some Americans thought the comet was responsible for a devastating earthquake in Missouri on 6 December 1811. Elizabeth Rusch, "The Great Midwest Earthquake of 1811," *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2011, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-great-midwest-earthquake-of-1811–46342/; see also Roberta J. M. Olson and Jay M. Pasachoff, *Fire in the Sky: Comets and Meteors, the Decisive Centuries, in British Art and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 138.
12 Flavel Roan, journal, in *Annals of Buffalo Valley Pennsylvania, 1755–1855*, ed. John Blair Linn (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, 1877), 398.
13 Remarks 5 Day 31 of 10th mo 1811, Remarks 6 Day 4th 1811, Wiggins, 165.
14 Remarks 5 Day 7th 1811, Remarks 6 Day 4th 1811, Wiggins, 166.
15 "Missionary Intelligence," 317.
16 Remarks on board 11th mo 3 Day 12th 1811 *Traveller*, Remarks 6 Day 4th 1811, Wiggins, 167.
17 For more on colonial authority and oaths of allegiance, see Elizabeth Mancke, "Negotiating an Empire: Britain and Its Overseas Peripheries, c. 1550–1780," in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries on the Americas, 1500–1820*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York: Routledge, 2002); Laura Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Eliga H. Gould, "Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 471–510.
18 Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise to Be a People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 66, 143.
19 Militia Act, *The Philanthropist, Or, Repository for Hints and Suggestions Calculated to Promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man*, vol. 4 (London: Longman, 1814), 90.
20 Suzanne Schwarz, "Reconstructing the Life Histories of Liberated Africans: Sierra Leone in the Early Nineteenth Century," *History in Africa* 39 (2012): 175–207, and Christopher Fyfe, "Four Sierra Leone Recaptives," *Journal of African History* 2, no. 1 (1961): 77–85.
21 Remarks 4 Day 1st mo 1st 1812, Wiggins, 180.
22 Christopher Fyfe, ed., *Anna Maria Falconbridge: Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone during the Years 1791–1792–1793* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 167.

23 John McLaren, *Dewigged, Bothered, and Bewildered: British Colonial Judges on Trial, 1800–1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).
24 Fyfe, *Falconbridge*, 167.
25 McLaren, *Dewigged, Bothered, and Bewildered*.
26 William Allen, *The Life of William Allen, with Selections from His Correspondence* (Philadelphia: H. Longstreth, 1847), Kindle.
27 Allen, *Life of William Allen*.
28 Allen, *Life of William Allen*.
29 Biographer Lamont Thomas describes him as "cantankerous," but Smith appears to be far more conniving than simply irritable. See Thomas's treatment of the conflict between the two men in Thomas, *Rise to Be a People*, 66.
30 "Missionary Intelligence," 317–18.
31 Remarks 1 Day 8th of the 12th Mo 1811, Wiggins, 172.
32 Remarks 2 Day 6th 1811, Wiggins, 182.
33 For more on Kizell's life, see Kevin G. Lowther, *The African American Odyssey of John Kizell: A South Carolina Slave Returns Home to Fight the Slave Trade in His African Homeland* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011).
34 Richard Phillips, "Dystopian Space in Colonial Representations and Interventions: Sierra Leone as 'The White Man's Grave,'" in *Dialectics of Utopia and Dystopia*, special issue, *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 84, no. 3/4 (2002): 195.
35 Remarks 12 mo 6 Day 13th 1811 and Remarks 1st Day 12th mo 1811, Wiggins, 173–74.
36 Remarks 5 Day 19th 1811 12 month, Wiggins, 175.
37 Remarks 7 Day 21 1811, Wiggins, 175–76.
38 Henry Clutterbuck, *On the Proper Administration of Blood-Letting, for the Prevention and Cure of Disease* (London, 1840). Clutterbuck published extensively on the treatment of various diseases in the mid-nineteenth century, but he was adamant on the high level of effectiveness of using leeches.
39 Remarks 6 Day 27th 1811, Wiggins, 177–78.
40 Remarks 4 Day 25 1811, Wiggins, 177.
41 For more on maritime communities and prostitution, see Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
42 Remarks 1st mo 3 Day 14th 1812, Wiggins, 184.
43 Remarks 7 Day 1st mo 18 1812, Wiggins, 185.
44 Remarks 1st mo 20th 1812 2 Day, Wiggins, 186.
45 Remarks 2nd mo 7 Day 1st 1812, Wiggins, 190.
46 The name of the ship's captain is recorded as Tillard in documents and newspapers from the period even though Cuffe refers to him as Tilldell. This appears to be the same man because Tillard served as captain of the vessel in 1811–12.
47 Jacob Oluwatayo Adeuyan, *The Return of the Tidal Flow of the Middle Passage* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2011), 25.
48 Remarks on board 7 Day 2d mo 15th 1812, Wiggins, 197, and Remarks on board 1st Day 2d mo 16 1812, Wiggins, 197.
49 Remarks on board 1st Day 2d mo 16 1812, Wiggins, 197–98.
50 Cuffe refers to the sloop as the *Abrina*, but the vessel's proper name was *Sabrina*. Remarks on board the *Abrina* 3 Day 2d mo 18 1812, Wiggins, 198.
51 Remarks 4 Day 2d mo 19th 1812, Wiggins, 199.

52 Remarks 2 Day 3d mo 9th 1812, Wiggins, 202.
53 Brian Arthur, *How Britain Won the War of 1812: The Royal Navy's Blockade of the United States, 1812–1815* (New York: Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2011), and Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).
54 Wiggins, 207–8.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1 Transactions 4th mo 3 day 21st 1812, in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 209 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).
2 Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
3 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 12 June 1812, Wiggins, 224.
4 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 12 June 1812.
5 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 12 June 1812, Wiggins, 225, and Samuel H. Williamson, "Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790 to present," MeasuringWorth, April 2023, www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/.
6 Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2006), 316–17, and *Encyclopedia of the War of 1812*, 1st ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1997).
7 Transaction 4th mo 7 day 25th 1812 at Rhode Island, and Transactions 4th mo 1st day 26th 1812 at Providence, Wiggins, 210.
8 The Boston Post Road is now the well-traveled and highly built-up Route 1 that still connects the two cities. Eric Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road, the Route that Made America* (New York: Scribner, 2010).
9 Transactions 4 Day 29th of the 4th mo 1812, Wiggins, 211.
10 Transactions 5th mo 6 day 1st 1812, Wiggins, 211.
11 Transactions 5th mo 7th day 2d 1812, and Transactions 5th mo 6 day 1st 1812, Wiggins, 212.
12 Nicholas Dunga, *Galatin: America's Swiss Founding Father* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).
13 Paul Cuffe to Moses Brown, 2 May 1812, Moses Brown Papers, vol. 12, p. 29, no. 3509, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RH, and Transactions 5th mo 6 day 1st 1812, Wiggins, 212.
14 5th month 2d 4th 1812 at Washington, in Transactions 5th mo 6 day 1st 1812, Wiggins, 212.
15 4th month 2d 4th 1812 at Washington, Transactions 5th mo 6 day 1st 1812, in Wiggins, 213.
16 Transactions 5th mo 3 day 1812, Wiggins, 213.
17 For more, see Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 93, and Wiggins, 180–81.
18 Wiggins, 180–81.
19 Transactions 5th mo 3 day 1812, Wiggins, 213.
20 For more, see Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 93, and Wiggins, 180–81.

21 Transactions 5th mo 3 day 5th 1812, Wiggins, 214.
22 For more, see Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 93, and Wiggins, 180–81.
23 Remarks 5th mo 4 day 6th 1812 at Baltimore, Wiggins, 214, and James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
24 New York 5th mo 5th day 14th 1812, Wiggins, 215–16.
25 Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World* (New York: Vintage, 2005).
26 New York Remarks 5th mo 2day ye 18 1812, Wiggins, 217.
27 George Francis Dow, *Everyday Life in Colonial Massachusetts* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1988).
28 New York Remarks 5th mo 2day ye 18 1812, Wiggins, 217.
29 New York Remarks 5th mo 2day ye 18 1812.
30 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, June 1812, Wiggins, 225.
31 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 12 June 1812, Wiggins, 224.
32 Barnes Riznik, "New England Village Sawmills, 1790–1840," Old Sturbridge Village, 1965, archival report available online at http://resources.osv.org/explore_learn/document_viewer.php?Action=View&DocID=1071.
33 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, June 1812, Wiggins, 226.
34 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, June 1812.
35 Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, reprinted in full in Sheldon H. Harris, "An American's Impression of Sierra Leone in 1811," *Journal of Negro History* 47, no. 1 (January 1962): 39.
36 *To the president, senate, and house of representatives of the United States of America*, 15 February 1813, reprinted in the *National Intelligencer* from *Niles Weekly Register*, 22 January 1814, 338–39. Reprinted in full in James Sheldon Harris II, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 183.
37 It is difficult to determine exactly when Cuffe gained possession of this letter, but the letter—as was the case with much of Jefferson's writing on the topic—was widely distributed among supporters of colonization. It is highly likely Cuffe first learned of the letter in 1812, after returning from Africa. The two copies are contained in box 3, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, New Bedford Free Public Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, MA.
38 Jefferson to John Lynch, 21 January 1811, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, box 3.
39 Paul Cuffe to Swift and Davis, 13 April 1813, and Paul Cuffe to John R. Hite, 13 April 1813, Wiggins, 243.
40 Paul Cuffe to James Wise Clark, 28 September 1813, ms. 10, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1811–1828, New Bedford Whaling Museum Research Library, New Bedford, MA.
41 Paul Cuffe to Elisha Tyson, 25 April 1813, Wiggins, 246.
42 Paul Cuffe to Hannah Little, 18 February 1813, Paul Cuffe Letterbook, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA.
43 Paul Cuffe to Hannah Little, 18 February 1813.
44 African American communities were divided on the issue of colonization. Most saw it as a racist idea that blocked the path to full citizenship in the United States. For more on Blacks' views of colonization, see Ousmane K. Power-Greene, *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).
45 See Richard Newman, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky, eds., *Pamphlets of Protest:*

An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790–1860 (New York: Routledge, 2001), 66–72.

46 William Rotch Jr. to Laban Wheaton, 10 December 1813, ms. 10, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1811–1828.
47 "Memorial of Paul Cuffe," *Annals of Congress*, 13th Cong., 2nd Sess., 861–62 (1814).
48 "Memorial of Paul Cuffe," 861–62.
49 Charles Collins to Paul Cuffe, 11 August 1815, Wiggins, 373.
50 "Memorial of Paul Cuffe," 861.
51 "Memorial of Paul Cuffe," 861–62.
52 *Niles Weekly Register, from March to December 1814*, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Franklin Press, 1814), 78.
53 *Niles Weekly Register*, 78.
54 *Niles Weekly Register*, 78.
55 *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 13th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1881–82.

CHAPTER NINE

1 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 25 July 1817, Paul Cuffe Papers, New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA.
2 Andrew Jackson called on enslaved Blacks in Louisiana to join his army shortly before his victory at the Battle of New Orleans. See James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 185.
3 William Rotch Jr. to Paul Cuffe, 15 April 1815, in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from Within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996, 351 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).
4 Paul Cuffe to Brian and Stapler, 21 June 1815, Wiggins, 354.
5 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, Wiggins, 376.
6 Paul Cuffe to Alice Cuffe, 6 September 1817, Wiggins, 376.
7 Census records suggest more accurately that 7, 470 free Blacks lived in the City by 1810, making the 1815 population close to the parameters Cuffe estimated. See Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770–1810*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 153.
8 Charles Collins to Paul Cuffe, 11 August 1815, Wiggins, 373–74.
9 Paul Cuffe to Brian and Stapler, 21 June 1815, Wiggins, 353.
10 Document reprinted in Harry A. Reed, "Financing an Early Back-to-Africa Scheme," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3rd ser., 90 (1978): 104, 105.
11 William Rotch Jr. to Paul Cuffe, 17 November 1815, Wiggins, 394.
12 Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600–2000* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 83.
13 William Rotch Jr. to Paul Cuffe, 17 November 1815, Wiggins, 394.
14 William Allen to Paul Cuffe, 6 May 1815, Wiggins, 354.
15 For example, Zachary Macaulay was no longer allowed to work with Cuffe on behalf of the African Institution or the new society. See William Allen to Paul Cuffe, 6 May 1815.

16 Edward Rowe Snow, *Storms and Shipwrecks of New England* (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 2005), 67–69.
17 Paul Cuffe to James Brian and Family, 29 October 1815, Wiggins, 384.
18 Paul Cuffe to Alexander Howard, 22 October 1815, Wiggins, 381.
19 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 22 October 1815, Wiggins, 382.
20 Paul Cuffe to James Brian and Family, 29 October 1815.
21 Thomas Wainer to Paul Cuffe, 28 October 1817, in Wiggins, 387.
22 Westport Monthly Meeting, Men's Minutes, 3-17-1797 to 3-17-18, Special Collections Section of the W. E. B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA., compiled by David C. Col, 199.
23 Paul Cuffe to James Brian, 22 November 1815, Wiggins, 390, 391.
24 James Taylor—Dr. to Paul Cuffe, 20 November 1815, Wiggins, 394–95.
25 James Taylor—Dr. to Paul Cuffe, 20 November 1815, 395.
26 Paul Cuffe mentions two different voyage lengths in his letters home, with one being fifty-six days and the other fifty-eight days. For the sake of consistency, I will consider his initial arrival to be February 3, with final landing being February 4.
27 Paul Cuffe to William Rotch Jr., February 1816, Wiggins, 403.
28 A hogshead was a wooden barrel used for storing and aging tobacco, often measuring sixty to sixty-five gallons in capacity. Flour glass were glass containers used for food storage.
29 Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, "Letter Book of Paul Cuffe," Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, box 1, New Bedford Free Public Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.
30 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Wiggins, 409.
31 Merrill Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson Writings* (New York: Literary Classics of the US, 1984), 290.
32 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Wiggins, 409.
33 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816.
34 For more on Cuffe's time in Sierra Leone from 3 February to 4 April 1816, see Wiggins, 399–412, and Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of West Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 90–98.
35 D. D. Daly, "Brigadier-General Sir Charles MacCarthy Kt., 1764–1824," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 10 (1930): 52–53.
36 Daly, "Brigadier-General Sir Charles MacCarthy," 72.
37 Daly, "Brigadier-General Sir Charles MacCarthy," 68n.
38 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Wiggins, 408–9.
39 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Wiggins, 410–11.
40 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 29 May 1816, Wiggins, 413.
41 C. Magbaily Fyle, *Historical Dictionary of Sierra Leone* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2006), xviii.
42 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Wiggins, 411.
43 Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, in Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Wiggins, 412.
44 Paul Cuffe to Peter Williams junior, 14 June 1816, Wiggins, 414.

CHAPTER TEN

1 Jeffrey A. Fortin, "Little Short of National Murder" (PhD diss., University of New Hampshire, 2007).

2 Cuffe to Samuel J. Mills, 6 August 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, microfilm, roll 2, New Bedford Free Public Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, MA.

3 Cuffe to Samuel C. Aiken, 7 August 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers.

4 Cuffe to Samuel C. Aiken, 7 August 1816.

5 Fortin, "Little Short of National Murder."

6 Sheldon Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 190.

7 Prince Sanders, Esq., *Haytian Papers: A Collection of the Very Interesting Proclamations, and Other Official Documents; Together with Some Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Kingdom of Hayti* (1816; repr., Westport, CT.: Negro Universities Press, 1969), i. I am not aware of any book-length studies on Prince Saunders. He is the subject of one journal article, and he periodically appears in larger studies of African American history and literature (especially in a biographical paragraph or two before a reprint of *Haytian Papers* excerpts). See Arthur O. White, "Prince Saunders: An Instance of Social Mobility among Antebellum New England Blacks," *Journal of Negro History* 60, no. 4 (October 1975): 525–36, and James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Saunders's name is spelled with or without the letter "u." In print, the letter "u" is often dropped, but on his signed letters, it is included. I have taken the liberty to use the spelling he used with his own pen. Also, for more on antebellum Blacks in New England, see Adelaide M. Cromwell, *The Other Brahmins: Boston's Black Upper Class, 1750–1950* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994).

8 See White, "Prince Saunders," 527.

9 Saunders to Cuffe, 21 March 1815, in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 336 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).

10 Charles Robert Leslie, an "English socialite," reportedly uttered these words. See Wiggins, 526.

11 Fears about the impact of Haitian independence on American Blacks reverberated throughout the political elite, however, making concerns over the proximity of Haiti too great to ignore and causing white colonizationists to look across the Atlantic for more remote regions to plant a settlement. Saunders wanted to ensure that all peoples of the Atlantic world were cognizant of this new Black kingdom in the heart of the European colonial world, but he also wanted all persons of African descent to know the opportunities Haiti extended to them. Scholars have examined the relationship between the United States and Haiti in several contexts, with considerations of race, slavery, and diplomatic exchange dominating most of the texts. See Chris Dixon, *African Americans and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2000).

12 For more about Haiti after its revolution, see Mimi Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000).

13 Saunders's *Haytian Papers* kept Haiti at the forefront of African American emigrationist thought at a time whites tried to convince them to go to Africa. He continued to travel the Atlantic as a personal courier for Christophe and as a civil ambassador for Haiti. In 1818, Saunders spoke at the meeting of the Pennsylvania Augustine Society, an organization formed by James Forten to educate Blacks in Philadelphia. On the surface, the speech simply advocated his belief in the "blessings of instruction" to Blacks. It also served to advance his support for Haiti by revealing the willingness of Haiti to accept any free Black from the United States with enough education and skilled labor to help build a middle class. Prince Saunders, *An Address; Delivered at Bethel Church, Philadelphia; on the 30th of September, 1818. Before the Pennsylvania Augustine Society, for the Education of People of Colour* (Philadelphia: J. Rakestraw, 1818), 1. Thomas Clarkson informed King Henry that he had heard from a friend that Saunders worked diligently "to excite a more lively concern for the promotion of the best interests, the improvements, the definite independence, and happiness of the Haytian People" by imploring free African Americans to emigrate. Clarkson to Henry, 20 February 1819, in *Christophe Henry and Thomas Clarkson: A Correspondence*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs and Clifford H. Prator (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 125.

14 Charles Edwards Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts* (Boston: G. H. Dean, 1911), 12–13.

15 *The Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Passed from the Year 1780 to the end of 1800* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1801), 491–93. Even in the mid-nineteenth century, Massachusetts officials were still trying to ascertain the size of Native American populations. See John Milton Earle, *Report to the Governor and Council, concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth, Under the Act of April 6, 1859* (Massachusetts, United States: W. White, printer to the state, 1861).

16 Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, 14.

17 For more on go-betweens, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).

18 Joel Rogers to Paul Cuffe, 3 November 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 2, frame 13.

19 I am grateful for the Sarah M. Loomis Papers, Paul Cuffe Biography manuscript, box 13, New Bedford Whaling Museum Archives, New Bedford, MA, which clarified this moment in Cuffe's life.

20 Paul Cuffe to Ebenezer Shiff, 6 October 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 2, frames 11–13.

21 Ebenezer Shiff to Paul Cuffe, 24 October 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 2, frames 11–13.

22 Paul Cuffe to Joel Rogers, 3 November 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 1, frame 127.

23 Paul Cuffe to Joel Rogers, 3 November 1816.

24 William K. Klingaman and Nicholas P. Klingaman, *The Year without Summer: 1816 and the Volcano That Darkened the World and Changed History* (New York: St. Martin's, 2014), 3.

25 The United States Geological Service identifies the Pacific Rim as responsible for 90 percent of the world's earthquakes and most of the volcanic activity. For more on the volcano and its impact, see Klingaman and Klingaman, *Year without Summer*,

and Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Tambora: The Eruption That Changed the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

26 Wood, *Tambora*, 199–209.

27 Gardner Wainer to Paul Cuffe, 4 December 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 1, frames 444–45.

28 Paul Cuffe to Cousin Michael Wainer, 6 November 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 1, frame 127.

29 See Sarah M. Loomis Papers, Paul Cuffe Biography manuscript, box 13.

30 Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 26 December 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, microfilm, reel 1, frame 135.

31 Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 26 December 1816.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1 Paul Cuffe often noted the holiday in his letters even if he did not wish to partake in the revelry enjoyed by some of his crew or acquaintances. For more on the celebration of Christmas in New England, see Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Social and Cultural History of Our Most Cherished Holiday* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 3–48.

2 Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 26 December 1816, in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 485–86 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).

3 Paul Cuffe to Thomas Wainer, 26 December 1816.

4 Cuffe to William Gibbon, 16 January 1817. Numerous other letters written by Cuffe and his associates in late 1816 and early 1817 discussed removing newly manumitted slaves to Africa and remote parts of America because it seemed unlikely to Cuffe that all free slaves could be transported across the Atlantic. See Sheldon H. Harris, "Letters," in his *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 220–62.

5 For example, James Forten informed Cuffe of his valued reputation among Philadelphia's merchants in a letter he wrote in early 1817. James Forten to Paul Cuffe, 25 January 1817, Wiggins, 502.

6 For more on crime and good fellows in urban America, see Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

7 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 23 January 1817, Wiggins, 499.

8 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 23 January 1817, Wiggins, 500.

9 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 23 January 1817.

10 Paul Cuffe to Joseph Jessop, 26 January 1817, Wiggins, 500.

11 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 23 January 1817, Wiggins, 500.

12 Paul Cuffe to Joseph Jessop, 26 January 1817, Wiggins, 501.

13 Paul Cuffe to Joseph Jessop, 26 January 1817.

14 Paul Cuffe to Samuel R. Fisher, 18 February 1817, Wiggins, 504.

15 Paul Cuffe to Samuel R. Fisher, 18 February 1817.

16 Gardner Spring, *Memoirs of Samuel J. Mills* (New York: New York Evangelical Missionary Society, 1820), 123.

17 Paul Cuffe to Samuel J. Mills, 6 January 1817, Wiggins, 491.
18 Cuffe to Samuel J. Mills, 6 August 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817, microfilm, roll 2, New Bedford Free Public Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.
19 Paul Cuffe to Robert Finley, 8 January 1817, Wiggins, 492.
20 Paul Cuffe to Robert Finley, 8 January 1817, 493.
21 James Forten to Paul Cuffe, 25 January 1817, and Paul Cuffe to Robert Finley, 8 January 1817, Wiggins, 502.
22 James Forten to Paul Cuffe, 25 January 1817, and Paul Cuffe to Robert Finley, 8 January 1817.
23 P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 188.
24 I would like to thank Paul Cyr of the New Bedford Free Public Library Special Collections for his invaluable assistance in locating key documents and for sharing his vast knowledge of the abolitionist community in early nineteenth-century New Bedford.
25 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 1 March 1817, "Letter Book of Paul Cuffe," box 1, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759–1817. A moderate percentage of the letters contained in the Paul Cuffe Papers have been reprinted in various collections, the most comprehensive being Wiggins, *Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters*. For more on Forten, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
26 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 1 March 1817, Wiggins, 509.
27 Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 1 March 1817.
28 As reprinted in Isaac Van Arsdale Brown, *Biography of Robert Finley* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1819), 88, 102. Also reprinted in William Lloyd Garrison, introduction to *Thoughts on African Colonization*, ed. William Loren Katz (New York: Arno, 1968), vii.
29 Allen quoted in Brown, *Biography of Robert Finley*, 88.
30 Brown, 88.
31 Paul Cuffe to John James, 28 February 1817, Wiggins, 507.
32 Daniel Coker, *Journal of Daniel Coker: A Descendant of Africa, from the Time of Leaving New York, in the Ship Elizabeth, Capt. Sebor, on a Voyage for Sherbro, in Africa in Company with Three Agents, and about Ninety Persons of Colour* (Switzerland: Kraus Reprint, 1970), 6.
33 In his eulogy for Paul Cuffe in 1817, Peter Williams referred to Cuffe's founding of "the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone" on his initial voyage to the colony as the first organization whose purpose was to promote the settling of free Blacks in Africa. See "Third Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing Free People of Colour of the United States," in *The Annual Reports of the American Society for the Colonizing of Free People of Colour of the United States, vol. 10, 1818–1827* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1979), 115–16.
34 For more on their relationship, see Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 59–65.
35 David Cuffe to Freelove Cuffe, 8 July 1817, Wiggins, 510.
36 Paul Cuffe to Stephen Gould, 16 August 1817, Wiggins, 510.
37 John Cuffe to Sister Freelove Cuffe, 10 September 1817, Wiggins, 512.

38 *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "yeoman," accessed 7 June 2014, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/231598?redirectedFrom=yeoman.

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1 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 24 October 1817, as reprinted from the *New York Spectator*, October 1817.
2 Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2002), 180–83.
3 John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).
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6 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 7 November 1817.
7 For more, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), and Richard Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).
8 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 24 October 1817.
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11 Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), xiii.
12 *New-Bedford Mercury*, 24 October 1817.
13 John Cuffe to Freelove, 10 September 1817, in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808–1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996), 511 (hereafter cited as Wiggins).
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15 David Cuffe to Freelove, 7 August 1817, Wiggins, 510.
16 John Cuffe to Freelove, 10 September 1817.
17 Cuffe quoted in John Cuffe to Freelove, 10 September 1817, 512.
18 W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 4.
19 "Extracts of a Biographical Sketch of Paul Cuffe."
20 John Cuffe to Freelove, 10 September 1817, Wiggins, 512.

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Paul Cuffe is best understood as a member of the Black founding fathers in the United States. Born in 1759 on Cuttyhunk Island in Massachusetts, Cuffe emerged from anonymity to become the most celebrated African American sea captain during the Age of Sail. Cuffe was a well-known abolitionist, veteran, and community activist, and celebrity followed him as he built a shipping empire. Cuffe and his Black crews shook the foundations of systemic racism by sailing into ports where slavery was legal. He established the first racially integrated school in the United States in Westport, Massachusetts, and is considered the leader of America's first back-to-Africa movement.

Jeffrey A. Fortin describes Cuffe's experiences in vivid detail and places them within the broader history of the Early Republic, revealing the central role of African Americans in the founding of the United States. Fortin situates Cuffe within a fascinating Atlantic world where race and identity were fluid, and Africans and African Americans sought to build and govern a free Black nation in West Africa.

"Cuffe's influence on the history of the colonization movement and African American, New England, and US history during the earliest days of the republic has been neglected over the past half-century. Fortin's biography is a significant achievement because it deeply considers this influence."

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JEFFREY A. FORTIN is associate professor of history at Emmanuel College. He is co-editor with Mark Meuwese of *Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World*.

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