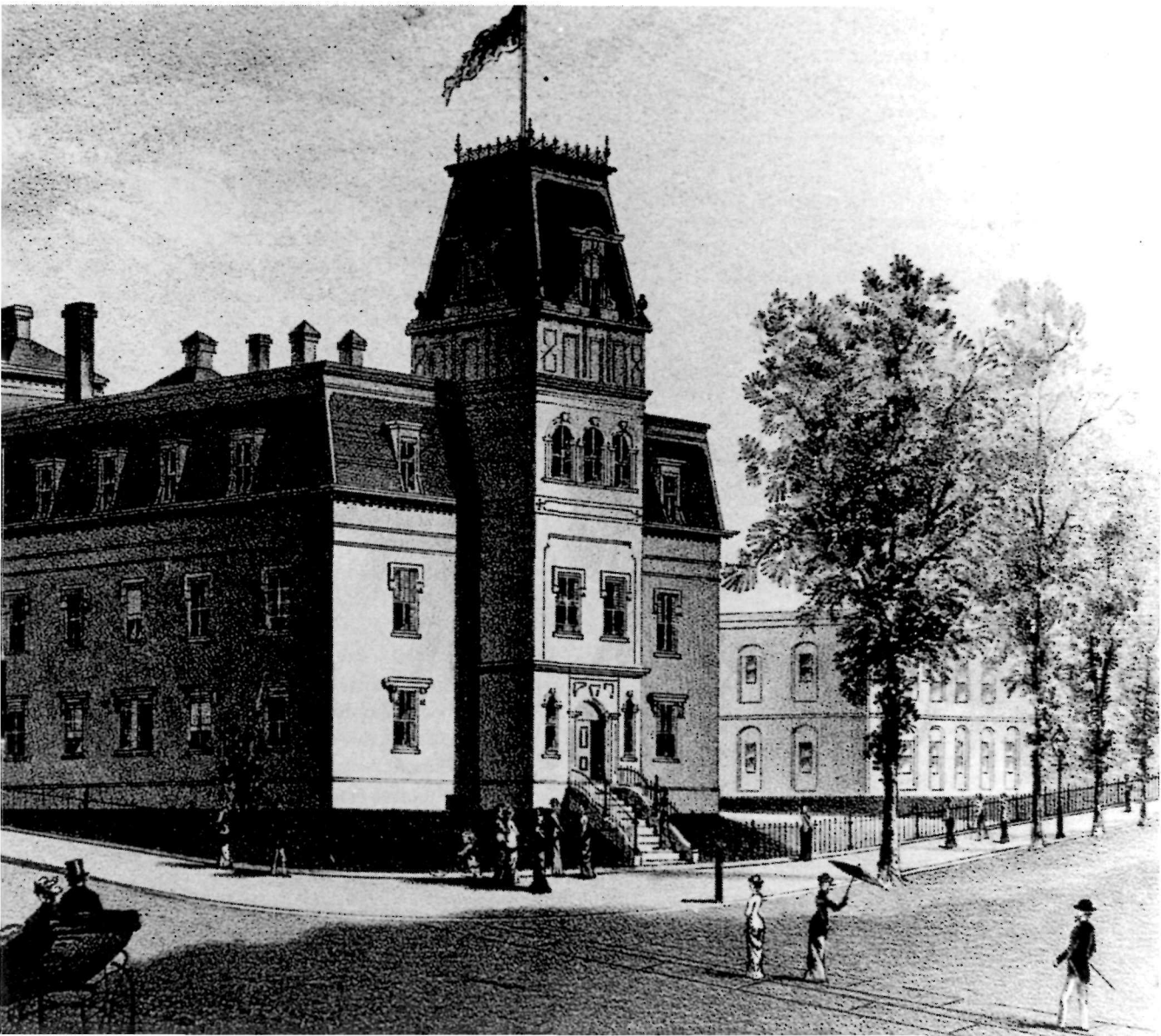


National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Salem Maritime National Historic Site
Salem, Massachusetts



African American Heritage Sites in Salem



African American History in Salem

Slavery and Salem

African Americans have played an important role in the city of Salem since its settlement in 1626. As early as 1638, the first enslaved Africans were brought into the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the Salem-owned vessel *Desire*. Slavery and the slave trade remained a fact of life in Massachusetts, and in Salem in particular, long into the eighteenth century, even after the official abolition of slavery in Massachusetts in 1783. However, Salem merchants and captains were familiar with the fierce resistance that could be shown by slaves. In 1794, a Salem slave ship, the *Felicity*, was bound for South America after illegally picking up captive Africans at Cape Mount, just above the Ivory Coast. The slaves killed Captain William Fairfield, wounded several crew members, and for a while had control of the *Felicity*. Their bid for freedom, however, was unsuccessful. The surviving crew members were able to regain control of the ship and eventually sold the Africans.

The Free African American Community

Along with slaves working in homes and businesses, Salem also had a community of free African Americans in the eighteenth century. This population grew after 1783 as freed slaves moved to the city looking for work, and in 1790, the number of blacks reached at least 155 out of a total population of 7,921. Fearing that Salem would have to care for unemployed families, the city forced almost 100 African Americans and their families to leave the city limits in December 1790. It was not until better weather in May that 300 poor whites and their families were forced to leave Salem. The poor freemen continued to be a target for removal from the city throughout the 1790s.

Despite the efforts to remove them, many freedmen remained in Salem, and by the early nineteenth century, the city was home to an active and successful African American community. Some owned their own businesses, others went to sea, and many were employed as laborers in local trades and industries. African Americans from Salem distinguished themselves in business, the abolitionist movement, and in war.

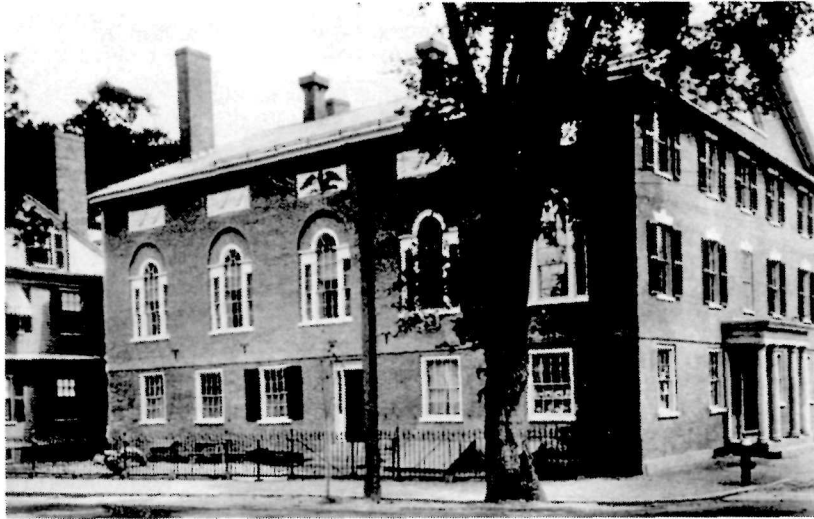
Cultural Expressions

Beginning in the early eighteenth century, the slaves in Salem were given a holiday around Election Day. They gathered in the fields, either north or south of the city, to eat, drink, dance, sing, and meet relatives from surrounding communities. This tradition was carried on in the 1920s, when black churches from the greater Boston area began holding an annual picnic at Salem Willows Park. Today, African Americans with roots in the Boston area still come from all over the United States to Salem Willows Park for an annual picnic.

Schools and Churches

In the eighteenth century, a few black families who could afford the fees sent their children to the schools in Salem. In 1807, however, an elementary school for African Americans was organized, and in 1834 an elementary and high school was started by the city for black students. The schools remained segregated until 1843, when Salem integrated its classrooms.

Though African Americans could attend some of the earliest churches in town, racial minorities were often expected to sit in segregated sections. In 1828, a church was started by and for the members of Salem's minority community. The building was originally located in the Mill Pond area, a large African American neighborhood. In the nineteenth century, the Mill Pond was filled in, and today Canal Street runs along its path.



Left: photograph of Hamilton Hall, corner of Chestnut and Cambridge Streets.

Below: John Remond's menu for the "Dinner on the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the First Settlement of Salem."

Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum

1

Hamilton Hall 9 Chestnut Street

Hamilton Hall was designed by the famous Salem architect Samuel McIntire and built in 1805. For almost two centuries, the hall has been the site of assemblies, dinners, dances, lectures, and weddings.

John Remond and Hamilton Hall

In the early nineteenth century, Hamilton Hall was the center of the catering business of John Remond (1785-1874). An immigrant from the Caribbean island of Curacao, Remond became a prosperous businessman in Salem. He began his career as a hairdresser, but with his wife's help, he became a caterer. He handled some of the most important functions in town, including the dinner celebrating Salem's two hundredth anniversary in 1826 and a dinner for President Andrew Jackson in 1833.

Remond also retailed wines and specialty foods, as well as catering, and his business records show the degree of his success from the 1820s through the 1840s. Many of Remond's children

also became business owners, following their parents into hairdressing and catering. Two of his children, Charles Lenox Remond and Sarah Parker Remond, were also active abolitionists in the early and mid-nineteenth century.

| DINNER ON THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF SALEM. | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| BILL OF FARE. | |
| FIRST COURSE. | SECOND COURSE. |
| GREEN TURTLE SOUP, | ROAST PIGS, |
| GREEN TURTLE PIE, | ROAST TURKEYS, |
| BOWLED LEGS BUTTOS, | ROAST BREMEN GESE, |
| BOILED HAMS, | ROAST MONGREL GESE, |
| BOILED TONGUES, | ROAST BEEF, |
| BEEF A-LA-MODE, | ROAST HUCKS, |
| BEEF A-LA-BOUCHE, | ROAST CHICKENS, |
| BEEF BOULLI, | ROAST WOODCOCKS, |
| VEAL TRICANDEAU, | ROAST PLOVERS, |
| PIGEONS TRANSMOGRIFIED, | ROAST TEALS, |
| SWEET BREAD, | ROAST GUALS, |
| CHICKEN PIE, | ROAST PARTRIDGES, |
| OYSTER PIE, | ROAST DOEBIRDS, |
| HALIBUT A-LA-MODE, | |
| BAKED CODFISH, | |
| PASTRY. | DESSERT. |
| FUDDINGS, | TURK'S CAPS, |
| PIES, | APPLES, |
| CUSTARDS, | ORANGES, |
| JELLIES, | GRAPES, |
| CALF'S-FOOT JELLY, | WATER-MELONS, |
| BLANC-MANGE, | MUSK-MELONS, |
| PRESERVES. | MINORCA MELONS, |
| PRESERVED PEACHES, | PEARS, |
| PRESERVED APPLES, | PEACHES, |
| PRESERVED PEARS, | GREEN GAGES, |
| PRESERVED QUINCES, | ELBERTS, |
| | ALMONDS, |
| FRONT & BROWN, PRINTERS. | JOHN REMOND, Hamilton Hall. |

2

Harmony Grove Cemetery 30 Grove Street

Harmony Grove Cemetery was consecrated in 1840 and is a beautiful example of the “rural garden” cemetery, with landscaped trees and winding paths.

The Remond Family Graves

This cemetery holds the burial plots of many members of the Remond family, including John Remond, his wife Nancy, and several of their children. Although the plots of John, who died in 1874, and Nancy are not marked, their son Charles Lenox Remond shares a common



marker with many of his family.

Charles Lenox Remond

Charles Lenox Remond (1810-1873) was one of the first African Americans to be paid to lecture on the abolitionist circuit. He spoke frequently to audiences at home in Salem, but he also had an international reputation. The American Anti-slavery Society chose him as its representative to a world convention in London, and after the convention he continued to travel and lecture in England and Ireland.

Remond was a close friend of the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and remained so throughout his career as an activist. In addition to his own work, Remond helped encourage the abolitionist efforts of women, such as his sister, Sarah Parker Remond, and Charlotte Forten, who resided with his family for several years. Unlike many abolitionists, Remond favored the participation of women in the abolitionist movement.

Initially, Remond opposed the use of violence to end slavery. Once the Civil War began, however, he became a recruiting officer for the Massachusetts 54th Regiment of African American volunteers. Near the end of his life, he served as a clerk in the Boston Custom House.

Left: Photograph of Charles Lenox Remond

Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library

3

Salem Lyceum 43 Church Street

The Salem Lyceum opened in 1831, and its rows of banked seats quickly filled with residents of Salem eager to watch demonstrations, lectures, and concerts. Nationally known artists, politicians, philosophers, and scientists, including Daniel Webster, Alexander Graham Bell, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, came to speak in the building.

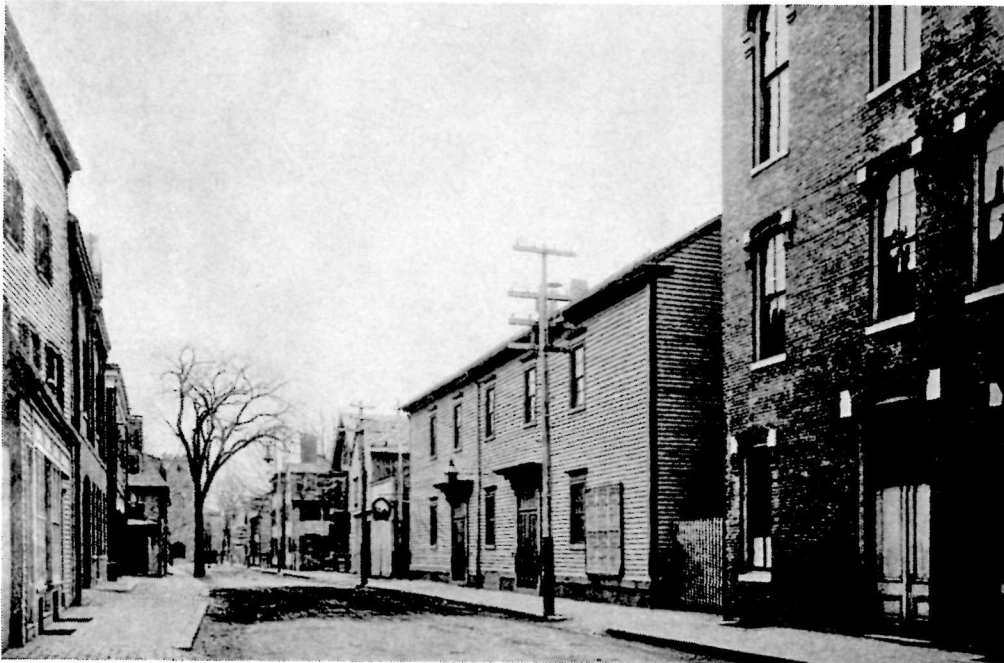
Many activists in the abolitionist movement came to the Lyceum as well, such as William Lloyd Garrison. In December 1865, Frederick Douglass lectured in the hall about the assassination of President Lincoln.

The Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society

The hall was also used for meetings and lectures by the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, whose members included the noted African American abolitionists Charlotte Forten and Sarah Parker Remond. Charles Lenox Remond gave the Society's anniversary address in 1844 and was frequently asked to speak as part of the Society's ongoing lecture series.

Below: Photograph of Church Street, c. 1890. The Salem Lyceum is the two story building on the right side of the street.

Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum



Charlotte Forten: Teacher and Abolitionist

Charlotte Forten was the daughter of James Forten, a wealthy sailmaker and ardent abolitionist from Philadelphia. In 1854, James Forten sent his daughter to stay with Charles Lenox Remond's family in Salem in order to attend its integrated schools. While she was living in Salem, Charlotte began to keep a journal of her thoughts and activities. These writings are a valuable record of the experiences of an African American woman in the nineteenth century. Like her father, she was also an active abolitionist and became a member of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society.

A Student at the Salem Normal School

Upon her graduation from the Salem public school system, Charlotte entered the Salem Normal School (see cover) in 1856. This institution, now part of Salem State College, educated

teachers, and Charlotte was the first African American student in the school. After her graduation, she taught for several years in the Salem School District, while continuing to take advanced classes at the Normal School.

A Teacher in the Civil War

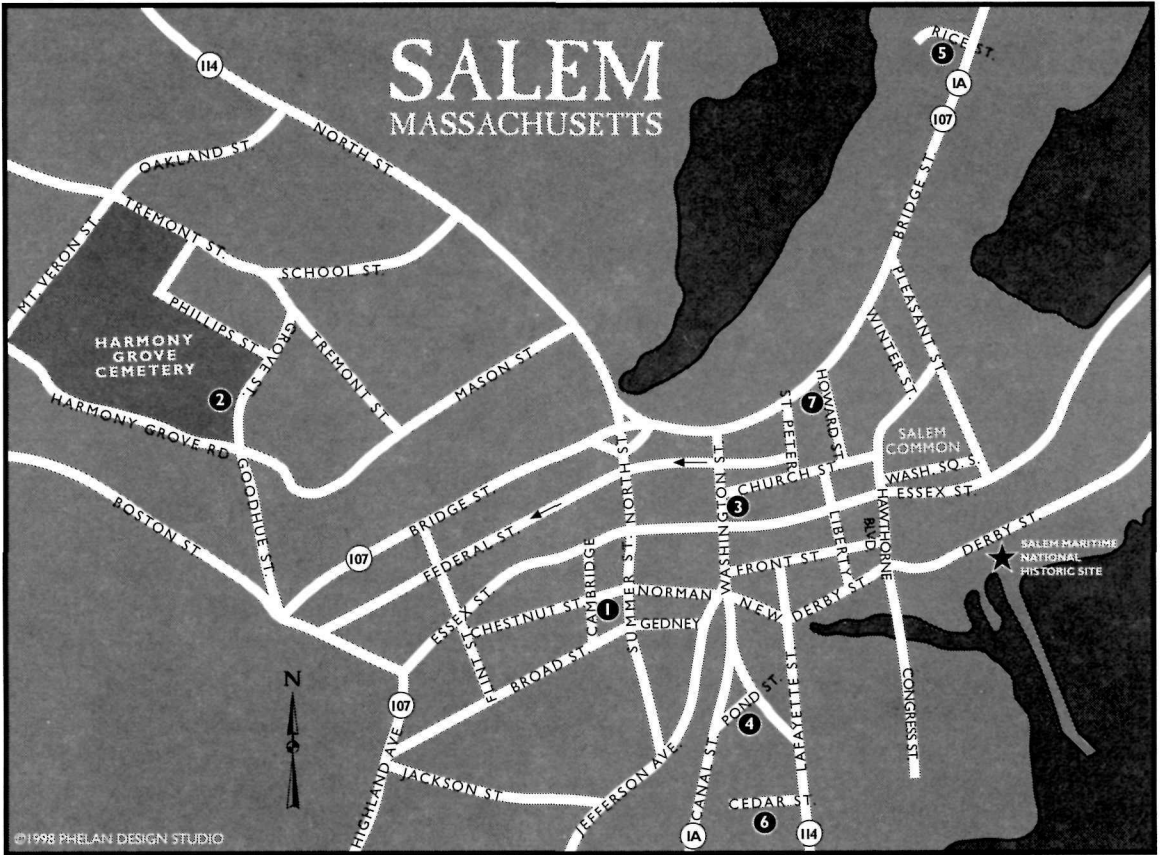
During the Civil War, Charlotte traveled to Port Royal, South Carolina, to help educate the recently freed slaves. From her vantage point at Port Royal, she witnessed the bloody assault on Fort Wagner by the Massachusetts 54th Regiment. In her diary, she noted with great sadness the death of its commander, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw.

Charlotte Forten returned to teaching after the war and also enjoyed a successful career as an author of poems and essays.

Right: Photograph of Charlotte Forten, c.1870.

Courtesy of the Moorland Springarn Research Center, Howard University.





Salem African American Heritage Sites

1. Hamilton Hall
2. Harmony Grove Cemetery
3. Salem Lyceum
4. Pond Street
5. Rice Street
6. Cedar Street
7. Howard Street Cemetery

Sarah Parker Remond: Abolitionist

An Abolitionist in Action

In 1853, Sarah Parker Remond bought tickets for herself, her sister Caroline, and fellow abolitionist William Cooper Nell for seats in the dress circle of the Howard Athenaeum in Boston. The management of the Athenaeum, however, would not allow them to sit in the dress circle. The three refused to sit in the segregated section of the theater or let the Athenaeum reimburse Sarah for the tickets. Finally, a manager and a police officer removed Sarah from the theater with such force that she fell down a flight of stairs. Sarah took her case to court and eventually received a small punitive sum and seats in the dress circle.

International Advocate for Freedom

In standing up for her rights as a paying customer of the Howard Athenaeum, Sarah Remond was following the family tradition of advocacy for African Americans. Like her brother, Charles Lenox Remond, Sarah traveled within the U.S. and throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland, speaking in support of abolitionism. When the Civil War broke out, she decided to stay in England in order to lobby the British Parliament to refuse assistance to the Confederacy. After the end of the war, Sarah Remond became a physician in Florence, Italy.



Above: Photograph of Sarah Parker Remond, c. 1865

Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum

4

Pond Street

African American Sailors

In the 1830s and 40s, Pond Street was home to an ethnically diverse population and included many of Salem's sailors. Many African Americans were drawn to seafaring occupations because of the opportunity to earn equal pay with white crew members. Between 1842 and 1846, approximately 46% of African American males with an occupation listed in the Salem City Directories were sailors. Crew lists that have survived from Salem's international trading fleet reveal the socially and ethnically diverse nature of the crewmen who sailed her vessels.

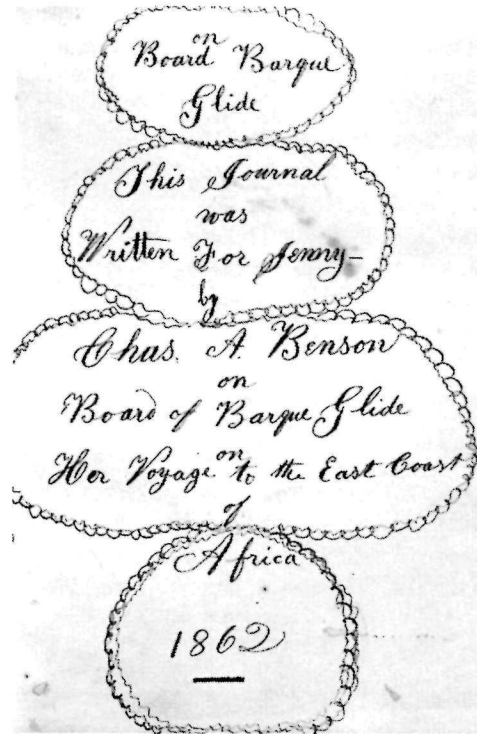
5

Rice Street

Charles A. Benson, Sailor

One particularly noteworthy member of Salem's African American maritime community was Charles Benson, who lived on both Pond and Rice Streets. He sailed for over twenty years, and because of his skill he earned more than the able bodied seamen in his crew. During those twenty years, he kept a series of journals to document his life and experiences at sea. On Christmas Day, 1878, Benson recorded that he was the first crew member to see a waterspout heading for the ship; his watchful eye saved the vessel and her men.

Benson's diaries show not only his own conflicting feelings about life at sea, but also the dangers and hardships that were faced by all sailors, regardless of race.



Above: Title Page of Charles Benson's journal "on Board of Barque Glide on Her Voyage to the East Coast of Africa 1862"

Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum

6

Cedar Street

Like Pond Street, Cedar Street was home to several African American families. During the Civil War, several residents of the street served in the Union Army.

Salem Residents in the Civil War

When the Massachusetts 54th Regiment of African American volunteers was formed, so many men volunteered that a second regiment (the 55th) was immediately created. Many men from Salem served in the 54th and 55th Regiments, including one resident of Cedar Street, Thomas C. Wilson, a member of the 55th who died of disease during the war.

Captain Luis Emilio

Another Salem resident, Luis Emilio, was a first Lieutenant who rose to become Captain of Company E of the Massachusetts 54th. Emilio was the son of a Spanish immigrant and thus was able to fulfill the Army's requirements that

the officers of the 54th be white. After the assault on Fort Wagner in South Carolina, Emilio was the highest-ranking officer of the 54th to survive without injury, and as a result, he served briefly as its acting commander.

After the war, he resided on Essex Street. Though he spent much of his later life in California and New York City, upon his death he was brought home for burial in Salem. Emilio and two other veterans from the 54th, Francis Fletcher and Charles Chipman, are buried in the Harmony Grove Cemetery.

Below: "Attack on Fort Wagner" Engraving by Johnson, Fry & Co., 1864, from a painting by Thomas Nast

Courtesy U. S. Military History Institute





7

Howard Street Cemetery Howard Street

When the Howard Street Cemetery was established in 1801, a portion was dedicated to Salem's African American population. Many prominent members of the African American community are buried in the cemetery.

Prince Farmer, Oyster Dealer

One member of the Salem African American community buried in the Howard Street Cemetery was Prince Farmer (1787-1852). A cook on the Salem vessel *George*, Farmer opened his own business as an oyster dealer after he left the sea. By 1850, Farmer owned a sizable business on Derby Street and was an active member of the African American community in Salem.

The Howard Street Church

The Howard Street Church was originally located behind the cemetery. Several abolitionist events happened in the church, including an anniversary meeting of the Salem Female Antislavery Society and a lecture by the famous abolitionists, the Grimke sisters. The church property was sold in 1867 and torn down to make way for a school.

Above: Photograph of Howard Street, c. 1880, with the Howard Street Cemetery on the left.

Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum



Salem Maritime National Historic Site
174 Derby Street
Salem, MA 01970

<http://www.nps.gov/sama>

The National Park Service thanks the Salem City Clerk's office, the staff of the Phillips Library of the Peabody Essex Museum, the Salem Public Library, Eleanor Broadhead, and Mike Sokolov for their cooperation and assistance in the production of this booklet.

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