

Local historian explains the origin and history of New Bedford's "City Seal"

In a video produced by New Bedford Cable Network, local historian, Arthur Motta explains the origin of New Bedford's "City Seal". The first seal originated in 1847 and was a crudely drawn depiction of Clarks Point lighthouse. The seal read "I am diffusing light" which was not only a reference to the lighthouse itself, but to the city of New Bedford as the whaling city which lit the world.

This 5 minute video is full of interesting historical facts and is well worth the watch!

Fascinating history of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, repaired, destroyed, rebuilt over and again

The New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge may be annoying to residents who get stuck waiting for the bridge to open and close, but it sure beats what residents had to do prior!

Spanning the Acushnet River to connect the Town of Fairhaven with the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts, the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge dates back to the late 19th century. Before the bridge was constructed, a ferry operated between the two

shores to transport residents to the other side.

Annoyed with this process, William Rotch decided to incorporate the “proprietors of the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge” in 1796. Four years and \$30,000 dollars later the bridge was built and open to the public!

From the beginning, a toll was required to cross the bridge. 6 cents for each horse, hand cart, wheelbarrow, dozen sheep, swine or cattle. And if you dared to get caught sneaking by without payment you would be hit with a heavy fine of \$2 for every foot passenger and \$4 for every passenger of horseback or with a cart.

Throughout the 1800’s several storms did severe damage to the bridge but residents persevered and it was always repaired back into operation. During the great gale of 1815, tides rose 11 feet higher than ever seen which submerged the bridge and caused it to close down for 4 years. Several lives were lost during the storm and the shipping industry suffered immensely.

In 1902 the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge underwent a \$1.2 million dollar renovation to accommodate a new and popular form of transportation, the automobile.

Think waiting in traffic for the bridge to open is a burden today? For most of the 1900’s the bridge would close for 2 hours in the morning, 2 hours at noon, and 2 hours during evening rush hour to accommodate the boats needing to pass through.

Next time you’re stuck waiting in traffic on the Fairhaven bridge, roll down your windows and turn on some music. It sure beats paying 6 cents to push a hand cart across the Acushnet river!

Watch some beautiful aerial video paired with a history lesson on the bridge below!

New Bedford's Fort Taber Flag To Honor WWII Veteran SGT Harold H. J. Clasky

During the month of November, the 50th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of SGT Harold H. J. Clasky, the namesake of Clasky Common Park in New Bedford, MA.

Mr. Clasky was born in Russia on March 2, 1896, and according to the library archives at UMASS Dartmouth, lived his early life in Brockton, MA, attending the Brockton public schools.

According to the War Records Dept., Clasky registered with the selective service on June 5, 1917, at the age of 21. On August 26, 1918, he was inducted into the Army of the United States and served in the 18th Regiment Field Artillery Replacement Depot at Camp Jackson, SC. He was honorably discharged at Camp Devens, Mass. Jan. 10, 1919.

Clasky continued his education, earning a degree from the Boston University School of Business. He moved to New Bedford in 1931.

Then, on Mar. 10, 1941, Clasky enlisted in Co. H 25th Infantry Regiment Massachusetts State Guard for a term of three years. He was honorably discharged Mar. 9, 1944, per expiration of service. The following day he re-enlisted into 8th Co. 28th Infantry Regiment MSG. He was honorably discharged Jan. 31, 1947, per disbandment of the company. He was awarded the WWII Victory Medal for his military service.

In 1952, his wife, Ida Fox, passed away in 1952 at the age of 45. Harold Clasky passed away on January 28, 1969, at the age

of 72.

Clasky was known as a popular political figure in New Bedford and beyond. According to the UMASS Dartmouth Library archives, "He was a Jewish state senator noted for work he accomplished in the community. He served as a New Bedford Councilor-At-Large from 1952-1953 and 1956-1965 and as a Massachusetts State Senator representing the 3rd Bristol District from 1965 to 1969. Originally a life insurance agent by trade, he was involved in a number of local organizations including the American Legion, the Jewish War Veterans, and the Jonah Lodge of the B'nai Brith."

He was remembered as "A most approachable and magnanimous man who served as a model of inspiration to everyone, no matter his or her faith, background or creed. He always had courage and will for a devoted and longtime career for public service. He brought no arrogance of power to office, only dedication, devotion, and a loyalty to the people he represented—a rare example of a man of the highest integrity and principle. Succinctly, he was an outstanding man of our times, a man of singular achievement, a righteous American, a superb politician and above all, a decent human being of quintessential goodwill and civility," as quoted by Mel B. Yoken, Ph.D., Chancellor Professor of French, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The popular park on County Street in New Bedford, known today as "Clasky Common Park," was renamed and dedicated to Mr. Harold H. J. Clasky on October 13, 1969.

Boston's "Faneuil Hall" may soon be "Frederick Douglass Hall" due to "racist history"

It looks like the iconic Faneuil Hall may be getting a new name after Boston City Council voted in favor of a change. They passed a resolution on October 25th to change the name of Faneuil Hall, in a 10-3 vote.

The city council does not possess the power itself to change the name, but they hope to "begin a process of addressing anti-Black racist symbols prevalent in Boston".

In the resolution they noted, "Changing the name of Faneuil Hall to the name of a true freedom fighter such as Crispus Attucks, Elizabeth Freeman, or Frederick Douglas, facilitates the flourishing of democracy and educates the local and national public about how we should best use our public spaces and memorials".

The Boston City Council is considering this a "public apology" process that is acknowledging the City of Boston's role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

WHEREAS, The Faneuil Hall and the Faneuil Hall Market Place is a publicly owned building where less than .01 percent of businesses located there are owned by Black people; and

WHEREAS, Faneuil Hall represents a place where positive history has been made and where democracy-loving people have gathered and organized despite the odious reputation of Peter Faneuil; and

WHEREAS, Faneuil Hall is a “public thing” to be enjoyed by all, even those Blacks (and their legacy) who were once enslaved in Boston and;

WHEREAS, The name “Faneuil Hall” retains a legacy for Blacks locally and nation that connotes exclusion and stigmatization; and

WHEREAS, The City of Boston would make positive steps toward reparative justice and reconciliation for Black people by changing the name of Faneuil Hall and using the name change process as a gateway toward deeper actions, dialogue, and conversations related to racial repair and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, Changing the name of Faneuil Hall to the name of a true freedom fighter (such as Crispus Attucks, Elizabeth Freeman, or Frederick Douglass) or to a noble concept, such as “Freedom Hall” or “Liberty Hall” facilitates the flourishing of democracy and educates the local and national public about how we should best use our public spaces and memorials; and

WHEREAS, Through changing the name of Faneuil Hall Boston residents can regain its reputation of being the “Cradle of Liberty;” and

WHEREAS, Changing the name of Faneuil Hall would not erase history but enhance our sense of history and place history in its proper perspective; and

WHEREAS, The Boston City Council in a “public apology” process that acknowledged the City of Boston’s role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing affirming that the name of Faneuil Hall be changed and the City pursues every effort to educate current and future generations about why the name of Faneuil Hall was changed and that the City Council initiate funding and planning efforts for erecting a significant memorial to the transatlantic slave trade at, or near Faneuil Hall that is equivalent to other Downtown memorials that recognized inhumanity through practiced genocide.

New Bedford's Fort Taber Flag To Honor WWII Veteran S1c George S. Furtado

During the month of October, the 49th Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of George Samanica Furtado, from South Dartmouth, who passed away in 1959 at the age of 35. Furtado served in the United States Navy aboard the USS Vincennes during WWII.

Furtado was born on May 15, 1924 and lived in South Dartmouth, MA for most of his life. While in school he studied welding and blacksmithing.

He was inducted into the United States Navy on August 30, 1943 at the age of 19. Furtado attended Naval Training School in Newport, RI. He began his career as an Apprentice Seaman (AS) and was promoted to the rank of Seaman 2nd Class (S2c) and eventually Seaman 1st Class (S1c).

Furtado served in the United States Navy from 1943 to 1945, much of his time served aboard the USS Vincennes. According to the historyofwar.org, the "USS Vincennes (CL-64) was a Cleveland class light cruiser which fought in the Pacific, taking part in the battle of the Philippine Sea, the invasion of the Philippines, the battle of Okinawa and the raids on the Japanese home islands. She was awarded six battle stars for her World War II service."

S1c was honorably discharged from the United States Navy in December 1945 and received the following awards: The WWII Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre Medal with 4 bronze stars. And the Philippine Liberation Medal with 2 bronze stars.

After completing his military service, Furtado worked as a Special Police Officer assigned to Jones Beach in Dartmouth,

MA. He was a communicant of St. Mary's Church and was a member of the Portuguese-American Social Club.

Tragically, George S. Furtado died on August 12, 1959, at the age of 35 from a heart condition. He left behind his wife, Mrs. Almorinda (Martin) Furtado and a son, Kenneth G. Furtado, who was seven years old at the time. Furtado is buried in the Veterans Section of St. John's Cemetery in New Bedford.

The surviving relatives of George S. Furtado include his son, Lt. Kenneth Furtado, now a retired Police Officer from UMASS Dartmouth, Kenneth's wife, Brenda (Sylvia) Furtado and two nephews, Robert Furtado of So. Dartmouth and Antone Demello of No. Dartmouth.

Other relatives who have passed, include: his wife, his mother, the late Mrs. Rose Enos Furtado; four brothers: the late Manuel, Antone, Gilbert and Frank Furtado; three sisters: the late Mrs. Mary Mello, Mrs. Lena DeMello and Miss Gloria Furtado.

If you would like to contact Kenneth Furtado directly, with any questions regarding his father, he can be reached at kfurtado@umassd.edu.

Linda Ferreira, of Empire Ford of New Bedford, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford of New Bedford. Flags are raised by the staff at Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum. Those who would like to honor a local veteran in the future can contact Ferreira at lferreira@buyempireautogroup.com.

Private detective pushes for new task force to cover unsolved “New Bedford Highway Serial Killer” cases

Lauren Lee Malloy, a private detective and founder of “Unsolved R.I” is making a push online to shine a new light on the notorious “New Bedford Highway Murders”. She recently wrote a summary of the story on twitter along with a push for a new effort to find justice.

“I hope and pray for the day a team comes together to focus on getting answers and justice for these victims discarded along stretches of highway in New England. If he is still alive, I hope NBHK knows he’s being hunted and it’s only a matter of time before he will pay for his evil crimes.”

There’s one case that’s haunted me for years – the New Bedford Highway Serial Killer.

Eleven suspected victims, only nine found.

Dawn Mendes, 25

Debra Greenlaw Demello, 35

Deborah Lynn McConnell, 25

Debra Medeiros, 29

Mary Rose Santos, 26

Nancy Lee Paiva, 36

Robbin Lynn... pic.twitter.com/mxKIaKfMPt

– Lauren Lee Malloy (@LaurenLee_915) September 30, 2023

This post has gained over 64,000 views at the time of writing this article, and people have been tagging major “true crime”

podcasts in hopes for them to pick up the story. “Crime Junkies” hosted by Ashley Flowers is not only the biggest true crime podcast, but is actually one of the most popular podcasts in the country. Users were tagging Ashley Flowers, and to be honest there is a great chance this story could get featured on the podcast as they have featured way lower profile cases.

@CrimeJunkiePod @Ash_Flowers have y'all covered this case before? I can't remember but if you haven't, you should! ? Not a lot of people have heard about this one

– Kaytey Keefe (@KayteyKeefe) October 1, 2023

Maureen Boyle, the author of the novel “Shallow Graves: The Hunt for the New Bedford Highway Serial Killer” shared the post on twitter.

Someone knows who killed the 11 women in 1988. #coldcase #serialkiller #newbedfordhighwayserialkiller @BrandeisPress pic.twitter.com/8a8ekqi8wd

– Maureen Boyle (@MaureenEBoyle1) September 30, 2023

Hundreds of “cold cases” have been covered on major podcasts over the years which helps shine a new light and new eyes on a seemingly forgotten crime. Want to get new eyes and ears on the New Bedford Highway Murders? Tagging some True Crime podcasts in Lauren Lee Malloy’s post could be a great way to make that happen!

The fascinating and tragic history of Palmers Island in New Bedford

Tucked west inside the busy New Bedford Harbor lies an island that began with a grim history. The land was first used as an internment camp for indigenous people during King Philip's War in 1675-76. Most of these Individuals were later sold into slavery in the West Indies after the war.

Almost 200 years later in 1843 when New Bedford was the whaling capital of the world, it was decided the harbor needed a lighthouse to help guide the hundreds of ships passing through on a daily basis.

Palmers Island, named after one of the first settlers of Dartmouth, William Palmer was deemed prime real estate for this project. On August 30th 1849 A lighthouse was built on the northern point of the island by Charles M. Pierce who was a local mason.

Like most of the United States lighthouses at that time, the lamps were fueled by world class New Bedford whale oil.

The island was much larger back in the day, and believe it or not in the 1860's a hotel and dance hall was built on the south side of the island. The hotel survived almost 30 years but eventually closed down due to the illegal activity that began to take place from returning whalers.

After the hotel closed in the early 1890's an amusement park was built on the island. The park failed after only a few years and everything was burned down in a fire in 1905. The lighthouse continued operating throughout the years with various "lighthouse keepers" working to keep the light shining.

It was a flawless operation until tragedy struck in September of 1938 when a hurricane hit shore.

A gigantic wave swept the lighthouse keeper Arthur Small into the New Bedford Harbor. In a heroic attempt to save her husband, Mabel Small, an expert boatswoman lost her life to the storm. Her body was later recovered on the shore of Fairhaven.

In 1963 a massive hurricane wall was built to protect the New Bedford Harbor which essentially deemed Palmers Lighthouse useless. For the next 36 years there were few attempts to renovate the lighthouse but it continued to be vandalized and remained dark through most of the 1990's.

In April 1999 Hillary Clinton named New Bedford an official Millennium Community of the White House Millennium Council to "Honor the past and imagine the future". It was decided that restoring Palmers Island Lighthouse would be New Bedford's mission.

After a full restoration project, a large crowd gathered on August 30th, 1999 to witness the relighting of Palmers Island Lighthouse.... 150 years to the day after its first lighting in 1849.

Mayor Fred Kalisz famously said in a proclamation "This shall be remembered by the citizens of New Bedford as the day they reaffirmed their ties to the sea, and indeed, to the world.

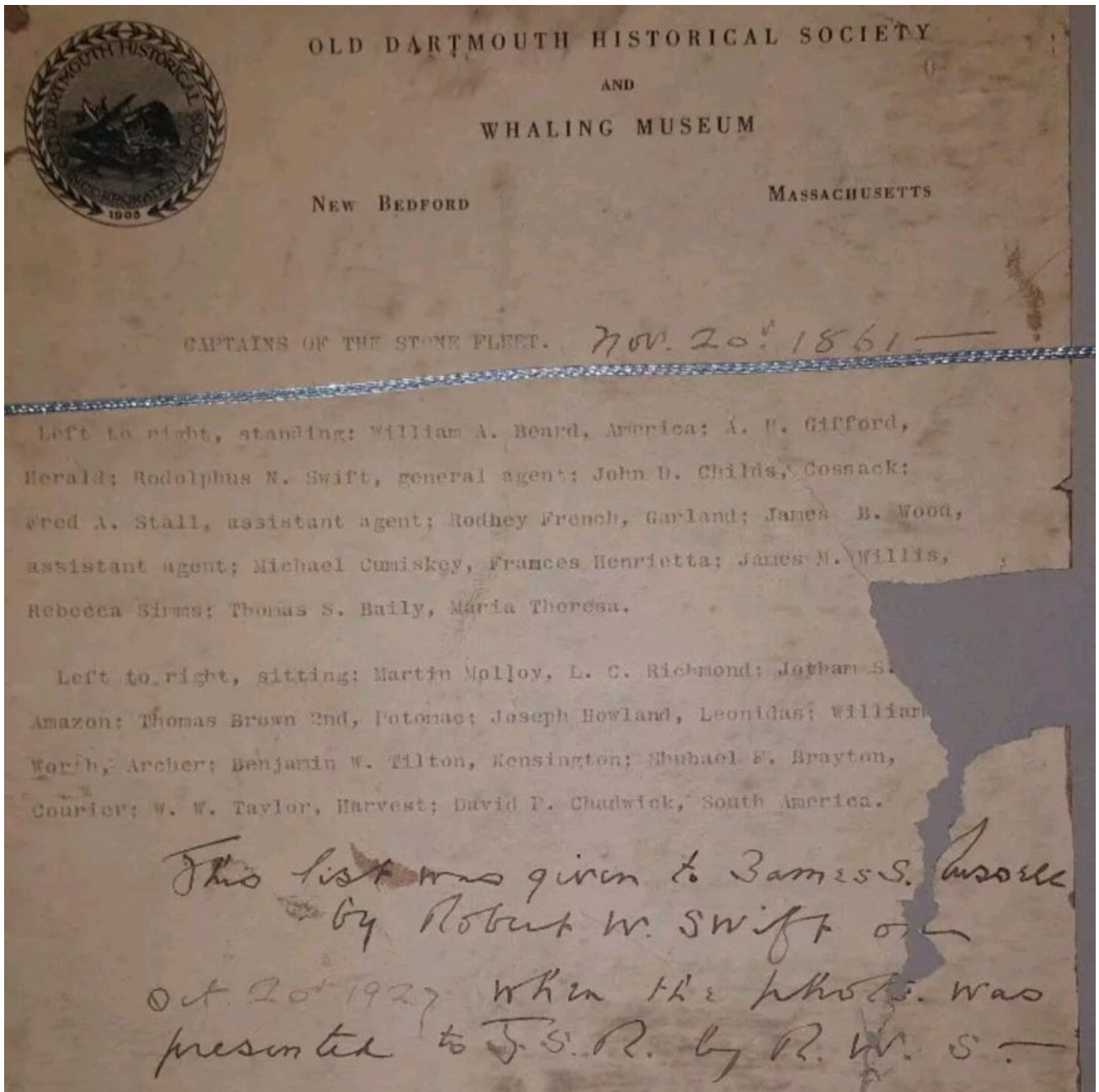
The video below highlights how the island and lighthouse looks current day!

Get your hands on New Bedford Civil War historical photograph for the low-price of \$17,500!

Any history lovers have extra cash laying around? There is an original photograph by the Bierstadt Brothers of the Civil War captains of the “Stone Fleet” whaling ships from New Bedford selling on Ebay for a whopping \$17,500!

It would be interesting to have a “Pawn Stars” moment and call a professional in to see whether this item is actually worth what the seller is asking. Maybe our friends over at the Whaling Museum or National Historical Park could help us out!

The photo does come with some sort of a certificate from the “Old Dartmouth Historical Society and Whaling Museum”:



Old Dartmouth Historical Society photo.

The Stone Fleet and its captains set sail from New Bedford on November 16th, 1861. The fleet consisted of old whaling ships loaded with stone, and sailed south during the American Civil War by the Union Navy for use as blockships. They were to be deliberately sunk at the entrance of Charleston Harbor, South Carolina in the hope of obstructing blockade runners, then supplying Confederate interests.

Below is a clearer (what I would assume digitally enhanced) version of the photograph. Captain Rodney French is standing in the center, behind the desk and facing the camera.



CAPTAINS OF THE STONE FLEET
WHICH SAILED FROM NEWBEDFORD NOV.16 1861.

Ebay photo.

The names of the men in the photograph are "Capt. Beard/ Capt. Gifford/ Capt. Swift/ Capts. Malloy, Swift, Brown, Howland/ Capt. Childs/ Capt. Stall/ Capt. French/ Capt. Worth/ Capt. Wood/ Capt. Cumiski/ Capts. Tilton, Brayton, Taylor, Chadwick/ Capt. Wiilis/ Capt. Bailey."

The Ebay seller claims not only is the original authentic photograph for sale, but it is also still behind its original glass and frame. Below is the listing photo of the item on Ebay (with a digital watermark across it for some reason).



21 East Bay photo.

What are your thoughts? How much do you think this piece of New Bedford history is worth? You can see the Ebay listing yourself [here](#)!

**Did you know these
fascinating historical facts
about Fort Rodman in New**

Bedford?

Standing tall in the southernmost point of New Bedford lies the historic “Fort Rodman” at Fort Taber Park. This military structure is named after Lt. Col. William Logan Rodman who was the highest ranking soldier from New Bedford to be killed in action during the Civil War.

He died leading his men in battle during the assault on Port Hudson, Louisiana, and is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in New Bedford.

Fort Rodman was built with granite shipped from Fall River, Massachusetts and Sullivan, Maine. It was built to serve as a link in the coastal defense system of federal forts in between Portland, Maine and Long Island, New York.

Before the granite fort could be completed, the Civil War broke out which halted the construction. Not wanting to wait in a time of war, Mayor Issac C. Taber decided to build a “earthworks fort” adjacent to the half built granite fort. This fort was armed and operational throughout the civil war while Fort Rodman was awaiting the finishing construction.

After the Civil war concluded, the war department ceased construction of Fort Rodman leaving the third tier incomplete. The unused granite blocks were then used to build the seawall which lines the beach that we all walk and enjoy today.

Checkout some beautiful aerial footage of how Fort Rodman looks today.

The fascinating, controversial story behind the hidden New Bedford tombstone of Daddy Grace

Nestled away in the back corner of the Pine Grove Cemetery in New Bedford, Massachusetts stands a rather impressive mausoleum, statue, and plaque. This stands in remembrance of Marcelino Manuel da Graça, otherwise known as Charles Manuel “Sweet Daddy” Grace.

Daddy Grace was born on January 25th in the Cape Verde Islands. Interestingly, there is no verifiable information to confirm his exact birth year, although most sources either state 1881 or 1884.

In May of 1902 his family set sail aboard a ship named “The Freeman” and he arrived in America at the port of New Bedford, Massachusetts. 17 years later in 1919 he quit his job as a railway cook and built the first “House of Prayer” in West Wareham, Massachusetts at the cost of \$39.



Photo by Steven Richard.

In December of 1921, a regular meeting place in New Bedford was organized on 357 Kempton Street. Throughout the 1920's and 30's Daddy Grace traveled extensively across the country holding tent meetings, healing services, and mass baptisms which were attended by the thousands.

Many people became members of the House of Prayer after these spiritual services because of the "healing power of Christ" being demonstrated. He was able to build an organization of 350 "Houses of Prayer" with a national membership of over 3 million followers.

His ability to step off the boat onto the Port of New Bedford with absolutely nothing in his name, and become an extremely wealthy man building over 350 churches with over 3 million followers is absolutely remarkable.

But unfortunately there is an aspect to his story which many have a major issue with.



Photo by Steven Richard.

Many would flat out tell you that “Sweet Daddy Grace” really was a cult leader who would enrich himself from his followers of the “Houses of Prayer”. It is rumored that he built a large wealthy empire by selling things like “plots in heaven” and “drinks that would cure anything” to his followers.

He made so much money that he actually bought the largest apartment building in New York City.

According to reporting from Southcoast Today, he faced some legal battles regarding tax evasion, IRS investigations, and even human trafficking which all make sense in regards to how

he built his wealth. Although I don't believe it is necessary to dig into the details of his legal issues, I figured it is important to note as it gives credibility to the rumors and stories surrounding him.

The story of Marcelino Manuel da Graça is a fascinating one to say the least. A poor kid that sailed to New Bedford from Cape Verde and became a wildly rich and famous cult leader that bought the tallest apartment in New York City. His life story has "Netflix Documentary" written all over it.

RELIGION

'Daddy' Grace Buys Tallest N. Y. Apartment House

Bishop Charles M. (Daddy) Grace, wealthy religious cult leader and landowner, bought the tallest apartment building in New York for an estimated \$4,000,000. Named the Eldorado, the 34-story, 216 - apartment building occupies an entire block front on swank Central Park West, home of scores of millionaires. Cash



"Daddy" Grace and \$4,000,000 building.

payment for the building was not disclosed, but Joseph H. Lopin, Grace's real estate manager, said mortgages total \$3,800,000. Bishop Grace, who heads the House of Prayer for All People, also owns large apartment buildings on New York's Sugar Hill and Riverside Drive, has real estate holdings in Los Angeles and Cuba.

Photo by Steven Richard.