

Photo captures sad “Rise and Fall” of Taunton’s “Silver City Galleria” 32 years after grand opening

A recent drone photograph of the vacant land where the Silver City Galleria Mall once stood in Taunton, Massachusetts, has sparked a wave of nostalgia among residents. The image, taken from above by the aerial photography page “Aerial New England”, contrasts sharply with a photograph captured on March 1st, 1992, the day the mall first opened, when the entire parking lot was bustling with cars and eager shoppers.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by New Bedford Guide (@newbedfordguide)

The Silver City Galleria Mall, a beloved landmark that once symbolized the heart of retail and community spirit, has since closed its doors, and the once-vibrant building has been reduced to rubble. However, the site is not destined to remain empty. In July 2022, the Taunton Planning Board approved a site plan for a major redevelopment project at the former mall location.

The plan originally included the construction of a FedEx distribution center, but FedEx has since reevaluated it due to financial factors.

In January 2024, Portman Industrial secured \$29 million for the first phase of Silver City Business Park, a 1.1-million-square-foot industrial park at the former Silver City Galleria Mall site in Taunton, MA. The site was purchased in 2021 for \$75 million, and phase one will include a 248,435-square-foot building with modern amenities. The park will eventually feature four warehouses of varying sizes, with the three larger ones reaching 55 feet in height.

As construction progresses and the landscape changes, the

drone photograph serves as a poignant reminder of the mall's past glory days and a bittersweet glimpse into its future. The redevelopment of the former Silver City Galleria Mall site represents not just a physical transformation but also a nostalgic journey through cherished memories of days gone by.

Massachusetts Senate Chamber To Honor “Founding Father” Frederick Douglass With New Bust

By Alison Kuznitz

State House News Service

Nearly 130 years after abolitionist, orator and newspaper publisher Frederick Douglass addressed state lawmakers, the Senate plans to unveil a bust in the branch's chamber honoring his legacy during a ceremony next week.

An empty pedestal meant for the Douglass bust is currently sitting inside the recently renovated chamber, where Senate President Karen Spilka said she intentionally left two alcoves vacant in her quest to enhance the diverse representation of historical figures in the State House. The other empty alcove will eventually be filled with a bust of a woman, and Spilka has previously floated the idea of selecting Abigail Adams.

“My hope is that people will see the Senate recognizes Frederick Douglass as one of our founding fathers, basically laying a strong foundation, raising issues, fighting for civil justice, for civil rights and that his words and actions still

are with us, still have to stay with us,” Spilka said in an interview with the News Service on Thursday. “They have to be forefront in our minds when we pass legislation.”

Douglass’s bust will be situated somewhat near the Douglass quote painted on the chamber’s tympanum, which states, “Truth, justice, liberty, and humanity will ultimately prevail.”

It’s the first bust to be added to the Senate Chamber since 1898, as well as the first state-commissioned bust of a Black person in the State House, according to Spilka’s office. The Senate commissioned the bust for \$7,000, a Spilka spokesperson said.

“We’re just really happy to see Frederick Douglass represented with a bust to go along with his quote,” Paula Morse, chair of the State House Art Commission, said. “I think it’s just wonderful that we are doing this, that when people come to the State House, from children all the way up to their great-grandparents, [they] can see people that look like them. We can’t remake the past but within the past, notable figures like Frederick Douglass belong here.”

When Douglass escaped slavery, he settled in New Bedford and spoke about his experiences across the country through the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, according to the National Park Service. His first speech to a mostly white audience happened in August 1841, during an anti-slavery convention held in the Nantucket Atheneum’s Great Hall, according to a town document.

During the Civil War, two of Douglass’ sons served in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, according to NPS.

“He has a lot of very close ties to Massachusetts, so we can call him our own,” Spilka said. “And it just feels that is so appropriate and overdue to have him in the Senate Chamber, along with some of the other prominent figures that we have there, as our founding fathers of Washington, and Lincoln, and

Franklin and a few others that are in there. He'll have his own resting place very comfortably."

Douglass spoke with House and Senate members during a visit to Beacon Hill on May 10, 1894. He previously came to the State House about five decades earlier, according to the Worcester Daily Spy.

"I have appeared before the American people in a number of qualities. Once as a slave, 56 years ago, I was seized with a strong desire to see Massachusetts, and came North with that end in view," Douglass told the House before visiting the Senate, according to the Boston Daily Journal. "Again I appeared as a fugitive slave and again as an advocate in behalf of the slave."

Spilka said she has not yet seen the Douglass bust, which is being stored securely at the State House ahead of Wednesday's ceremony in the chamber. The public event coincides with Douglass's birthday, and Feb. 14 is also recognized as Frederick Douglass Day in Massachusetts as a result of an amendment to the fiscal year 2020 budget bill first proposed by Sen. Mark Montigny, Spilka's office said.

A different Frederick Douglass bust, loaned by Boston's Museum of African American History, was previously displayed in the Senate Chamber after the space was renovated and reopened in 2019, a Spilka spokesperson said.

The new Douglass bust slated to be installed in the chamber is a replica of a bust originally created by Massachusetts sculptor Lloyd Lillie and kept by his family, said State House art curator Susan Greendyke Lachevre.

"Their bust in their collection was sent to a foundry, and a mold was made. So it is a true copy of the one that Lloyd Lillie made, and it was cast by the foundry that he always used," she said.

Spilka said she was struck by the dearth of diverse artwork at the state capitol, particularly featuring women and people of color, when she became Senate president.

“We have such a rich history, with women, with people of color and all of the contributions that all people, the diverse people, have made to our wonderful commonwealth,” Spilka said. “And it was astounding to me the lack of diversity here.”

Spilka said senators will start discussing which woman should be depicted in another new bust during Women’s History Month in March.

The State House’s limited diverse collection today includes portraits of influential Massachusetts women hanging in Spilka’s office, plus portraits of former Gov. Deval Patrick and Chief Justice Roderick Ireland, both of whom are Black. There are also reliefs of Sarah Parker Remond and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, two Black female leaders who knew Douglass, in Doric Hall, Greendyke Lachevre said.

The original Senate busts depict George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Marquis de Lafayette, Abraham Lincoln, Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, Gardiner Tufts, George Boutwell and Samuel Francis Smith, according to the State House Art Commission.

The Douglass bust is filling space previously occupied by Boutwell’s, Spilka’s office said.

Greendyke Lachevre said Douglass belongs with the other distinguished honorees.

“It’s a step in the right direction to broaden the representation of the people who are honored in the State House,” Greendyke Lachevre said. “We even have this encouragement in our acquisition guidelines that people consider broadening their thoughts and their ideas of who to honor in the building by recognizing underrepresented

communities, groups, people in the collection.”

[Sam Doran contributed to this story.]

Fall River man shares story of New Bedford and Fairhaven roots that go back to 1784!

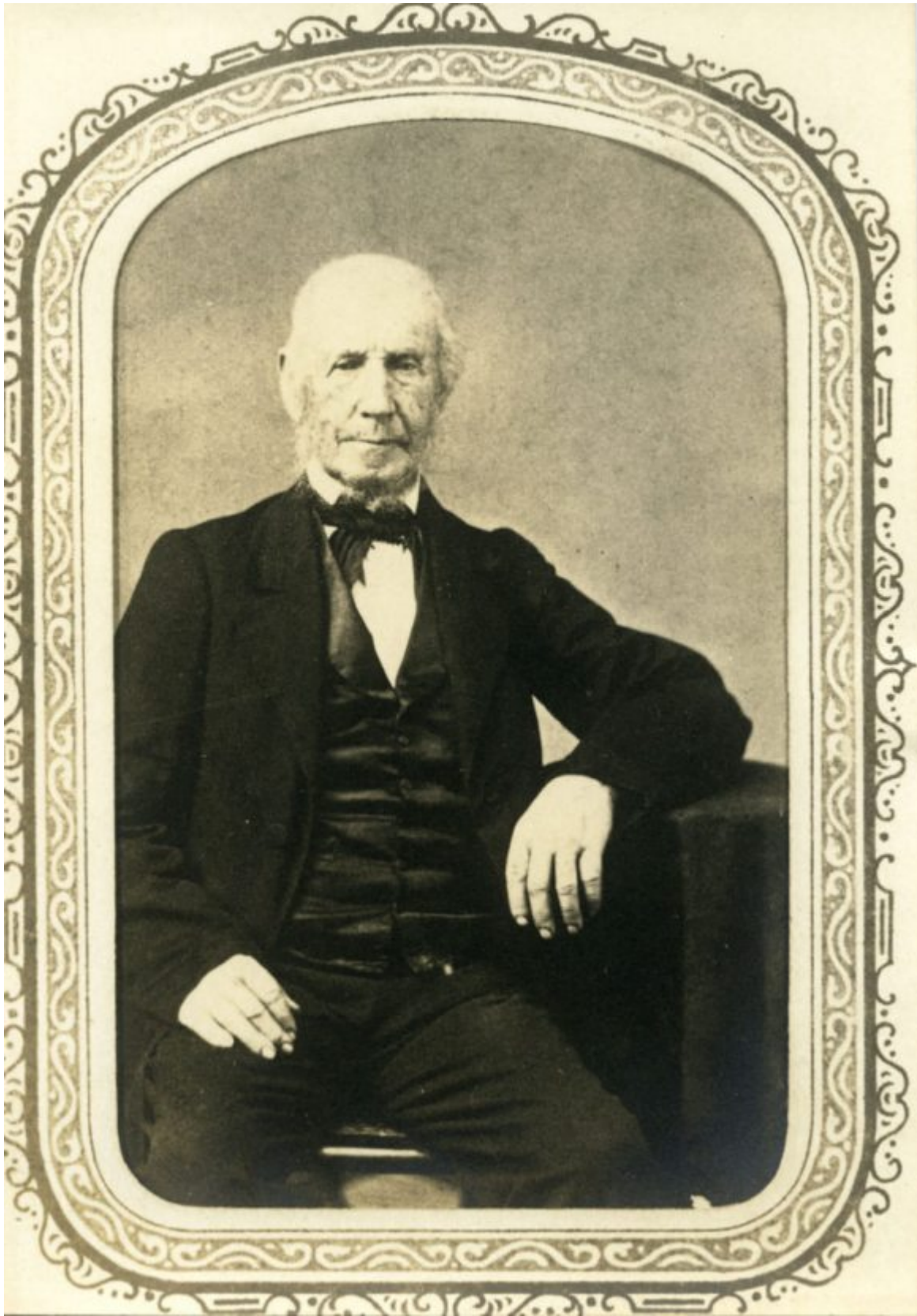
“I grew up in Fall River, but I thought I’d share some of my New Bedford heritage on the birthday of my 4th great-grandmother, who lived most of her long life in NB.

Amazingly, I recently discovered photos of both of them in an online collection at the Harvard libraries.

Her husband, my 4th great-grandfather, Phineas H. Kenney was born around Sep 1784 in North Fairhaven, Massachusetts to Jacob Kenney and Pernal Hammond. During the War of 1812 he served as a Private in Captain William Nye’s Company in the 2nd Regiment, Massachusetts militia.

Phineas married Achsah Bennet in 1807 in New Bedford. She had been born in Sandwich. He was a mason, a profession his son Lorenzo and grandson Alonzo would also enter. Phineas was highly instrumental in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal church in New Bedford.

He died in 1870 shortly before his 86th birthday. Achsah would die in 1886 at the age of 95.” Photos by Chris Kenney.



Chris Kenney photo.



Chris Kenney photo.

Fort Taber Flag in New Bedford To Honor Father John B. DeValles WWI Veteran Awarded for Heroism

During the month of January, the 52nd Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of Rev. Father John Baptist DeValles, a WWI Veteran who was awarded for “extraordinary heroism and exceptional devotion to his duty.”

He was born, Joa Baptista DeValles, on Aug. 29, 1879 on the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores, and emigrated to the United States at the age of two years old, eventually residing at 39 Ingram St., New Bedford. He attended local schools and studied for the priesthood. He was ordained in 1906, serving in local parishes in New Bedford and Fall River.

According to the War Records Dept., “When the United States entered World War I in 1917, despite being nearly 40 years old, (DeValles) set aside his comfortable life to volunteer as a chaplain through the Knights of Columbus and was attached to the Massachusetts National Guard’s 104th Infantry Regiment, 26th “Yankee” Division. He was appointed to First Lieutenant (1LT) Chaplain on July 17, 1918. The Yankee Division was organized from National Guard units throughout New England and as the first entire U.S. division to arrive in France, it saw action in every major campaign of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF).”

The AEF helped the French Army on the Western Front during the Aisne Offensive and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. DeValles took part in the Defensive Champagne-Marne; Offensive Aisne-Marne; St. Mihiel; and Defensive Sectors: Rupt (Lorraine) and Troyon

(Lorraine).

He was known as the "Angel of the trenches" often in "no man's land," comforting the injured and carrying the wounded to aid stations, administering to the dying. He made no distinction between allies or Germans.

Father DeValles returned to the United States with the Yankee Division in 1919 but died in May 1920 of abdominal cancer at St. Luke's Hospital, New Bedford, MA at the age of 41, due to exposure to mustard gas in France. He was awarded the nation's second highest military decoration, the Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously by Major General Clarence Edward, former Commanding General of the Yankee Division. "For extraordinary heroism in action near Apremont, Toul sector, France, April 10 to 13, 1918. Chaplain DeValles repeatedly exposed himself to heavy artillery and machine-gun fire in order to assist in the removal of the wounded from exposed points in advance of the lines. He worked for long periods of time with stretcher bearers in carrying wounded men to safety. Chaplain DeValles previously rendered gallant service in the Chemin des Dames sector, March 11, 1918, by remaining with a group of wounded during a heavy enemy bombardment."

He was also awarded the foreign decorations of the French Croix de Guerre with gilt star, under General Order No. 736-A, dated April 26, 1918, 32nd French Army Corps, with the following citation: "Extraordinary heroism and exceptional devotion to his duty. Under uninterrupted enemy fire, did not cease to care for the wounded and to encourage to renewed efforts the men worn out by hard fighting."

Some insight as to what the soldiers went through during WWI as documented by WWI letters explained that "there were no trenches in the area of the front, little wire and no shelters (dugouts). Rather, defenses were designed for open warfare and consisted of shallow foxholes covered with brush, positioned to provide mutually supporting fire along with numerous machine gun positions. The outpost line and principal

resistance line were separated by a 1,000 yard artillery barrage zone designed to break up any attack that overran the outposts. Occupants of the outposts had the usual mission of fighting to the last man with no hope of reinforcement. At all hours, troops of the outpost line were fired on by machine guns and artillery of the German 7th Army. Food and water had to be carried to the forward troops by ration details through machine gun fire under cover of darkness. The troops suffered a high number of casualties due to heavy gas exposure."

In October 1920, shortly after Chaplain DeValles' death, the Katherine Street School in New Bedford was rededicated as the John B. DeValles School in his honor.

Linda Ferreira, of Empire Ford, researches the life histories of area residents. American flags are provided by Empire Ford. 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@empirefordinc.com.

Fort Taber Flag To Honor WWII New Bedford Veteran PFC Irving C. Kaplan

During the month of December, the 51st Lights for Peace flag to fly at the Fort Taber – Fort Rodman Military Museum honors the memory of PFC Irving Chandler Kaplan, of New Bedford, a WWII veteran who was killed in Germany in 1945.

Kaplan, who lived at 26th Eight St., New Bedford, was born on July 6, 1915. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Kaplan.

According to the archives at the University of Massachusetts Library, Kaplan attended Boston University and Harvard University Law School and went on to practice law in New Bedford, with offices in the National Bank Building.

He was inducted into the U.S. Army on Dec. 14, 1942 and served with the U.S. Army Signal Corps. PFC Kaplan was killed on August 25, 1945, at the age of 30, as the result of an accident while serving in Kassel Germany during WWII.

According to army.mil, throughout WWII, the Signal Corps served a variety of functions and had the responsibility for one of the most important systems used during World War II – radar. Success in combat depended on good communications and that was the Signal Corps' main mission. At its peak strength in the fall of 1944, the Signal Corps was comprised of over 350,000 officers and men, over six times more than had served in WWI.

According to army.mil, "In addition to sending messages, the Signal Corps retained responsibility for the Army's signal security and intelligence activity. The 2nd Signal Service Company performed intelligence-gathering duties."

Another specialized field that fell under the Signal Corps function was photography. "Its value and versatility reached new levels, especially during the second half of the war, partially due to improvements in training and organization. The Signal Corps created orientation and training films, using the talents of notables such as Frank Capra, who was commissioned as a major in the Signal Corps in 1942, and Theodor Seuss Geisel, who served as a member of Capra's documentary film crew. The Signal Corps also created an unprecedented pictorial record of World War II."

Members of the Jewish War Veterans New Bedford Post 154 erected a monument in Irving Kaplan's honor. On June 19, 1949, a parade and memorial service were held, and Kaplan Square was

dedicated in his honor. Kaplan Square is located at the intersection of Fair and Bolton Streets in the South End of New Bedford.

“If you take County Street south to Fair St. and turn right, you will drive straight to this monument in the middle of the Portuguese community which was then populated by many Jewish,” according to an article at the UMASS Library archives.

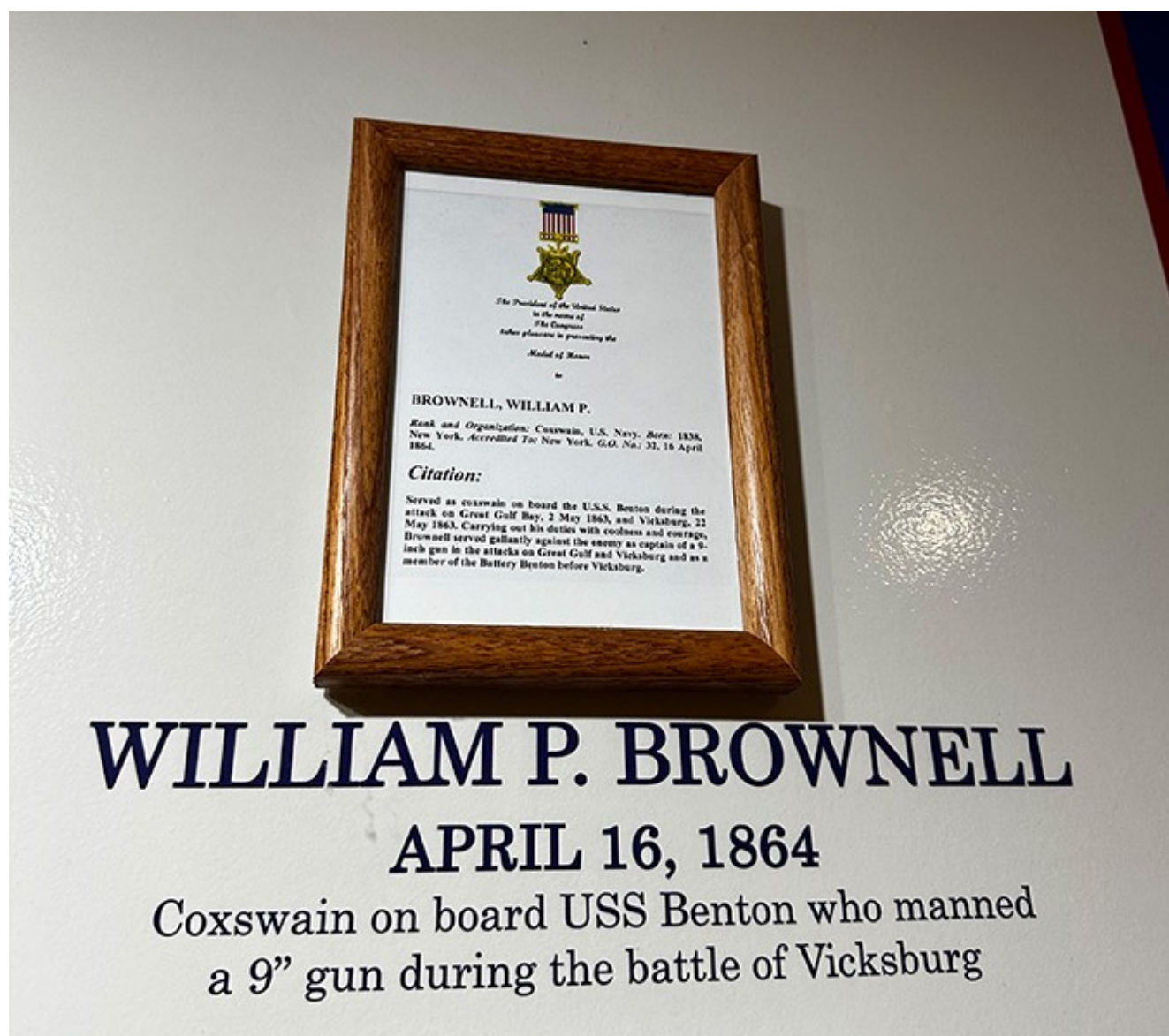
“In 1997 the 6th grade class of Mrs. Susan Baroody of the Congdon School took it on as a local beautification project to refurbish and replant the Kaplan memorial. It was rededicated on June 18, 1997, by the Jewish War Veterans in conjunction with the city of New Bedford.”

New Bedford Military Museum seeks help finding pictures of faceless Medal of Honor recipients

Within New Bedford's military museum in Fort Taber, you can find a wall displaying the 9 medal of honor recipients of New Bedford. The Medal of Honor is the United States' highest award for military valor in action. According to the “National Medal of Honor Museum”, of the 40 million Americans who have served in the Armed Forces since the Civil War, only 3,517 have earned the Medal of Honor.

Two of the nine New Bedford recipients have no photograph or painted portrait to display in our military museum, or any museum for that matter. I know it's a long shot, but if anyone

has any historical photographs or paintings which could resemble these two individuals, please reach out as you will quite literally be holding on to a one-of-one historical photograph.



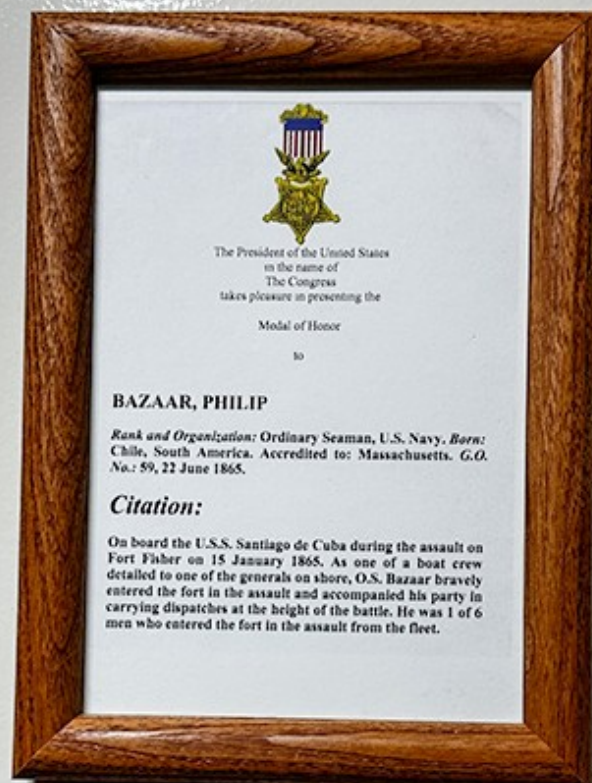
Steven Richard photo.

The first Medal of Honor recipient is William P Brownell who was born in New York on July 12th, 1839 and died in New York on April 26th, 1915. He is buried in OAK GROVE CEMETERY (MH) (GG-31), NEW BEDFORD, MA, UNITED STATES.

- **RANK:** COXSWAIN (HIGHEST RANK: ACTING MASTER'S MATE)

- **CONFLICT/ERA:** U.S. CIVIL WAR
- **UNIT/COMMAND:** U.S.S. BENTON
- **MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH:** U.S. NAVY
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION DATE:** MAY 22, 1863
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION PLACE:** GREAT GULF BAY & VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI, USA

"Served as coxswain on board the U.S.S. Benton during the attack on Great Gulf Bay, 2 May 1863, and Vicksburg, 22 May 1863. Carrying out his duties with coolness and courage, Brownell served gallantly against the enemy as captain of a 9-inch gun in the attacks on Great Gulf and Vicksburg and as a member of the Battery Benton before Vicksburg."



PHILIP BAZAAR

One of six sailors on board the USS Santiago de Cuba who was part of a land assault on Fort Fisher

Steven Richard photo.

The next Medal of Honor recipient is Philip Bazaar who was born in Chile with no birth date available and died on December 28th, 1923 in New York City. He is buried in CALVARY CEMETERY (BURIED AS BAZAN), NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES and his award is accredited to New Bedford, MA.

- **ALSO KNOWN AS:** BAZAN, PHILIP
- **RANK:** ORDINARY SEAMAN
- **CONFLICT/ERA:** U.S. CIVIL WAR
- **UNIT/COMMAND:** U.S.S. SANTIAGO DE CUBA
- **MILITARY SERVICE BRANCH:** U.S. NAVY
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION DATE:** JANUARY 15, 1865
- **MEDAL OF HONOR ACTION PLACE:** FORT FISHER, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

"On board the U.S.S. Santiago de Cuba during the assault on Fort Fisher on 15 January 1865. As one of a boat crew detailed to one of the generals onshore, O.S. Bazaar bravely entered the fort in the assault and accompanied his party in carrying dispatches at the height of the battle. He was one of six men who entered the fort in the assault from the fleet."

I'm sure historians have searched endlessly for photographs of these gentlemen, so I know it is a long shot to find any photographs or paintings. But if there are any in existence, I would have to believe they would exist stored away in the attic of a south coast families home who has no idea that they are holding on to a piece of American history.

Wareham Police announce operation of Polar Express Train in town this year!

"Just a reminder to everyone that the Polar Express Train will be operating during this holiday season. Please be aware that there will be heavier train traffic through town.

Nice to see that this locomotive is still out and running. It was built in 1957 and 1 of 60 that were built.

We are lucky to have such a big piece of railroad history operating in our town."-Wareham Police Department.



From the Polar Express Train's website:

"Set to the sounds of the motion picture soundtrack, passengers will relive the magic of the classic story as they are whisked away on THE POLAR EXPRESS™ for a 1 to 1 ½ hour trip to meet Santa.

Santa and his elves board the train at the North Pole to greet passengers and each guest is given the first gift of Christmas. Please be sure to have your camera ready to capture this moment! During the trip, characters on each car lead fantastic onboard entertainment – just like in the film! Each child will take home a keepsake sleigh bell and souvenir golden ticket in addition to the wonderful memories made on this magical trip. Delicious hot chocolate and Walker's Shortbread cookies – the "Official Onboard Treat" of THE POLAR EXPRESS Train Ride, which are individually wrapped in sealed packages, will be served to each passenger during the run.

We recommend wearing your Christmas jammies for even more fun!"





See more photos [here](#).

How New Bedford's William H. Carney became an American Hero, first black Medal of Honor recipient

Buried in the Oak Grove cemetery in New Bedford, Massachusetts is an American Hero whose legend should be taught in history books across the country. Army Sgt. William H. Carney is the first African American recipient of the Medal of Honor.

Serving on the legendary Massachusetts 54th regiment in the Civil War, he earned the Medal of Honor during the "Charge of Fort Wagner". When the unit's color guard was killed, Carney stepped forth, picked up the American flag, and rallied his troops up the hill towards almost certain death. It's important to emphasize that 270 of the 600 members of the 54th regiment were killed in this battle. These men truly embodied what it meant to "Live free or die".

With the flag in his hand, Carney was shot several times, yet refused to let the flag hit the ground. He planted the flag at the base of the fort and held it upright until his nearly lifeless body was rescued.

Miraculously, he survived, and when rescued he looked up at his fellow soldiers and told them, "Boys, the old flag never touched the ground". Check out this video highlighting the moment William Carney earned his medal of honor.

Historical displays in disrepair or outright destroyed at Fort Taber draw ire of New Bedford veterans

On Wednesday afternoon I paid a visit to the military museum at Fort Rodman in New Bedford. This is an amazing place to get lost in history, and if you are from the area you might even see memorabilia of an old family member which you did not know existed. I stumbled upon a photo of my uncle who served in Korea!

While there are endless stories I plan to cover, I felt obligated to address the concerns of the veterans who volunteer at the museum. When I told them I am a local journalist, every single volunteer pleaded that I help them get the signs repaired at the Fort. It's a simple request, yet they have had no luck getting the City of New Bedford to complete this task.

When leaving the museum I asked myself, "How bad could these signs really be?" As I walked out the door one volunteer who is also a Vietnam veteran, gave me his final pitch and told me to go take a look for myself.

I took a walk along Fort Taber and snapped some photos of the displays which should stand as an educational resource to teach the public about the rich history of New Bedford. I will just post the photos and let you decide if these displays are something to be proud of...



Steven Richard photo.



Steven Richard photo.



Steven Richard photo.



Steven Richard photo.

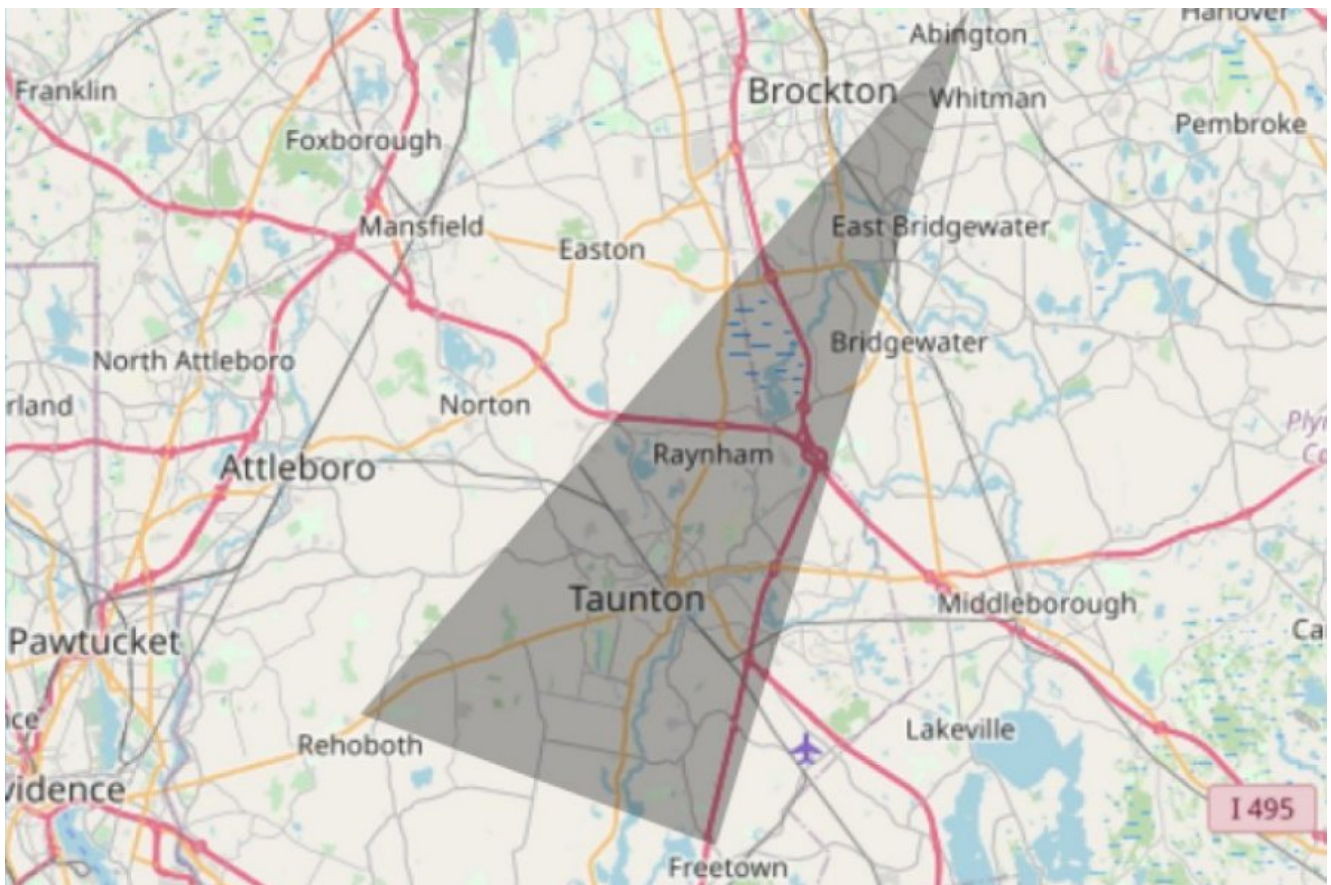
Bridgewater Triangle
Phenomena: hauntings, curses,
murders, Satanism, Bigfoot,

or just hooley?

By Bailey Bisson.

The Bridgewater Triangle is an area of about 200 square miles located in southeastern Massachusetts, United States. The area is known for a variety of unexplained phenomena, including reports of UFO sightings, Bigfoot sightings, ghosts, reports of cult activity and unresolved murders. The boundaries of the Bridgewater Triangle are somewhat disputed, but the general area includes the towns of Abington, Freetown, and Rehoboth.

The Bridgewater Triangle attracted national attention during the 1970s, when reports of strange occurrences in the area started to surface. Many people believe that the area is cursed, or haunted, due to its history of Native American conflicts, colonial battles, and mysterious disappearances. Some also believe that the area is a vortex or portal to other dimensions.



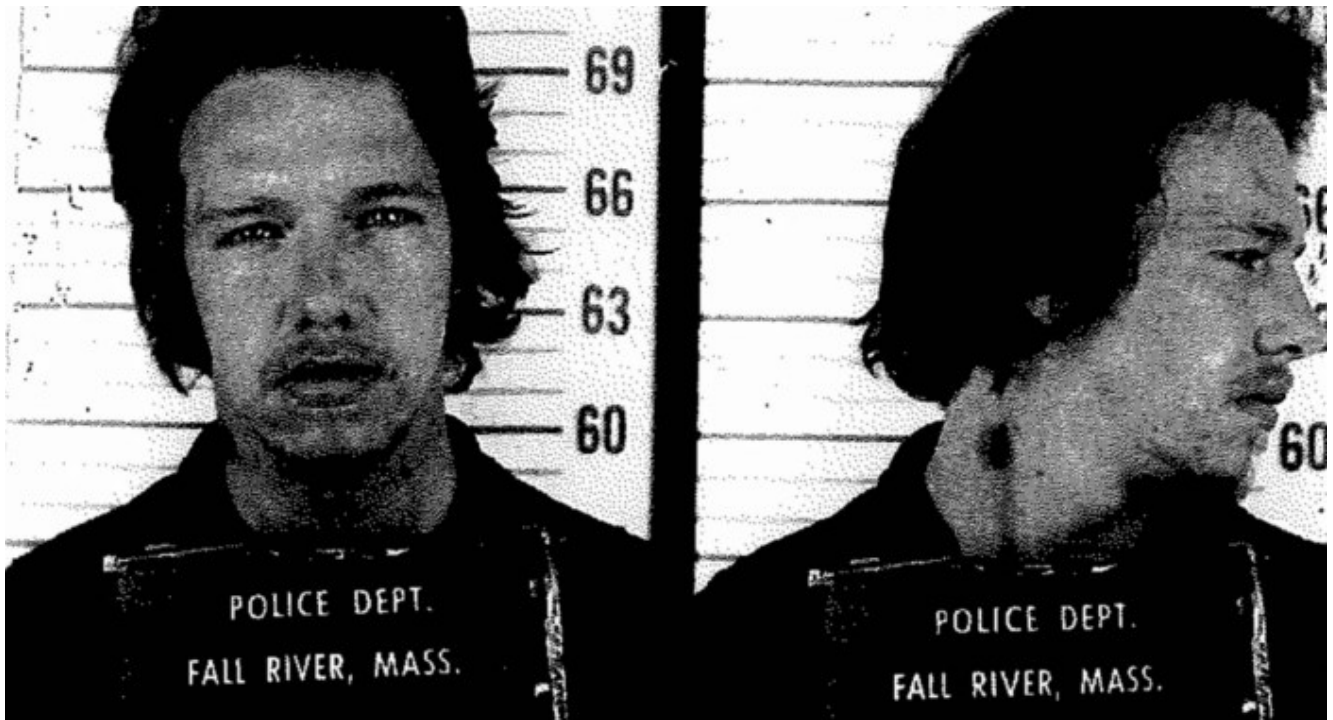
The Bridgewater Triangle. Facebook photo.

In addition to paranormal activity, the Bridgewater Triangle is also known for environmental anomalies. The Hockomock Swamp, which is located in the center of the triangle, is known for its quicksand, sinkholes, and other hazards. The swamp is also home to a variety of rare and endangered plant and animal species. You can see a fantastic infographic map with all its incidents [here](#).

Florida resident and Published author of paranormal literature, Christopher Balzano, appeared in a podcast known as OldColonyCast to share information regarding alleged eeriness within the Bridgewater Triangle.

“We have a saying now: ‘The triangle will never get big.’ It’s an obsessive topic for people who are in the area, and anyone who hears about it, but people aren’t hearing about it as much as they should,” said Balzano.

Despite the rumors and legends surrounding the Bridgewater Triangle, skeptics argue that there is no credible evidence to support the claims of paranormal activity. Some suggest that the area’s reputation is simply the result of folklore and urban legend, which have been perpetuated over time.



Carl Drew's mugshot. Facebook photo.

One of the most notorious cases of cult activity and murder in the Bridgewater Triangle is the case of Carl Drew and Robin Murphy. In the early 1980s, Drew and Murphy were accused of being members of a satanic cult that operated in the area, and were charged with the murder of several women who were believed to have been involved with the cult.

The case was complicated and controversial, with some arguing that the murders were the result of drug-fueled, non-ritualistic violence rather than satanic rituals. Nevertheless, Drew and Murphy were both found guilty and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

However, in 2021, Robin Murphy was released from prison due to a change in Massachusetts law that allows for parole after 25 years for juveniles convicted of murder. Drew died in prison in 2008.

Despite the convictions, the case remains shrouded in mystery and controversy, and the possibility of a larger, organized cult operating in the Bridgewater Triangle continues to be a subject of debate among those interested in the paranormal and unsolved crimes.



15-year-old Mary Lou Arruda, abducted and killed by James M. Kater and 17-year old prostitute Doreen Levesque allegedly killed by her pimp Carl Drew, however many believe both teens were victims of a Satanic cult. Facebook photo.