

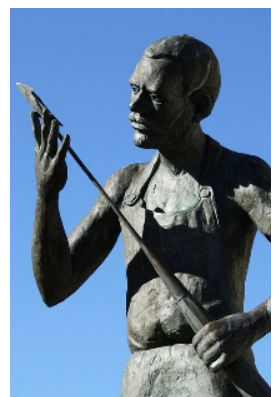
# Some Notable New Bedford African-Americans



by  
Michael  
Silvia

As you know, February is “Black History Month” in the United States. What you may not know is that New Bedford has deep roots when it comes to African-Americans. The city was an integral part of the Underground Railroad that helped bring slaves from the southern slavery states into the north. In 1833, the first anti-slavery society was founded in New Bedford. Here are some notable New Bedford African-Americans and their accomplishments:

- **Frederick Douglass** – Runaway slave who became a famous abolitionist and lived in New Bedford in the late 1840s.
- **William Harvey Carney** – Received the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Fort Wagner, which took place during the Civil War. W.H. Carney Academy elementary school is named in his honor.



Lewis  
Temple's

- **Robert H. Carter III** – Carter paved the way for African-Americans by being the first to practice pharmacy in Massachusetts, which he did by earning his license in 1886.
- **Lewis Temple** – Invented the toggle iron harpoon in 1848, helping put New Bedford on the map. By the 1890's, thanks to the Whaling industry, New Bedford was the fourth largest cargo terminal in the United States, behind New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans.
- **James E. Reed** – James E Reed left an abundance of photos behind capturing the city and region for three decades giving us a window to the past.
- **54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry** -Many New Bedford African-Americans (including William Harvey Carney) joined the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, one of the first black units during the Civil War. The movie *Glory*, starring Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, and Morgan Freeman, detail the story of this unit.
- **Charles Manuel “Sweet Daddy” Grace** – Founded the **United House of Prayer for All People**.
- **Mary J. “Polly” Johnson** – First home in freedom to renowned fugitive Frederick Douglass.
- **William Bush** – Instrumental in the Underground Railroad.

### Places to Visit:

- William Harvey Carney is buried in New Bedford's Oak Grove Cemetery.



Click to  
Enlarge

- Charles Manuel “Sweet Daddy” Grace is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery.
- William Bush is buried Rural Cemetery.
- The Lewis Temple monument is located just outside the New Bedford Library.
- The New Bedford Historical Society at The Nathan and Mary (Polly) Johnson properties, where you can learn about the Underground Railroad, Fredrick Douglas, and much more! (Website)
- Check out some of the Underground Railroad locations and other historic sites in New Bedford.