

Dianne Boisvert

From: Katelyn E. Sullivan
Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 12:22 PM
To: Dianne Boisvert
Subject: FW: Nbpt Black History Initiative

Can you please include this email for the NHC on the site? I will send some photos too to include.

From: Geordie Vining <GVining@CityofNewburyport.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 23, 2021 2:47 PM
To: Glenn Richards <glennprichards@comcast.net>
Cc: Andrew Port <APort@CityofNewburyport.com>; Katelyn E. Sullivan <KESullivan@CityofNewburyport.com>
Subject: Nbpt Black History Initiative

Hi Glenn,

I have been working for the past few months with resident volunteers Cyd Raschke and Professor Kabria Baumgartner on an historic interpretive sign about the so-called "Guinea" area of Newburyport, which we anticipate placing on the Rail Trail near Low Street, and more recently on a broader list of interpretive signs on Newburyport's Black History. I am coordinating with Ghlee Woodworth who developed the Clipper Heritage Trail a decade ago. I am planning to go to the CPC for funding and the application is due in a few weeks on 2/3/22. We are thinking of about 6-8 permanent high quality historic interpretive signs, with professional layout and fabrication similar to the standard that we have created for the Rail Trail, Brown Square, Inn Street, etc., with locations to be determined but largely in the downtown area based on proximity to the historical locations and people described.

The purpose of this particular initiative is to incorporate Newburyport's Black history more fully into the public landscape using the City's standard historic interpretive sign format, so that residents and visitors can encounter the information and stories in their day-to-day lives. The signs should add to and expand beyond the stories of Newburyport's place in the 19th Century Abolition movement, and center on the stories of Black Newburyporters. The interpretive panels will illustrate the diversity in Newburyport's past from the pre-Revolutionary period to the early 20th Century, as well as shine a light on some of the complications of our community's history. The signs will hopefully help take a small step towards building a more inclusive and welcoming community, and help inform Newburyport's understanding of its collective past, and by extension the present and future of the community through a broader and truer understanding of our history.

Please see the draft list below. Could you please let me know what you think? A number of us have been talking about this kind of thing for years, and I believe there is some momentum to see it through.

Thank you! -- Geordie

Newburyport Black History Initiative

1. "Guinea Village" sign – 19th Century African American community

- Local residents used to call this section of Newburyport "Guinea" – and the old 1840 railroad bridge "Guinea Bridge" – because of the predominantly Black community that existed here during the early 19th Century
- Girls from Guinea seek education in Newburyport public schools; denied for a generation

- Annual “Election Day” festivities – homegrown rituals and celebrations
- Location: on Clipper City Rail Trail near Low Street bridge

2. Black Newburyporters Brought Freedom Lawsuits in Court and Petitioned the Massachusetts Legislature Against Slavery

- Freedom lawsuits helped lead to legally ending slavery in Massachusetts by 1780; enslaved people in Massachusetts had some legal rights and access to the mainstream courts, and there were about two dozen freedom lawsuits in years before Revolutionary War
- 1773: Newburyport’s Caesar Hendrick sued Richard Greenleaf in 1773, with aid of counsel John Lowell, and was freed with damages of 18 pounds paid
- 1774: Caesar Sarter published jeremiad against slavery to public and legislature in Newburyport newspaper the Essex Journal and Merrimack Packet on August 17, 1774

1. Substantial Number of Newburyport’s Mariners During the Age of Sail in the 18th and 19th Centuries Were Black

- Few Americans recognize the degree to which Black history is a maritime history; seafaring was one of most significant occupations of Black men between 1740 and 1865, when systematic exclusion began (Jeffrey Bolster)
- 10-20% of sailors were Black during this period of Newburyport’s maritime history
- 1777: Daniel Cottle - Black sailor on Dalton privateer ship from Newburyport - captured by British and imprisoned with rest of crew in Mill Prison in Plymouth, England – went to nurse other sick prisoners for a month and died of smallpox
- Risk of kidnapping of Black men, forced on to ships, and sold into slavery – in Newburyport as well as rest of country
 - Profile: sons/family of Jude Hall, soldier in Revolutionary War, of Exeter NH James Hall, 19 years old, and brother William Hall – both were kidnapped at different times and forced on to Newburyport ships (third brother Aaron also kidnapped in Providence RI in 1807); enslaved; never came home; [The Liberator newspaper 08 March 1834, etc.];

2. Black Revolutionary War and Civil War Soldiers and Sailors from Newburyport

- 1776: Newburyport’s Pomp Jackson enlisted in a regiment of the Continental Army on 6/15/1776; four days later Pomp paid five shillings to Newburyport merchant Jonathan Jackson and was emancipated on 6/19/1776; Pomp was a fifer throughout the Revolutionary War through 1783
- Dozens of Black men from Newbury/Newburyport documented as Revolutionary War soldiers and sailors
- Edwin E. Moses – Civil War
- African Americans not allowed to be commissioned as officers

3. Black Owned Businesses in 19th Century Downtown Newburyport

- Liberty Street through to Water Street, side of Market Square buildings, old short cut to waterfront – old Elbow Alley or Lane
- Highlight group and patterns, and also individuals as possible

- Peter Romily, Black man from Havana, Cuba; arrived on Bayley ship; settled to become victualer 1860; 1870 restaurant at corner of Elbow Alley at #1 Water Street in the Ferry Wharf Building where he lived with wife and son; thrived and purchased section of building in which he worked; moved to restaurant on Liberty Street;
- John Young, lived on Elbow Lane, owned barbershop/hairdresser at 31 Merrimac St – *(corner of Green Street? Cleared as part of urban redevelopment?)*
- Andrew Raymond, barbershop on Market Square
- James and Lucinda Law, residents of Elbow Alley, mariner/cook and laundress

4. African Americans in Newburyport during early 20th century

o Profile of Louis Clarkson Tyree, 1884-1963

- Tyree had determination to succeed, with support from a few white individuals and educational institutions willing to ignore the prevailing prejudices of the time;
- Unusual for ANY person to go to higher education in this time period – and especially for an African American at that time
 - Around 1910, only about 3% of ALL 18-24 year-olds in U.S. enrolled in higher education
- father Charles Tyree born in slavery in TN in 1845, and was a sergeant in the Civil War’s 14th U.S. Colored Infantry; Louis was one of 11 children, 5 of whom died in infancy or youth
- Louis Tyree worked and boarded at Wolfe Tavern in Nbpt; went to Nbpt High School
- Enrolled in Harvard Law School as first year student with help from scholarship in October 1912 from Harvard Club of Newburyport, which gave him a \$150 scholarship to defray the \$250 annual tuition; one year, and had to drop out; ended at Boston University Bachelors 1919 and Masters of Law 1921
- Context – era of “race riots” massacres around the country, “Red Summer” of 1919, Tulsa massacre of 1921
- Louis tried to move to France – more “congenial environment” – ended in Chicago; died at 81, one year before 1964 Civil Rights Act

5. Profile of Townes Family in Early 20th Century Newburyport

- o Moved to nbpt; worked in shoe industry; Moses Prophet Townes worked for over 50 years as a porter at the Wolfe Tavern; Eliza worked as music teacher; lived on Titcomb St; boarders; two children died; founded 1924 Newburyport Union Baptist Church
- o *(1911-1931 family papers at PEM)*

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