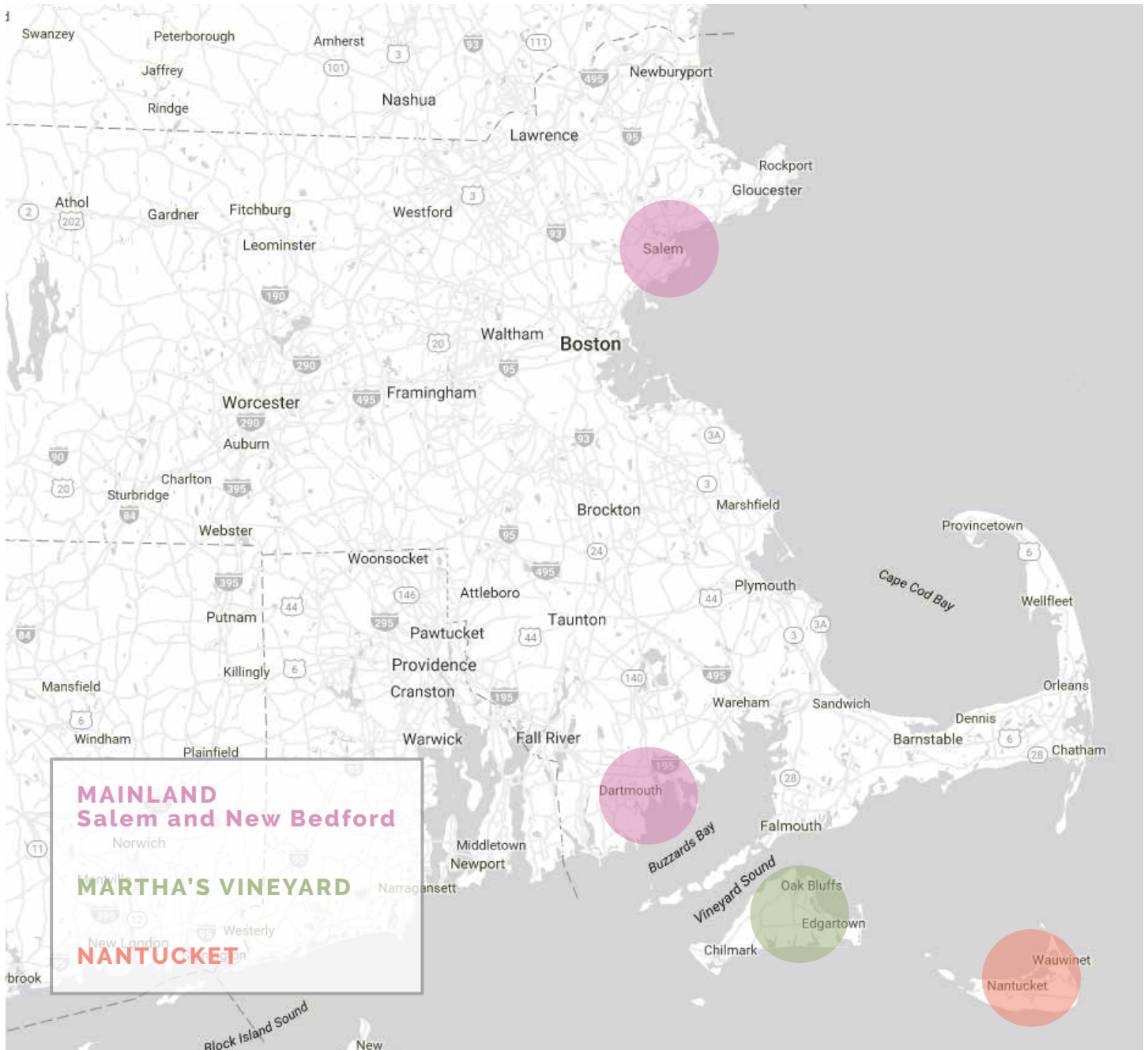


Black History in Massachusetts

MARITIME TRADITION AND OPPORTUNITY



One of the lesser known stories in Black History is the connection between African Americans and the coastline of New England. The Massachusetts maritime narrative was built on faith, opportunity, and freedom found in the sea-faring trades, particularly whaling. Here we focus on four distinct Massachusetts communities that continue to celebrate this rich trade-time tradition today: Salem, New Bedford, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard.

For heritage sites and events celebrating Black History in Massachusetts, visit massvacation.com

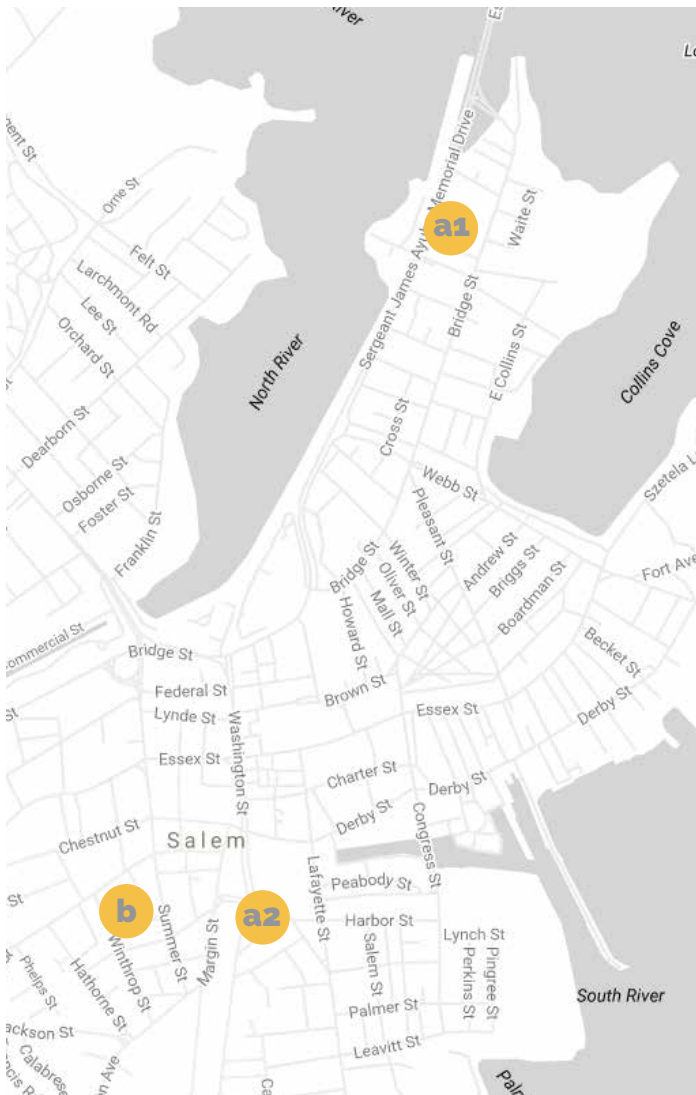
MAINLAND

SALEM and NEW BEDFORD

Massachusetts is famous for its seafaring trades. In the early 1800s, Salem and several other North Shore communities housed the most sailors in the state, with a significant number of African Americans calling this region home. Notable sailors, like Charles Benson, lived on Pond and Rice Streets, along with other free Black men in search of equal employment and pay under sail. As the economy in Salem flourished, entrepreneurs made strides and opened doors. Caribbean-born John Remond prospered with a catering business at the chief venue for festivities and banquets of the time, Hamilton Hall, even hosting a presidential dinner.

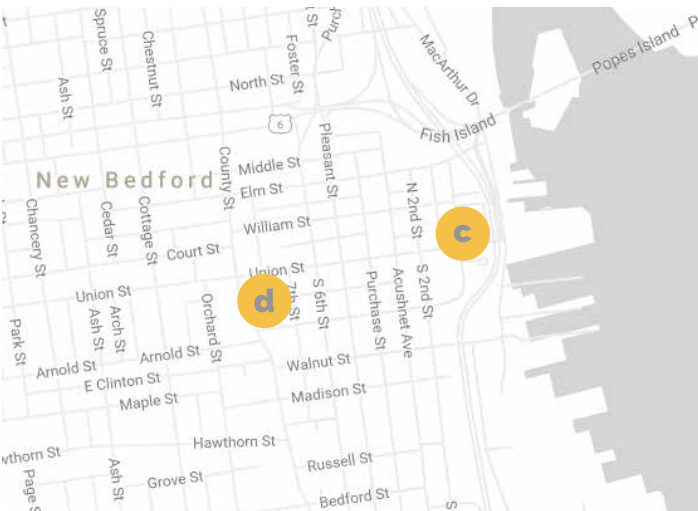
New Bedford is another Massachusetts city with strong ties to the sea. This port served not only as a haven for slaves seeking freedom, but also as a harbor of opportunity within the whaling industry. The city's Cape Verdean population has a history that dates back to the 17th century. Cape Verdean whalers were regarded for their harpoon and deep sea fishing skills, strengthening New Bedford's position as an 18th and 19th century commercial maritime hub.

With walking tours and historic trails, both Salem and New Bedford have a rich collection of heritage sites to explore that celebrate the significant contributions of Black immigrants who called the Bay State home.



MUST-SEE DESTINATIONS include:

- a** Stroll down **Rice (a1)** and **Pond Streets (a2)** in Salem where sailors of the 1830s-40s resided.
- b** Stop by **Hamilton Hall** on Salem's picturesque Chestnut Street, the center of catering and festivities run by Curacao immigrant, John Remond in the mid 1800s.
- c** Sightsee along the **New Bedford Black History Trail** in downtown New Bedford.
- d** Visit the **New Bedford Whaling Museum** and its **Cape Verde Maritime Exhibit**.



MARTHA'S VINEYARD

Martha's Vineyard celebrates its Black History with a 27-stop African American Heritage Trail. The Vineyard boasts one of the United States most inclusive integrated regions spanning two centuries. Since the 1800s, African Americans have called Oak Bluffs home.

The island's famous Gingerbread Houses were built by Methodist settlers in the early 18th century who sold land to freed slaves, sailors, and laborers. Many African Americans chose maritime professions for equal pay, and found the island provided many occasions to be treated as equals in real estate matters, religion, and community affairs. The tradition of Oak Bluffs and the island's unparalleled cultural inclusivity drew many Black families to purchase homes or vacation rentals in the region throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Oak Bluffs overlooks Nantucket Sound on the upper northeastern part of the island and has hosted several prominent United States Presidents, including the first Black President, Barak Obama. Many prominent civil rights leaders and pioneers of industry have roots on the island as well— from the first Black U.S. Senator, Edward Brooke to William Martin, the only African American Whaling Captain out of Martha's Vineyard.

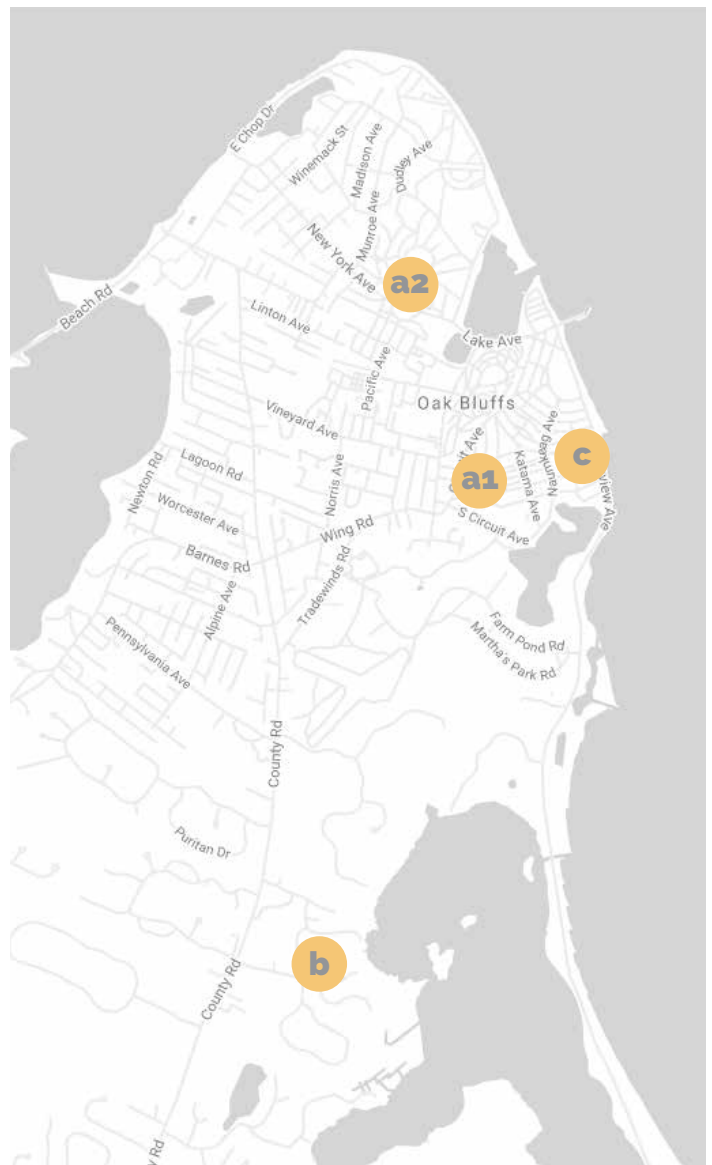


Shearer Cottage

MUST-SEE DESTINATIONS include:

- a** The **Landladies of Oak Bluffs** (a1) and **Shearer Cottage** (a2), two of Martha's Vineyard's first Black-owned and operated guest homes for African Americans visiting the island.
- b** **Farm Neck's Pulpit Rock**, where John Saunders preached to the island's African American community about matters of faith and inclusion.
- c** **The Overton House** — note its guestbook, which includes: Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Jackie Robinson, and many more famous figures in history!

Additionally, there are a number of sites to explore on the African American Heritage Trail of Martha's Vineyard. Details at mvafricanamericanheritagetrail.org



NANTUCKET

Nantucket has played a pivotal role in Massachusetts' maritime community and industry since its founding in 1641. The island is best known for its history as the epicenter of the whaling industry.

As a "working" island, trade was the essence of inhabitants' lives. Founded on Quaker-principles, all inhabitants on Nantucket who lived there worked, from basket weaving and sheep-herding to shipbuilding and whaling. Where neighboring island, Martha's Vineyard, was known for its work-life balance, Nantucket was a place many individuals came to enhance their profession and explore monetary prospects. Many of these individuals, including a significant immigrant population that manned whaling ships from Cape Verde, found salty success in the whaling industry as sailors, shipbuilders, sail makers, and whalers.

By the mid-1800s, many African American whalers and sailors were living and working on the island. Nantucket was also a safe haven for runaway slaves after slavery's abolition on the island in 1773. Whaling and crew careers were equal opportunities for Black men seeking equal labor and pay on the ocean.

New Guinea, or *Five Corners*, was home to the island's Black and Cape Verdean population. It's also the location of the African American Meeting House at the intersection of York and Pleasant Street; one of the first community meeting sites for education, faith, and entertainment in New England.



MUST-SEE DESTINATIONS include:

- a** **The African American Meeting House**, restored in 1999 to its original glory as a local community center for culture and learning.
- b** Adjacent to the Meeting House, visit the **Florence Higginbotham House** on 29 York Street, for insights into the life and times of people of color on the Islands.
- c** **The Nantucket Whaling Museum** is the capital of the Nantucket Historical Association, and well worth a visit to learn more about this infamous trade.

