

# Envisioning Paul Cuffe: Images from 1811- 2017

Presented by Carl J. Cruz  
New Bedford Historical Society

This presentation is dedicated to  
Mrs. Eleanor Tripp (1910 - 2003)

- 1759 Born Cuttyhunk Island
- 1807 “Memoir of an African Captain” first biography
- 1808 Membership in the Society of Friends
- 1810-11 First expedition to Sierra Leone establishing “The Friends Society of Sierra Leone”
- 1811 Silhouette by Charles Willson Peale, Philadelphia facing left
- 1811 “Memoir of the life of Paul Cuffee, the Interesting Negro Navigator”
- 1811 “Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Colour”
- 1812 Silhouette from a drawing by John Pole MD, Bristol, England facing right

1812 “Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Colour to which is subjoined, The Epistle of the Society of Sierra Leone in Africa”

1812 “A Brief account of the settlement and present situation of the colony of Sierra Leone in Africa”

1812 Cuffee meets with President James Monroe at the White House

1816. “Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Colour”

1817 Cuffee dies at home in Westport, Ma. September 9, 1817

1817 “A Discourse Delivered on the Death of Capt. Paul Cuffee, Before the New York African Institution, in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. October 21, 1817

“ he was “both tall and stout” spoke good English, and dressed “in the Quaker style” that is, he adorned “a drab-colored suit” with a large “flapped hat”.

Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* 1808

“His person is tall, well formed and athletic; his deportment conciliating, yet dignified and serious.” *Liverpool Mercury* 1811

“Memoirs of the Life of Paul Cuffee, the Interesting Negro Navigator” 1811

“In his person, Capt. Paul Cuffee was large and well proportioned.

”Peter Williams Jr. *A Discourse Delivered on the death of Capt. Paul Cuffee*” 1817

“I was pleased with the profile of Paul Cuffee-it is a striking likeness of him...”

Stephen W. Gould 1822

“Paul Cuffee is tall, well formed and athletic; his deportment conciliating, yet dignified and serious.” Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Colour, Wilson Armistead 1840

“Paul Cuffee was in person well formed and prepossessing --- tall and athletic --- of noble bearing.” William J. Allison, The Non-Slaveholder 1850

“Paul Cuffee, or Cuff is represented to have been a man of noble personal appearance, tall, portly and dignified in his bearing.” Daniel Ricketson, History of New Bedford 1858

“He is described as tall, with straight hair, of light complexion, with dignity of mien.” Zephaniah W. Pease, History of New Bedford 1918

“Of medium height, stocky tending towards portliness, fashionably dressed (for a Quaker) , he looked every inch the country squire except for his skin color.” Sheldon Harris, Black America and the African Return 1972

“Paul was unmistakably both African and Native American in physical inheritance. He was big enough to stand out, and he dressed in his sober Quaker grey and wide brimmed black hat, he was impressive.” Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters, 1808-1817 1996

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1806  
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MEMOIR  
OF  
CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFEE,  
A MAN OF COLOUR: 4  
1811  
Cuffe  
York  
TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED  
THE EPISTLE  
OF THE  
SOCIETY OF SIERRA LEONE,  
IN AFRICA, &c.

“Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
Till some reason ye shall find  
Worthier of regard, and stronger  
Than the colour of our kind.”

COWPER.

York:

PRINTED BY C. PEACOCK,  
FOR  
W. ALEXANDER, AND SOLD BY HIM;  
SOLD ALSO BY DARTON, HARVEY, AND CO. GRACE  
CHURCH-STREET, AND W. PHILLIPS, LOMBARD-  
STREET, LONDON.

1811.

A  
BRIEF ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
SETTLEMENT AND PRESENT SITUATION  
OF  
THE COLONY  
OF  
SIERRA LEONE,  
IN AFRICA;

AS COMMUNICATED BY PAUL CUFFEE (A MAN OF COLOUR)  
TO HIS FRIEND IN NEW YORK: ALSO, AN EX-  
PLANATION OF THE OBJECT OF HIS VISIT,  
AND SOME ADVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF  
COLOUR IN THE UNITED STATES.

Cuffee, Paul

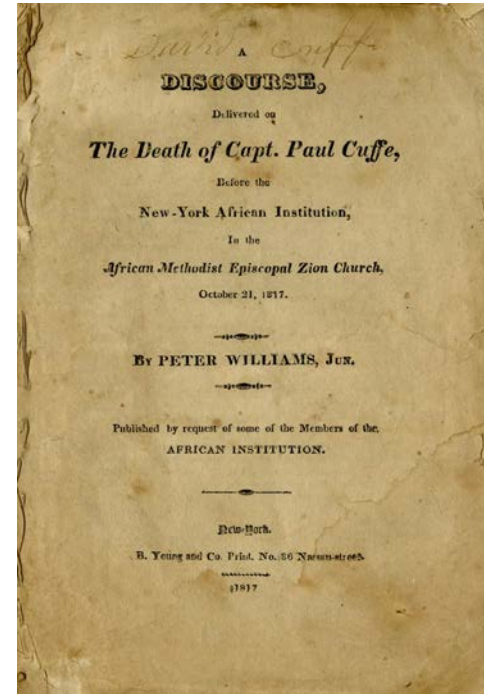
TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED,

An address to the people of colour, from the Con-  
vention of Delegates from the Aboli-  
tion Societies in the U. States.

NEW-YORK:  
PRINTED BY SAMUEL WOOD,  
NO 357, PEARL-STREET.  
1812.



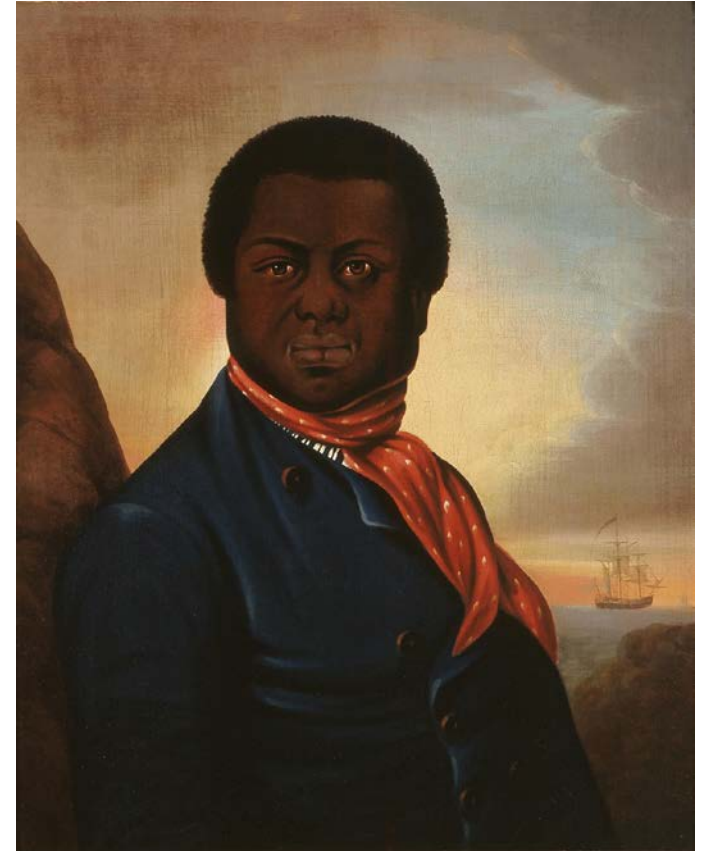
Rev. Peter Williams Jr. (1780-1840), an abolitionist, was the son of the founder in 1796 of what would become the AME Zion Church in New York City. He helped establish the first Black Episcopal church in New York City. St. Philips African Episcopal Church where he was pastor. Cuffe's sister Freelove Slocum was a member of the AME Zion Church. Rev. Williams was one of a few people who knew Cuffe personally and wrote a physical description of him. This pamphlet was owned by Paul's brother David Cuff. You can see his name on it. This document is in the collection of the New York Historical Society.



This American School painting, oil on canvas ca 1800, Artist unknown is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Over the years, it has been listed or exhibited under different descriptions ie “Portrait of Jamaican Seamen”, Portrait of a black sailor” and now “Portrait of a Sailor”.

Christie's of London in 1952 listed the artist as John Singleton Copley (1738-1815).

In 1976, Historian Sidney Kaplan attributed the painting to Paul Cuffe based on the likeness of the 1812 silhouette. To date it has not been identified.

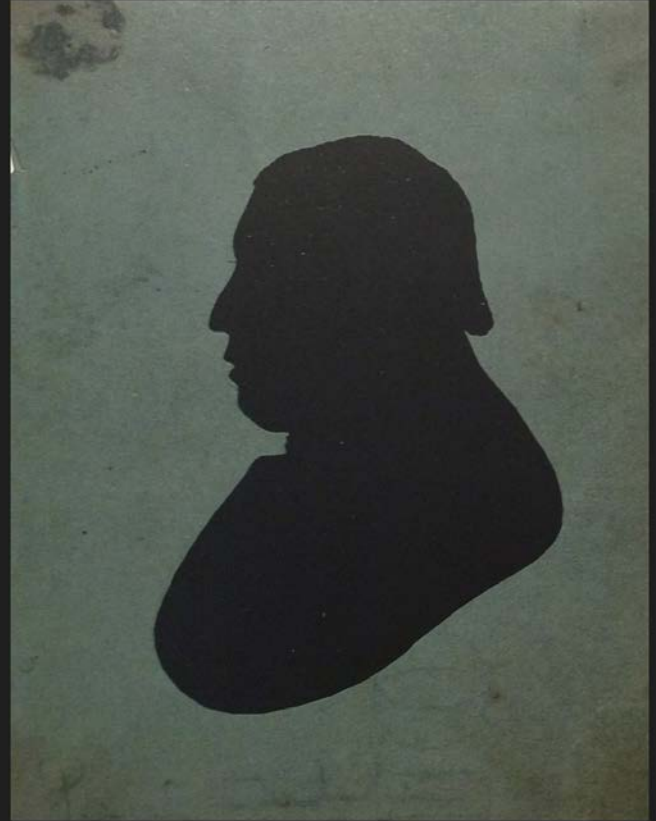


This American School Portrait oil on canvas, first appeared in public in 1976 at Sotheby's listed as Captain Paul Cuffe. It was sold as "portrait of a man." It reappeared in 2009 at the Gene Shapiro Auction House as Captain Paul Cuffe, artist Chester Harding (1792-1860) and sold to the New England Genealogical Historical Society in Boston. Harding is no longer listed as the artist and attribution of Paul Cuffe is in question. The Society purchased this Portrait in 2012 in honor of Prof. Henry Louis Gates Jr., "who suggested they would benefit from a broader representation of America's diversity on our walls."



In the collection of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, this 1811 silhouette attributed to and in the style of American painter Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), is believed to be the earliest known image of Cuffee and likely done on one of his many visits to Philadelphia. While attributed to Peale, there is some evidence it was done by Peale's slave Moses Williams (1777-1825) who worked in Peale's museum as a silhouette artist and cutter for over 20 years.

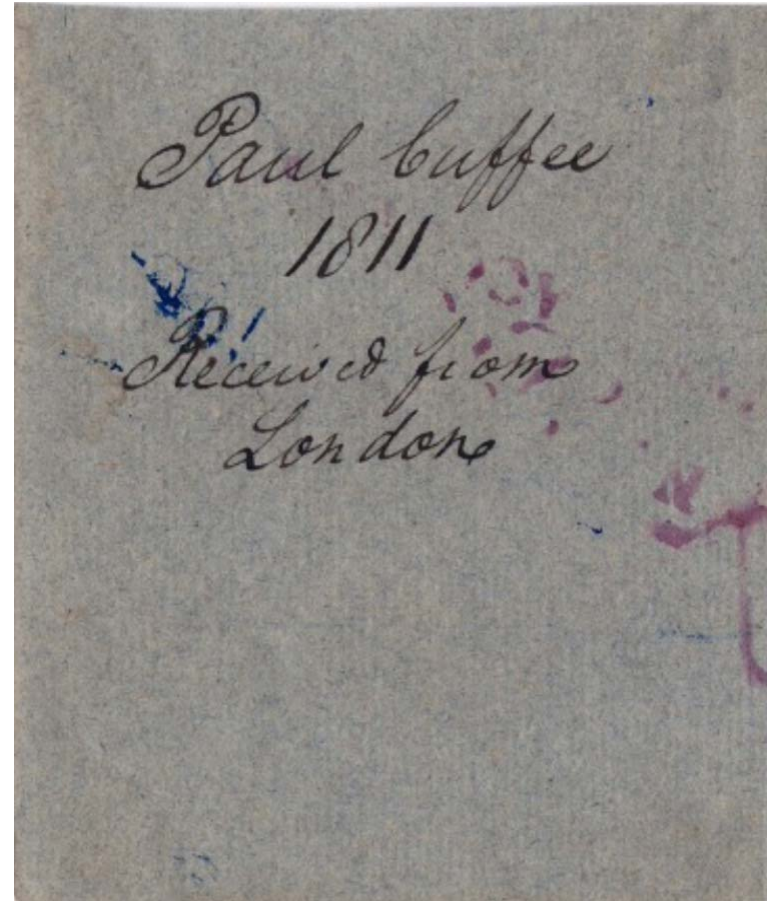
On the reverse side is the inscription "Paul Cuffee 1811 received from London"



On the reverse, is this significant note indicating this was probably brought to London and then returned to Philadelphia.

Cuffee can be documented in having traveled to both places. It was not uncommon for the sitter to give to friends as the cost was reasonable.

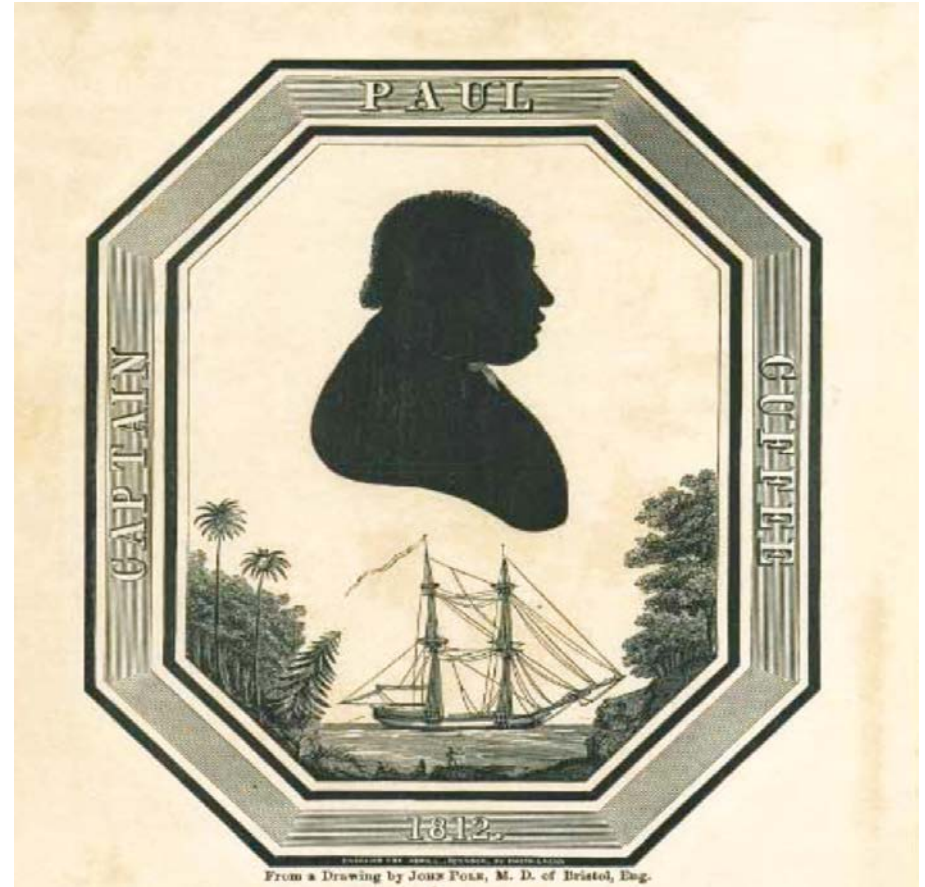
Early Quakers objected to having their Portraits drawn or painted, but likeness drawn from tracing a shadow casting and trimming out the resulting shape were considered acceptable by the Church.



The most recognizable and iconic image of Cuffee. This 1812 silhouette after a drawing by John Pole MD (1705-1775) of Bristol, England displays his image prominently centered between the shores of Sierra Leone and New England above his ship the “Traveller” with several natives on shore.

This engraving was done in Philadelphia by Mason and Maas. There is strong evidence the drawing was done by Thomas Pole MD (1753-1829) son of John Pole.

Abraham L. Pennock, publisher/editor of “The Non-Slaveholder” commissioned this silhouette for the frontispiece of the final volume of the anti-slavery monthly in 1850 which included “A Brief Memoir of Paul Cuffee” written by abolitionist William J. Allison. (Cruz Collection)





This December 1850 edition was the last copy of this anti-slavery periodical which advocated free labor and free produce at a time when both were under fire. This is the only issue in the five years of publication to include a frontispiece. In a letter written in 1851, (Cuffee papers NBFPL) by Samuel Allison, nephew of William we have a description of the silhouette and how this frontispiece came to be associated with the this periodical. A great tribute to this extraordinary man. (Westport Historical Society)

THE  
NON-SLAVEHOLDER.

"Whoso gives the motive, makes his brother's sin his own."

VOL. V.] PHILADELPHIA, TWELFTH MONTH, 1850. [NO. 12

EDITED BY SAMUEL RHOADS.

—  
PUBLISHED MONTHLY

At the N. W. corner of Fifth and Cherry streets,  
PHILADELPHIA.

Price one dollar per annum, or six copies for five dollars—subject to newspaper postage only.

☞ The Non-Slaveholder is frequently sent to persons who are not subscribers. To these, no charge is, of course, made. It is hoped they will take the paper from the Post Office, and read and circulate it.

☞ All communications and remittances should be directed to SAMUEL RHOADS, PHILADELPHIA.

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COMMUNICATION.

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For the Non-Slaveholder.

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF PAUL CUFFEE.

BY W. J. ALLINSON.

Among the individuals who in various ages have attracted the notice of the public, a large proportion, perhaps, have been by nature endow-

ory of such an one again into view, after he has been partially forgotten by the busy throng in the lapse of half a generation.

Paul Cuffee, the youngest son of a captured African, was born A. D. 1759 on the Island of Cottenhunker, near New Bedford, Massachusetts. John Cuffee, his father, having been kept during the chief part of his life in slavery, was enabled, through great diligence, faithfulness and economy, to purchase his freedom. He married an Indian woman, one of the aboriginal owners of the soil of Massachusetts, and left at his death an unproductive farm of 100 acres. The care of the widow and her six daughters chiefly devolved upon Paul. His three brothers became respectable farmers. To the mind of Paul, however, Commerce presented stronger attractions, and he entered, at the age of 16, with a view to qualifying himself for this pursuit, as a common hand in a whaling expedition bound for the Gulf of Mexico. He remained four years as a subordinate. In his third voyage, which was

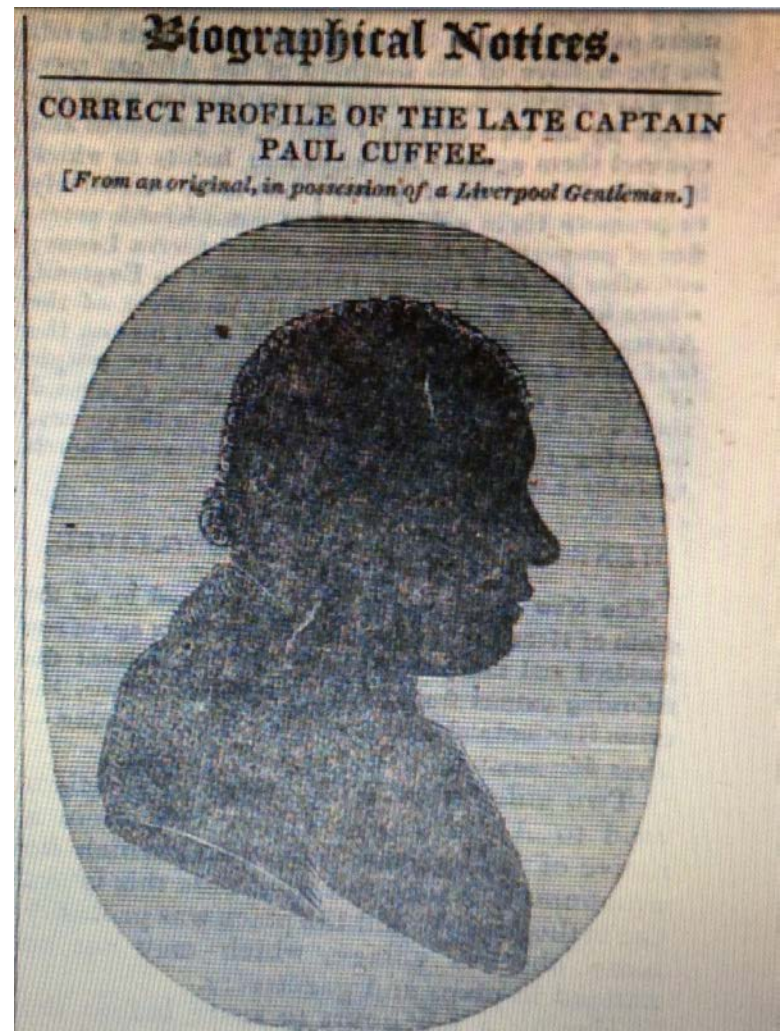
This silhouette was done by Thomas Pole MD, Bristol England in ca.1822. Notice the framing and highlighting is similar in style to the 1812 Cuffee silhouette. (Thomas Pole, M.D. written by Edmund Tolson Wedmore for The Friends' Historical Society, London 1908)



MARTHA SAVORY.



This silhouette appeared in the May 3, 1822 edition of The London Mercury and the May 7, 1822 edition of The Kaleidoscope; or Literary and Scientific Mirror. This appears to be the article Stephen Wanton Gould (1781-1832), of Newport R.I. was referring to when he wrote to Friend Thomas Thompson (Liverpool) on May 20, 1822 stating “ I was pleased with the profile of Paul Cuffee - it is a striking likeness”. Stephen Gould knew Cuffee intimately from 1810-1817. In fact, one of the last letters Cuffee wrote before his death was to Gould on August 8, 1817 “ I am in a low State of health, as thou Proposed of a physician from there I think now to except of thy offer If thee can make it Conveanant to Come with him thy Company would be very agreeable.....I am thy ashurd friend Paul Cuffee”



In 1840, abolitionist and writer Wilson Armistead of Leeds, England included this silhouette in an article he wrote "Memoir of Paul Cuffe, A Man of Colour" published in London by Edmund Fry. There is no attribution associated with this image.

This pamphlet is in the collections of Cornell University and Swarthmore College.



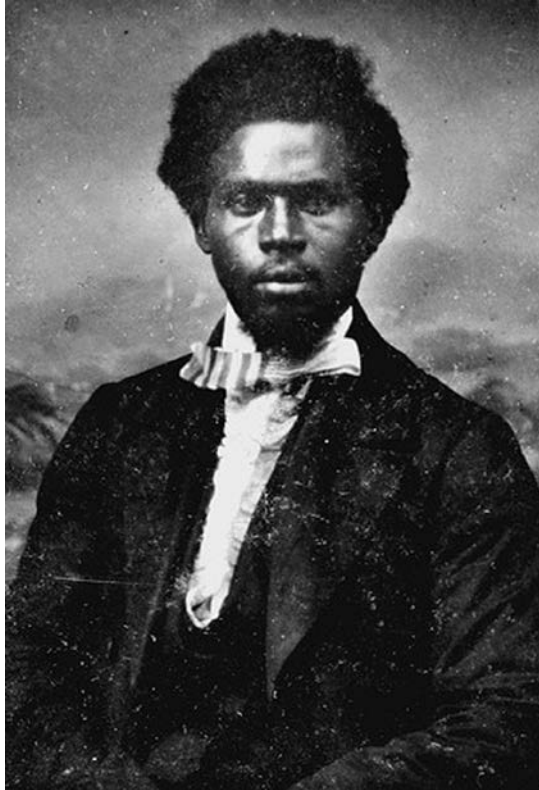
*Paul Cuffe.*

OB. 5 MO. 7. 1817.

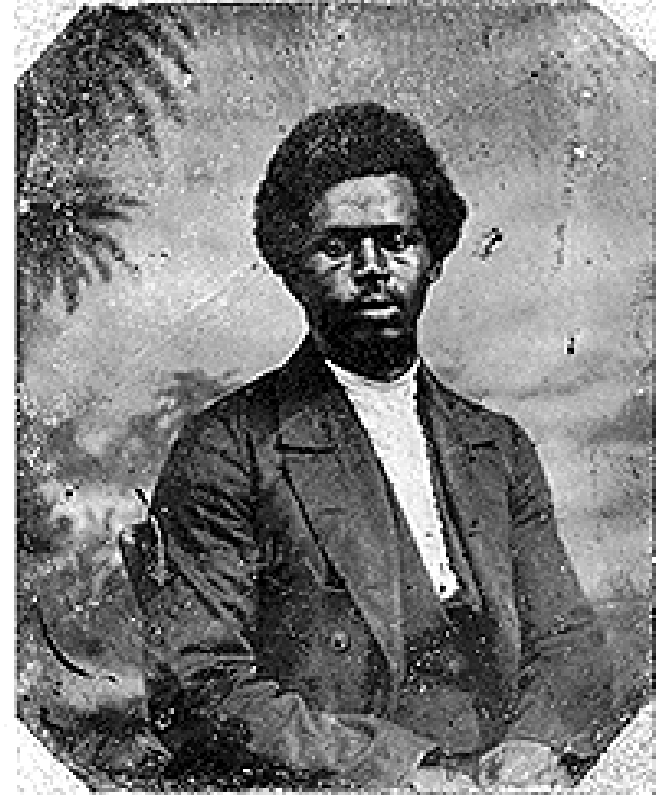
The exertions of this truly benevolent individual .  
entitle him to the esteem of the world . and the  
grateful remembrance of latest posterity .

In a conversation, with the archivist at Swarthmore College, they attribute this engraving to Mason and Mass of Philadelphia, the engravers of the 1812 Silhouette.





This photograph alleging to be Paul Cuffe appears on most search engines without attribution. It appears to be photo shopped and based on the 1812 engraving by its framing and inclusion of an exotic tree. Based on the sitter's clothing, this picture is ca 1860.



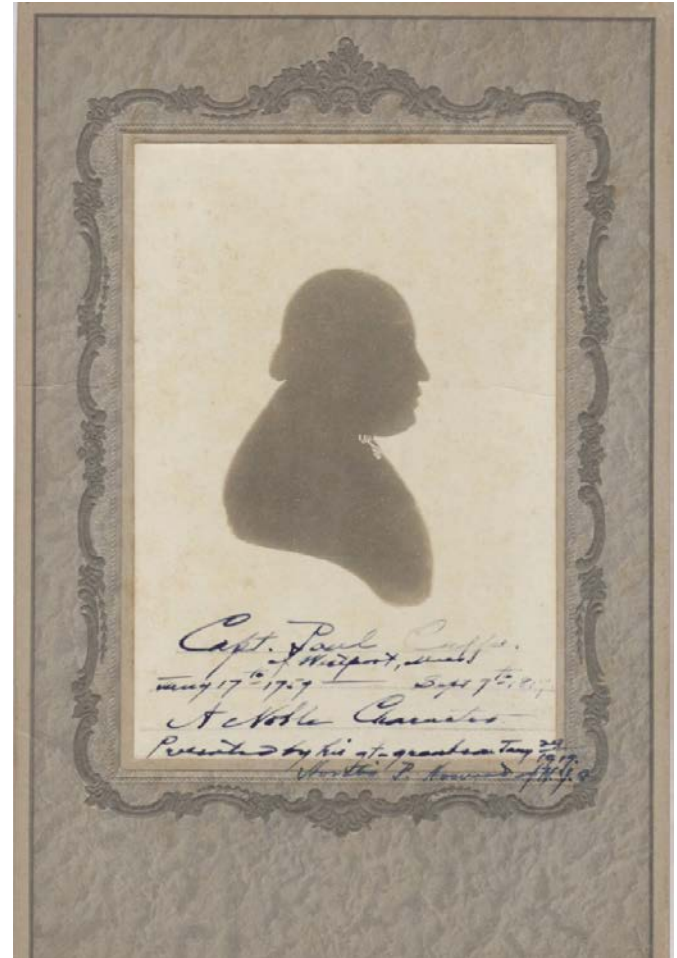
This tintype photograph ca 1862-05 is of Robert Smalls (1839-1915) former slave, who became a ship's pilot, sea captain and Member of the US House of Representatives (1882-1883 & 1884-1887) from South Carolina during Reconstruction.



This ca 1852-1857 oil painting by William A. Wall (1801-1885) is one of three versions of this painting with different titles. In an 1859 letter to Wm. Penn Howland, Wall identified many of the people by name. The colored people were identified as a group. It was not until 1897, when H.S. Hutchinson & Co. in an effort to promote the 1892 print now titled “New Bedford in 1810” identified one of the colored persons as Paul Cuffe, “a minister among his people.” (New Bedford Free Public Library)



In 1919 Horatio P. Howard, the great grandson of Paul Cuffee, who erected the Monument in 1913 sent this notecard to the Westport Friends Meeting. This silhouette is similar and most likely the 1812 engraving which he reproduced in the pamphlet entitled "Self Made Man: Capt. Paul Cuffee" given out at the dedication.  
(Westport Historical Society)





Designed in 1920 by Selectman George W. Russell, this is the Town Seal, The upper portion depicts the Waite-Potter House, one of the earliest dwellings in Westport. Lower left the farmer behind plow represents agriculture in Westport. Lower right Capt. Paul Cuffe and for establishing the first free integrated school in Westport. The black and white seal is the 1920 version which first appeared on the 1930 Town Record and the modern version on the 2014 cover.

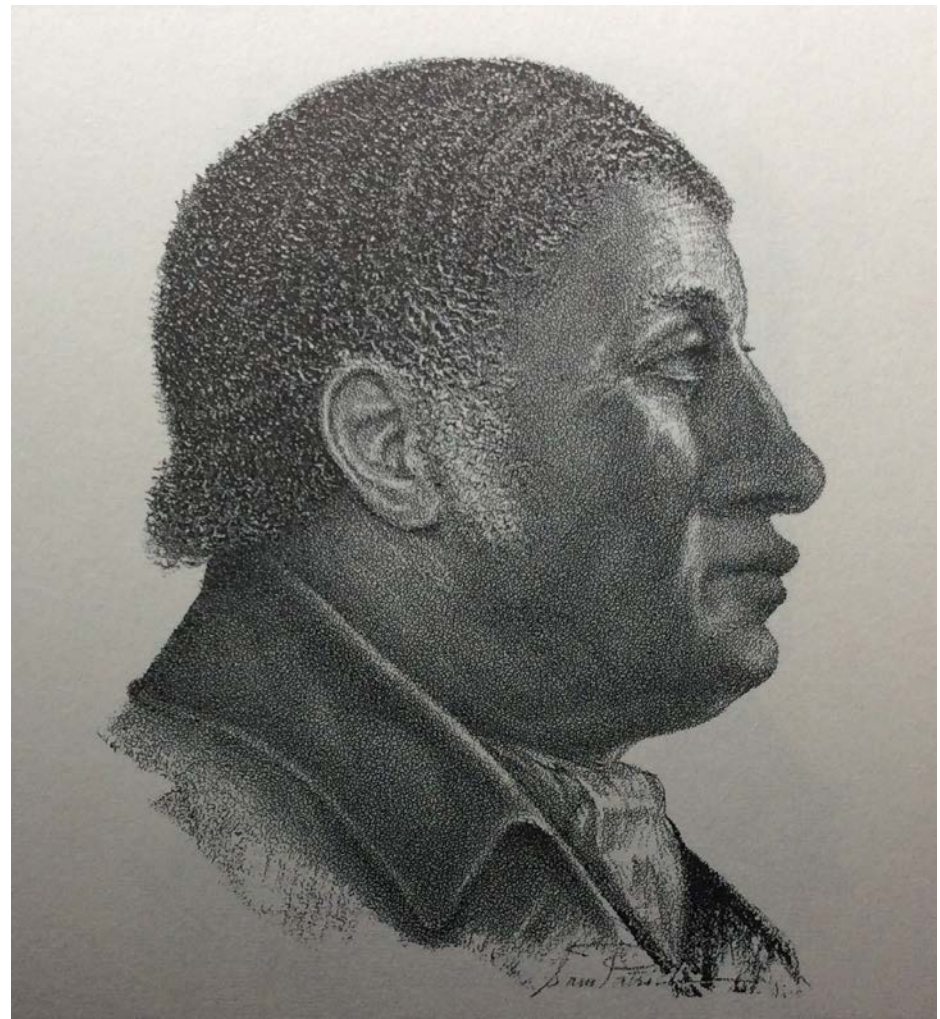




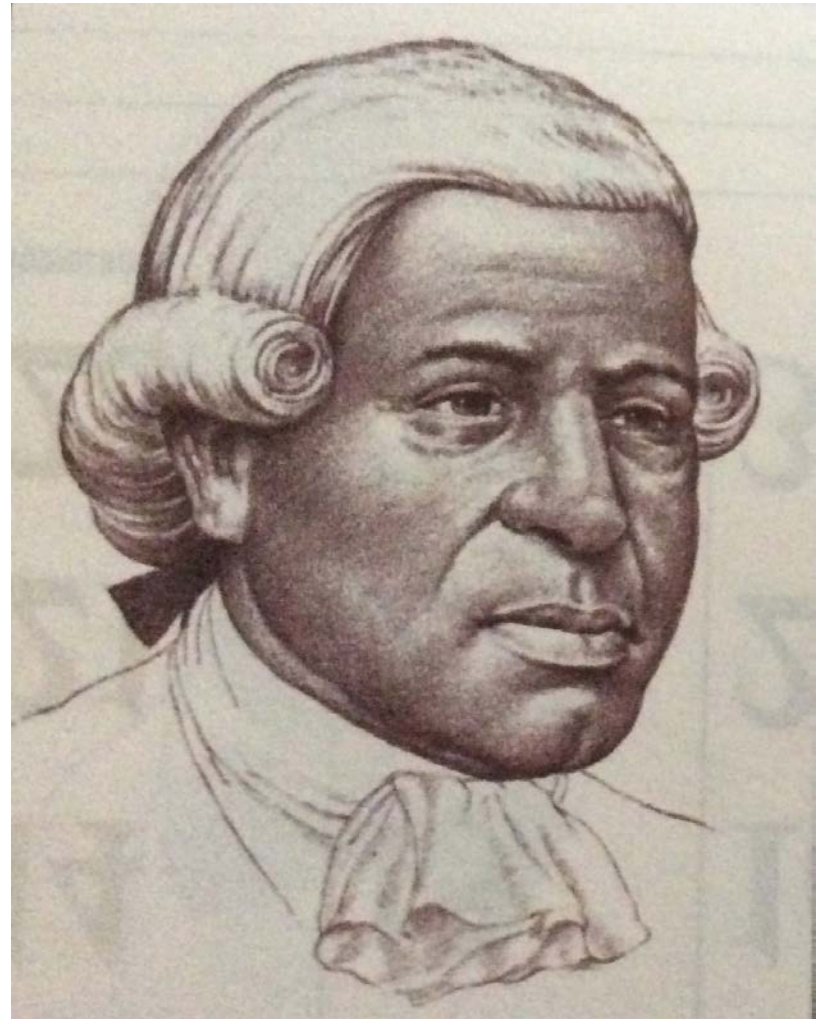
This 1969 illustration of Cuffee is part of the “Profiles of Black Americans” flash card series by Richard A. Boning and illustrator Joseph Forte. (Cruz Collection)



This illustration by Sam Patrick is included in the three volume book entitled "They had a Dream" by George Reason dated 1971 and published by the Los Angeles Syndicaret. ( Cruz Collection)



This sepia tone drawing was designed by well known African-American artist Calvin Massey of Philadelphia in 1971. The print was commissioned by "The American Negro Commemorative Society". The image was included in the story of "The Great American Negro Calendar" for 1971 and also a stamp. (Cruz Collection)



This Portrait, oil on canvas was commissioned in 1989 by the Hall of Black Achievement at Bridgewater State University. The Artist is Larry Johnson an African-American illustrator. Mr. Johnson used the 1812 silhouette as his model and brought this realistic image to life.





# Cuffee

This 1990 illustration of Cuffee and his *Ship Traveller*, included in the “A Salute to Black Pioneers Vol. III 1990” by Editor and Publisher Richard L. Green, Embak Publishing Co., Chicago, Illinois. (Cruz Collection)

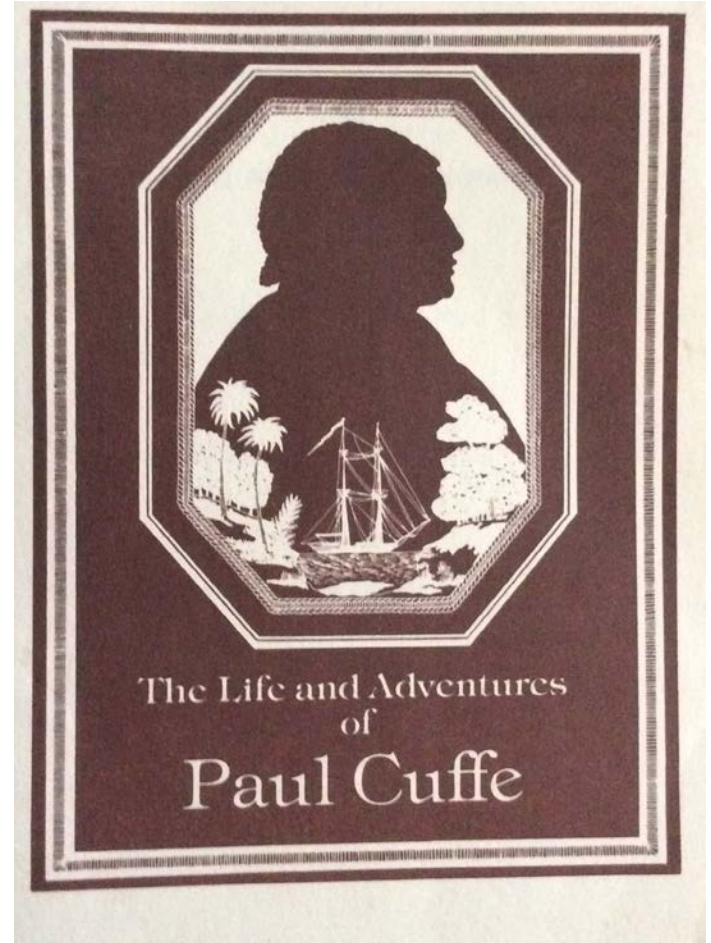


This illustration by Wayne Anthony Still, was created for the book “ Conscious Choices of African-Americans during the American Revolution “ , by Ann Chandler Howell, Ph.D in 1991. (Cruz Collection)



This pamphlet is a facsimile of the 1839 pamphlet entitled “The Life and Adventures of Paul Cuffe. It was printed by the former Cuffee’s Bookcase, Westport, Ma. For many years, researchers thought this was Captain Paul Cuffe. It is actually the life and adventures of his son Paul Cuffe Jr (1792-1843).  
(Cruz Collection}

This is an exaggerated copy of the 1812 silhouette.



This sterling silver Medal coin was designed by Albert Wein for the Franklin Mint. It is one of 70 African- American coins commissioned for “The American Negro Commemorative Society “ from 1968-1974. These Medal Coins pay tribute to African- Americans who have made important contributions to the American heritage. The reverse side of the coin features a ship with the words “Sailing to a Free Land”. {Cruz Collection}

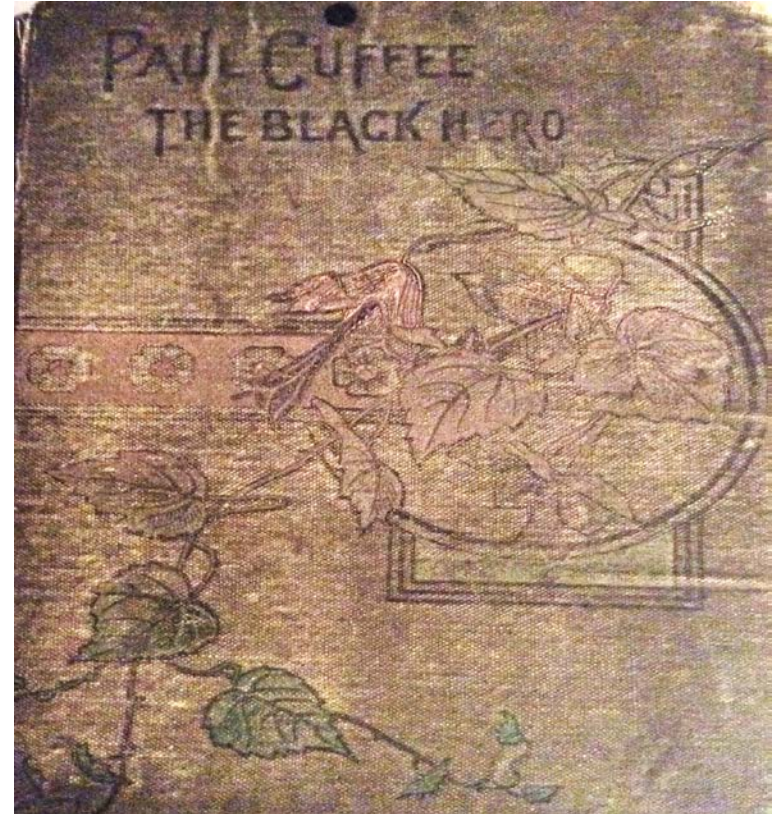
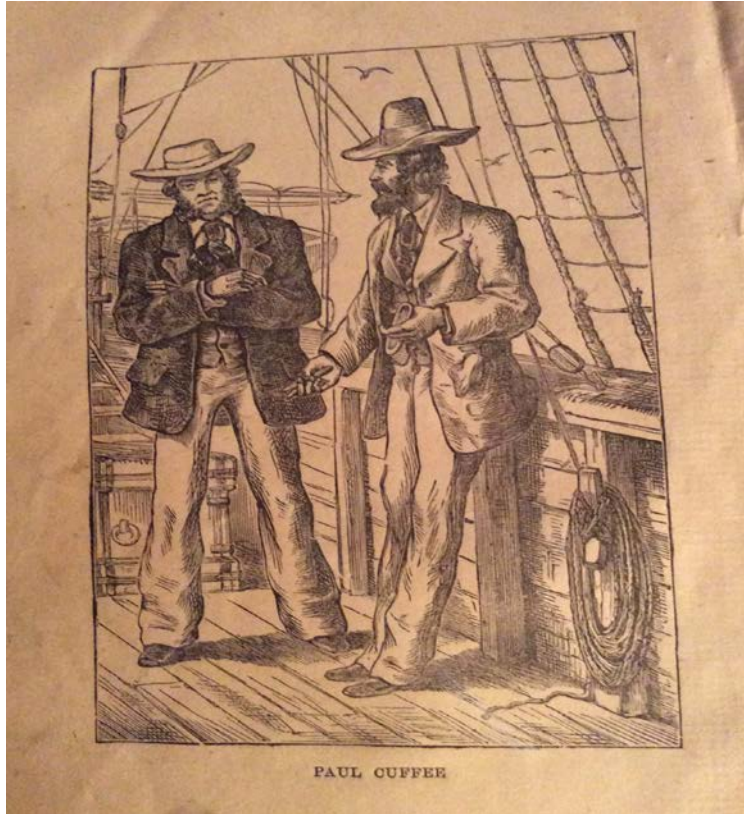




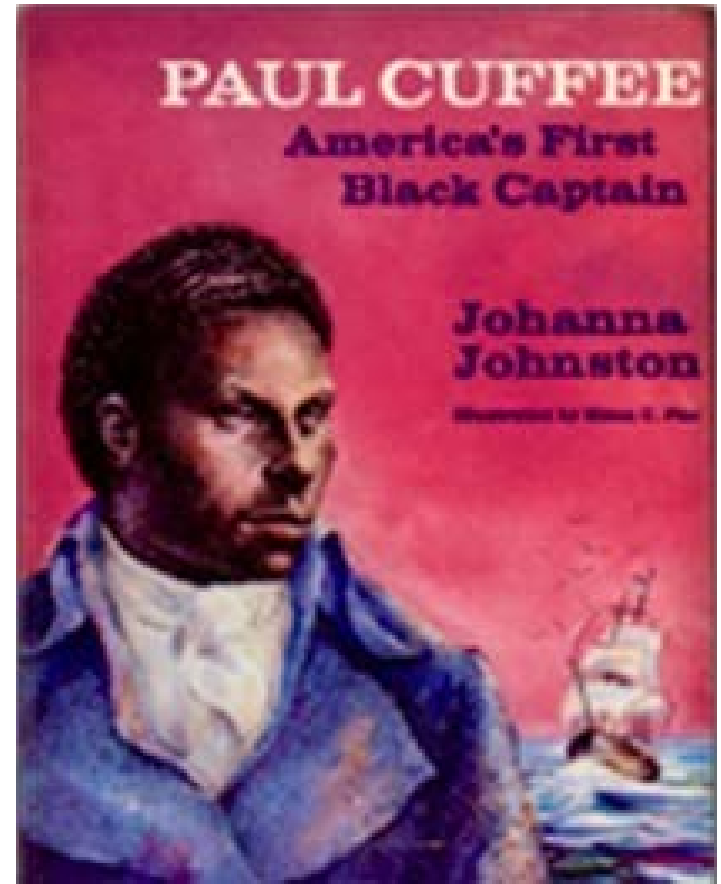
The reverse side commemorates Cuffe's trips to England and Sierra Leone. (Cruz Collection)



Paul Cuffee: The Black Hero. A Narrative founded on facts. By the author "Lucy Smith, The Music Governess" "Jem the Tinker etc etc"

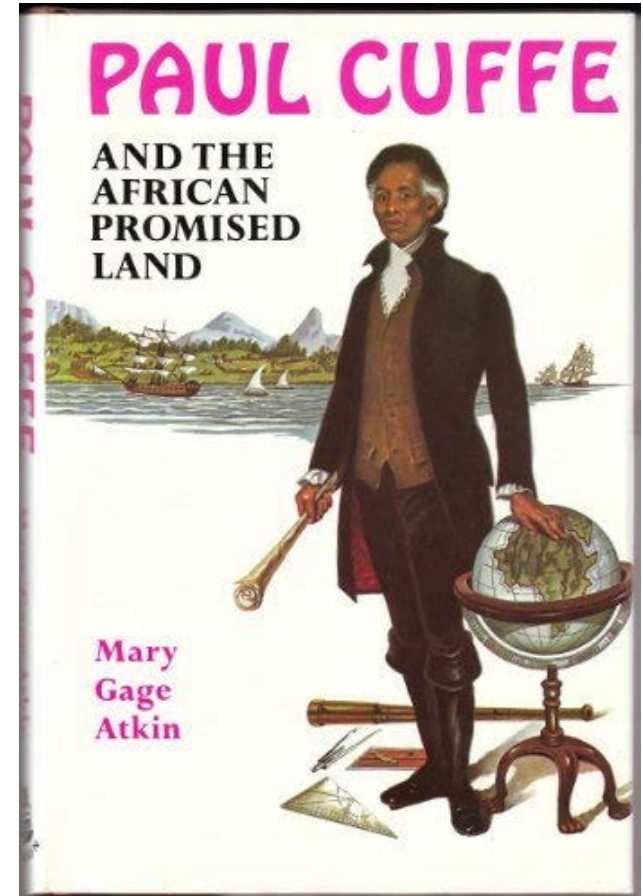


Published in 1970, this is one of the earliest children's book illustrated by African-American artist Elton C. Fax. (Cruz Collection)

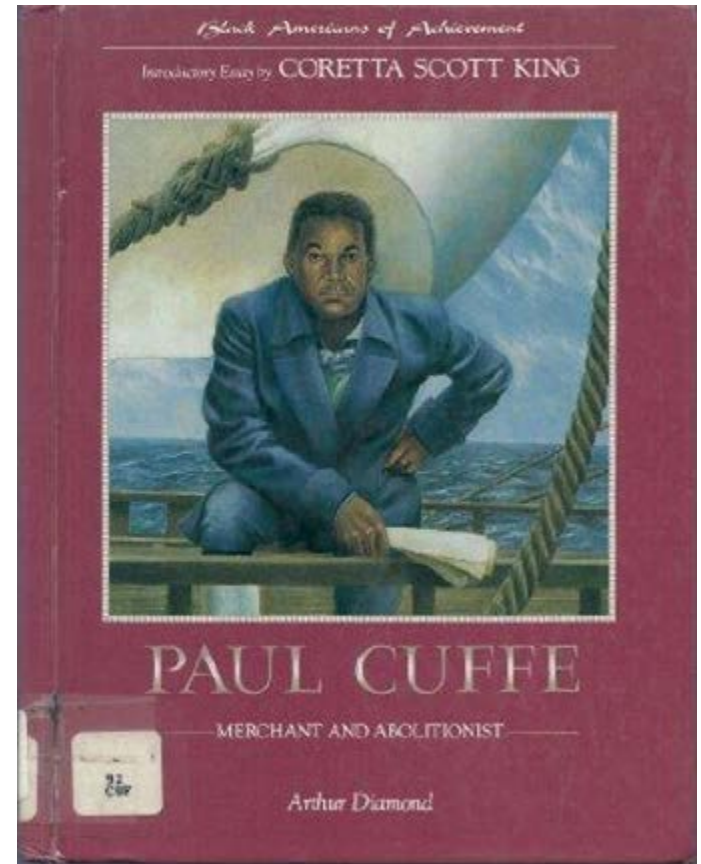




This children's book was published in 1977. It is illustrated by Eliza Moon. Here Cuffe is depicted as a well dressed traveler with his sights set on Africa and his ship in the foreground. (Cruz Collection)



Published in 1989 by African-American children's author, Arthur Diamond and illustrated by Bill Donahey, Cuffee is shown as a young man looking out from the deck of his ship. (Cruz Collection)



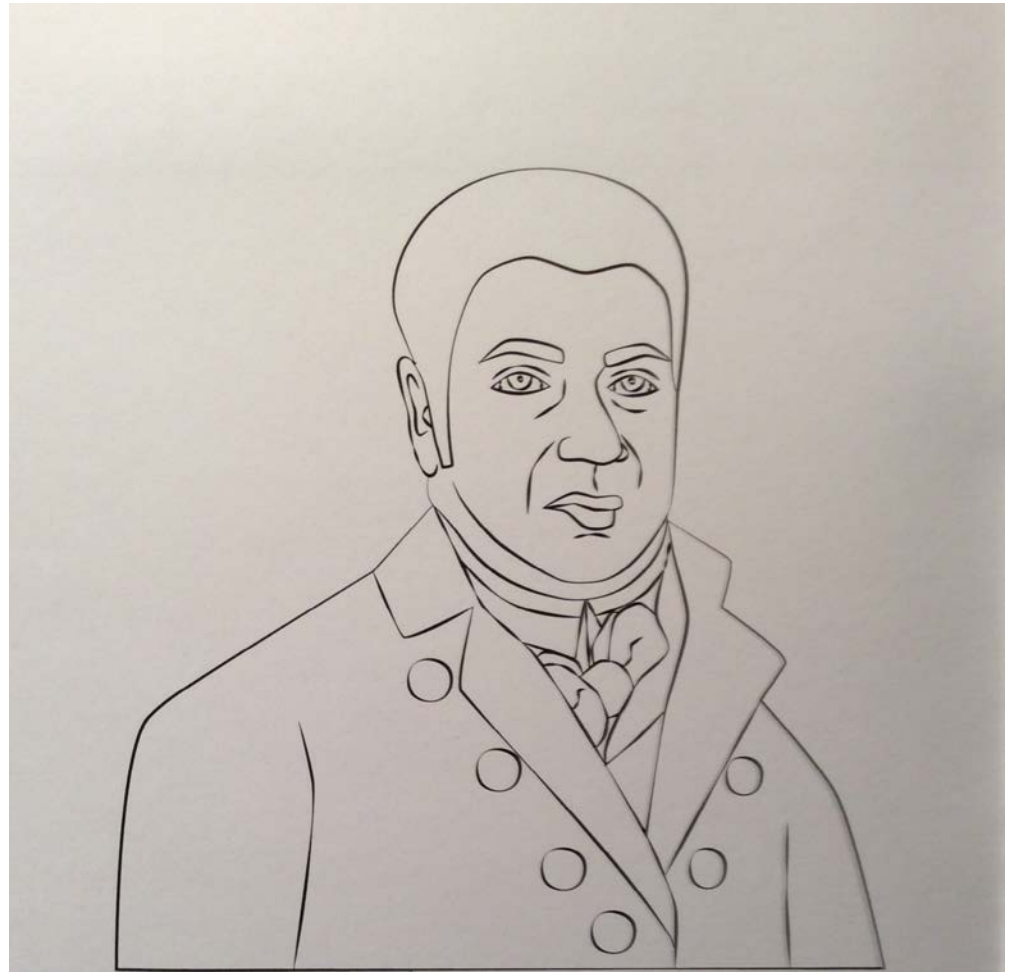
Partings Ways shared this 2016 action image of Paul Cuffe by artist Cecilia Moscote. Here Cuffe is in his open sailboat at the age of 20. This is part of their #historicalfanart series.



Illustrator Ashe Samuels, has created this image for his upcoming graphic novel.



This Cuffe image was designed by the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park for their 2017 Black History Coloring Book .This image is similar to the portrait owned by the New England Historic Genealogical Society.





Horatio P. Howard great grandson of Paul Cuffe who donated the monument which was dedicated on June 1913

