

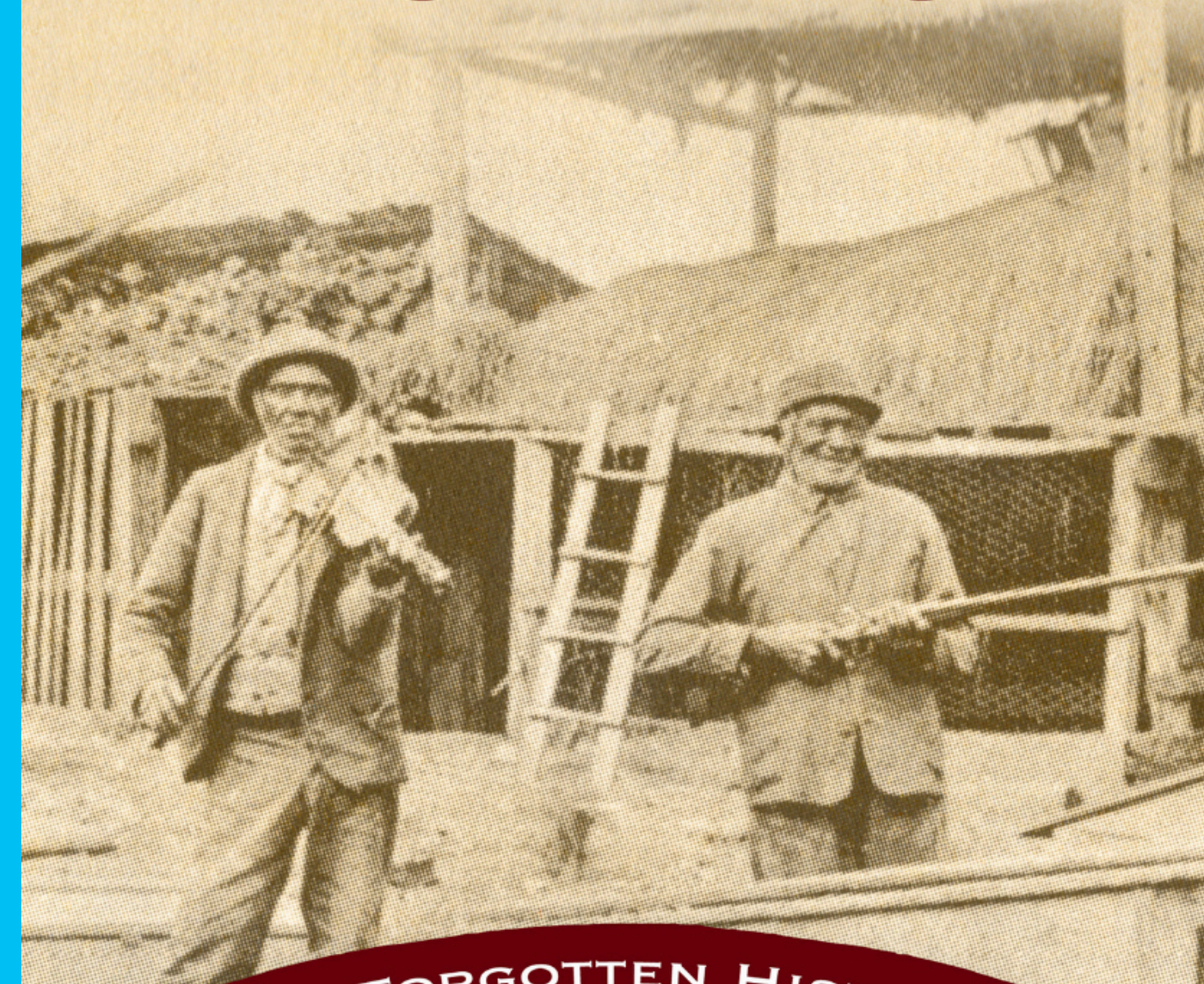
RABORN

BLACK KINGS AND GOVERNORS 1700-1800'S IN AMERICA

**Free black communities established by blacks called little Liberia
And New Guniea**

- The earliest reports on black king elections and parades in the New World can be found in a Latin-American context. In the early sixteenth century, Bernal Díaz del Castillo described how, during a celebration in Mexico City, a group of fifty sumptuously dressed black men and women escorted “their king and queen” in a parade.⁸⁵ In 1715, the French traveler Guy Le Gentil de la Barbinais observed how African slaves in Lima were
- divided into “tribes” that were commanded by their respective “kings,” who were responsible for order and justice in their communities. According to Le Gentil de la Barbinais, the city authorities of Lima used to give a financial compensation to the owner of the slave who “had been chosen as king.”⁸⁶ In the 1830s, John Wurdemann witnessed a slave celebration in Cuba where “each tribe, having elected its king and queen, paraded the streets with a flag,

The Pinkster King •• and the •• King of Kongo



THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY
OF AMERICA'S
DUTCH-OWNED SLAVES

**Jeroen
Dewulf**

NEGRO ELECTION DAY

New England, election day was the most important holiday of the year. 1 It is not surprising, then, that the occasion was also adopted by Yankee slaves for annual festivals to honor the Afro-American community. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century and continuing in places for almost a century thereafter, black New Englanders used the holiday both to elect governors and kings of their own and to celebrate the inauguration of the new officials.

While outwardly it may have seemed that the slave population was simply imitating the election festivities of their masters, in actuality Yankee bondsmen were creating an important celebration of black awareness which, like similar holidays elsewhere in the Americas, borrowed from African forms and satirized white society as much as it imitated Euro-American institutions.”

“By the 1770s black election celebrations had expanded to include Norwich, Connecticut, and Salem, Massachusetts. When the eighteenth century ended, similar institutions were found in Derby, Durham, Farmington, Middletown, Oxford, Wallingford, Waterbury, and Wethersfield in Connecticut; Danvers, Lynn, and North Bridgewater (and perhaps Boston) in Massachusetts; Portsmouth in New Hampshire; and North Kingston, South Kingston, and Warwick Neck in Rhode Island. Additional Connecticut towns like Seymour, Woodbridge, and New Haven were hosting Negro elections in the early nineteenth century, and probably began the tradition in the late eighteenth century.6”



Black Yankees

*The Development of an Afro-American
Subculture in Eighteenth-Century
New England*

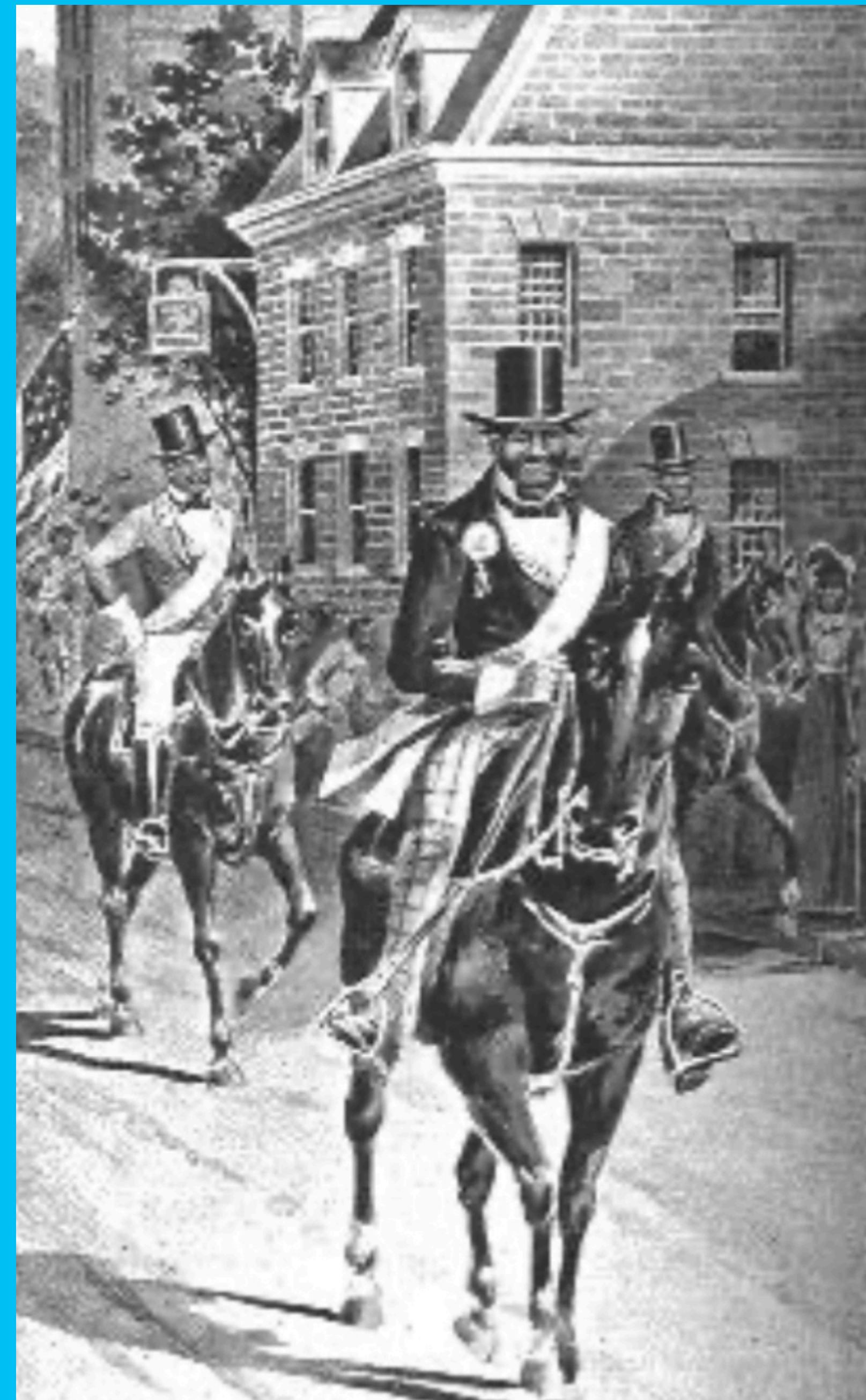
A black king of New England, Nero Brewster, introduced a bill to gain his freedom to the General Assembly in 1779. It became law 234 years later, a fitting, if tardy, tribute to an extraordinary man.

Historians identified Nero as one of at least 31 elected black kings and governors throughout New England from about 1750 to 1850.

An African essence to the office of king or governor within the black community of New England is suggested by the election of many leaders with strong connections to the old country.

Portsmouth's African-Americans would elect Black King Nero every June, during Portsmouth's 'Negroes Hallowday,' or 'Election Day.' The most important day of the year, it was held annually on the same day the white men of New England's towns and cities gathered to vote for their leaders.

<https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/>



Both King Pompey of Lynn and Prince Robinson of Narragansett were African-born and of royal lineages, while governors Tobiah and Eben Tobias in nineteenth-century Derby, Connecticut, were the grandson and great-grandson respectively of an African prince.

King Nero Brewster of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and governors Boston of Hartford, Quosh Freeman of Derby, and London of Wethersfield, Connecticut, were all native Africans; in addition the names of Hartford governors Cuff and Quaw (both day names) and Boston Trowtrow of Norwich, Connecticut, seem to indicate that these men were of African birth, just as the classical, slave cognomen "Caesar" commonly given to "new negroes" marks King Caesar of Durham, Connecticut, as of likely immigrant status.² Of some thirty-one men identified as black kings or governors in New England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the eleven of probable African birth or African royal heritage constitute more than one-third of the office holders.³"

Name	Location	Approximate date
Quash Freeman	Derby	1810
Tobias	Derby	1815
Roswell Quash (Freeman?)	Derby	1830-1835
Eben Tobias	Derby	1840-1845
Caesar	Durham	1800
Peter Freeman	Farmington	1780
London	Hartford	1755
Quaw	Hartford	1760
Cuff	Hartford	1766-1776
John Anderson	Hartford	1776
Peleg Nott	Hartford	1780
Boston	Hartford	1800
William Lanson	New Haven	1825
Quash Piere	New Haven	1832
Thomas Johnson	New Haven	1833-1837
Boston Trowtrow	Norwich	1770
Sam Huntington	Norwich	1772-1800
Jubal Weston	Seymour	1825
Nelson Weston	Seymour	1850
Wilson Weston	Seymour	1855
London	Wethersfield	1760
Cuff	Woodbridge	1840

During the Revolutionary War, Black King Nero led at least one meeting of 20 black slaves to discuss their freedom. He may well have held more.

So who ran against Nero?

Prince Whipple, born a prince of Africa, served as General Whipple's bodyguard during the Revolutionary War. He also stood with the general at the Battle of Saratoga and at the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

According to legend, Prince Whipple accompanied George Washington during his famous crossing of the Delaware.

In the 1851 painting by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, some identify the black oarsman as Prince Whipple.



African American Section
North Cemetery
Maplewood Ave. near North Mill Pond
Portsmouth

Perhaps the first African American buried here was Prince Whipple (ca. 1756–1796), a former slave of General William Whipple, Revolutionary War soldier, and a recognized leader in Portsmouth's African American community. He was born at Amadou on the Gold Coast of Africa.

Tradition states that he and his brother Cuffee Whipple (died 1820), also enslaved in Portsmouth, were the sons of an African prince who were sent to the colonies in America to be educated but were instead treacherously sold into captivity at Baltimore by the ship's captain.

Prince and Cuffee eventually ended up being purchased by merchant William Whipple and were brought to Portsmouth about 1765 at the age of ten.

Prince first served with his master during the Saratoga campaign in the fall of 1777, and once again in 1778 in his master's militia regiment during the Rhode Island campaign of 1778.

Prince soon became a trusted slave for Whipple, and when the American Revolution broke out, he served two terms of military service with his master in 1777 and 1778.



African American Historic Burial Grounds and Gravesites of New England



Glenn A. Knoblock

Prince instead first served with his master during the Saratoga campaign in the fall of 1777, and once again in 1778 in his master's militia regiment during the Rhode Island campaign of 1778. In 2013, state Sen. **Martha Fuller Clark of Portsmouth** declared Nero Brewster and the other 19 captive Africans deserved some closure. She filed a bill before the Legislature to posthumously free the remaining 15 slaves. The bill then passed, and Gov. Maggie Hassan signed it into law. **King Nero Brewster won his freedom, on Friday, June 7, 2013.**

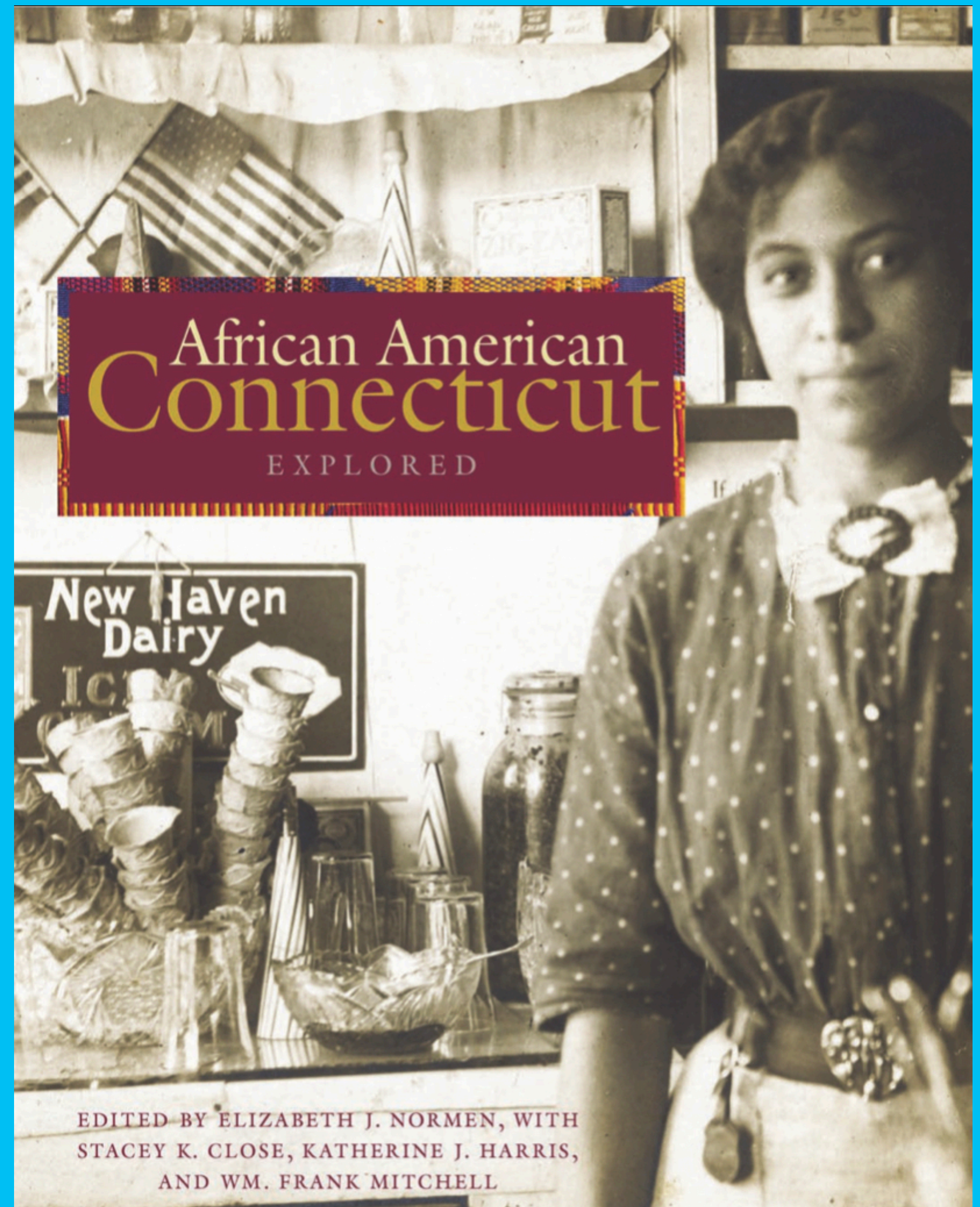


BLACK GOVERNOR WILLIAM LANSON

A black entrepreneur built Long Wharf and the walls of our part of the Farmington Canal.

The work crews who built those mansions and labored for Lanson in harbor and canal lived in housing he owned in a section of town adjacent to and north of the new square. It came to be known as New Guinea. (See map.) Irish laborers lived nearby in a section called Slineyville. Both white and black often associated in groceries, hotels, and stores owned by Lanson.

He became the go-to guy when the task at hand was to extend a wharf into the harbor to increase New Haven's commercial productivity. He devised a way to bring down scree from East Rock for a foundation that made the long docks sturdy despite the shifting mudflats; at three quarters of a mile, it was the longest pier in the country in 1810.



EDITED BY ELIZABETH J. NORMEN, WITH
STACEY K. CLOSE, KATHERINE J. HARRIS,
AND WM. FRANK MITCHELL

NEW GUNIEA BLACK AFRICAN COMMUNITY

White business partners, including many of New Haven's mercantile elite, helped subsidize his land purchases in what became the New Guinea community. The community housed hundreds of African-Americans, including runaway slaves as well as free blacks, and some white laborers.

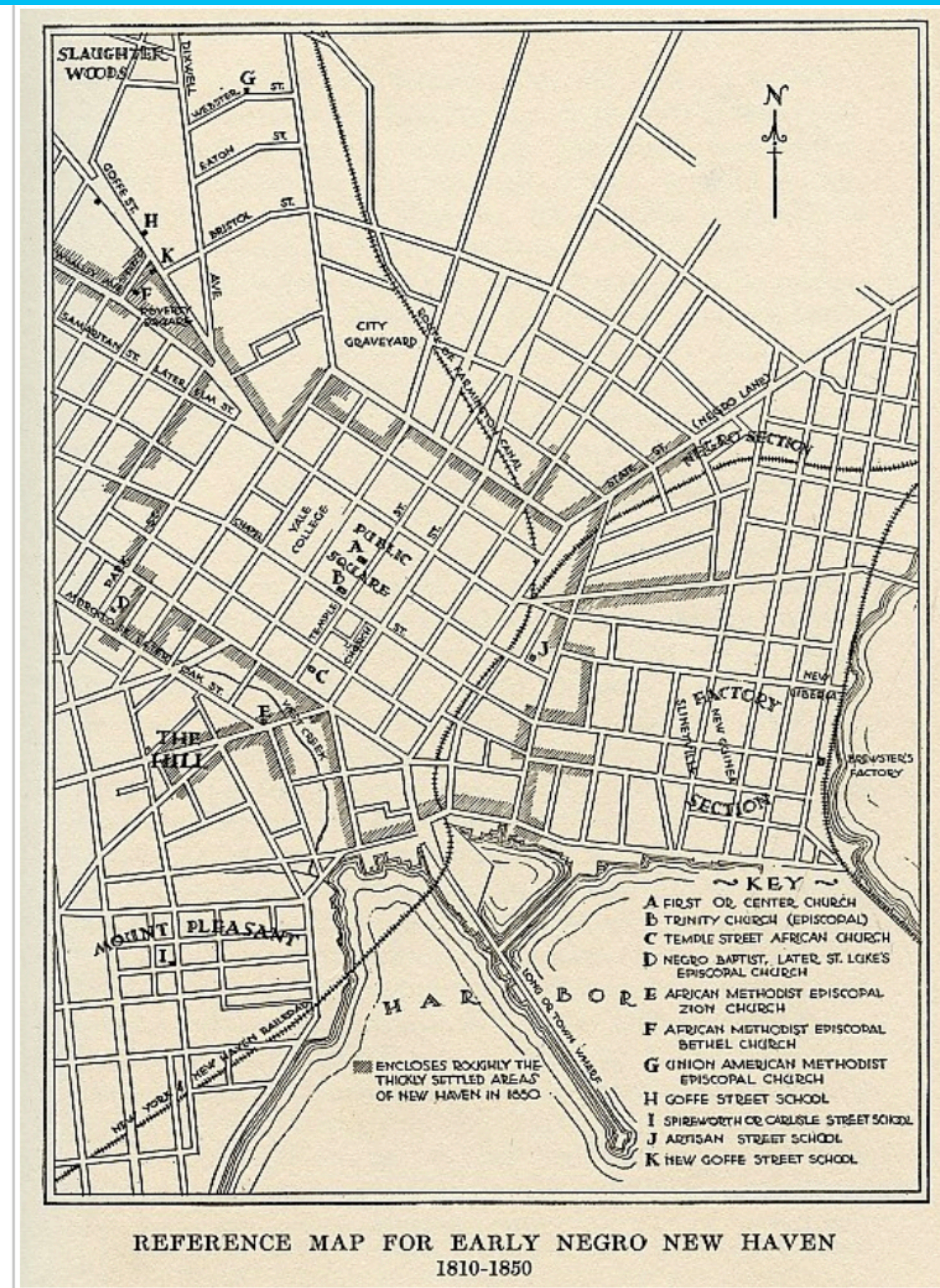


PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW HAVEN MUSEUM

Map detail, 1850, from *New Haven Negroes: A Social History*, 1940.

MONUMENT 2020

A seven-foot-tall bronze statue of William “King” Lanson will soon stand along the Farmington Canal — giving a permanent, public, and highly visible form to a Black New Havener who helped build the modern city.

The Lanson statue represents the culmination of a decade’s worth of advocacy by the Amistad Committee, working in recent years with the City Plan Department to make the memorial a reality.

The public artwork will honor the early 19th century local engineer, entrepreneur, and Black political leader who freed himself from slavery, built a section of the Farmington Canal, and constructed an extension of Long Wharf that allowed for the local port to rival New York’s.

He was also elected “Black governor” in 1825, helped found what is now Dixwell Congregational Church, owned land and ran businesses on what is now Wooster Square — and, after encountering opposition from white authorities and the business establishment, died in the poorhouse.

Statue Readied To Honor “Black Governor”

by **THOMAS BREEN** | Jul 10, 2020 2:42 pm

(4) Comments | **Commenting has been closed** | **E-mail the Author**

Posted to: **Arts & Culture, Visual Arts, Black History, Dixwell**





Hartford students Andriena Baldwin, Christopher Hayes, and Monique Price with the African American Monument they researched and raised the fund to erect, 1998. photo: Billie M. Anthony



LITTLE LIBERIA

- During the 1820s and 1830s they purchased lots and built homes. The community soon boasted a grocery store, an African Free School, a library, and two centers of African Methodism: the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and Walters African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The families named their community "Little Liberia." Eliza and Mary Freeman left instructions for the construction of an obelisk to mark their burial site in nearby Derby. The obelisk was an indication of their self worth and a symbol for future generations of African American accomplishments.³ The obelisk still stands in Derby's Uptown Cemetery.
- Born into freedom, the two women, who never married, became successful landowners. In 1848, the sisters purchased adjoining building lots in "Little Liberia" and utilized their homes as rental property while they worked and resided in New York. Their activities in New York in this period are little known. Eliza moved permanently from New York to Bridgeport around 1855 and worked as a domestic. At the time of her death in 1862, she had over \$3,000 in real estate holdings in Bridgeport. Mary Freeman moved back to the community just prior to her sister's death and subsequently bought out the interest of other heirs in Eliza's properties.
- <https://connecticuthistory.org/mary-and-eliza-freeman-houses/>



The Mary and Eliza Freeman Houses on Main Street in Bridgeport's South End. Photo by Phil Hall.