Sailing to Freedom

- Dear Colleague Letter
- Application Guidelines
- Partner Organizations
- Workshop Readings
- Local Information
- Faculty
- Weekly Schedule

Apply

Visit

Sailing to Freedom: New Bedford and the Underground Railroad
New Bedford, Massachusetts

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

National Endowment for the Humanities the People

July 12-17 and July 19-24, 2015

Printable version of the **2015 Dear Colleague Letter** (pdf)

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to tell you about an exciting opportunity for summer 2015, designed specifically for K-12 teachers: Join eminent historians, literary scholars, design and architectural historians and archivists for a week-long NEH "Landmarks of American History and Culture" workshop that will give you penetrating new insights to the compelling story of the Underground Railroad. ***Sailing to Freedom: New Bedford and the Underground Railroad,*** supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, will focus on the national influence of New Bedford, Massachusetts within the nineteenth-century Abolitionist movement, the town's unique role in the Underground Railroad, the development of its dynamic, prosperous African-American community and its maritime history and culture. You are invited to apply to become one of 40 NEH Summer Scholars in either of two **Landmarks in American History and Culture** teacher workshops. These will be directed by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and held downtown in the historic seaport of New Bedford from July 12 – 17 and July 19 – 24, 2015. The workshops provide K-12 teachers with the opportunity to engage in intensive study and discussion of fundamental issues and events in our national past, while providing firsthand experiences in the interpretation of significant historical and cultural sites through the use of archival and other primary-source evidence. I want to share with you the great excitement I feel about these workshops and encourage you to apply.

Although the historic seaport of New Bedford, Massachusetts has been known primarily as the whaling capital of the world, its role in nineteenth-century American history is not limited to whaling. For many people—particularly escaped slaves, those "self-emancipated" men and women who found safe haven through the Underground Railroad—New Bedford was a port of entry and opportunity. New Bedford was a major waypoint in this clandestine system that moved enslaved persons from the South to freedom in the North. \Former slaves frequently settled in New Bedford, becoming whalers or workers in the maritime trades. The city, therefore, provides a lens through which some of the most significant issues facing the New Republic and Antebellum America can be studied and understood.

Among these fugitives from bondage was Frederick Douglass, who lived and worked in the city for five years before becoming a leading antislavery orator and author. Douglass wrote that New Bedford's people of color were "much more spirited than I had supposed they would be," with a "determination to protect each other from the blood-thirsty kidnapper [that is, bounty-hunters looking for escaped slaves], at all hazards." Several buildings where Douglass lived and spoke publicly still stand; they are part of New Bedford's proud Abolitionist legacy.

Fugitives faced many challenges in their attempts to escape the South and their status as bondsmen and women. They often had to travel vast distances through unfamiliar terrain, relying on the kindness of strangers who formed the network known as the Underground Railroad. Often, assistance came from members of the Society of Friends, better known as Quakers. Even before the American Revolution, the Quakers had become the most outspoken anti-slavery religious group in Britain and North America. Because whaling was typically an industry dominated by Quakers, who abhorred violence in any form and held that slaveholding was antithetical to piety, New Bedford became a hotbed for Abolitionists in the antebellum north. For runaway slaves from south of the Mason-Dixon Line, New Bedford was a safe haven, glowing as a beacon of hope at the end of the Underground Railroad.

New Bedford was a place where black and white Americans put their lives on the line toward establishing universal freedom through the Abolitionist movement, a movement that shook nineteenth-century America to its core. From its emergence, New Bedford's African-American community took an active stand on Abolitionism in partnership with the city's white residents. Together they provided shelter and work for fugitives, helped to secure the release of fraudulently enslaved Northern African-American seamen and worked diligently to end the South's "peculiar institution"—slavery—which they saw as an immoral stain on the nation.

By the mid-nineteenth century such workers, along with Quaker ship owners and other whaling entrepreneurs, had helped New Bedford became one of the richest cities in the United States, sending its fleet to the Pacific cruising grounds to capture whales and extract the oil that fueled the lamps and lubricated the machines of the new, growing nation. Wide residential lanes sparkled with the stores and mansions of those on whom industry had bestowed its riches. In his epic tale *Moby Dick* (1851), Herman Melville called New Bedford "the dearest city in all the world" for its fine homes, shops and streets. Its waterfront teemed with sailors and trades-people from every corner of the globe, drawn by the whaling industry's promise of prosperity, but also by the prospect of freedom, justice and racial harmony.

New Bedford thus has an exceptionally rich history that provides a ready-made laboratory for studying antebellum America's social, political, cultural and economic issues. Historians can document the presence of and aid to fugitive slaves in New Bedford as early as 1787, some five years before the Fugitive Slave Law was enacted in 1793. When seeking communities to provide a safe refuge, the "Vigilance Committees" of Philadelphia and New York sent more fugitive slaves to New Bedford than to any other place in New England, including Boston. New Bedford is where fugitive Frederick Douglass got his first taste of democracy; he registered to vote in 1839, paying a $1.50 poll tax just a few months after fleeing enslavement. By that time, New Bedford's black citizens were vetting candidates for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, vowing not to vote for any candidate who did not openly support immediate abolition. They nominated Nathaniel Borden, a black mariner and Abolitionist, to represent the county and advocate for an end to enslavement across the country.

In addition to Frederick Douglass, other escapees who found refuge in this strong, welcoming Abolitionist community were such notable figures as Lewis Temple (inventor of a revolutionary whaling harpoon), William Wells Brown and his daughters Josephine and Clara, William Bush, George Teamoh and William H. Carney, all of whom became leading figures in the city. Others began their careers on the national anti-slavery lecture circuit, including Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, John Jacobs, Daniel Drayton and Henry "Box" Brown (who had himself shipped to freedom inside a crate). New Bedford's streets, buildings, and harbor preserve their stories, and will serve to inspire participating NEH Summer Scholars.

Many traces of this thriving seaport's bygone Abolitionist activities remain. Still a multicultural maritime city with handsome landmark

buildings and cobblestone streets, New Bedford has unparalleled museum resources and extraordinary archival collections to facilitate historical investigation into the Abolition Movement and the Underground Railroad. This rich combination of resources will constitute the lively classroom for 2015 NEH Summer Scholars.

Program

During each six-day residential workshop (Sunday through Friday), noted historians and other expert scholars in the fields of African-American studies and maritime history will present original material taken from their main areas of research. In addition to these content-oriented lectures, NEH Summer Scholars will be given the opportunity to work side-by-side with faculty during breakout sessions during the day. Further, the workshop will draw on the rich cultural resources of our local partner institutions to offer firsthand experiences and access to primary source learning resources at the New Bedford National Historic Whaling Park, the Rotch Jones Duff Museum (a whaling captain's mansion and gardens), the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Nathan and Mary Johnson House (a refuge for runaway slaves, including Frederick Douglass), the New Bedford Free Public Library, the New Bedford Friends Meeting House and other historic sites. In addition to field trips and walking tours, targeted sessions will be devoted to methods of relating content presented in faculty sessions to your students. Working independently or in small groups, local master teachers will assist NEH Summer Scholars in developing classroom-ready materials based on content covered in the workshop. Our goal is that, before leaving New Bedford, each NEH Summer Scholar will develop a detailed working knowledge of pedagogical resources on this topic, as well as some practical methods for putting such material to use in their classrooms. Finally, for long-term impact, NEH Summer Scholars' lesson plans and other teaching ideas will be made available afterward on a dedicated website that will be accessible throughout the school year, allowing for continued collaboration and development of classroom resources.

All NEH Summer Scholars will be expected to keep a journal and write a classroom unit with lesson plans that show how the material can be integrated into the teacher's curriculum in accordance with national standards and state frameworks. Teachers who successfully complete the workshop will receive a letter confirming attendance and a list of workshop activities. For an additional fee, participants may obtain PDPs (Professional Development Points) or graduate credits. The latter will require an additional reflective essay and more fully developed materials that demonstrate the use of New Bedford's material culture resources, architecture, and primary sources in their home communities.

To achieve a long-term impact, NEH Summer Scholars' lesson plans and other teaching ideas will be made available afterward on a dedicated website that will be accessible throughout the school year, allowing for continued collaboration and development of classroom resources.

Coming Soon: A detailed day-by-day program schedule for the week.

Faculty

The workshop will bring together nationally known scholars of the antebellum Abolition Movement, the Underground Railroad, and African Americans in the maritime trades. "Sailing to Freedom" workshop leaders will include Kathryn Grover, author of *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (UMass Press, 2001); Dr. Jeffrey Bolster, author of *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Harvard U. Press, 1997); David Cecelski, author of *The Watermen's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Univ. of N.C. Press, 2001); Dr. Len Travers, of the UMass Dartmouth History Department; Everett Hoagland, UMass Dartmouth English professor *emeritus* and New Bedford poet laureate; Dr. Laurie Robertson-Lorant, professor of English at Bridgewater State University; Dr. Kate Clifford Larson, author of *Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (Ballantine Books, 2004), historian for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Discovery Center and State Park and faculty member at Simmons College; Dr. John Stauffer, author of *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln,* and Chair of the History of American Civilization Program and Professor of English and African-American Studies at Harvard University; Michael Dyer, Maritime Curator, New Bedford Whaling Museum; Kathryn Dunlap, director of the Buzzards Bay Writing Project, and Cynthia Barber, Curator of Architecture and Design at the Rotch-Jones-Duff House Museum.

More information about our program faculty and their qualifications.

Stipend, payment, tenure and conditions of award

Teachers selected to participate as NEH Summer Scholars in each week-long workshop will receive a stipend of $1,200.00. Stipends are intended to help cover travel expenses to and from the project location as well as housing and meals for the duration of the period spent in residence. NEH Summer Scholars are required to attend all workshop meetings and to engage fully in the work of the project. Stipends are taxable and will be paid on the final program day, upon completion of each workshop. Participants may elect to obtain PDPs (Professional Development Points) or graduate credits, which are available for an additional fee; graduate credit requires submission of additional academic work, outlined above.)

NEH Summer Scholars are required to attend all scheduled meetings and to engage fully as professionals in all project activities. Participants who do not complete the full tenure of the project will receive a reduced stipend.

Note: Once you have accepted an offer to attend any NEH Summer Program (NEH Landmarks Workshops, NEH Summer Seminars, or NEH Summer Institutes), you may not accept an additional offer or withdraw in order to accept a different offer.

At the end of the project's residential period, NEH Summer Scholars will be asked to provide an assessment of their workshop experience, especially in terms of its value to their personal and professional development. These confidential online evaluations will become a part of the project's grant file.

Professional development for summer scholars

Graduate credits will be offered through the University of MA Dartmouth through the Center for University, School and Community Partnerships which will arrange for participating teachers to earn graduate credits or professional development credits. Costs are $285.00 per graduate credit hour; the total for three credit hours (tuition plus fees) is $958.80. NEH Summer Scholars currently enrolled in graduate programs at other universities should confirm that UMASS Dartmouth credit hours may be transferred to their "home" institution. Professional Development credits are also offered at the cost of $100.00 for 45 PDPs. Please feel free to contact us for any additional information.

Accommodations

For your convenience, we have arranged participants' lodging at the **Fairfield Inn and Suites at Homer's Wharf** in downtown New Bedford, a new Marriott hotel located across the street from New Bedford's harbor and working waterfront, and within easy walking distance of the venues where the NEH Workshop will hold most of its sessions. All rooms are air-conditioned and include two double beds, one bathroom, complimentary wired and wireless Internet, flat screen TVs and a desk.

The approximate cost per person is $102 per night (special NEH Workshop rate) with hot buffet breakfast included each day for six days,

for a total of $594.00 (plus Massachusetts state room tax) (single occupancy). Alternately, rooms can be shared with one roommate for $51 per night for five nights for a total of $255.00 (plus room tax) per person (double occupancy). Lunch and dinner costs are “on your own.” There are many moderately priced cafés and restaurants within walking and shuttle distance to the hotel.

Physical exertion and recommended level of fitness

Please note that, outside the classroom, this NEH “Landmarks of American History and Culture” workshop requires participants to walk considerable distances in moderately hilly coastal urban cityscapes, often in the substantial heat and humidity typical of a New England summer day. Exploring historic sites on foot in New Bedford and Boston therefore requires a basic level of physical fitness and endurance. Prospective Summer Scholars are asked to consider these matters when deciding to apply to this workshop.

Application procedure

Eligibility

“Landmarks of American History and Culture” projects are designed principally for full-time and part-time classroom teachers and librarians in public, charter, independent, and religiously affiliated schools, as well as home schooling parents. Other K-12 school personnel, including administrators, substitute teachers, and classroom professionals, are eligible to participate, subject to available space. We wish to encourage applicants from a broad range of teaching disciplines: social sciences, art, music, history, literature and languages—all educators are urged to apply!

Teachers at schools in the United States or its territorial possessions, or Americans teaching in foreign schools where at least 50 percent of the students are American nationals, are eligible for this program. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Foreign nationals teaching abroad at non-U.S. chartered institutions are not eligible to apply. Individuals may not apply to participate in a workshop given by the same director on the same topic in which they have previously participated; in other words, they should not apply to attend the same workshop twice. Individuals may not apply to study with an NEH Landmarks director who is a family member.

Applicants must complete the **NEH application cover sheet** and provide all the information requested below to be considered eligible.

Please Note: An individual may ***apply to up to two*** NEH summer projects (NEH Landmarks Workshops, NEH Summer Seminars, or NEH Summer Institutes), but may ***participate in only one***. Please note that eligibility criteria may differ among projects.

Selection criteria

A selection committee (consisting of the project director, one of the project scholars, and a veteran teacher) will read and evaluate all properly completed applications. Special consideration is given to the likelihood that an applicant will benefit professionally and personally from the workshop experience. It is important, therefore, to address each of the following factors in the application essay:

1. your professional background;
2. your interest in the subject of the workshop;
3. your special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the workshop; and
4. how the experience would enhance your teaching or school service.

When choices must be made among equally qualified candidates, several additional factors are considered. Preference is given to applicants who have not previously participated in an NEH Landmarks Workshop, NEH Summer Seminar, or NEH Summer Institute, or who would significantly contribute to the diversity of the workshop. While recent participants are eligible to apply, project selection committees are directed to give first consideration to applicants who have not participated in an NEH-supported workshop in the last three years.

Application instructions

All application materials must be sent to the project director at the address listed below. Application materials sent to the Endowment will not be reviewed.

Please indicate on the application cover sheet your first and second choices of workshop dates.

Application checklist

A completed application consists of **three** copies of the following **collated** items:

- the completed application cover sheet;
- a résumé or short biography;
- an application essay (**no longer than one double-spaced page**) as outlined below; and
- one letter of recommendation as described below.

Application Cover Sheet

The **application cover sheet must be filled out online**.

Please follow the prompts; be sure to indicate your first and second choices of workshop dates. Before you click the “submit” button, print out the cover sheet and add it to your application package. Then click “submit.” At this point you will be asked if you want to fill out a cover sheet for another project. If you do, follow the prompts to select the other project and repeat the process. Note that filling out a cover sheet is not the same as applying, so there is no penalty for changing your mind and filling out a cover sheet for several projects. A full application consists of all of the items listed above, as sent to the project director. Please note that if you are applying to two projects, a separate cover sheet must be submitted online for each one.

Résumé

Include a résumé or brief biography detailing your educational qualifications and professional experience.

Application Essay

The essay is the most important part of your application. It should be no more than **one double-spaced page**. The essay should address your professional background; interest in the subject of the workshop; special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the workshop; and how the experience would enhance your teaching or school service.

Reference Letter

Each applicant should provide a letter of recommendation from his or her school principal, department head, district administrator, or home-

schooling association president as appropriate. It is helpful for referees to read the director's description of the project and your application essay. Please ask your referee to sign across the seal on the back of the envelope containing the letter. Enclose the letter with your application.

Submission of application and notification procedure

Completed applications should be submitted **to the project director**, not the NEH, and **postmarked no later than Monday, March 2, 2015**. **Application materials sent to the NEH will not be reviewed.**

Three collated copies of the completed applications should be sent to:

NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshop
Dr. Timothy Walker and Ms. Lee Blake
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
200 Mill Road
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Successful applicants will be notified of their selection on Monday, March 30, 2015, and they will have until April 3, 2015 to accept or decline the offer. Please understand that, once you have accepted an offer to attend any NEH Summer Program (NEH Landmarks Workshops, NEH Summer Seminars, or NEH Summer Institutes), you may not accept an additional offer or withdraw in order to accept a different offer. Selected 2015 Summer Scholars will be sent information on travel, readings, etc. upon admission to the workshop.

We look forward to hearing from you, and to your active participation next summer!

Sincerely,
Dr. Timothy Walker, Program Director
Lee Blake, Program Administrator

Equal opportunity statement

Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For further information, write to NEH Equal Opportunity Officer, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. TDD: 202/606-8282 (for the hearing impaired only).

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Contact us

Dr. Timothy Walker, Program Director:twalker@umassd.edu
Lee Blake, Program Administrator:lblake@umassd.edu

Additional information

Partner Organizations for "Sailing to Freedom"

New Bedford Free Public Library

New Bedford Seamen's Bethel

New Bedford Historical Society

New Bedford National Whaling Historical Park

New Bedford Whaling Museum

Rotch Jones Duff House Museum

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Travel

By car, New Bedford is located approximately one hour south of Boston, MA and 35 minutes east of Providence, RI. The nearest airports are in Providence and Boston. New Bedford is served by bus links to Providence and Boston. There is no direct railway link to New Bedford.

Climate/weather for summer in New Bedford

Weather conditions in Massachusetts change quickly, especially along the coastal areas, which enjoy more moderate temperatures in summer. The South Coast (New Bedford area) and Cape Cod are kept cooler in the summer months by ocean breezes. Summers are usually comfortably mild, though some hot days in July/August are possible. The statewide average high temperature in July approaches 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Average July temperature in New Bedford is 74 degrees; low temperature in July is 65 degrees. July is also the least rainy month in New Bedford, with just a few rainy days, typically.

Readings for participants

(All publications to be provided to NEH Summer Scholars at no additional charge.)

- Jeffrey Bolster Black Jacks African American Seamen in the Age of Sail Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press (1997)
- David Cecelski The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom In Maritime North Carolina University of North Carolina Press (2001)
- Kathryn Grover The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press (2001)
- George Hendrick and Willene Hendrick, editors Fleeing for Freedom: Stories of the Underground Railroad as told byLevi Coffin and William Still Chicago: Ivan R. Dee (2003)
- Mark Landas and Peter Dennis African American Soldier in the American Civil War: USCT 1862-1866 Osprey Publishing (2006)
- Mary Malloy African Americans in the Maritime Trades: A Guide to Resources in New England Sharon, Massachusetts: Kendall Whaling Museum Monograph Series No. 6 (1990)

- John Thompson The Life of John Thompson, A Fugitive Slave: Containing His History of 25 Years in Bondage, and His Providential Escape Penguin Classics (2011)

An Official UMass Dartmouth Web Page/Publication. © 2015 Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts.
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth • 285 Old Westport Road • Dartmouth, MA 02747-2300
Phone: 508 999-8000 • TDD: 508 999-9250 (for the hearing impaired) • **Contact the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth**

+