

## *Author's Preface*

As a long-time member of the Georgetown Open Space Committee, I have spent a great deal of time at the Southern Essex Registry of Deeds in Salem, MA, researching the deeds of various town-owned lands. It was on one of these research missions that, to my surprise, I came across the name Cuffee Dole in an old index. Being interested in local history, I knew about the legend of Cuffee Dole, but had never read anything about him owning land. After locating the deed, I asked Joe Knapp of the Georgetown Historical Commission and Historical Society if he was aware that Cuffee was a landowner in town. When I found that he, too, was unaware of it, I wondered, "What else is there about Cuffee that we don't know?"

The story of Cuffee Dole has been passed down for generations. Like most legends, the story has grown and evolved over time, with each storyteller adding a new element. Unfortunately, what none of the earlier writers did was cite their sources, leaving us to wonder just how reliable they might have been.

I decided to do some research on Cuffee *and to cite my sources*. Being a genealogist, I knew of many places where I might find information about him. I doubted that I would find much, but was pleasantly surprised. In fact, I found so much that I decided that I should share my research with everyone. I have also included all that I found on the other early black residents of our town, slave and free, so that readers will have a better understanding of the black history of our town.

It is my hope that this book will encourage residents to become more interested in learning about *and preserving* the history of their cities and towns.

Christine Comiskey  
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