

Memoir tells tale of a man who backed settlements of free slaves

Rare opportunity to buy contemporary account of Paul Cuffee arises at Gloucestershire saleroom

by Roland Arkell

A scarce lifetime biography of the renowned pan-Africanist Paul Cuffee (1759-1817) found plenty of competition at **Dominic Winter (20% buyer's premium)** on December 12.

Estimated at £300-500, *Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Color*, issued by Liverpool printer Egerton Smith in 1811, took £5000 at the auction in South Cerney, Gloucestershire.

The son of an emancipated African slave and a Wampanoag Indian, Cuffee was a Massachusetts merchant, whaler and an influential figure in the back-to-Africa movement.

Championing the cause of African colonisation in the years following the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807, he made several trips to Sierra Leone in an effort to settle freed slaves.

This 12-page biographical sketch, priced at three pence, was reprinted from an article that had appeared in *The Liverpool Mercury* in 1811, its founding year. Beginning with two

lines from William Cowper poem *The Negro's Complaint* (1877) – 'Skins may differ, but affections Dwell in Blacks and Whites the same' – it contains an outline of Cuffee's life, struggles and successes.

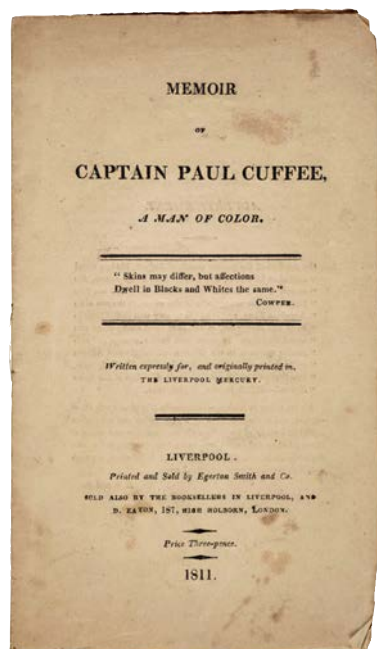
The text references the difficulties as a ship's captain at a time when 'a vessel owned and commanded by a black man, and manned with a crew of the same complexion, was unprecedented and surprising...' and records the creation of the first racially integrated school in America, established by Cuffee on lands he owned in Westport, Massachusetts.

The account says that '[he] worked in earnest and had a suitable house built on his own ground, which he freely gave up to the use of the public, and the school was opened to all who pleased to send their children'.

It ends by noting that Cuffee has recently been received into the Society of Friends (a rare event in America at the time). Two years later, in 1813, he donated half the money for a new Quaker meeting house in Westport, a building that still stands today.

Most surviving copies of this simple stitched booklet are in institutional collections. Save some spotting and light browning, this example was 'as issued'.

In 1812, *A Man of Color* was reprinted with the addition of *The Epistle of the Society of Sierra Leone*, the brief mission statement of a mutual-aid merchant group formed by Cuffee and other black entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone in the hope of furthering prosperity and industry in the colony. ■



Above: *Memoir of Captain Paul Cuffee, A Man of Color...*, Written expressly for, and originally printed in, *The Liverpool Mercury*, £5000 at Dominic Winter.



A vessel owned and commanded by a black man and manned by a crew of the same complexion... was unprecedented and surprising

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Jan 7-8	Reeman Dansie – Colchester	Books section
Jan 8	Burstow & Hewitt – Battle	Ephemera section
Jan 8	Golding Young – Bourne	Books section
Jan 8	Mallams – Oxford	Prints, Watercolours & Etchings
Jan 8-9	Ashley Waller – Macclesfield	Books section
Jan 8-9	Irita Marriott – Melbourne	Books section
Jan 8-9	Laganside – Belfast	Books & Prints sections
Jan 8-10	Eastbourne Auctions	Books section
Jan 9	Clevedon – near Bristol	Books section
Jan 9	Parker Fine Art Auctions – Farnham	Watercolours, Prints & Drawings sections
Jan 9*	William George – Bury	Maps & Prints
Jan 9-11	Ryedale – Kirkbymoorside	Books section
Jan 10	Bowler & Binnie – Dunfermline	Books section
Jan 10*	Cheffins – Cambridge	Prints section
Jan 10	Ewbank's – Woking	Comics & Graphic Novels
Jan 10	Three Bridges – Dunfermline	Books & Prints sections
Jan 10-11	Hansons – Burton on Trent	Eric Morecambe ephemera section
Jan 11	Excalibur – Kings Langley	Posters section
Jan 11*	Mullock Jones – Telford	Books section
Jan 11*	Southams – Bedford	Militaria Books
Jan 12*	Chaucer – Folkestone	Autographs
Jan 12	Claydon – Middle Claydon	Prints section
Jan 13*	Chaucer – Folkestone	Football Programmes
Jan 13	Taylor's – Montrose	Prints section
Jan 14	Lockdales – Martelsham	Works on Paper
Jan 14-16	Mellors & Kirk – Nottingham	Books & Prints sections
Jan 15*	Auctioneum – Bath	Books & Manuscripts
Jan 15	Barry Hawkins – Downham Market	Ephemera & Prints sections
Jan 15	James & Sons – Fakenham	Books & Ephemera sections
Jan 15	Swan Fine Art – Tetworth	Books & Prints sections
Jan 15-16	Great Western – Glasgow	Books section
Jan 15-16	Harper Field – Stonehouse	Books & Ephemera sections
Jan 16	David Duggleby – Scarborough	Prints & Watercolours sections
Jan 16	Thomson Roddick – Carlisle	Antiquarian & Collectable Books
Jan 16*	William George – Bury	Antique Maps & Prints
Jan 19*	BTW – West Bromwich	Comics section
Jan 19*	Chaucer – Folkestone	Books & Periodicals
Jan 19*	James – Ashford	Books & Prints sections
Jan 20*	Chaucer – Folkestone	Autographs
Jan 20*	Dawsons – Maidenhead	Posters
Jan 21	Vectis – Stockton-on-Tees	Books & Comics section
Jan 24	Ryedale – Kirkbymoorside	Postcards & Books sections
Jan 25	Antikbar – London	Posters
Jan 26*	1818 – Milnthorpe	Books & Maps
Jan 26*	Chaucer – Folkestone	Autographs
Jan 28	Griffin's – Warwick	Ephemera
Jan 28	Omega – Newton-Le-Willows	Posters
Jan 28	Swan Fine Art – Twickenham	Library Sale
Jan 28	Swords – Stansted Mountfitchet	Books section
Jan 29	Chaucer – Folkestone	Military Autographs
Jan 29-30	Mallams – Oxford	Books section
Jan 31*	Southgate – London	Books, Works on Paper, Prints

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