

Paul Cuffe grew up on a farm in Massachusetts. Farming was hard work, but it gave Paul's family a good life. Paul should have been very happy. But he wasn't. As a small child he had lived near the ocean. Paul never forgot the smell of salt water or the sound of the waves. He wanted to return to the sea.

Everyone teased Paul about becoming a sailor. But his father didn't. "Paul, never give up if you want something," he said. "If it's good, keep working till you get it."

Paul's father had been born a slave. He had worked until he saved enough money to buy his freedom. Then he worked harder so that he and Paul's mother could buy their farm.

When Paul was fourteen, his father died. Paul stayed on the farm for two more years. When he was sixteen, his family was able to take care of things without him.

Paul went to New Bedford, a seaport in Massachusetts. But when he asked for work, people answered, "Are you a runaway slave?" Paul knew that most of the black people in America were slaves in the South. But the question still made him angry. "Why should people think I'm a slave just because I'm black?"

Finally Paul talked to the captain of a ship. The captain asked him the same question: "Are you a runaway?"

"No," Paul said, "I am the son of a free man."

"Are you willing to work?" the captain asked.

Paul thought of his father. "Captain, I was raised on hard work!"

"All right, you're hired." The captain shook Paul's hand.

On the first trip Paul was only a cabin boy. But on the next trip, he was given more important work. Soon, he was learning how to run the ship. Paul knew he was a good sailor. He began to think he would be a good captain. Some day, he thought, I'll have my own ship.

Paul did become captain of his own ship. And he also worked for his people. In Massachusetts, free black men owned land. They paid taxes. Paul thought they should be able to vote. He helped them win that right. Paul also helped set up a colony for blacks in Sierra Leone, Africa.

All his life, Paul worked for his dreams. And he made many of them real.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. **Paul Cuffe grew up on a**
 - A ship
 - B plantation
 - C farm

2. **As a small child, Paul had lived near**
 - A a school
 - B the ocean
 - C his grandparents' house

3. **Paul wanted to become a**
 - A sailor
 - B teacher
 - C free man

4. **Paul's father had been born a**
 - A free man
 - B farmer
 - C slave

5. **At the time of his father's death, Paul's age was**
 - A twelve
 - B sixteen
 - C fourteen

6. **When Paul went to New Bedford, people asked if he was a**
 - A free black
 - B runaway slave
 - C sea captain

7. **Paul became angry with their questions because**
 - A he was a good sailor
 - B all blacks were not slaves
 - C he thought the people were nosy

8. **On his first trip at sea Paul worked as a**
 - A cabin boy
 - B deckhand
 - C pilot

9. **Paul finally became a**
 - A first mate
 - B captain
 - C pilot

10. **Paul later helped blacks win the right to**
 - A pay taxes
 - B be free citizens
 - C vote