



Tracing history on the Trail of Tears

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NEW ENGLAND NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

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‘Threshold of the journey’



Attendees take a closer look at the Herman Melville statue ‘Melville and Jonah’s Journey’ unveiled in front of the Seamen’s Bethel in New Bedford on Aug. 14. PHOTOS BY PETER PEREIRA/THE STANDARD-TIMES

Herman Melville statue anchors new chapter at Seamen’s Bethel

Frank Mulligan
The Standard-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

NEW BEDFORD — Herman Melville has returned to the city that inspired his literary classic “Moby-Dick” in the form of a dramatic statue adorning the grounds of the historic Seamen’s Bethel.

The statue was unveiled Aug. 14 in front of several hundred people following a ceremony within the Bethel’s chapel where Melville worshipped 185 years ago.

The chapel, in fact, inspired the novel’s Whaleman’s Chapel.

The event was highlighted by Emmy-winning actor Sam Waterston’s dramatic rendition of excerpts from Father Mapple’s Sermon in Chapter 9 of “Moby-Dick,” which enthralled those gathered in the chapel on a Friday in the late summer of 2026.

Sculptor Stephanie Rocknak was selected from among 41 prominent artists to design the statue.

Her winning concept came to her after she re-read the sermon offered up in the Whaleman’s Chapel about Jonah and the Whale, she said.

Melville stands beside three towering whale ribs amid swirling waters symbolizing his journey into and out of the whale. The work is titled, “Melville and Jonah’s Journey.”

Mayor Jon Mitchell said it was “entirely fitting that today on the grounds of the chapel where he once worshipped, having been drawn to New Bedford’s great whale fishery, we dedicate a statue of Herman Melville, whose magnum opus continues to call us to reflect deeply on our place in the world.”

Melville was an unemployed 21-year-old New Yorker when he came to New Bedford to try his hand at the whaling industry that had made it the wealthiest city in the nation.

“Its waterfront was a beehive of activity, and its fleet of whaleships made New Bedford known in every corner of the world,” Mitchell said.

Ishmael gushes about New Bedford in “Moby-



Stefanie Rocknak, artist, speaks from the iconic pulpit of the Seamen’s Bethel on the inspiration for her creation during the dedication of the Herman Melville statue in New Bedford on Aug. 14.

Dick’s” opening chapters, Mitchell said, quoting, “Nowhere in America will you find more patrician like houses, gardens more opulent than in New Bedford.”

Mitchell said Melville’s statue “is meant to tell the story of the New Bedford that Melville recognized: audacious, outward looking, diverse, egalitarian, and resolute.”

Like Jonah of Father Mapple’s famous sermon, it is a city willing “To preach the truth to the face of falsehood,” Mitchell said.

Rocknak said New Bedford wasn’t merely the background to the beginning of “Moby-Dick.”

“It is the threshold of the journey.”

Ishmael - like Melville – “comes here before going to sea.”

Melville transformed his experiences into literature but the physical places in New Bedford remain, she said. “We’re in one of them now.”

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Area electricity customers were overcharged by \$8.6B, study says

Henry Schwan
Worcester Telegram & Gazette | USA TODAY NETWORK

Electricity customers in New England have been overcharged by billions of dollars, according to a study by an independent energy analyst.

The overcharges total \$8.6 billion over a 10-year period from 2016 to 2025, according to Synapse Energy Economics Inc. in Cambridge. Each bill was overcharged \$22 on average. In Massachusetts, it was \$18 monthly on average.

Those numbers apply only to electricity customers on basic-service plans with an investor-owned utility. In Worcester, that means basic service provided by National Grid, the city’s electricity provider.

Gov. Maura T. Healey called the billions in overcharges “unacceptable” and reiterated her call for state lawmakers to pass her plans to lower electricity costs.

“It is unacceptable that customers are left paying billions of dollars in additional costs because of the way the current system is set up – especially at a time when so many people are already struggling to pay their bills,” said Healey’s prepared statement. “As President Trump continues driving up energy prices

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Some of MA’s best hidden gems are on the SouthCoast

Faith Harrington
The Standard-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

You don’t have to head to Boston or Cape Cod to find something worth exploring in Massachusetts.

The SouthCoast is full of beaches, historic sites, farms, trails, and hidden gems that locals and visitors have given plenty of love.

National Massachusetts Day is observed each year on Aug. 17, giving us another reason to appreciate the place we call home.

Whether you’re looking for a new place to explore or finally checking out a local favorite, there are plenty of options right in our own backyard.

We rounded up some of the top-reviewed things to do in Greater New Bedford and Fall River to help you celebrate and get in a few more summer memories.

Acushnet

For a quieter outing, head to The Sawmill, a highly rated 19-acre natural area along the Acushnet River with walking trails, a boardwalk, wetlands, and plenty of scenery to take in. Make the drive over to 32 River Road. After exploring the outdoors, make a stop at Acushnet Creamery, 786 Main St., a longtime local favorite for ice cream with a 4.7-star rating and more than 100 reviews. Together, the two make for an easy Acushnet day out, whether you’re looking to explore, relax, or grab something sweet.

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