



*The Stonington Middle School Eighth Grade Class
Presents
A Witness Stone Installation Ceremony
Commemorating the Life of Cato Cuff*



Friday, April 28, 2023

10:30 AM

First Congregational Church of Stonington

903 Pequot Trail, Stonington, CT 06378

Program of Events



Welcome

Alexa Checchi

Project Introduction

*Cindy Cassidy & Dan Agins
8th Grade Social Studies Teachers*

Commemorative Citation

Rep. Aundre Bumgardner

*The History of
The Road Church*

Reverend Norman Erlendson

Music:

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Nekita Waller

Eighth Grade Student Readers

Who was Cato Cuff?

The Five Themes of Slavery through Poetry

Dehumanization

Treatment

Paternalism

Economics

Agency

Afterword

*Witness Stone Presentation
and Closing Words*

Alexa Checchi



Student Authors and Readers

Dedication

Corinne Mercier

Devyn McInerney

Who was Cato Cuff?

Lillian Harney

The Five Themes of Slavery

Dehumanization

Ross Biddle

Manav Patel

Treatment

Lindy Thomas

Finn Bowyer

(Author: Audrey Schrage)

Paternalism

Ashley King

Holden Chute

(Author: Joseph Goulart)

Economics

Jaelyn Deschamps

(Author: Hannah Tyke)

Jake Wagner

Agency

Lauren deCastro

Liam Young

(Author: Harmeet Kaur)

Afterword

Kate Ruenzel

Music:

A Change Is Going to Come

Nekita Waller





Stonington Middle School Eighth Grade

<i>Chantelle Bennett</i>	<i>Emma Gowen</i>
<i>Ross Biddle</i>	<i>Kairi Grant</i>
<i>Zi Qing Biondo</i>	<i>Jaime Halloran</i>
<i>Samantha Boffi</i>	<i>Ellis Hankins-Saltzman</i>
<i>Finnegan Bowyer</i>	<i>Harriet Hardaway</i>
<i>Kameron Brayman</i>	<i>Lillian Harney</i>
<i>Edward Brown</i>	<i>Madison Harvey</i>
<i>Ava Burke</i>	<i>Julian Hasson</i>
<i>Samantha Calderon Marin</i>	<i>Henry Head</i>
<i>Jaxon Camara</i>	<i>Quinn Heal</i>
<i>Blake Carlson</i>	<i>Gwendolynn Higginbotham</i>
<i>Austin Center</i>	<i>Cohan Hinchey</i>
<i>Alexa Checchi</i>	<i>Sienna Hirschorn</i>
<i>Holden Chute</i>	<i>Rocco Hoadley</i>
<i>Tyler Cimini</i>	<i>Fredrick Hodgson</i>
<i>Stephany Cobena</i>	<i>Sophia Hoinsky</i>
<i>Dylan Condie</i>	<i>Nathan Howard</i>
<i>Oliver Cooke</i>	<i>Javier Huss</i>
<i>Garrett Cooper</i>	<i>Bryce Jameson</i>
<i>Aiden Deary</i>	<i>Kiley Jameson</i>
<i>Lauren deCastro</i>	<i>Oliver Kasprzak</i>
<i>Clare deLarbry</i>	<i>Harmeet Kaur</i>
<i>Aaron Demartino</i>	<i>Zaira Kelley</i>
<i>Nevaeh DeMartino</i>	<i>Emily Kelly</i>
<i>Jaelyn Deschamps</i>	<i>Ashley King</i>
<i>Eliza DuFour</i>	<i>Andy Kramer</i>
<i>Ryan Dugas</i>	<i>Brayden Landgren</i>
<i>Rowan Duhig</i>	<i>Dilan Langer Alva</i>
<i>Sean Durham</i>	<i>Kayleen Lebron Collazo</i>
<i>Vivien Fleming</i>	<i>Hayden Leeming</i>
<i>Hannah Fyke</i>	<i>Ryker Lees</i>
<i>Isabella Giuliani</i>	<i>Quinlin Main</i>
<i>Joseph Goulart</i>	<i>Ajar Malik</i>

Asar Malik
Brady Marr
Joseph Marshall
Shelby Mayo
Joshua McBain
Ava Medeiros
Corinne Mercier
Mary Mickus
Devyn Milnerney
Michaela Miner
Brooke Morin
Hope Mullen
Rori Murphy
Kylie Nachin
Cayden Naholnik
Nolen Neale
Isabelle Nesbit
Thomas O'Rourke
Kyle Olsson
Isabella Page
Matteo Panciera
Manav Patel
Aiden Peterson
Cormick Pettegrow
Caylee Piela
Helen Plasencia
Joshua Post
Sienna Potter
Sophia Richards
Kate Riggins
Seth Riggins
Demitri Ritacco

Lacey Roberts
Iyaisha Robinson
Logan Rollins
James Rollins
Kate Ruenzel
Samantha Russo
Cole Seahill
Audrey Schrage
Cameron Seger
Liam Shanahan
Nova Shank
Bailey Simmons
Annalia Simpson
Emmaline Spelman
Ryder Springer
Addison St. Amand
Byron Stillman
Elijah Sullivan
Cheyenne Taber
Brayan Talbot
Jana Tannatt
Jakob Tetlow
Solana Thagnabouth
Lindy Thomas
Estella Tippetts
Gabriel Torruella
Revekka Tsiakiris
Oliver Turner
Jake Wagner
Rhiann Walsh
Lincoln Whewell
Brayden Wolfradt
William Young

8th Grade Social Studies Teachers
Dan Agins & Cindy Cassidy



The Witness Stones Project

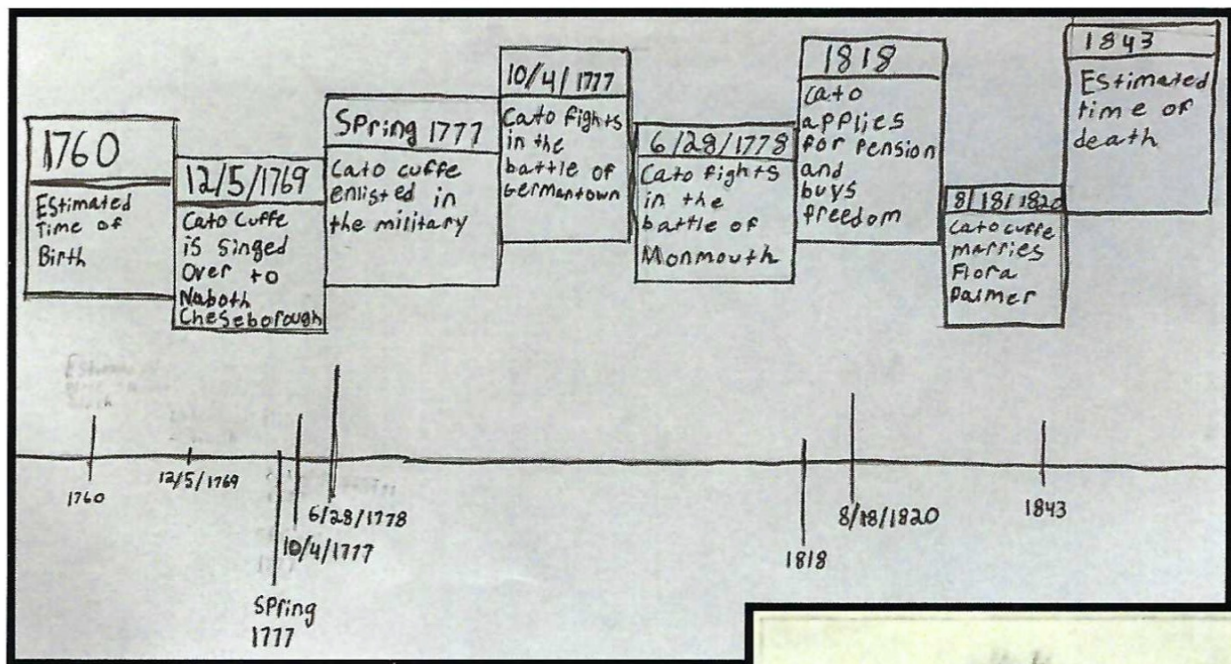
The Witness Stones Project™ is an educational initiative whose mission is to restore the history and honor the humanity of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities.

The Project provides local archival research, professional teacher development, a classroom curriculum, and public programming to help students discover and chronicle the local history of slavery. The final component of the work in each community is the placement of Witness Stone Memorials™ that honor enslaved individuals where they lived, worked, or worshiped.

Inspired by the Stolpersteine project in Germany, the Project began in Guilford, Connecticut, in 2017. In five years, the Project has partnered with 94 schools and civic organizations in 50 communities across 5 states. More than 6,600 middle and high school students and their communities have participated in the Project.

<https://witnessstonesproject.org/>





Known Timeline of Cato Cuff's Life

Overview: Michaela Miner

At 10 years old Cato was taken aboard a slave ship and was brought to Boston, Massachusetts.

He was bought by Elihu Chesebrough.

When Elihu Chesebrough passed Cato was given to Naboth Chesebrough, Elihu's son.

Naboth made Cato help with the cider mill and many other things. On April 29th, 1777 Cato was enlisted into the military for a term of 3 years. He fought in two battles. The battle of Monmouth and Germantown. After he served his 3 years he was discharged in New Jersey. In 1818, 38 years after he was discharged he applied for a pension.

He supported evidence that he served and started receiving \$8 a month.

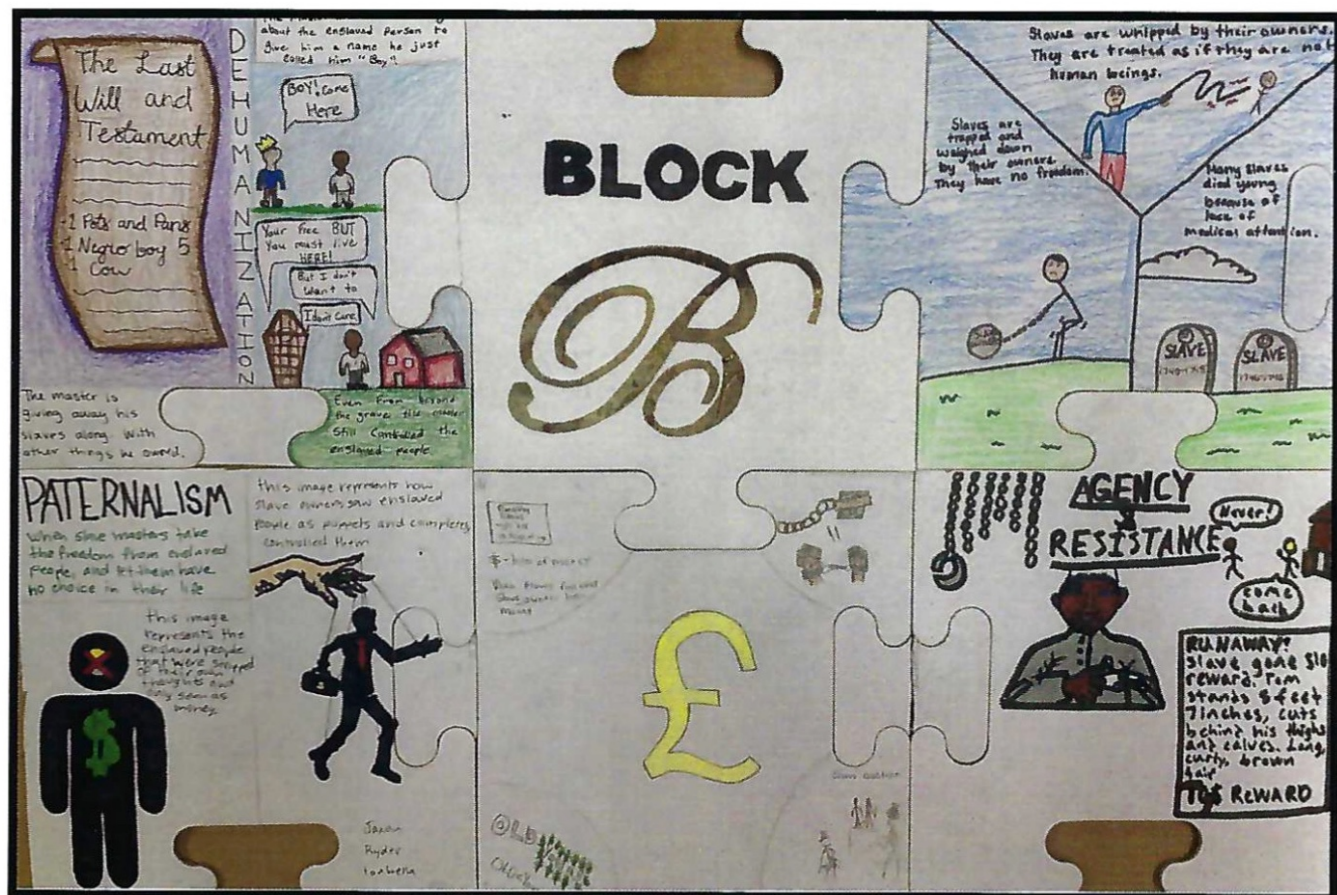
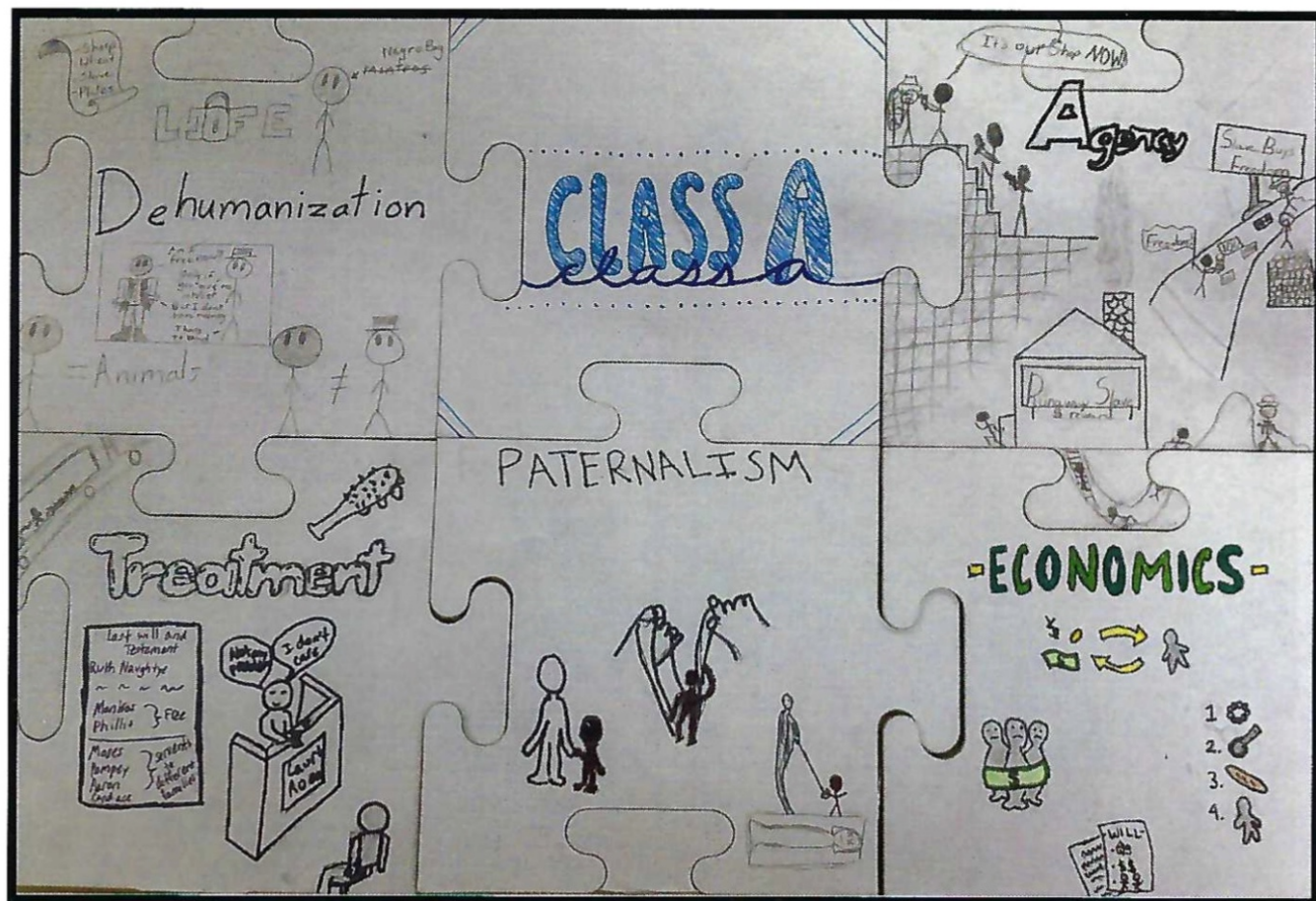
2 years later he married Flora Palmer, now Flora Chesebrough.

Cato and Flora lived in a house that was owned by Thomas Palmer and his late wife.

The house was on Pequot Trail, Stonington CT and they lived here until they passed.



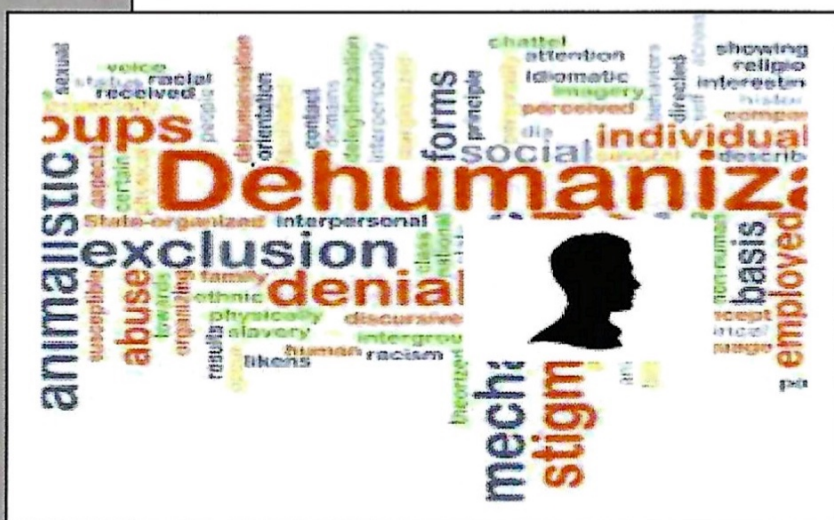
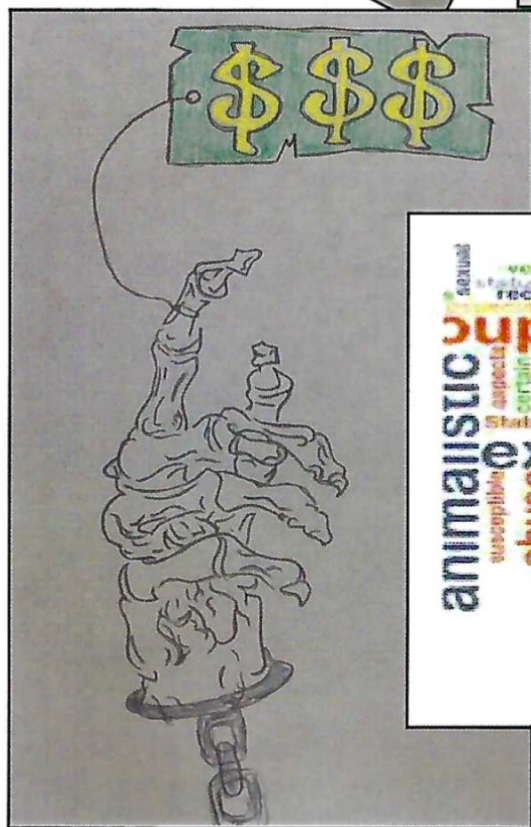
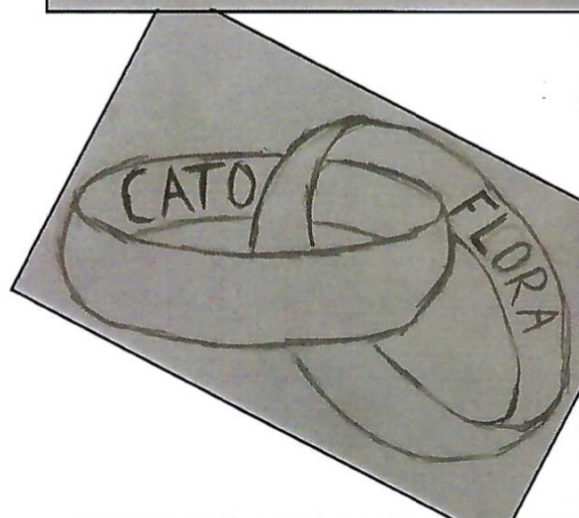
The Five Themes of Slavery

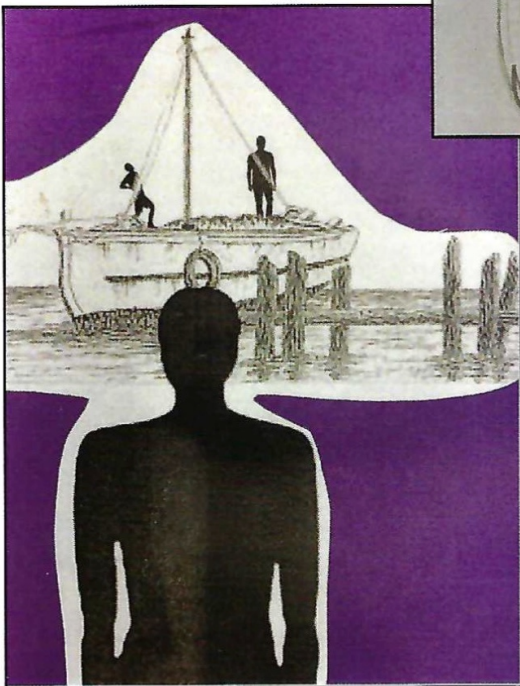
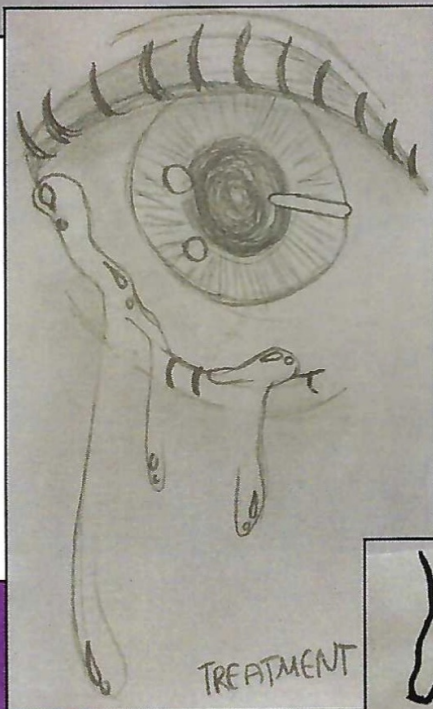


Examples of students' artistic depictions of the themes of slavery



DEHUMANIZATION





*First Congregational Church of Stonington
~The Road Church~*



Cato Cuff married Flora Palmer at The Road Church

The First Congregational Church of Stonington is the oldest church in Stonington (The Road Church) and one of the oldest in Connecticut. The church was established in 1674 and the first Minister was Reverend James Noyes. The current Road Church Meetinghouse was built in 1829 after the original building burned. Many of the beams and other significant architectural features that were salvaged after the fire, were used when constructing the Sanctuary seen today. The church has a unique design and all attempts were made to keep it as original as possible. The box style pews and the simplicity of the church architecture date back to the late 17th century. In 2024, the First Congregational Church of Stonington will celebrate its 350th anniversary!



Special Musical Guest

Nekita Waller



Nekita Waller from Middletown, Connecticut was Connecticut's 17th State Troubadour. Nekita's diverse musical journey has taken her through chorus groups, musical theater, Hartt School of Music, and mentoring and performing with many independent artists. Nekita has shared the stage with

artists, B.B. King, Ruben Studdard and Dianne Reeves. She has performed on the Steve Harvey Radio Show and has been heard on more than 60 radio stations and by approximately six million weekly listeners. "Music is my purest form of communication. It doesn't care how much money you have, where you were born, the color of your skin, or how old you are," notes Nekita.

<https://portal.ct.gov/About/State-Symbols/Connecticut-State-Troubadour>



Superintendent:

Mary Anne Butler

Assistant Superintendent:

Tim Smith

Stonington Middle School Administration:

Deanna Brucoli and Tina Eisenbeis

Stonington Board of Education:

Farouk Rajob- Chairman, Kevin Agnello, Sara Baker, Chris Donahue, Craig Esposito, Dan Kelley, Heidi Simmons



The Witness Stones Project was made possible by the following:

Sincere Thank you to:

Tim Flanagan, former SMS teacher, who had the vision to apply for a grant to procure funding for The Witness Stones Project. Tim's passion and diligence has been influential in bringing equitable learning opportunities to the students of Stonington.

Dennis Culliton, founder of The Witness Stones Project, who spent countless hours researching and finding primary source documents about Cato Cuff and providing professional development to the staff.

Reverend Norm Erlendson and the First Congregational Church of Stonington Board who graciously provided the use of their sanctuary for the ceremony and for installing Cato Cuff's memorial stone for all to see.

Joanna Seinberg, Chelsea Mitchell, and The Stonington Historical Society for their help with resources, planning, and engaging the students with local history.

Funding provided by:



ENVISION EQUITY GRANT



The Stonington Middle School PTO

*We thank and remember
Cato Cuff
for his service to our town and our country.*

