



Take a journey of heart and mind across time, place, families, and communities. Our journey focuses on the life of Elizabeth “Mumbet” Freeman, perhaps the best-known and most influential woman from the Berkshires.



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Although Black, a woman (pre–women’s rights), unable to read or write, a slave, and, for much of her life, a servant, Freeman resisted being a victim. Instead she lived a full and rewarding life. She owned a small farm, supported her family, and cared for her friends and neighbors as a skilled nurse and midwife.

Freeman’s rich and complex life is the starting point for an exploration into the lives of other Black families and other Black communities as they formed and changed over time in towns such as Sheffield, Stockbridge, and Lenox, Massachusetts, and Norfolk, Connecticut.

★ Many of the legends surrounding her life are examined and either corroborated or thoroughly discredited.

Wray Gunn, Trustee, Clinton A. M. E. Zion Church and Past President, Sheffield Historical Society

★ It is at once the most complete and the most authoritative of recent writings on this subject. . . .

*Professor Frances Jones-Sneed, Department of History and Director of Women Studies,
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts*

★ Piper and Levinson have written an important book about the remarkable Elizabeth Freeman, . . . and significantly deepen our understanding of the African American community of Revolutionary New England.

Professor Robert Paynter, Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

★ Mumbet’s life is fleshed out in detail that traces the legacy and lineage of a woman whose life touched and inspires many.

Claudette Webster, Mt. Everett Regional High School, Sheffield, Massachusetts

Paperback, 272 pages, 50 illustrations, chapter endnotes, index.

Published by the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area /African American Heritage Trail, 2010,

ISBN: 978-0-9845492-0-7. For more information: www.AfricanAmericanTrail.org



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