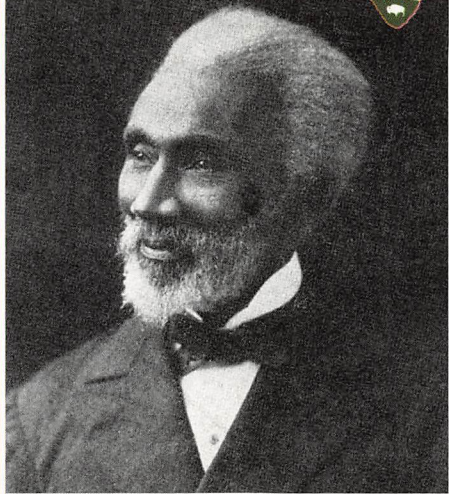


New Bedford Whaling
National Historical Park



William Jackson



Reverend William Jackson

Fact: Before the Civil War, Reverend Jackson was a known agent for the Underground Railroad.

Founder and minister of the Salem Baptist Church in New Bedford, Rev. William Jackson was appointed chaplain of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry on March 10, 1863. He then became the first African American commissioned as an officer in the U.S. army when he was made chaplain of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry on July 14, 1863. In 1864 he resigned his commission and returned to his ministry in New Bedford.

Image courtesy of Carl Cruz Collection, New Bedford Historical Society