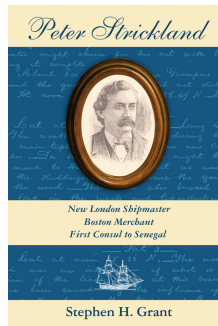


Capt. Peter Strickland: Dorchester's West Africa Connection



Dr. Grant will give a presentation on highlights of his biography of a nineteenth-century Dorchester resident, sea captain Peter Strickland, a merchant and the first American consul in French West Africa. In his lecture, Grant will trace the steps he followed in New England and West Africa in pursuit of Peter Strickland's story. Using PowerPoint slides, Grant will show how a man from Dorchester played a major role in West African trade for almost half a century! Born a farmer's son in 1837 in New London, Connecticut, Strickland left home at age 15 for a seafaring life. By age 24 he had become a merchant marine captain. Hired by a Boston ship owner in 1864, he sailed to West Africa with a cargo of leaf tobacco and lumber; in his return cargo, animal skins to make shoes for Union soldiers. He bought a house in Dorchester, MA where he settled with his young family in 1871. His son would attend Adams Academy in Quincy. Strickland commanded dozens of sailing vessels out of Boston that traded with West Africa from 1864 to 1904.

Impressed by Capt. Strickland's knowledge of transatlantic navigation and West African trade, the Department of State asked him to open the first American consulate in French West Africa in 1883. His major task would be to facilitate and monitor American shipping interests in the French colony of Senegal, but he was also allowed to practice his import-export business. He chose as residence Gorée Island just off Dakar on mainland Senegal. From his residence overlooking the port of Gorée, he served as consul—with no salary—for 23 years. Peter Strickland lived for about 18 years in Dorchester and died there in 1921, leaving behind a book he wrote on behalf of sailors, business correspondence, consular dispatches, and—an amazing feat—a personal journal spanning 64 years.

Presenters: *Stephen Grant & Earl Taylor*

Dr. Stephen Grant served the U.S. Agency for International Development for over 25 years as education officer in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Central America. While abroad, he published three books on French Guinea, the Dutch East Indies, and El Salvador. In common with Peter Strickland, he spent most of his professional career in West Africa as a diplomat. Grant was born in Boston and schooled in Massachusetts. He earned a doctorate in education at UMass Amherst.

Mr. Earl Taylor, President of the Dorchester Historical Society, will also address the audience to outline the activities of the Society and to talk about the role the Society played in publicizing the Strickland story. In 2004, the Dorchester Historical Society published Grant's pamphlet "Capt. Peter Strickland & Dorchester 1864-1921." In 2007, New Academia (Washington, DC) published his book *Peter Strickland: New London Shipmaster, Boston Merchant, First Consul to Senegal*. Stephen Grant will autograph his book after the talk.

Date & Time: Monday, April 30, Noon-2:00 pm.

Location: Room 204A, 3rd fl., McCormack Hall, UMass Boston Campus