

Spring & Summer 2008



Black Loyalist Heritage Society

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BLHS BOARD

Richard Gallion-President
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BLHS STAFF

Beverly Cox—Site Manager
Shari Shortliffe—Office Administrator
Tanya Townsend—Museum Supervisor

“ You can never go home again, but the truth is you can never leave home, so it's all right.”

Maya Angelou

President's Report 2008 Richard Gallion



Greetings from Birchtown. Spring is finely here and summer is just around the corner - preparations are under way for the

2008 tourist season. 2008 marks the 225th anniversary of the Loyalist Landing to Nova Scotia. This historical celebration includes monthly events which are sure to appeal to all ages and cultures. The BLHS is especially pleased to announce their anniversary events - the March to Birchtown (August 2) and the Amistad Weekend (August 8-10).

The Amistad Weekend will feature tours of the Amistad Freedom Schooner, a farmer's market, dance and an ecumenical church service. The farmer's market will feature food, crafts, face painting, African drumming, music and much more. Come to Shelburne's historic waterfront to experience our unique culture and heritage. The March to Birchtown event is in honour of the Black Loyalists who first arrived in Birchtown in 1783. You will be able to “walk a

mile in their shoes” and experience what it was like to walk from Shelburne to Birchtown on a daily basis.

On May 16th we said goodbye to Project Manager Jacqueline Race, who returned to her position with the Department of Community Services. Jackie was instrumental in organizing and implementing many fund-raisers for the BLHS as well as doubling the number of visitors to our historical site. We wish Jackie all the best! On July 2nd, we welcome our new Project Manager, Stephen Workman. Stephen will be taking a one year leave of absence from the Ross Farm Museum where he has been employed since 1979. Through his years of experience and executing a variety of duties and tasks, we believe Stephen will be a great asset to our heritage site. He will be working on implementing various stages of the BLHS Business Plan, specifically planning the stages for development and construction of the BLHS Interpretive Centre.

The Society was successful in its application to Nova Scotia Economic Develop-

ment Student Career Skills Program to hire a museum supervisor for 14 weeks. We were also successful in obtaining one position for an interpretive guide through Service Canada's student job programming. As always, the students bring fresh ideas and energy to the site and we are looking forward to an eventful and busy summer.

Sustaining our heritage site continues to be one of our largest tasks. Fund-raisers are crucial to providing operating revenue for the site and as always, the fund-raising committee along with staff have worked hard at implementing successful fund-raisers. In February we hosted a Movie and Pasta Night that filled the house (and everyone's bellies!). Over March Break, we hosted our first March Break Multi-cultural Day Camp which featured 2 days of lessons in traditional African Drumming. In April we held our first quilt workshop facilitated by master quilter Laurie Swim. BLHS members and community supporters have
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been working on the Birchtown Quilt which will depict the story of the Black Loyalist. Once complete the quilt will be on display at the Old School House Museum. In May we also had another first - the Mother's Day Cheesecake Festival. This event was as sweet as it sounds with mouth watering cheesecakes of every flavor imaginable! May 31 was our annual auction and plant sale. Thank you to the many businesses and individuals who supported this event with donations of auction items and plants.

The Old School House Museum officially opened on June 7. This event was celebrated in partnership with the Shelburne Historical Society and the community was invited to St. Paul's Church to hear the serene and tranquil sounds of harpists and vocalists Ardyth & Jennifer. Another crowd pleaser of the evening included the 18th Century Prince of Wales Dancers who sure know how to "cut a rug".

We have organized 2 multi-cultural day camps for this summer - first session is July 14-18 and the second will be August 11-15. The camps are designed for kids aged 5-12 and include a busy schedule of activities, crafts and good ole fashioned fun!

Call (902) 875-1310 to pre-registered for either camp.

We have continued to build on our partnership with the Shelburne Historical Society. The year long ticket sales have been a success and winners to date include:

Jan 2008: Lorna Hallet hand crafted mirror
Feb 2008: Sandra Harris BLHS package (sweatshirt and mug)
Mar 2008: Kathleen Glauser - Shine Shop Car Cleaning
Apr 2008: Emily Tenhave - 2 nights accommodation at the Carriage House
May 2008: Bev Delaney - Mother's Day Spa Package

Tickets are available for the remaining months of 2008. We will also be partnering to host the Annual Garden Party on July 20. This year's celebration will feature a pageant of 18th Century dress with the usual great food, people and musical entertainment.

I would like to thank our members, supporters, volunteers and staff for their continued dedication and support to keeping the memories alive at Birchtown. Operating and maintaining a his-

torical site is not a task to be taken lightly - there are ups and downs with many road blocks but all those involved with the Birchtown site have done so with determination, pride and lots of heart!

A reminder to all members the **Annual General Meeting has been scheduled for June 29 at 3:30pm** at the Birchtown Community Centre. The agenda will include the presentation of the financial statements as well as the Election of Officers. If you would like to nominate someone for any of the available offices (president, vice-president, treasurer or secretary) please send in your nominations to our office administrator no later than June 25.

Have a great summer!

Richard Gallion



Feature of the Month—Old School House Museum, Birchtown, Nova Scotia



Built in the 1830's, the school may have been the site of the original school which served the Black community, then served the White community as well. Being probably one of the first integrated schools in the province, as the disbanded British soldiers moved into the community. Originally, the school was funded by the Anglican Church. It is believed that Colonel Stephen Blucke, leader of the Black Pioneers, was one of the first school teachers. He was a prominent Anglican and the community's best educated man, so it was

logical that he be chosen as Schoolmaster. The Birchtown School was organized in 1785 (The Black Loyalist—James Walker). Although there were several hundred children of African heritage, only a few attended, for it was not accessible for children from Shelburne's Black community. This building continued to serve the people of this community as a one room school until the Consolidated Birchtown School was built around 1960. It became a community hall and storage shed before being purchased by the BLHS in 1997.



Amistad Freedom Tour Update



After four months aboard the Amistad, Haley Cox returned to Shelburne full of great stories of a once in a lifetime experience she will never forget! As an ambassador for the Black Loyalist Heritage Society, she had many engaging conversations during her travels, especially in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Many Nova Scotian descendants of the Black Loyalists who returned to Sierra Leone in 1792 welcomed her and the Amistad crew.



In February 2008, Nina Cox, Haley's younger sister, set out for Cape Verde to join the Amistad crew for the fourth leg of the Freedom Tour. Sailing from Cape Verde to Barbados was a 28 day trip with beautiful weather, but crew members were glad to see land. After a great stay in Barbados, the Amistad headed to Charlestown, South Carolina.

Both Haley and Nina are past staff members of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society Historical Site. Making this spiritual and emotional journey will leave a lasting impression for a life time.

(P.S. Haley is back aboard the Amistad as crew! Congratulations Haley!)

The Amistad will make her way to Shelburne Harbour on August 8—10 as we proudly host the Amistad Weekend Celebrations! The ship will be available to the public for tours and there will be lots of other exciting things to see and do. On August 9 there will be an African Bazaar (*held in the parking lot of the Shelburne Harbour Yacht Club*) featuring crafters, musicians and lots of great food. End your evening with a night of fun and dance at the Shelburne Legion beginning at 9pm with live music. Come and share in this unique celebration!

African Drumming March Break Camp



Birchtown Community Hall resonated with the sound of the beat during the March Break Camp bringing many local residents to the hall to enjoy the drumming. A three day camp, led by Dr. Henry Bishop, Mr. Tony Ince and youth drummer Gentry Thomas, engaged fourteen youth from Shelburne and Yarmouth.

Dr. Bishop found many of our local youth to be drumming naturals and hopes to continue African drumming in the Shelburne area.

This is the first time a March Break Camp has been hosted by the BLHS. Thanks to the support of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, junior leaders Troy Hartley and Arlee

Davis and the BLHS members who assisted with the activities & food preparations. The day camp was a great success!



Summer day camps are scheduled for July 14-18 and August 11-15. Camps run from 9am to 4pm for kids aged 5-12. Nutritious snacks will be provided—kids are asked to bring a brown bag lunch, bug spray & sun screen. Registration fee is \$35/child for the week or \$9/day. The kids will celebrate different cultures through food, music & crafts. Daily activities will include outside activities, crafts, scavenger hunts, water play, sports & cooking.

Call 875-1310 or 875-1606 to register.



Site Manager's Report



Greetings! As you all know, we have a busy summer that awaits us. With the celebration of the 225th Anniversary of the Loyalist Landing, family and friends are coming home—there will be plenty to do. The months leading up to this busy season have at times been hectic as preparations unfold for the opening of the museum and site.

There will be three students present on site to help with museum and site tours. The BLHS will be partnering with the Shelburne Historical Society, Harmony Bazaar and the Shelburne Yacht Club. Events to include: The 32nd Annual Garden Party, Founder's Days Church Service and Amistad Weekend.

The Birchtown Story Quilt project is underway with assistance from Master Quilter Laurie Swim. Two sessions have been held and a great design has been decided. We will be working on the quilt all summer at the museum—so stop by and stitch for a bit. Tanya Townsend has been hired as our Summer Supervisor and she will be preparing summer programming for day camps and other summer projects. Welcome aboard Tanya! Blessings! Beverly Cox

I can be contacted at beverly@blackloyalist.com or 875-1606 (office) or 875-1293 (Old School House Museum)

UPCOMING EVENTS & FUND-RAISERS for 2008

- June 29: BLHS Annual General Meeting 3:30pm at Birchtown Community Centre
- July 14-18: Multi-cultural Day Camp, daily from 9am to 4pm. Cost is \$35/child. Snacks provided. Call 875-1606 to register
- July 20: 32nd Annual Garden Party, 2pm to 5pm. 9 Charlotte Lane, Shelburne. Admission \$5/person
- July 24-27: Founder's Weekend
- July 27: Black Loyalist Commemorative Church Service—Shelburne Christ Anglican Church, 11am
- August 2: March to Birchtown: BBQ, picnic & musical entertainment. Walk begins at the Atlantic Park, Shelburne to BLHS site, Birchtown from 1pm-5pm
- August 5: Shelburne Exhibit Parade, 6:30pm
- August 8-10: Amistad Weekend - Activities to include Farmers Market, Dance, Amistad Freedom Schooner tours
- August 11-15: Multi-cultural Day Camp, daily from 9am to 4pm. Cost is \$35/child. Snacks provided. Call 875-1606 to register

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society is committed to discover, interpret, safeguard and promote the history and heritage of Black Loyalists and their descendants in North America.

OUR MANDATE:

To ensure the chronicles and contributions of Black Loyalists share a place with other communities that shape Canada's cultural mosaic.

Old School House Museum
131 Old Birchtown Rd



Hours of Operation

June to September
Monday Closed
Tues. to Fri. 10am—4pm
Sat. to Sun. 11am—5pm

Admission: \$2.50/person
Gift Shop on Site

Birchtown is located at Exit 27 on
Highway 103

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society Historical Site is located in Birchtown - (Hwy 3) 7 km southwest of Shelburne.



National Historic Monument
Black Burial Ground, Birchtown, NS



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MEMBERSHIP FORM

SINGLE: \$20.00 FAMILY: \$25.00 ORGANIZATION: \$40.00

NAME (S): _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE/FAX #: _____

EMAIL: _____

*Cheques/money orders payable to the Black Loyalist Heritage Society.
Memberships renewed annually at the calendar year end.*

Encl./ \$ _____

Mission Statement

The BLHS is committed to discover, interpret, safeguard and promote the history & heritage of the Black Loyalists and their descendants in North America.

PLEASE NOTE: Membership Fees have increased!

Single: \$20 Family: \$25 Organization: \$40

Membership is renewable on or before December 31.

Our Goals Are:

- ♦ To gain recognition as original colonists
- ♦ To celebrate the survival and determination of our ancestors
- ♦ To become a national resource for information pertaining to the history & heritage of the Black Loyalists
- ♦ To plan for and attain social and economic equality of the Black Loyalists among Canadians
- ♦ To provide mentors to our youth in the Black community
- ♦ To promote the scholarship fund for the descendants of Black Loyalists
- ♦ To discover artifacts of Black Loyalists and their descendants
- ♦ To maintain the National Historic Site, Old School House Museum and St. Paul's Church at Birchtown as a public exhibition and education resource