

FALL & WINTER 2008



Black Loyalist Heritage Society

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BLHS BOARD

- Elizabeth Cromwell-President*
- Barb Falk-Vice President*
- Sharon Oliver-Second Vice*
- Hank Falk-Treasurer / Secretary*
- Terry Bower-Director*
- Dolores Atwood-Director*
- Everett Cromwell-Director*
- Laurence Bruce-Director*
- Julie-Anne Bruce-Director*
- Sheila Hartley Gallion-Director*
- Carrine Sparks-Director*

BLHS STAFF

- Beverly Cox—Site Manager*
- Stephen Workman—Project Manager*
- Shari Shortliffe-Office Administrator*

“ If you don't know your family's history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree.”

Michael Crichton

Congratulations to 44th President Elect Barack Obama—First African American elected president of the USA!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008 ELIZABETH CROMWELL



Greetings from Birchtown. I would like to thank you for electing me as President at the Annual

General Meeting in June and I intend to channel my inner strengths and energies to confidently lead the BLHS into the future. I would like to take a moment to honour and remember my brother, Richard F. Gallion, who left this world too soon on September 13th, 2008. Richard was involved with the Society since its inception in the late 1980's and his dedication to supporting our mandate is to be commended. Richard's illness left him unable to attend many of the BLHS events and programs this summer, but he always spoke of how the staff worked hard to implement the programs and for that he was very thankful. We miss him and pray that he has found peace in the Lord's Kingdom.

The summer of 2008 was very busy and eventful with visitor numbers reaching just over 1200. Summer staff, Tanya Townsend, Isaac MacLean and Kimball Hammond, kept busy with guided tours, organizing and running the 2 days camps and ensured the site looked its best by mowing, planting, weeding and whipper snipping.

The BLHS initiated several

programs this summer, specifically designed to celebrate the 225th Anniversary of the Loyalist Landing to NS. In July we celebrated, in partnership with the Shelburne Historical Society, the annual Garden Party which is held to honour the original Loyalist settlers of Shelburne and Birchtown and celebrate our community's rich and diverse history. Also in the month of July, we partnered with Christ Church and welcomed singer Pat Watson to celebrate Shelburne's Founders Weekend. Pat delighted the congregation with her sultry and powerful voice. The BLHS hosted its first ever—March to Birchtown— which was designed to pay homage to our forefathers, who fought for their freedom, survived harsh and grueling living conditions and overcame a slew of broken promises by the British government. Over 40 people supported this event and all of them managed to walk the 5 mile journey from Shelburne to Birchtown.

Another eventful and memorable moment was on August 8th when the freedom schooner, La Amistad sailed into Shelburne Harbour. During the 4 days the ship was docked, people were invited to tour the ship, attend an outdoor Farmers Market, community dance and for the younger ones—a chance to sail on the Amistad for a day in Shelburne's beautiful harbour.

The BLHS continues to partner with the Shelburne Historical Society and our year long ticket winners to date are:

- Jan: Lorna Hallet—hand crafted mirror
- Feb: Sandra Harris—BLHS pkg
- Mar: Kathleen Glauser—Shine Shop Car Cleaning
- Apr: Emily Terhave—2 nights stay at Carriage House
- May: Bev Delaney—Mothers Day Spa pkg
- June: Donna Rhuland—Family pkg to NS Museum & Upper Clements park
- July: Aileen Stokes—Shelburne Museum pkg.
- Aug: Monique Fillmore—Shelb. Shopping spree
- Sept: Debi Wilson King—basket of home-made preserves
- Oct: William Nickerson—Halloween centre-piece & baked goods

November's prize is a hand made quilt and December will be a Christmas centre-piece with baked goodies for the holidays. Also, hands have been busy peeling, slicing and rolling dough for our annual Apple Pie Fundraiser. All pies are unbaked and frozen—pies available include 2 crust apple, diabetic apple and a limited number of mincemeat and blueberry. Pies are \$7 or \$8 for diabetic.

(continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1) Call 875-1310 to order your pies today.



On October 28th, Vice President Sharon Oliver graciously accepted "The Friends of Archaeology Award" from the

NS Archaeology Society at their fall lecture. Thank you to the NS Archaeology Society for recognizing the efforts of the BLHS in the field of archaeology. Archaeology has been instrumental in the BLHS's quest to promote and preserve the history and heritage of the Black Loyalist and we hope to continue surveys and excavations in Birchtown.

Our project manager, Stephen Workman has been busy with proposal writing and furthering the plans for construction of the BLHS Interpretive Centre. We have chosen 3 architectural firms located in NS, and now we must narrow that choice down to one firm who will design the interpretive centre planned for Birchtown. We will continue to keep you updated on our progress.

Site manager, Beverly Cox, continues to plan and develop relevant programming for our heritage site and museum. She has organized several successful programs and fund-raisers, maintained exhibits at the Old School House Museum and over the winter, she will continue to develop strategies for next season. Our office administrator, Shari Shortliffe, continues

to manage the office, assisting wherever she is needed. She is also taking several courses on-line through the Nova Scotia Community College and hopes to obtain a diploma in Business Administration upon her completion in April 2009. I would like to thank the staff for their dedication and hard work over the summer to develop creative, relevant programming for the community of Shelburne and Birchtown.

I would like to thank our members, supporters and volunteers—who have continued to support our cause over the last 19 years. Reaching our goal, to become a national resource for information pertaining to the history and heritage of the Black Loyalists is within "arms reach". We hope to achieve this with the construction of the Black Loyalist Interpretive Centre here in Birchtown so the world can learn about this determined, resilient people who were one of the founding peoples of this nation and to recognize and celebrate their contributions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Cromwell
President, BLHS



Christmas Tree Fundraiser: BLHS is selling Xmas trees this holiday season—prices range from

\$20-\$30. Come see our great selection!

HANDS ON HISTORY



Three Shelburne youth had an opportunity to experience life at sea this summer. Daniel Raçe sailed from the port of Halifax to Shelburne aboard the Freedom Schooner La Amistad. Daniel is an

avid sailor who has been taking sailing lessons at the Shelburne Yacht Club.

Troy Hartley and Sarah Burrill sailed aboard the Amistad from the port of Shelburne to Portland, Maine. Both Troy and Sarah had the opportunity to be part of the crew who hosted boat tours and day sails while in Maine. Troy and Sarah both loved the experience. Troy stayed aboard a few days longer as he realized he loved the life at sea. The ship is a replica of the original "La Amistad".

In 1839, fifty-three Africans were held captive aboard La Amistad and were supposed to be sold into slavery. They mutinied, were jailed and tried. In a landmark decision, the US Supreme Court freed the Africans. Today, the Amistad Freedom Schooner travels the world as a floating exhibit—educating people, especially school children, about the past and the importance of the creating a better future.



FEATURE OF THE MONTH—BLACK BURIAL GROUND NATIONAL HISTORIC MONUMENT



Located on the Old Birchtown Road, near Birchtown Bay, this National Historic Monument came about in July 1996. This monument is dedicated to the people who settled Birchtown. They were the Black Loyalists who were escaping slavery in the thirteen colonies in America. They chose to leave New York in 1783 with the United Empire Loyalists. Many served in the Black Pioneer Regiment; others were still enslaved and owned by the United Empire Loyalist families who brought them to Port Roseway (now Shelburne). It is believed that this is but a small section of the original burial ground. Local oral folklore re-

ferred to this spot as the Black Burial Ground, but local farmers all tell stories of removing stones with rough etching and carvings on them to make room for planting. Also, in the late 1950's, when the Birchtown School was being constructed, there were human bones unearthed, however, we do not know the names of people buried here and have found only one reference to a person being buried on the Northwest Arm (John Stevens). The Society constructed a seawall around the site to prevent further erosion.





Richard Franklin Gallion, passed away peacefully at Yarmouth Regional Hospital surrounded by his loved ones, his wife Sheila, his son Richard Jr. (Butch) and his sister, Elizabeth on Saturday, September 13th, 2008. He was the son of the late James and Annabelle (Matthews) Gallion.

Richard was a man of great character and spirit. He was a caring, generous soul, who was always there to lend a helping hand. He supported his community and dedicated much of his spare time to assist with our community's social and economic development. Richard was a devoted member of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society since its inception in 1989. He was a strong believer in educating our country on the forgotten history of one of Canada's founding people - the Black Loyalist. Richard was very active in the promotion of social justice and equality for all. He served as Deputy Zone Commander of the Royal Canadian Legion, Zone 12, was Past President of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch No. 63, President of the Thunder Bay Friendship Centre, Past President of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society and a member of the Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia. Richard also volunteered for the Canadian Diabetes Association.

His working years were spent as an Ontario Provincial Police Officer until his retirement in 1995. In his leisure time, Richard enjoyed base-

ball and golf and liked to watch old movies. He especially enjoyed family get-togethers where he would often have everyone in 'stitches' telling jokes and stories. Richard was a good friend to all who knew him - trust-worthy and dependable. He was always up-front and would speak his mind - Richard was never one to back down from a challenge.

He is survived by his wife, Sheila (Hartley) Gallion; son Richard Jr. (Bonnie) of Windsor, Ontario; sisters Gladys (Max) Russell of New Germany, NS; Elizabeth (Everett) Cromwell of Birchtown; 2 step-grandchildren, Evan and Nick; nephew Joseph (Deborah) Howard of Vancouver; great niece Megan Howard of Vancouver, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his sister, Brenda MacIsaac, and nephew, David Mooney.

Richard will be deeply missed but he will live on in our memory. I thought it was fitting to share with you all the words of Wayne Hamilton from the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

"What moves through us is a silence, a quiet sadness, a longing for one more day, one more word, one more touch. We may not understand why he left this earth so soon, or why he left before we were ready to say good-bye, but little by little, we begin to remember all that he was and that he gave us memories too beautiful to forget."

BLACK LOYALIST 225 SHELBURNE



The Black Loyalist Celebrations kicked off with the March to Birchtown on August 2. Approximately 30 participants walked from the Loyalist Plaza in Shelburne to Birchtown Community Centre where everyone enjoyed a BBQ and musical entertainment. On August 3 the Osprey Arts Centre hosted the play "A New Hope" performed and written by Shelly Hamilton. The play was based on the historical accounts of John Clarkson's mission to America who came to improve the conditions of the Black Loyalist in NS and to promote the colonization of Sierra Leone in Africa. The story teller, through the voices of those who made this journey, tells of their hardships and hopes of a better life in the new land. Ms. Hamilton was brought to tears as a full house gave her a standing ovation. What a moving night.

August 4th the Shelburne County Rug Hookers opened their display at the Old School House Museum, featuring a number of rugs that told the story of the Black Loyalist experience. What a show of talent.

On August 8th, the Shelburne Harbour was the back drop as the Amistad Freedom Schooner sailed in with a flotilla of local sailboats from the Shelburne Harbour Yacht Club and the schooners from the NS Schooner Association. A civic welcome was hosted by the BLHS with welcoming wishes by Democracy 250 Co-chairs Dr.

John Hamm and Russell MacLellan; Nova Scotia Amistad Freedom Society Co-chairs—John Hennigar-Shue and Wayne Adams; Mayor of the Town of Shelburne, Parker Comeau; Warden of the Municipality of Shelburne, Sherman Embree; and President of the BLHS—Elizabeth Cromwell, who presented the Amistad Captain with a plaque of the BLHS's Armorial Bearings.

August 10th the BLHS held an interdenominational service at St. Paul's Church in Birchtown. The service was led by Pastor Debra Hill, who delivered a great message. Ms. Leona Smith and Ole Friends helped fill the church with wonderful music. The Amistad crew and workshop facilitator Charla Williams ran a program for local youth with discussion of diversity and the importance of creating a better future. The afternoon featured a chance for the youth to work the sails of the Amistad and sail around Shelburne Harbour. The weekend was full of celebrations, music, food, displays & lots of history—leaving many tired after a busy weekend. On August 11th, the Amistad left Shelburne with 2 Shelburne youth on board heading for Portland, Maine.

Many new friends were made and many old friends reacquainted during this celebration weekend.



SITE MANAGER'S REPORT



The last few months have been very busy, beginning with the preparation of the tourist season. We had 3 students on site this summer—Tanya Townsend, supervisor; Isaac MacLean, interpretive guide; and Kimball Hammond, grounds maintenance. At times, we felt as though we could have used 3 more summer staff but we all pitched in to make a successful summer.

We kicked off the season with Jennifer & Ardith, harpists, who performed at St. Paul's Church—what a wonderful show. Many new partnerships were formed this year which proved to be very successful. I would like to thank the Harmony Bazaar, Shelburne County Museum, Shelburne Historical Society, Royal Cdn Legion, branch 63, Lockport Recreation Dept., Shelburne Yacht Club, Town of Shelburne, Osprey Arts Centre, Black Cultural Centre, Municipality of Shelburne, Amistad Freedom Society of NS; and the 3rd New Jersey Volunteers.

Visitor numbers continues to increase at the BLHS Historical Site & Museum, along with requests for genealogical and historical inquiries. I would like to welcome Stephen Workman, the new BLHS Project Manager who has been working closely with board members and the Steering Committee on the development of the new interpretive centre.

Like many other small, but important organizations throughout NS, the BLHS struggles with obtaining members and volunteers. It is important to have a strong membership and committed volunteers to keep our organization's vitality. From new members and volunteers come new ideas. The BLHS welcomes all who would like to be part of our organization. With saying this, I would like to thank all volunteers who helped make this spring and summer events a success! Thank you so much!

Beverly Cox, BLHS Site Manager

Contact me at 902-875-1606 or beverly@blackloyalist.com

UPCOMING EVENTS & FUND-RAISERS FOR 2008

Nov 13: **General Meeting** for Executive & Finance Committee. All members are welcome—6:30pm in the Birchtown Community Hall.

Dec 6: **BLHS Annual Christmas Social**—begins at 7pm in the Birchtown Community Centre. Potluck supper so bring along your favorite dish. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, bring a gender neutral gift valued at \$10 or under.

Dec 15: **Bake Sale** at the Shelburne Mall from 11 am to 1pm. Drop off your donation of something sweet to the office—98 Old Birchtown Rd.

Annual Apple Pie Fundraiser: Pies are now available—2 crust apple, diabetic and a limited number of mincemeat & blueberry. Pies are \$7 or \$8 for diabetic. All pies are frozen and unbaked. Call 875-1310 to order yours in time for the holidays.

Christmas Tree Fund-raiser: BLHS is selling Xmas Trees—prices range from \$20-530. Call 875-1310 or 875-1606 to learn more!

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.

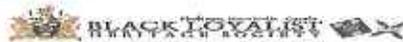
The Black Loyalist Heritage Society's
Annual Home-made Apple Pie Fundraiser

Pies Available:
2 Crust Apple
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Limited Number of
Blueberry & Mincemeat

Regular pie
& Diabetic pie

Order yours today!
Call 875-1310

Proceeds benefit the Society
and its programs



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Email: blackloyalist@blackloyalist.com Web Site: www.blackloyalist.com

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.

Check / \$ _____

Mission Statement

The BLHS is committed to discover, interpret, safeguard and promote the history & heritage of 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