

SPRING 2010



Black Loyalist Heritage Society

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BLHS BOARD

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The family is both the fundamental unit of society as well as the root of culture. It ... is a perpetual source of encouragement, advocacy, assurance, and emotional refueling that empowers a child to venture with confidence into the greater world and to become all that he can be. -----

MARIANNE E. NEIFERT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT SPRING 2010 ELIZABETH CROMWELL



Another winter is behind us and spring is definitely upon us. Daffodils, tulips & crocuses have all poked their heads through

the ground and trees are beginning to bud. The wondrous transformations of mother nature are happening all around us. Preparations are underway for the opening of the Old School House Museum on May 31st. Hours of operation will be Tuesday through Sunday 11am to 5pm, by appointment on Mondays, and admission is \$3/ person. We have already had a few visitors on site and as always, you can visit the museum in the off-season or when it is closed by simply stopping at the administrative office or call the office at 875-1310 to make an appointment. We already have 2 tours scheduled for the month of June! We had 815 visitors in 2009, up from 711 in 2008. Let's see if we can reach the 1000 mark this year!

We have received confirmation of funding through NS Economic & Rural Development, Student Skills Development Program for a Project Assistant. This position is open to students who expect to graduate in June and are enrolled full time in a post secondary institution in the fall, as well as students who are currently enrolled in a post secondary institution and are returning full time in the fall. We have also received funding confirmation through Service Canada, Canada Summer Jobs for one student position - this is open to students ages 15-29, either enrolled in high school or a post secondary institution. Student resumes can be sent via email at blackloyalist@blackloyalist.com or via fax at 902-875-1352 or via mail to PO Box 1194, Shelburne, NS, B0T 1W0.

On February 7th, we held the 5th Annual Chocolate Festival with special guest Neville MacKay. Neville is the proprietor of My



Mother's Bloomers, one of Atlantic Canada's finest floral and gift shops. He is also a world renowned florist, event speaker, floral judge, writer and a dedicated community volunteer. Neville charmed the crowd with his witty humor while teaching the audience floral care and arranging techniques. Not to mention, he made several stunning arrangements all of which he gave away to the audience. Thank you to our volunteers and supporters who donated their delicious, delectable chocolate treats. The fundraiser was a great success and we raised over \$850.

Over the winter, we continued to implement the Black Loyalist Interpretive Centre Blueprint Phase Project, funded through Cultural Spaces Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage & Community Trust Fund, NS Economic & Rural Development. This

project was developed to further the plans to build a \$3 million interpretive centre in Birchtown to tell the full story of the Black Loyalist in North America. The consortium practice of Peter Henry Architects and Filum Ltd has completed the architectural plans and contract documents. Before applications are submitted for capital infrastructure funding, we need to make revisions to our 2005 Business Plan in order to have an updated and accurate projection of anticipated revenue generation and overhead expenses of the interpretive centre. It is anticipated that all capital funding proposals will be submitted in the fall of 2010.

In January we engaged Form Media, a full service design firm who specializes in interpretive planning and design, environmental graphic design, brand identity and digital multimedia, to create a preliminary interpretive plan for the Black Loyalist Interpretive

Centre. A two day workshop was held in February to begin the process of identifying and defining the exhibit and visitor experiences. Participants of the workshop included historians, genealogists, staff of the Nova Scotia Museum specializing in interpretation and other key stakeholders of the Black Community. The participants engaged in open discussion to develop a vision and determine the interpretive criteria for the Black Loyalist Interpretive Centre. Form Media has submitted to the BLHS a proposal for Interpretive Planning and Design Services related to the Black Loyalist Interpretive Centre and Site. The proposal, which would result in a Schematic Level Design Package, includes a description of the proposed work through itemized phase descriptions, fees estimates and a proposed schedule for the interpretive centre. We are currently working on funding applications to develop the Black Loyalist Interpretive Centre Concept Plan & Schematic Design.

On March 31st, we completed the BLHS Business Plan Implementation Project which was funded through Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Multiculturalism and the Office of African NS Affairs. The project allowed the BLHS to pursue the next steps along the path of activity initiated to preserve, protect and make the public aware of the Black Loyalist Heritage Site at Birchtown, NS and the story of the Black Loyalists in NS. Overall, the project contributed to the development of the historical site & the required infrastructure services including the development of appropriate management skills; developing and implementing a human resource policy; gift shop product development; implementing a volunteer recruitment plan; and identifying and accessing infrastructure funding for interpretive centre.

Also this winter, the BLHS undertook a project to improve the security of our heritage site, an initiative supported through Public Safety Canada, Security Infrastructure Pilot Program. This program is designed to increase a sense of safety in communities at risk of hate-motivated crimes. We have installed better lighting as well as security cameras to monitor and record site activity.

We also received funding from the NS Department of



Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Strategic

Development Initiative Program, to acquire the Bunce Island Exhibit. This exhibit consists of 20 door sized vinyl panels depicting the history of the Atlantic Slave Trade, specifically of the Bunce Island Slave Castle which is the largest British slave castle of the Rice Coast of West Africa. This exhibit covers topics relating to the slave castle, its history, its operations, the slave trade and the Middle Passage to America. This exhibit will enable people to have an open and honest dialogue about slavery and its effects on today's society. We are finalizing the plans for the exhibit's unveiling scheduled for Sunday, June 27th to be held at the Birchtown Community Centre. We will keep you posted as the details unfold.



On Saturday, April 24th we participated in our county's annual event - Our Community, Something for Everyone, where businesses, non profit, charitable

organizations and other community groups set up display booths to showcase what they have to offer. The event also featured musical entertainment, children's activities, physical activity opportunities, contests and demonstrations. Shelburne County should be proud of all it has to offer!



The 3rd Annual Mother's Day Cheesecake Festival was held on Sunday, May 9th. Along with a variety of

home-made cheesecakes to choose from, mom also enjoyed the country & western sounds of Dave Bur-



bine & Marianne Nickerson. Prizes were donated by the Rose Bouquet Flower & Gift Shop, Hastings Guy, Perly Goodick, Video Focus, Trimmers Property Services and Sou' West Hair Choppers. Appreciation and thanks are also extended to our local Tim Hortons who donated coffee for the event. I would also like to thank the supporters who donated their delicious cheesecakes. We raised \$325 at this event!

In partnership with the Birchtown Community Centre, on Sunday, June 20th we will be hosting our 2nd Annual Father's Day Roast Turkey Supper at the Birchtown Community Centre from 4pm to 6pm. Bring Dad out for a delicious turkey dinner complete with all the trimmings, dessert & beverage - price is \$12/person or \$6 for children 12 and under.

The BLHS Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 27th at 3:30pm in the Birchtown Community Centre. We encourage members and supporters to actively consider running for office. Please contact the BLHS administrative office to submit your nomination. We are also looking for supporters to participate on the Board of Directors or sit on one of our committees. Community involvement is vital to our sustainability!

Shelburne's annual Founders Weekend is scheduled for July 15-18, 2010 which is an annual celebration of the rich history, heritage, culture and people who have made Shelburne and its environs one of the most interesting and diverse small towns in Canada. As always, the BLHS will have its BBQ booth on the waterfront district selling everyone's favorite summer time treat - hot dogs & hamburgers along with cold & hot beverages. We will also be co-hosting the 34th Annual Garden Party in partnership with the Shelburne Historical Society - our theme, Founding Fathers, will celebrate and include all founding cultures.

We are also planning two summer day camps this year - July 26-30 and August 16-20. The camps are designed for children ages 5-12 and to promote physical fitness, healthy life choices, explore nature and learn about different cultures through dance, exercise, crafts



and sport.

Planning is also underway for the Saint Paul's Stain Glass Window Dedication Ceremony which is also planned

for June 27th beginning at 2pm. This dedication celebration will not only include the unveiling of the donor plaques, but activities of song, worship & reflection. Guests will then be invited to proceed to the Birchtown Community Centre for the Bunce Island Exhibit Unveil and refreshments. In 2007, the BLHS undertook a campaign to raise funds to restore the stain glass windows in the church as time had taken its toll and many of the windows were cracked and broken. They have been restored to their original beauty and in honour of those who donated funds, each window will have a permanent donor plaque installed.



You can clearly see all that we have accomplished because of your continued support! Please continue to renew your memberships, volunteer your time and support our annual events. Encourage your friends and family to do the same! We rely on your input and feedback in order to provide quality and creative programming and events. Please feel free to send your suggestions to our staff - we are always open to improving our existing programs and developing new ones as well.



Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Cromwell

FEATURE OF THE MONTH



Located on the Old Birchtown Road, near Birchtown Bay, this National 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 referred to this spot as the Black Burial Ground, but local farmers all tell stories of removing stones with rough etching and carving 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.

FROM THE DESK OF ARLENE BUTLER—BLHS SITE ASSISTANT



Another spring has risen upon us once again. We are looking forward to a great season with lots of fund-raising events & activities.

Since 2010 has begun, we held our 3rd annual Chocolate Festival on February 7 with a special guest appearance from renowned florist Neville MacKay and there was a great turnout of guests. All the floral arrangements that Neville created during the event were given out as prizes to the attendees. A special thank you goes out to everyone who donated chocolate treats.

On Mother's Day, we hosted our 3rd annual Mother's Day Cheesecake Festival. Entertainment was provided by country & western duo David Burbine & Marianne Nickerson. They were absolutely amazing and at the end of the festival the audience cheered for an encore. David & Marianne were more than pleased to sing another song. All of our door prizes were donated by the following local businesses & individuals: Trimmers Property Services,

Hastings Guy, Sou'West Hair Choppers, Video Focus, The Rose Bouquet Flower & Gift Shop and the Little Guy Household Products. Tim Hortons provided coffee for the event. A special thank you to everyone who donated cheesecake. Pictures can be viewed on our Facebook Page.

We are now preparing for our 2nd annual Father's Day Roast Turkey Supper on Sunday, June 20th at the Birchtown Hall from 4pm to 6pm. Plates will be \$12/adult and \$6/child (12 & under). There will be door prizes available to be won. The supper will consist of roast turkey, potatoes, carrots, turnip, stuffing, cranberry sauce, dessert, tea/coffee and juice. We are calling on members to donate vegetables for the event—you can drop off donations at the office Monday through Friday and for any donations over \$5, we will issue a charitable receipt. Bring Dad out on his special day for a home-made supper.

If you would like to stay updated on our events & festivals, you can visit the Black Loyalist Heritage Society Facebook page or you can contact me—Arlene Butler, Site Assistant at arlene@blackloyalist.com or call 902-875-1310.

VIOLA DESMOND—A BLACK CANADIAN HERO



Born and raised in Halifax, Viola Desmond trained as a teacher but soon joined her husband Jack Desmond in a combined barbershop and hairdressing salon, a beauty parlour on Gottingen Street. While expanding her business across the province, Viola went to New Glasgow in 1946.

In New Glasgow, Desmond developed car trouble and decided to go to the movies while repairs were made. She bought a ticket, entered the theatre and took a seat on the main floor, unaware that tickets sold to African Canadians in this town were for the balcony and the main floor was reserved solely for White patrons. Theatre staff demanded that she go to the balcony, but she refused, since she could see better from the main floor. The police were summoned immediately and she was dragged out, which injured her hip. She was charged and held overnight in jail; she was not advised of her rights.

Maintaining her dignity, Desmond remained sitting upright, wearing her white gloves (a sign of sophistication and class at the time). The following morning, despite not having done anything wrong, she paid the imposed fine of \$20. Besides being fined, she was charged with defrauding the Government of Nova Scotia of the difference in the tax between a ground floor and a balcony seat, which amounted to one cent.

While discussing the incident with the doctor who tended to her, Desmond

decided to fight the charges. Clearly, the issue was about her being African Canadian and discriminatory policies; it was not about tax evasion. In taking the matter to the courts, Viola Desmond's experience helped to galvanize public opinion locally and internationally, and to raise awareness about the reality of Canadian segregation. ¹

April 14th, 2010, Ms. Desmond, who passed away in 1965 in New York, was pardoned by Nova Scotia Lt.-Gov. Mayann Francis at a ceremony in Halifax, along with an official apology read by Premier Darrell Dexter recognizing the injustices & racial discrimination Ms. Desmond suffered. Canada will be reminded of its egregious errors. The free pardon recognizes Ms. Desmond's innocence at the Roseland Theatre that night, and it recognizes the error of the four white Supreme Court judges who turned down her appeal.

But although the pardon is hailed as an overdue gesture, some members of Ms. Desmond's family say if she were alive today, the former teacher and entrepreneur would want nothing of the sort.

"She would have laughed and said, 'Pardon me for what? I didn't do anything wrong,'" said Sharon Oliver, Ms. Desmond's niece. ²

¹ <http://blackhistorycanada.ca/profiles.php?themeid=20&id=13>

² <http://www.nationalpost.com/story.html?id=2907492>

BUNCE ISLAND EXHIBIT

The Bunce Island Exhibit will be unveiled at the BLHS Annual General Meeting on June 27, 2010. The exhibit has been funded through the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Strategic Development Initiative Program.

Bunce Island was one of about 40 slave castles, or fortified trading post, that European merchants built along the west coast of Africa during the period of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Slave trade based at the castles purchased African captives, imprisoned them and loaded them aboard the slave ships that took them on the infamous middle passage to America. Slave castles have been called "warehouses of humanity"



The Bunce Island Exhibits consist of 20 door size display panels, each containing text and images illustrating Bunce Island's history and its links to North America. The exhibit includes period drawings of the castle and other pictures illustrating the slave trade era in Sierra Leone and North America. There are also photos of the ruins of

Bunce Island today as well as computer generated reconstruction drawing showing in great detail how Bunce Island appeared in the year 1805.



The Bunce Island Exhibit covers 26 topics relating to the slave castle, its history, its operations, and its contemporary importance.

This exhibit on the history of Bunce Island and its links to the Americas is available in the US and Great Britain. We currently are the first Canadian venue. This exhibit will be available to travel to schools, museums, libraries and other educational institutions.

Professor Joseph Opala, the exhibit curator, has been studying Bunce Island for 30 years. Mr. Opala lived in Sierra Leone for 17 years and taught African studies at that country's Fourah Bay College. He now teaches history at James Madison University in Virginia.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Adams Family Reunion, August 20th – 22nd 2010

Come one come all!

For further information please contact Perry Adams or Lillian Symonds at perryadams@ns.sympatico.ca or atsymonds@hfx.eastlink.ca or Registrar Missy Symonds Searl msearlecc@gmail.com

See website for more information

<http://adamsfamilyreunion2010.ning.com/>

Sable River Country Market

The Sable River Country Market opens Saturday, May 29 at the Irving on HWY 103 in Sable River. This is a non-profit community market run by the Women's Fishnet. It is for you—if you wish to sell your produce, crafts or collectables, bring a table and come join us. Sable River Fire Department will be there with a BBQ every Saturday. On May 29, Wayne Stoddard's One Man Band will be there to sing a variety of songs. We appreciate every one of our customers and send out a huge thank-you for supporting the community by buying & selling locally last year. Thanks to you, we are growing and will now be including a Thursday Market this year. Starting June 3 we'll be at the ESSO on HWY 103 in Sable River. Local produce, valley produce, cheeses & Meadowbrook Meats will be there along with anything you would like to sell. SASI's Beech St. Studio will come out from Lockeport to BBQ and to sell crafts. Everyone Welcome! For more information, please contact Cindy at 656-2793 or Alice at 874-1858.



Find us on
Facebook

The Black Loyalist Heritage Society is now on Facebook—become a fan & encourage your family & friends to do the same. Leave your comments, suggestions & ideas. A great way to stay informed of all the BLHS programming & events!

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.



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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.*

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.

Black Loyalist Heritage Society Historical Site & Old School House Museum



131 Old Birchtown Rd
Site of the Largest Settlement of Free Blacks in 1783

Featuring
Remembering Black Loyalist, Black Communities Exhibit
Genealogy
Archaeological Artifacts
Heritage Trail

Open June to Sept
Monday - Appointment only
Tues - Fri 11am - 5pm
Saturday & Sunday 11am - 5pm
Gift Shop on Site

blackloyalist@blackloyalist.com

www.blackloyalist.com

Phone: (902) 875-1293 or 875-1310

Fax: (902) 875-1352

Admission Charged

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