

SUMMER & FALL 2009



Black Loyalist Heritage Society

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BLHS BOARD

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*Arlene Butler-Special Project
Coordinator*

" You can kiss your family & friends good-bye and put miles between you, but at the same time you carry them with you in your heart, your mind, your stomach, because you do not just live in a world but a world lives in you."

Frederick Buechner

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FALL 2009 ELIZABETH CROMWELL



Another successful summer has passed - the mornings are cooler now as we move into the fall season. Summer staff has completed their work terms and have returned to school. Patricia Reid, a history major at St. Xavier University, was our Museum Supervisor and I would like to thank her for a job well done. Thanks are also extended to the funder for this position - Nova Scotia Economic & Rural Development, Student Skills Development Program. Eden MacLean, a student of Shelburne Regional High School, was employed as the Museum Interpretive Guide and she too did a great job. Thank you to Service Canada, Canada Summer Job Program for her position's funding.

The Old School House Museum will remain open during the month of September; however, hours have changed from Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm. Simply come to the Administrative Office at 98 Old Birchtown Road and one of the staff members will gladly take you up for a tour. The Museum is open during the off-season by appointment - just call the office at 875-1310 to make arrangements.

I would like to thank the members for nominating and re-electing me as President at our Annual General Meeting on July 5th. I would like to congratulate

my fellow officers who were also elected at the AGM - Hank Falk, Vice President; Sharon Oliver, 2nd Vice President; and Barb Falk, Secretary / Treasurer. It is comforting to know you have faith and confidence in my abilities to continue leading the BLHS.

We said good-bye to Stephen Workman, the BLHS Project Manager, on June 30th, who returned to his position at the Ross Farm. We would like to thank Stephen for his dedicated service and all that he accomplished during his one-year term. The plans for the Birchtown Interpretive Centre continue to move forward, with funding confirmation from Nova Scotia Economic Development for the Blueprint Phase. An application is also pending approval through the Department of Canadian Heritage, Cultural Spaces, as a partner of the Blueprint Phase. Once blueprints are produced, we can move forward with our application to Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency for infrastructure funding.

The Father's Day Roast Turkey Supper, held in partnership with the Birchtown Community Centre was a huge success. We served over 100 suppers and would like to thank all of you who came out and supported this event. We would also like to thank the volunteers who donated food, cooked turkeys, and gave their time to assist with serving. Without volunteer support, we would not be able to

host these important community functions.

There was a good turnout for Founders Weekend Celebrations, July 16-19. Unfortunately the rain put a damper on Saturday's celebrations, but the remainder of the events were held under sunny skies. The Annual Garden Party, held in partnership with the Shelburne Historical Society, was



the high light of the weekend, with special guest speaker the Honourable Mayann Francis, ONS, DhumL, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. Her address was touching and sincere as well as thought provoking as she reminded us of the importance of telling the complete history, which may not always be gallant. We must continue to educate the populace on the injustices and cruelties suffered at the hands of our forefathers to make sure it never happens again and to make the world a better place for tomorrow. After the garden party, Her Honour visited the gardens of Anna Scott Smith, a Black Loyalist descendant, clad in skirt and high heels to admire the beauty of Anna's garden.

The Birchtown Multicultural Day Camps held July 13-17

Continued on page 2..



and August 17-21, were also a success. We had over 20 children in attendance that enjoyed activities, which included drumming, yoga, belly dancing, story telling and arts & crafts. Thank you to the junior leaders who assisted with the camp and made the experience that much more enjoyable for the little ones.

Amistad 175 Freedom Celebrations were held from August 12-17th in honour of the 175th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in the British Empire. Shelburne's Dock Street was flooded with visitors who



came to see the Amistad Freedom Schooner and participate in the many events scheduled. Over the

course of the week, we hosted a public civic welcome for the arrival of the freedom schooner, performance by Shauntay Grant, gospel festival, film presentations, cold plate supper, March to Birchtown and a youth sail. A lot of hard-work and effort went into organizing and planning the week's festivities and for this I would like to thank the staff, board members and volunteers who made it all possible.

Honourable Percy Paris, Minister of Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs and Minister of Economic & Rural Development, along with the Honourable Sterling Belliveau, Minister of Fisheries & Aquaculture and

Minister of Environment, visited the heritage site on August 28. Their



words of encouragement and praise for the work undertaken in Birchtown were inspirational and up lifting. We

wish them success during their term of office and hope to continue working together.

Through the fall and winter, staff will continue to work on funding proposals, planning & organizing events for the 2010 season and continue to implement various fund-raisers. I would like to personally thank Beverly, Shari & Arlene for their hard work and dedication. To our members, supporters and volunteers - thank you for your continued support and assistance. You truly are the life-line of the Society.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elizabeth Cromwell

Greenville Community Reunion 2009

By Teena Paynter-Mahoney

Last month, the members of the Greenville community made history. They held their first community reunion and



met their goal to unite the community. A year ago, when the organizing committee started the task of putting together a community

reunion, the task could have seemed daunting. But working together committee members, Angie Lawrence, Rachel

Falls, Lisa Johnson, Alice Crawford, Maryann Crawford, Faye Smith, Carolyn Smith and Sheridan Lawrence Jr. put together a reunion that attracted current and former Greenville residents and their families.

More than 150 people pre-registered for the Reunion, held at the Greenville Community Hall. During the event, held on the August 7-9, 2009 weekend, registrants attended various events on the agenda. Brenda Clark presented a fashion show of African apparel, and 1970's retro wear, using Greenville residents, past and present as models. Major Ken Fells, whose mother the late Ada Fells (nee Crawford) was born in Greenville, spoke about African Nova Scotian history, specific to Greenville and Yarmouth County. Much of the focus of the Reunion was on unity within the members of the community. Other speakers during the Greenville Reunion included Will Crawford and Chief Deborah Robinson, Chief of the Acadian Band of Mi'kmaq, who spoke to the reunion gatherers about her connections to the community and the importance of unity and shared history.

The Anderson, Crawford, Falls, Jarvis, Johnson, and Lawrence displayed family trees and photos at the Reunion.



On Sunday, the Ministers Reverend Catelli of African Socialization and Reverend Michael Alden Fells led the congregation at the Greenville Baptist

Church.

Greenville is in Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia. The Community was settled circa 1820, at the time it was the only all-Black community in Yarmouth Town and County.

FEATURE OF THE MONTH—ST. PAUL'S CHURCH



In 1996, the Black Loyalist Heritage Society acquired land in Birchtown, Shelburne County, Nova Scotia, to develop the heritage site. One of those buildings included St. Paul's Church. Faith was and is an important part of the Black Loyalist life. The Birchtown Loyalists were primarily Anglican, Methodist or Baptist. Two of the community's early spiritual leaders were; Moses Wilkson - a blind, lame, former slave know for his fiery preaching and David George - a Baptist who traveled the province preaching in

Black communities. The earliest church building here in Birchtown was shared by several denominations.

The community built St. Paul's beginning in 1888 and opened as the Anglican Church in 1906. Records show that a Black fisherman named Enoch Scott sold the land to the rectors, wardens and vestry of St. George & St. Patrick in 1888. The church served this community for many generations and upon closing as an Anglican church, it was purchased by the BLHS as a community landmark. On May 6, 2007, the church was officially deconsecrated by the Right Reverend Fred Hiltz and the baptismal font was donated to Christ Church, Shelburne.

FOLK ARTIST HAROLD CROMWELL



Harold Cromwell was born in Southville, near Weymouth, Nova Scotia, in December 1919 and died at the age of 88 in Weymouth Falls in March 2008. Harold's drawing talents were evident at an early age, however, his amazing sketching skills truly shown through after sustaining an injury in World War II. Harold's drawings illustrate

the experiences and struggles of Weymouth's community as he remembered it. He started out working with oils and some water-colours, but soon switched to pen or pencil. Most of his work was done on scraps of paper – some even drawn on Chinette paper plates.

The First Annual Harold Cromwell Arts Festival is being held at the Sissiboo Landing in Weymouth, NS, from July 4 to September 30, 2009 to showcase Harold's legacy as well as promoting the strong artist talents of other artists right here in Southwest Nova Scotia.

JOYCE BRUCE'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



Family & friends celebrated Joyce Bruce's 80th birthday on Saturday, August 29th, 2009 at the Sandy Point Light House Community Centre. The celebration was a surprise party organized by Joyce's daughter Kelley and her husband John that included a lovely buffet supper, a slide show of old family photos and remarks by friends and family. Joyce's son Tom surprised the whole family by arriving from Calgary unexpectedly the night before.

Joyce is past treasurer of the Society and still remains active in her community. She volunteers at Roseway Hospital's New 2 U, a second hand clothing store and is a member of the hospital's auxiliary. The auxiliary has been instrumental in fund-raising to purchase equipment for the hospital. Joyce, a native of Shelburne, is the daughter of Ida Hartley and is married to Seldon Bruce and together they have two children.

ANCESTORS IN THE ATTIC—WRITTEN BY BEV COX



The History Channel's *Ancestors in the Attic* visited Nova Scotia in late June. One of their stops was the Black Loyalist Heritage Society Site and Museum. *Ancestors in the Attic* is a program that helps track down lost family branches and takes people on a journey of discovery.

Bob Stoutley, a Milton Ontario resident was on a journey to find out who he is and where his ancestors came from. Bob's father died when he was 11 before he could find out answers of his father's ancestry. During Bob's research he came in contact with a half brother, one of his father's older sons from a previous marriage. Neither man knew each existed, but eventually connected while researching their father's past. Together they found a common thread to Glen Willis of Truro. They began to share family trees and discovered they shared the same grandfather - James Edward Stoutley.

In March, the producer of the program called Bob to say they had found some interesting background information and were interested in doing his story.

In June the production crew began their nine day journey in Queens County. Some of the things they discovered were eye opening. During their journey they made stops in Birchtown, Windsor, and Truro. They had a hard time trying to sort out the story as records pertaining to Blacks in Nova Scotia are not complete or just plain hard to find.

Tim McDonald, an avid amateur historian and genealogist, has done a lot of research of the Black families of Queens County. Tim was hired to do some of the preliminary work, which later expanded to appearing on the show.

The complete story will air this fall so stay tuned....

AMISTAD FREEDOM 175 CELEBRATIONS AUGUST 12-17



The Amistad Freedom Schooner was led into the Shelburne Harbour on August 12th by a parade of sails, followed by a community welcoming ceremony and a historical presentation "Freedom."

The week's plans included many events and festivals. There were two (2) movies "Amistad" and "Loyalties" that played at St Paul's Church in Birchtown. Shauntay Grant, who regularly works with youth on writing poetry and expressing themselves, performed a spoken word interpretation on "Africville" and what it meant to each individual youth. Their words were amazing and heartfelt. Also, at the Guild Hall, there were performances by "Killick", a local musical group and The Prince of Wales Historic Dancers.

A local artist, Janet O'Connell, demonstrated her talents with a line drawing of the Amistad and some of her paintings were showcased. Dan Colin, Curator, Marine History gave a presentation on the "Sierra Leone 1791" painting. He explained his interpretations of the images in the painting.

On August 15th, members of the community along with the crew of the Amistad participated in the 2nd Annual March to Birchtown which concluded

with a boat taxi ride back to Shelburne on the "Brown Eyed Girl". The Birchtown Community Hall's volunteers organized a breakfast for the crew & public which was excellent.



BLHS organized a cold plate supper for the members of the community which included turkey, ham, cold salads & dessert. Beverly Suttle donated a cake which was beautifully decorated with the Amistad logo for dessert at the supper. Everything was delicious.

We also hosted a gospel festival at St. Paul's Church. "The William's Sisters" and "Rhythm & Good News" were the groups that performed. Both groups were absolutely amazing.

Lastly, the Amistad Schooner hosted public sails around Shelburne's harbour. Having the Amistad in Shelburne was an amazing week with a great turnout to all events and festivals.

BLHS would like to thank the Department of Canadian Heritage, Historical Anniversaries Program for their generous contribution during Amistad Week.



Members: we are looking for old photos, family stories & memories that you would be willing to share. We would like to feature a different family in each newsletter so please help us in celebrating our ancestors and submit your pictures to blackloyalist@blackloyalist.com.

We would also like to create a marketable scrapbook of Black Loyalist families that we could sell in the gift shop. What do you think? We need your family photos to make this happen. Please submit your photos—either by email (jpeg) or by post: PO Box 1194, Shelburne, NS B0T 1W0. Please send a copy that we can keep as photos will not be returned.

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
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Thank you for your support
The Black Loyalist Heritage Society


BLACK LOYALIST HERITAGE SOCIETY

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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. B

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.

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