

Black Loyalist Heritage Centre Newsletter



March, 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2019 was very busy for both the staff and board of directors at the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre.

It has also been a very sad, difficult year for us as we lost the heart and soul of the society with the passing of founder and long-time president, Elizabeth Cromwell. Elizabeth was the matriarch and heartbeat of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society and served on the board as vice president up until her death. She was my friend, and a very strong and wise lady. A very proud African Nova Scotian woman, Elizabeth was very proud to tell the story of the Black Loyalists who came to Birchtown. She encouraged me to become president of the society and she helped me make the transition from board member to president. We miss her and are still recovering from her passing. I have to mention the death of another founder of the society during the 2019 year and that would be of Elizabeth's husband, Everett Cromwell. He was also very committed to discover, interpret, safeguard and promote the history and heritage of the Black Loyalists and their descendants. The past year has been a year of transition for the centre and society. We have lost board members, so we have a small, but very committed group of members who want to continue to advance the mission of the BLHS.



Everett & Elizabeth Cromwell

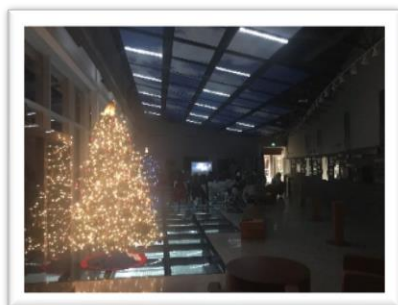
Some highlights of this past year were the Journey Back to Birchtown celebration held July 19th to 21st. This was another successful event. We had folks from all over Nova Scotia attend and we were fortunate to have a gentleman who was originally from Sierra Leone – now living in California – attend all three days. His ancestors were Black Loyalists who came from Nova Scotia and he was searching for his family roots. Another highlight was the Zion March in Birchtown on August 30th and the historic tree planting. This involved descendants of Black Loyalist's from Freetown, Sierra Leone journeying back to Birchtown to plant a tree and tour the centre. This was a very special event for me and it was very inspiring and hopefully it will stimulate more events like this in the future. On the 6th of December I attended the Santa Visit held at our centre. This was the first time we had a Santa Visit and it was well received by the public. I played Santa Claus and really enjoyed this opportunity to help the youth in Birchtown and Shelburne get ready for Christmas.

We have lots of exciting events planned for the 2020 year. We are already planning our 2020 Journey Back to Birchtown, set to be held in July. We hope to expand our programs that we offer to schools and communities in Nova Scotia. I like to encourage anyone who is interested in joining the board of directors to contact our site manager, Cynthia Dorrington. You can contact her by calling our office at 902-875-1310. The Society is looking for new board members who can help the museum grow and become a stronger presence in the local and Nova Scotia communities.

- Chuck Smith, President of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society

HOLIDAYS AT THE BLACK LOYALIST

This past holiday season, the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre partnered with the Municipality of the District of Shelburne to host a series of holiday events at our centre. These events, which included a visit from Santa, a free family movie night and a candlelight service in St. Paul's Anglican Church were well attended and enjoyed by the community. We would like to thank Tim Hortons Shelburne, Sobeys Shelburne, the Trinity United Church Bell Choir, Reverend Ed Trevors, and Anne Pierce for helping to make these events possible.



FAITH, FAMILY & COMMUNITY: AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH

February was a busy month here at the centre. African Heritage Month was kicked off with our annual proclamation, organized between the Black Loyalist Heritage Society, the Town of Shelburne, and the Municipalities of Shelburne and Barrington. We had representatives from the different communities around our two municipalities, as well as members of the legislative assembly present to offer remarks. We were treated to two beautiful performances during the event. The first was a beautiful rendition of O'Canada from members of the Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion and we concluded with a moving performance of Lift Every Voice by Akaya Shand.

The following week we held our second Black Beauty Expo, which brought professionals from around Nova Scotia to the centre to offer talks and demonstrations around the topic of Black beauty and wellness, as well as vendors to sell their products. This informative and fun event was made possible by the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development.

Another educational event was our screening of *Black Mother, Black Daughter*, a film by Sylvia Hamilton and Claire Prieto. This documentary explores the lives and experiences of black women in Nova Scotia, their contributions to the home, the church and the community and the strengths they pass on to their daughters.

Lastly, we ended the month's celebrations with a delicious luncheon catered by the Nova Scotia Rollies. This event was a fundraiser for the society and centre and we are happy to say that it was an overwhelming success. We'd like to thank our sponsors, ACE Machining & the Municipality of Shelburne. We would also like to thank everyone for their support of the luncheon and all our programming initiatives throughout African Heritage Month.



SAVE THE DATE

We are well underway in the planning for our annual Journey Back to Birchtown celebration. This year we have partnered with the Town of Shelburne to host our event in conjunction with the Founder's Day festival. These events both aim to showcase the history and culture of the Shelburne area, and we know that we can work together to create a more inclusive, enriching and fun weekend for everyone. We have big things being planned, so stay tuned to our social media for updates as they become available!



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Here at the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre we are currently in the process of scanning and digitizing our archives. The image below is from a collection of photos given to us from the Shelburne Historical Society. The information included says that they are from the home of James Gloster of Upper Port La Tour. Many of the photos in this collection are well over a hundred years old, including this tin type photograph. A tin type was an early type of photograph made on a thin sheet of metal that would then be covered with a dark lacquer or enamel and used as the support for photographic emulsion.



MEMBERSHIP

Are you a member of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society? If not, call our centre to join! Memberships help our centre and society to grow and thrive. As a member you have the opportunity to meet and connect with others who are Black Loyalists descendants, or who have a similar interest in uncovering and preserving the history of the Black Loyalists. Our members also receive benefits including 15% off select merchandise at the Black Loyalist gift shop, and reduced registration fees for workshops and events! You can select a membership that works for you: individual (\$20), family (\$20), and organization (\$40). Contact our centre today to join!

SITE MANAGER'S MESSAGE

As we begin a new decade, we are hoping that 2020 sets the stage for what is to come and let's say we have lots planned for the coming year. As we wrapped up 2019, we ended in style by hosting our first ever Christmas Candlelight Service in St. Paul's Anglican Church. Music, candlelight and the spirit of Christmas was on full display. What a great way to end the decade.

Our Programming and Outreach team have been busy planning our schedule for 2020. We have presentations, tours and numerous events planned for the year with our signature event being hosted in July. This year Journey Back to Birchtown and Founders Day will collaborate to host the first ever combined festival that will truly encompass and highlight our collective rich and deep history; showcase our many artisans and offer traditional cuisine to tempt one's palette. In essence we are showcasing Shelburne County to the world.

Along with our signature event we will be hosting events monthly for all age groups so please stay tuned to our website and follow us on Facebook so that you won't miss out. Our team is looking forward to an exciting year in sharing our story – our past, our present and our future dreams.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to share in our many events in the coming year.

- Cynthia Dorrington, Site Manager



119 Old Birchtown Road, Shelburne, Nova Scotia

Telephone: (902) 875-1310 Fax: (902) 875-1352

www.blackloyalist.com

Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm (October – May)