



The Probe

Est. September 1999

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ottawa

April 2015, #85

Probus Month ...

... or “let them eat cake!”

March is Probus Month in Canada and everyone enjoyed a celebratory carrot cake served by our Hospitality Helpers.

The Barracks Hill Cemetery

Our February meeting featured two speakers. First was Ben Mortimer, an archeologist, followed by Janet Young, Curator of Physical Anthropology at the Canadian Museum of History. Their common topic was the archeological finds during the excavation of the new LRT route.

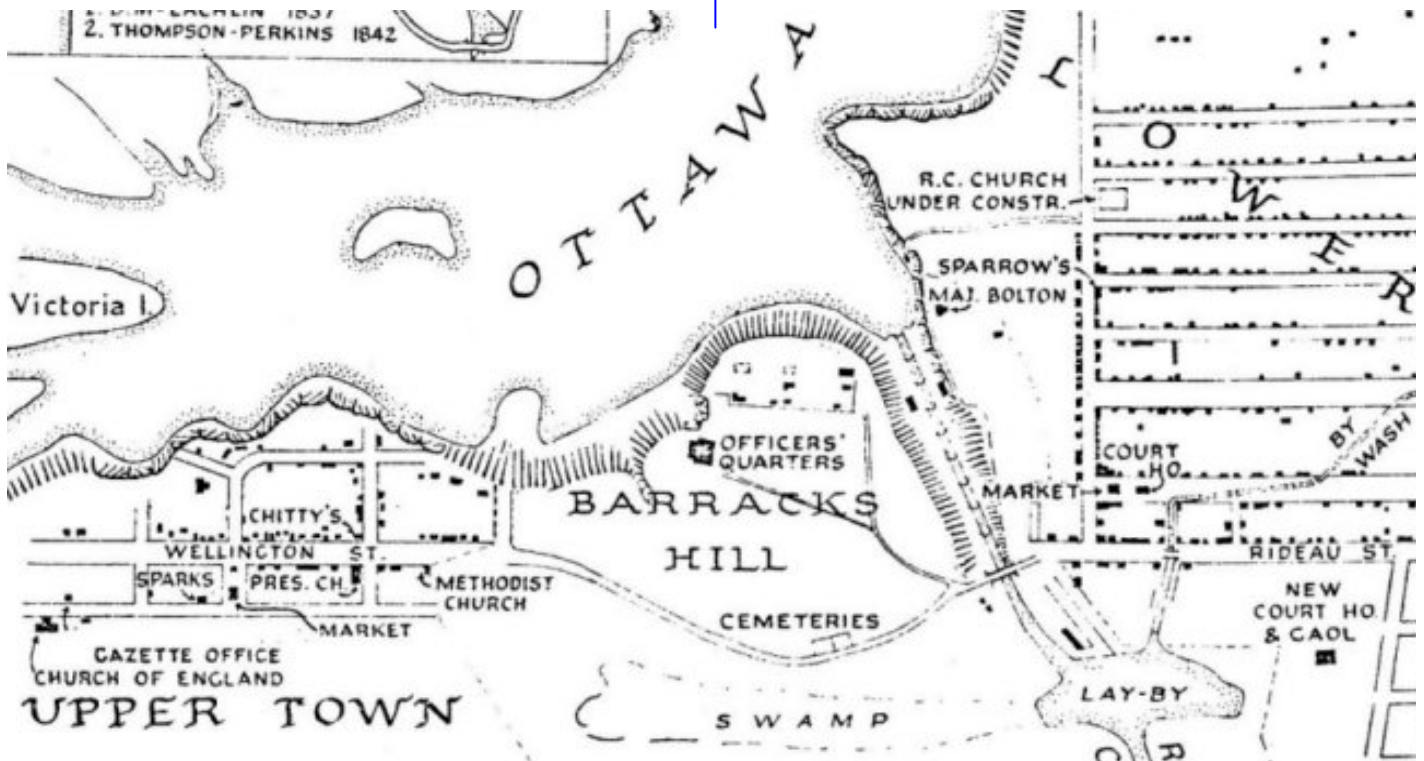
Ben began by sketching the early history of the settlements in our section of the Ottawa River. Around 1800, the main settlement, Wrightsville, was on the north side of the river within the boundaries of present-day Gatineau. Small settlements began to appear on the

south side around 1820 and these became part of Bytown when it was incorporated in 1826.

Colonel By and his Royal Sappers and Miners had come to prepare for the construction of the Rideau Canal, which began in 1826 with the decision on its specific route, and ended in 1832. Colonel By laid out the plan of Bytown consisting of the upper town, which would be occupied primarily by English and Scottish professionals and military officers, and the lower town occupied primarily by Catholics of Irish or French ancestry.

Barracks Hill Cemetery was established in 1827 as an inter-faith cemetery for Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists. The impetus apparently came from Thomas Burroughs, a British engineer officer whose son died here before there was any cemetery on the south side of the Ottawa. Burroughs is well known to this day for his sketches and paintings of Bytown.

The population of Bytown increased so rapidly in its first 15 years that the cemetery had to be removed to make



If you join Wellington (at the left) to Rideau (at the right) and use the block distances in the Market as a guide it appears that the word “CEMETERIES” is right along Sparks Street. Queen and Albert are over the swamp.

way for construction and development. Once the cemetery was removed its existence was forgotten. However it was rediscovered on twelve occasions between 1888 and 1971.

It was rediscovered once more on September 19, 2013 when work was in progress on Queen Street in the vicinity of Metcalfe Street to replace an old water main in preparation for the LRT construction. Human remains were found.

Construction work was stopped immediately and the police were called. When the police investigation concluded it was not a crime scene, the site was turned over to an investigation under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act in which the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches were represented.



Janet Young explaining some detail while Ben Mortimer looks on

In the summer of 2014 extensive digging and screening found 19 in situ burials. There were very few artifacts, no personal items and no shoes. Adults had been buried in tight-fitting wooden coffins fastened with iron nails.

Parish records for the period to 1829-45 identified 508 burials in the original cemetery. Of these, 248 were Catholic, 182 were Anglican and 78 Presbyterian. The records include causes of deaths for 117 of the 508 burials. The leading cause by far was cholera in the epidemic years 1832 and 1834. Other causes were drowning, typhus, smallpox, scarlet fever, falling trees, falling and gun.

Janet Young began her presentation by describing the process of preparing the remains for analysis. She was looking for bones, ossified soft tissues, artifacts and teeth. The bones were fragile and sometimes wet, because of the wetness of the 2013/14 season in which this was being done. The cleaning of the bones includes dry brushing and screening of all material removed. Most burials were in sand but one was in clay that is

particularly difficult to remove. Few artifacts were found but the findings include some small buttons.

By analysis of the 17 burials and two bundles, Dr. Young identified remains of 23 individuals. Fourteen of these were adults, seven were children and two were fetuses. In four cases it was possible to determine handedness and all four of these were right-handed. She was able to determine the height of five adults - four males and one female. She found all five to be in the range 5' 0" to 5' 3".

She investigated pathology and found evidence of periodontal disease, cavities and linear enamel hypoplasia (indicating periods of tooth enamel deficiency). The teeth of at least one individual showed evidence of wear from clay pipes. The cause of dark eye sockets in one case has not yet been determined. In some individuals she found cribra orbitalia, a sure sign of iron deficiency.

The Q and A session following the presentations revealed some interesting avenues of future research. For example, DNA analysis might conceivably be used in future to establish a connection between a living person and an ancestor whose remains have been studied in this project. Dr. Young cautioned that this is improbable as only 23 individuals are represented in the study out of the 508 buried in the Barrack Hill Cemetery. However, she encouraged any audience members to contact her if they have reason to believe that they are descended from a settler who died here in 1827-45.

In the same vein, it might well be possible at some future time to identify the geographic region in which any of these individuals grew up. There is no present intention to do this but it might be done by isotopic analysis of teeth.

Patt Macpherson

How to find us

We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month except December (2nd Wednesday) in the Hall of Gloucester Presbyterian Church, 91 Pike Street (corner of Lorry Greenberg Drive).

Our meetings begin at 10 but members start arriving soon after 9:30 for coffee and chat. Guests are welcomed.

PROBUS' Vital Purpose ...

To stimulate thought, interest and participation in activities at a time in life when it is easy to become complacent and self-centered.

Black Stories 101 - Judith Brown

In March we had both an inter-club visit and a guest speaker in one. Judith Brown is President of the Kingston-Frontenac Probus Club and President of the Kingston Afro-Caribe Association. She talked to us about Black History in Canada.



Judith Brown giving her talk on Black Stories 101 at a recent meeting of the Kingston Afro-Caribe Association

Starting with the “Why?” of Black History Month, Judith gave us 5 centuries of history in 35 minutes, interspersing her narrative with vignettes of some of the important contributors.

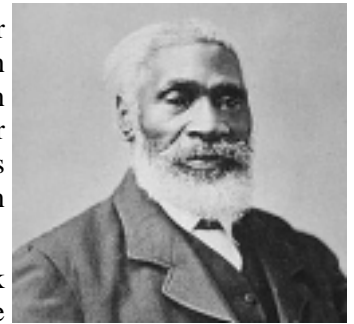


Mathieu Da Costa was the first Black man known to have visited Canada. His date of birth is unknown, though historical records show he was a free Black African employed as a translator by French and Dutch traders and explorers in the early 1600s.

Why is BHM so necessary? To make the Canadian Community at large aware of the part played by Blacks and all early pioneers in the building of this great nation. It also affirms, empowers and provides role models to our Black Youth as they learn of the many contributions of Blacks. Time to tell of the Black Loyalists, Blacks who fought in the War of 1812-- Blacks who worked side by side with Whites, First Nation Folk and others to defend, build homes, and prepare for the harsh winters.

The Blacks in Canada until 1778 were mostly slaves. One was Marie Joseph Angelique, who escaped, was recaptured and, when she was about to be sold,

(probably) set fire to her mistress' house which burned over 60 buildings in 'Old Montreal'. Whether she did it or not, she was found guilty and hanged in 1734.



The big change in the Black population came during the American Revolution. In 1776 Black Loyalists made their way to Canada followed a year later by 100,000 who were offered freedom if they left their masters and came to Canada.

'Freedom' was not quite as good as it sounded. Blacks were not allowed to learn how to read and write and

in 1792 almost 1200 Black Loyalists left Canada to resettle in Sierra Leone. It was not until 1793 that Lt. Governor John Simcoe decided that an anti-slavery law was necessary. The first legislation was not immediate abolition but a gradual prohibition.

In 1787 the (new) United States passed its first anti-slavery law. Despite this slavery continued and led to the “Underground Railroad” which operated from 1815 to 1860. About 40,000 people made their way to Canada along the ‘Underground Railroad’ although about half returned to the U.S. when slavery was finally abolished.



Elijah McCoy was born on May 2, 1844, in Colchester, Ontario, to parents who had fled slavery. McCoy trained as an engineer in Scotland. Unable to find an engineering position in the U.S., he took a job working for a railroad. He invented a lubrication device to make locomotive operation more efficient. There were many imitations but people in the know would demand "the real McCoy".

Judith finished her talk with reference to some prominent Blacks, including Donovan Bailey, Rosemary Brown, the first Black woman to be an MPP (BC), Governor-General Michaëlle Jean and Lt.-Governor Lincoln Alexander. The last word went to “Caribana” which has operated in Toronto since 1967 with a **very** positive social and economic impact.

May 27th, Brian Hartley - *Building Bridges*

Building bridges between the (96%) majority and our aboriginal neighbours who constitute a (4%) minority of Canadians is the sensitive theme Brian Hartley will tackle for us.

His insights come from the most satisfying assignments of his Public Service career – his work as the federal negotiator years ago in three major claims advanced by aboriginal communities in western Canada. Before that experience, he says, “I was as uncomprehending as most other Canadians of the history of our aboriginal neighbours, and of their current predicaments.” Because of it, he sees how the “distrust of the majority’s institutions” is connected to the creation of reserves by our ancestors, and the less distant abuse of aboriginals in residential schools.

Brian Hartley sees a deep need for bridge building between our respective communities and may be able to offer some guidance on “steps in the right direction” that could be taken by individuals.

June 24th, TBA

We have a willing speaker lined up for June, but he is awaiting corporate approval. As soon as it comes through, the notice will be posted on the web site:
www.probusaltavista.ca

From *The Probe* - April 2002

After the first year of publication, your editor wrote, “In the next year I would like to see 11 different by-lines on the reviews of our 11 speakers so please don't be backward in coming forward. It's your newsletter - it should have your name in it.”

It didn't happen. Perhaps, this year?

Most reviews are five- or six-hundred words and a picture or two to fill a page. It's not a major task and something to show off to your grand-kids.

It was ever thus

For years we have bought 2% milk from the handiest source on the day. That meant that sometimes it was Neilson, sometimes Sealtest and sometimes Beatrice. For some reason Sealtest and Neilson have gradually made it more difficult to open the push-apart spouts, so we decided to forego convenience and buy Beatrice.

Guess what! Last week Beatrice changed from screw-top to push-apart on their 2%.

Keith Walker - VP

We welcome **Keith Walker** to the Management Committee as Vice-president. Keith and Joyce originally joined in 2002 and after an ‘off-again, on again’ period they have been consistent members since 2009. Keith, you may remember, was one of our ‘10-minute talkers’ last July, talking about aircraft design.

Program

Patt Macpherson has put together our program of speakers for the past year but has asked to be relieved of this task.

First: Our thanks to Patt for providing a very varied and interesting program.

Second: We need a Program Director. The immediate job is to find speakers for August and the fall. Patt has made arrangements for May, June and July.

We have room for another “In-house” speaker in July. Have you taken a trip recently (Canada or elsewhere)? What about your hobby (anything from collecting beer bottle caps to philately)? The field is wide open, the audience is receptive and we can turn your photos into a presentation for you. Please talk to Lynne Bond or John Wright about taking part.

Hello!

The Telephone Companies used to describe their operators as ‘The Voice with a Smile’. Well, **we** need one more such voice.

Barbara Wilson (613-837-2377) wants one more caller to round out her roster. Our callers enjoy doing it and none have complained about worn out fingers.

Spring Fling

The Spring Fling is being hosted by the Probus Club of North Grenville on Tuesday, May 12th at the Grenville Municipal Centre in Kemptville. Registration begins at 10:15, the cash bar opens at 11:00, and they request that attendees be seated for lunch by 11:45.

Directions

- Take exit 34 from Highway 416 to Highway 43.
- Turn WEST on Highway 43.
- Drive through **2** traffic circles and proceed to second set of traffic lights at intersection of County Road 44.
- Turn right at traffic lights and follow the signs to the Municipal Centre, use second entrance to main doors.