

The Megaphone

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meg·a·phone [meg-uh-fohn] –noun

1. a cone-shaped device for magnifying or directing the voice, chiefly used in addressing a large audience out of doors or in calling to someone at a distance.

www.dictionary.com

Hello everyone!

In this week's *Megaphone*, we have a really interesting feature for you about one of our newer members who has some big plans for the coming year!

The Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum Inc. (SACHM) is a provincial organization whose primary purpose is to “celebrate, explore, research, document and preserve the history, heritage and contributions of people of African ancestry.”

Carol LaFayette-Boyd co-chairs the museum with Bert Clarke. She recently filled me in, via an email interview, on the museum's history and exciting efforts to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1910 arrival of a significant number of African American settlers from Oklahoma in the North Battleford and Eldon district. I learned a lot, and hope you do too!

“Although not widely known, people of African ancestry were among the early, non-Aboriginal residents of Saskatchewan, particularly in the communities of Melfort, Rosetown, and Eldon District (near Maidstone),” LaFayette-Boyd wrote.

The majority of African Americans who came in 1910 came from Oklahoma. They were headed for North Battleford and Eldon District, although many travelled on to Alberta, she says. Many of them filed on homesteads in the district and farmed. They came seeking a better life, to escape racial discrimination in Oklahoma. By the 1950s, most had left for urban centres in Alberta and elsewhere, but others continued to make their place in Saskatchewan history.

“These pioneers have made contributions in many sectors including agriculture, academics, the arts, culture, education, human rights, medicine, public service, social justice, recreation and sports, among others. Their descendants continue to be active citizens and contributing members of their communities and society.”

SACHM began as an informal organization in 2001, but soon developed its own constitution to guide its work, and in 2004, formalized its status as a non-profit corporation. It is dedicated to helping people of African ancestry preserve and gain access to information about their history, appreciate their heritage, and recognize the contributions that Saskatchewan African Canadians have made.

SACHM also works to raise public awareness of the role people of African ancestry played in settling and developing the province as well, and their ongoing contributions as responsible community members and active citizens, LaFayette-Boyd says, which matches up well with SACHM's current celebratory plans.

“In 2005, it was decided that a public monument that represents the legacy, heritage and contributions of African Canadians to the multicultural mosaic be built,” LaFayette-Boyd wrote. “The monument will compliment Saskatchewan’s motto, “From many peoples strength”.

“It will also recognize Dr. Alfred Schmitz Shadd, a resident in the late 1800s and until 1916 of African ancestry who, throughout his life exemplified the spirit of multiculturalism and the principles of equity, equality, human dignity and active citizenship.”



Dr. Alfred Schmitz Shadd
Photo courtesy SACHM
Virtual Museum

Dr. Shadd was born in 1870 in Ontario. He dreamed of becoming a doctor. To cover the cost of his studies, he taught school for a short time, which is what brought him to Kinistino in 1896. He returned east to get his medical degree and graduated from Trinity College at the University of Toronto.

He returned to the Kinistino area to practice medicine, and also owned a newspaper, pharmacy, and farm, raised prize bulls and ran unsuccessfully for Parliament. He died in 1916 at age 45 from appendicitis, and is buried in Melfort.

You can read more about Dr. Shadd and a number of other individuals who have added to our province’s mosaic at SACHM’s virtual museum <http://www.sachm.com/museum.php> It’s fascinating!

SACHM is in the process of applying for grants for the monument and celebrations, and is welcoming input from members of MAS in the planning, which is still in its early stages. Organizing an educational symposium and having a banquet and gala event are part of the festivities being considered.

If you’re interested in getting involved, you can keep an eye on the SACHM website for announcements (see address above) about upcoming meetings, or call or email Carol LaFayette-Boyd at 545-8824 or clboyd1@accesscomm.ca.

MAS will also post information about upcoming SACHM events on the Member Events page of our website http://www.saskmuseums.org/museum_events

Thanks so much to Carol for sharing this information with us – we hope the planning goes well, and look forward to hearing more as things progress!

-Lisa

Please note that due to Remembrance Day, our next *Megaphone* will be posted on Tuesday, November 10, instead of Wednesday, November 11.

In it, I’m going to fill everyone in about MAS’ exciting new Saskatchewan GPS Heritage Tour Project, which is now getting underway in the southwest corner of the province. **Application forms will be available Oct. 30, and must be submitted by Nov. 30.** For more information, email me at gpsheritagetour@sasktel.net Thanks so much to our Stage One funder, the provincial Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport! Talk to you more on Nov. 10! - Lisa