

NEWS & FEATURES

The Island's forgotten black history

UPEI among last remnants of Island racial community

BY REBECCA MOORE

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF BLACK students here at U.P.E.I.. In fact, it's probably the largest black community in the province, though most of them are not native to the Island. The black population on P.E.I. has decreased considerably since the late 1800's.

It wasn't until the early 1800's, when slavery was abolished, that a black community was established in Charlottetown. This is where the majority of black Islanders once lived. The district, known as "the Bog" in West Charlottetown, ranged from Euston Street to Richmond Street, and from Government Pond to Pownal Street. Most people would recognize this area today by the large, grey government

buildings near the entrance to Victoria Park.

Even after Blacks were released from slavery, they were expected to take work of low status. This led to poverty, crime, bootlegging and prostitution in the Bog. Unfortunately, the community was often ignored.

Around the turn of the century the reputation of "the Bog" started to turn around--partly because of reconstruction, and also because of a dedicated teacher at the Bog school: Miss Harvie, the daughter of a local jailer, taught over two thousand pupils during her career. Many people believe she had a positive influence on the community.

The Bog boasted strong athletes such as

George Godfrey ("Old Chocolate"), and George "Budge" Byers. These boxers emigrated to the U.S. and enjoyed successful careers that would have never been possible here on P.E.I.

The isolated black community had a strong sense of togetherness. There are few records of everyday life, but we know of their involvement in sporting activities, the West End School, and the West End Brass Band.

The Bog disappeared in the early twentieth century. Emigration, redevelopment and assimilation were a few of the causes.

Blacks are no longer segregated on the Island, but there are not many living in this

predominately white province. Why? Perhaps for the same reasons that the majority of blacks left. As Frank Deedmeyer, the United States consul in Charlottetown, said in 1907,

"...we do not find any white people who are labouring to bring about social equality between the two races."

Do blacks feel isolated in 1994 on PEI? As a white person I will never really know. I can only trust that our society has improved since the

beginning of the century, and that we can accept everyone as equals with love in our hearts.

SOURCE: *Black Islanders* by Jim Hornby

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Be it resolved that...

The UPEI debating society visits Halifax

BY YVONNE MACKEAN

DURING THE WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY 4-6, the UPEI Debating Society participated in the 1994 North American Debating Championships. Dalhousie University and King's College hosted this year's event. Representing UPEI were three teams (Edward Lank and Janice Enman, Andrew MacPherson and Garry MacDonald, Patricia Embleton and Yvonne MacKean) and five judges (Amber Allin, Eric Chase, Ron MacDonald, Cory Mosher and David Saunders).

Also in attendance at this tournament were some of the strongest debating clubs in North America. These participants included University of Toronto, Princeton, McGill, Guelph, Concordia, Western, Queen's, Waterloo, Bates College, Smith College, and Colgate, plus Atlantic teams representing Mount Allison, St. FX, UCCB, Acadia, St. Thomas, and Memorial. In total there were sixty-five teams who debated at the tournament.

The UPEI gang rolled into Halifax Thursday evening. On Friday we found our accommodations and began debating. There were two rounds of debating before the Pub Crawl. Reliable sources say that the bar scene was great--of course, this writer would know nothing about that adventure.

Bright and early Saturday morning (too bright for some), it was back to debating. There were also some public speaking rounds, but no one from UPEI participated in this

event. By seven o'clock, after three rounds of debating, everyone was quite tired. A banquet was then held. The service and food were fabulous. Afterwards, there was a party. It can be safely said that all debaters and judges had a good time.

Sunday heralded the sixth round of debating and the final rounds. The final pitted Princeton against Hart House (University of Toronto). Hart House defeated Princeton and were crowned champions. One of UPEI's teams, Edward Lank and Janice Enman, finished twenty-third overall with a record of 4-2. This team was also the top Atlantic team, and Edward Lank led all Atlantic debaters in Speaker Points.

As a reminder of the Tournament, UPEI has an official, but empty, North American 1994 Debating Tournament wine bottle. The Debating Society is also in the midst of finding sufficient funds to send a team to the Nationals in Toronto.

Congratulations must be extended to Edward Lank for his "timely" presence in the semi-final round. It is also important to mention that Andrew MacPherson, out of devotion to the Student Union, had to leave early on Sunday (thereby missing the final round). Debaters are dutiful people. The trip to Halifax left memories of great debating, unbelievable speakers, sleep deprivation, partying and an ever-present map in the minds of the UPEI contingent. Congratulations once again to all debaters and judges!



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