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and race PAGE 18

The Parsonage: Dockyard  
architectural gem PAGE 22

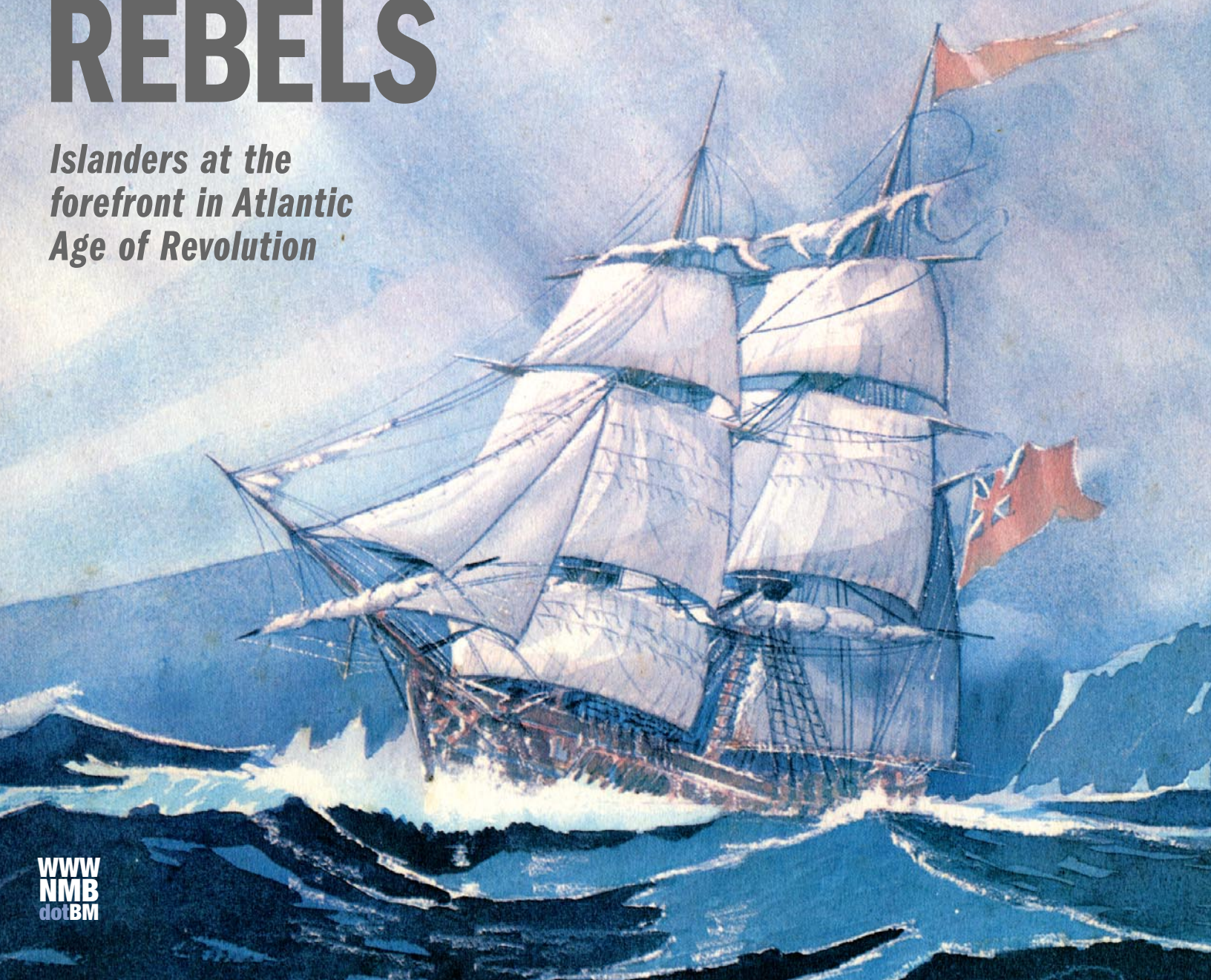
NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF BERMUDA

# MARITIMES

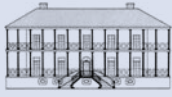
2019 • VOL 32 • WINTER

## BERMUDA'S PRUDENT REBELS

*Islanders at the  
forefront in Atlantic  
Age of Revolution*







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## MARITIMES

MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BERMUDA

2019 VOLUME 32 WINTER

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The National Museum of Bermuda is located within 15.73 acres of fortifications at the Royal Naval Dockyard, including buildings of outstanding historical value. The Museum is a non-government, non-profit Bermuda Registered Charity (No. 136), established in 1974, and its general operations are funded by donations and gate receipts from over 70,000 visitors annually. Its staff is supported by local and visiting volunteers. NMB is overseen by the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of Bermuda. The Museum opens 9 am-5 pm weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm weekends (last admission 4 pm) every day except Christmas Day. Winter hours 10 am-5 pm (last entry 4 pm).

# Howie heads up education programme

**'The spirit of learning by teaching is a key element of NMB Education Strategy'**

The National Museum is pleased to announce that Lisa Howie has been hired as Director of Learning and Engagement. She will be implementing the newly-launched NMB Education Strategy that repositions the Museum as a multi-faceted community institution that encourages and supports the open exploration of history, heritage and identity. "We are thrilled to have Lisa join the NMB team," said Executive Director Elena Strong. "She brings a wealth of experience and expertise along with enthusiasm and a fresh art-based perspective."

Through the design and delivery of innovative and engaging programming, targetting early childhood to lifelong learners, Howie will work on strengthening and promoting an understanding and appreciation of Bermuda's diverse heritage and history. Knowing, understanding and appreciating our history and heritage can allow us to effectively confront the issues of the present, shape our identity and our lives and strengthen our purpose in the world.

Howie will be building the Museum's education department from the ground up, working closely with the NMB Education Committee and staff and collaborating with local educators,



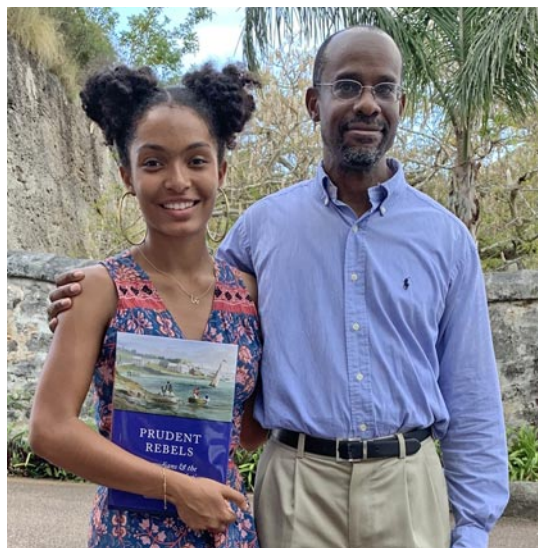
*Lisa Howie: new NMB Director of Learning and Engagement*

schools, government and community groups. Initial priorities include growing formalised educational initiatives with schools and community partners; developing teacher professional development programmes that provide up-to-date historical research to better support teachers with the delivery of the local social studies curricula; launching a community docent programme; and increasing opportunities for Museum members and community groups to engage with our past.

After completing her bachelor's and master's degrees in Canada, Howie worked in the Bermuda school system for 13 years. She moved to the Bermuda National Gallery as Education Director in 2006 and was BNG's Executive Director from 2009–17.

A lifelong learner herself, she recently completed the Senior Leaders Programme for Non-Profit Professionals at Columbia University in New York City. She is also the owner and curator of Black Pony Gallery, which seeks to develop international awareness of the contemporary visual art movement in Bermuda.

Howie said: "NMB's Education Strategy 2019: Moving the Needle was the hook. It is a thoughtful document that challenges the manner in which a museum will engage with learners of all ages, doing so in order to transcend barriers, instigate new ways of thinking, and ultimately arriving at transformative experiences. My role is a great opportunity for me to deep-dive into our Island's history—learning actively while creating stimulating programmes to engage a wide audience. This spirit of learning by teaching is a key element of the NMB Education Strategy and I will be modelling the way."



## Grundy photo contest launched for kids

The Museum has partnered with Joy Grundy to establish the first Dr. Reg Grundy Annual Youth Photography Competition, in memory of his photographic legacy and passion for Bermuda.

Students aged 7–18 were asked to submit photos under three themes: Bermuda Life, Bermuda Buildings or Bermuda Wildlife/Nature. Submissions were assessed by photographer and

artist Antoine Hunt, Curator Dr. Deborah Atwood, and Reg Grundy Photographic Libraries Curator Chinni Mahadevan. Winning photographs will be unveiled at an award ceremony at Commissioner's House and published in the next issue of *MARITimes*. We thank sponsors Clarien Bank, A. F. Smith, Phoenix Stores and Bermuda Blueprinting.

**STAR ATTRACTION** US actress, activist and model Yara Shahidi and her family paid a visit to the Museum while on vacation in Bermuda. They were shown around by NMB Trustee Dr. Clarence Maxwell.



## MARITimes back issues online

NMB has uploaded 31 back issues of its popular magazine *MARITimes* to the Museum website. With decades of articles on a variety of topics from local history to ground breaking research, new acquisitions, archaeology, news and events, this archive has been described as a “treasure trove” of Bermuda history. This first phase of digitisation includes articles from 2001 to 2019. Earlier issues will be made available in 2020.

In an increasingly digital world, online access to information and research has become a key part of the Museum’s effort. We have been exploring a variety of ways to share information, including our popular Facebook and Instagram pages. Back issues of *MARITimes* are available at [www.nmb.bm/maritimes](http://www.nmb.bm/maritimes)

## Airport art aids Museum

We were honoured to be part of the submission process for artwork in the new passenger terminal at Bermuda’s L. F. Wade International Airport. Local artists were invited to submit proposals for the terminal and as part of the process paid a fee to an organisation of their choice: National Museum of Bermuda, Bermuda Arts Centre, Bermuda Society of the Arts or Masterworks. Thank you to all the local artists who chose to donate their fee to NMB.

# Hurricane Humberto strikes



NMB crews fix damaged parts of the Museum’s hostel roof

In the days leading up to Hurricane Humberto last month NMB crews were out in force putting up shutters and preparing the property for severe winds. With a 16-acre property, this is quite a task for Facilities Manager Andrew Harris and his team.

Once the hurricane passed, staff conducted a careful review of the property, identifying any damage and clearing debris. Though Category 3 Humberto pounded Dockyard with 140 mph winds, the Museum came through with only minor cuts and bruises compared with previous storms. A small portion

of the Hostel roof was damaged as well as several shutters and outside fences.

Thanks to the extensive repairs and additional strengthening and rebuilding of roofs in the entire upper grounds (apart from the hostel), carried out in the aftermath of Fay, Gonzalo and Joaquin, along with the Museum’s hurricane preparedness plan and protocols, we have sustained very little hurricane damage over the past two years.

Thank you to our volunteers and support crews who helped prepare the Museum, ensuring collections and buildings were protected.



SOA President Paul Drury and Dr. Edward Harris in London with the Society medal

## Dr. Harris receives Prestigious award

NMB Founding Director Emeritus Dr. Edward Harris has been awarded the Society Medal by the Society of Antiquaries of London. Dr. Harris was elected a Fellow of the 3,000-member Society (founded in 1707) in 1982 and has been recognised for his “significant contribution towards the Society’s research grants.”

His 1979 work *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy* set the worldwide standard for recording stratigraphy on archaeological excavations and other related contexts. Since initial publication it has been translated into almost a dozen languages including Italian, Spanish, French, Polish, Japanese, Slovene, German, Hungarian and Czech, with Chinese and Arabic translations in progress and is available free via the website [www.harrismatrix.com](http://www.harrismatrix.com).

# Dockyard Clock rings true once again at Museum Boat Loft

Visitors to the Museum may have noticed the reassuring chimes of the Dockyard Clock are back, faithfully alerting them to the time every fifteen minutes. Originally installed in the south turret of the Great Eastern Storehouse (now the Clocktower Shopping Mall), the mid-Victorian clock mechanism was made by John Moore & Sons of Clerkenwell, London in 1856 and drove four dials which kept time for the Royal Naval Dockyard for 100 years.

The clock was accurate to one-tenth of a second with minor variations due to humidity and was installed at the then Bermuda Maritime Museum in 1984, with a reproduction dial and three new bells: ting, tang and hour. Bermuda's salty and humid climate is not kind to the inner mechanisms of historic clocks. Despite continued care, it developed a strike problem which caused it to stop completely.

However, thanks to antiquarian horologist, master clockmaker and restoration expert Dr. Edward Cloutman,

who first fixed the clock 13 years ago, the clock is back up and running.

On initial inspection Dr. Cloutman was pleased to find the clock was overall in excellent condition, mainly due to the regular attention of NMB Facilities Manager Andrew Harris, who followed a strict maintenance schedule developed by Cloutman during his earlier visit. The schedule sets out a strict oiling, greasing and cleaning regime and regular checking of the clock lines (wires carrying the weights), and consequently the clock has given very little trouble over the years.

Chris Roque of SparYard Marine Solutions and welder Rolly Jino assisted Dr. Cloutman with restoration and preservation of the clock. Dr. Cloutman was a hit with visitors while working at NMB, fielding questions from groups of schoolchildren and many people who had never seen a clock so large. If you'd like to hear the Dockyard Clock for yourself, you can see it on display in the Boat Loft building.



*The Dockyard Clock installed at the Boat Loft. Below: Cloutman with the clock's inner mechanism, which he restored*



**The Museum** is now in possession of two of the five turret clocks in Bermuda, and part of a third. The original five were the Eastern Storehouse clock (1856), the Whitney Institute clock (1780s), the Sessions House clock (1862), St. Peter's Church clock (1814) and the Manchester Unity clock (1924).

NMB is now conserving the Whitney

clock, which was made in London by Edward Tutet and, unlike the later turret clocks, has a birdcage movement made of wrought-iron. A predecessor to the longcase clock movement, which later became more common in turret clocks, the birdcage movement has plates on top and bottom holding its wheels and barrels together. In longcase clocks, the

plates are placed at front and back of the movement to secure the parts.

The Bermuda Government has also donated parts from the Sessions House clock, made in Croydon by Gillett & Johnston. The clock was converted to an electrical drive several decades ago and now the historic components it replaced are at the museum for conservation.





## We sprung a leak!

The NMB team, helped by Mike Tatem of Crisson Construction and his crew, made much-needed repairs to one of our electrolysis tanks used for large artifact conservation. The stainless steel tanks, originally designed to store chemicals and donated by Stolt Tank Containers of Stolt-Nielson Limited, was refitted many years ago when first brought to the Conservation Lab to be used as freshwater baths for salt-water-logged artifacts. Artifacts recovered from the ocean need to go through a series of freshwater baths to help desalinate, otherwise the salts cause

corrosion and eventual destruction.

In 2018, the tanks were repurposed for electrolysis by East Carolina University to treat cannons and large metal objects. Electrolysis uses an electric current to further clean the cannon, remove chlorides and reduce corrosion. After its many years of service, one of the tanks sprung a leak this summer. We had to remove the large guns, fix the holes in the stainless steel, adapt the design to best suit the cannon, and insulate the interior with fibreglass to prevent further corrosion. The cannons are now back in the tank and undergoing conservation.

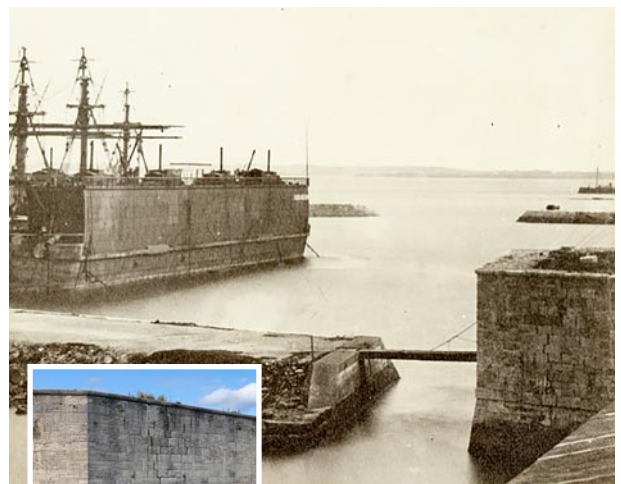
## Rampart repairs made at last

As steward of the 19th-century Dockyard fortifications, which comprise a total of 16 acres and 11 grade I listed buildings, the Keep Fort, the Northwest Rampart and the Casemates complex, the Museum is charged with the care and restoration of our extensive property. This process has been ongoing since the museum opened its doors in 1975, and this summer, we focussed attention on the ramparts, making repairs to the south section of the walls.

A crack which initially formed sometime in the mid-19th century,

as evidenced in a photo taken in 1872, required attention, as it had been further undermined. To prevent more structural damage, the crack was reinforced and repaired. We thank Herbie Feathers and Mike Tatem of Crisson Construction for their assistance with this project.

In the endless battle against invasive vegetation, the Museum also engaged our summer student interns to lend a hand. Interns left curatorial for the outdoors and spent the day removing casuarinas from the roof of Bastion A.

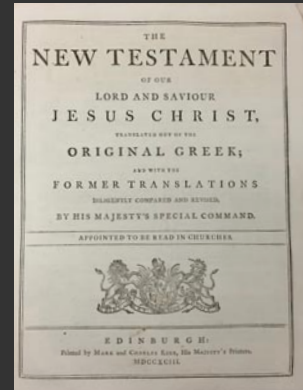


*This 1872 photo shows the cracked rampart wall. Inset, the wall in 2019 before repair*

# Family bible printed in 1793

**Richard** and **Mary Winchell** gave the Museum a bible which belonged to the McCallan family. The bible—titled *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments: Translated out of the Original Tongues and with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised, by His Majesty's Special Command. Appointed to be read in Churches*—is one of a number of versions published in 1793 by Mark and Charles Kerr, His Majesty's Printers, Edinburgh.

Family bibles were often used to record births, deaths and marriages, especially prior to the creation of the Registry General in the mid-1860s. This bible contains manuscript notes recording information for the family of Nathaniel and Susanna Roberts, their daughter Mary R. Wright and her daughters Susanna McCallan and E. R. Outerbridge. The entries appear to have started in 1826—with some backdated as far as 1733.



Recently retired Museum Chairman **James Hallett** and his sister **Mary Saunders** have donated a pair of Bermuda cedar chairs made between 1710–50. The chairs have the vase-shaped back splat, curving cabriole legs and chair rail typical of the Queen Anne style popular in Britain and America into the late 18th century, and are finished with Spanish feet. Like most Bermuda-made furniture, there are no marks or labels to identify the maker. The chairs originally had caned slip frame seats, which could be slid out for repair or replacement of the caning. Remnants of cane can still be seen on the underside, but the cane was long ago replaced with cedar, making stronger seats that did not need as much maintenance.



NMB was recently given a child's petticoat worn in Bermuda c. 1866–70, an addition to our small but growing collection of clothing. Worn under a skirted garment, petticoats like this were worn by both boys and girls from infancy until they were out of diapers. Handmade of cotton, with barely visible stitches, the petticoat is finely gathered at the waist, tucked, and trimmed with broderie anglaise—details that indicate the garment belonged to a fairly well-to-do family.



Donated by **Keith Adams**, this 1954 panorama of the Naval Operating Base at Southampton was taken by American commercial photographer E. O. Goldbeck, owner of the independent National News & Photo Service. Goldbeck began taking panoramas early in his career and made it into a lucrative speciality. Although he and his

staff worked with many types of subject, Goldbeck was known for his group photos of military personnel and panoramas of military bases, earning him the soubriquet of “unofficial photographer of America’s military.” He regularly visited US bases at home and overseas, and made the panoramas available for purchase by mail.



Thanks to **John Skinner, Rees Fletcher, Roger Sherratt, Martin Weekes** and **Calvin Smith**, NMB is on its way to assembling a complete set of Bermuda Police Service magazines, newsletters and other publications. We still have gaps, so if you have any copies you’d be interested in donating, call 734-1333.



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# THE BERMUDA RAILWAY

SIMON HORN

NATIONAL MUSEUM  
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PRESS

## THE BERMUDA RAILWAY

by *Simon Horn*

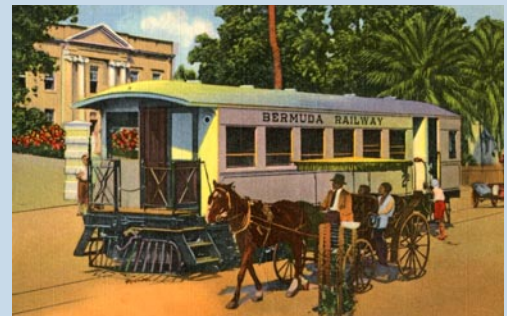
Publishing in 2020

Bermuda's Railway—the "Old Rattle and Shake"—captures the curiosity and hearts of Bermuda's residents and visitors alike. For most, the surviving, tranquil Railway Trail is a quiet and beautiful place to run, cycle and walk. For many, it conjures memories of days gone by, when it echoed with the rumble of daily trains running the length of the car-free Island in the 1930s and '40s.

In 2020, the National Museum of Bermuda Press will publish *The Bermuda Railway*, by Canadian historian and Bermudaphile Simon Horn, who has meticulously researched the Island's only "rapid transit" system from its difficult start to untimely demise. The Bermuda Railway took a number of years to build and never made money for its investors, yet it played a key role in the development of a new form of "island tourism" and in the construction of America's wartime bases here.

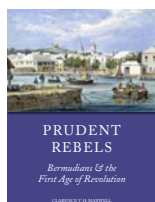
This coffee-table edition, with hundreds of rare and historic photographs, maps, illustrations and plans, will add to the growing corpus of essential National Museum of Bermuda Press books on the cultural heritage of Bermuda.

Become a subscriber to *The Bermuda Railway* for \$250. Your name will be printed in the book and you will receive a copy signed by the author and an invitation to the book launch. For more information please contact Advancement Officer Katie Bennett: [advancement@nmb.bm](mailto:advancement@nmb.bm) or 234-1333





# Make a present of the past with these fabulous NMB books



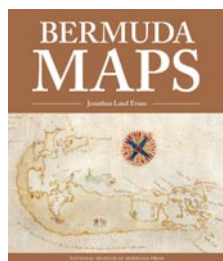
## **Prudent Rebels: Bermudians in the First Age of Revolution**

Dr. Clarence Maxwell  
et al, \$35  
Bermuda's role forging  
the Atlantic World.



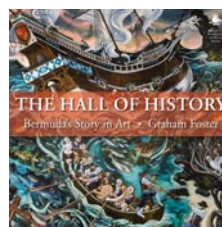
## **Dr. Savage's Bermuda**

Edited by Dr. Edward  
Harris, \$30  
The landscape of 1830s  
Bermuda in the beautiful  
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\$65  
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## **The Hall of History**

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## **Heritage Matters Vol 7**

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The latest edition of  
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amusing history.

**NMB Press books are available in bookshops islandwide and directly from the Museum: [www.nmb.bm/shop/](http://www.nmb.bm/shop/) • [info@nmb.bm](mailto:info@nmb.bm)**



From left: Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Alexandra Mairs-Kessler and Dr. Theodore Francis

## **Prudent Rebels authors give free public lecture**

The authors of our latest publication, *Prudent Rebels: Bermudians & the First Age of Revolution*, gave a free lecture at Bermuda College outlining their work. Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Dr. Theodore Francis II and Alexandra Mairs-Kessler highlighted the role of Bermudians during the Atlantic littoral upheavals from 1775–1834. During that period, a “prudent rebel mentality” developed among Bermudians, shaping the way they took part in the British-American Revolution and the role they played in the making of America.

The event at Bermuda College was filmed by CITV and streamed live via Facebook and can be viewed via the Museum's website: <https://nmb.bm/learn/teacher-resources>

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# Atlantic World History

What it is, how it is relevant to modern times and how it is done

**By Dr. Clarence Maxwell**

Associate Professor of History, Millersville University

**D**uring an episode of the TV documentary *Finding Your Roots* one of the guests, the filmmaker Ava DuVeray, listened as host Henry Louis “Skip” Gates told a surprising story of her family history. She learned how her ancestors, originally from Saint-Domingue, left during the uprising of 1791 that eventually evolved into the Haitian Revolution. This revolution profoundly shaped her genealogy and personal life and the telling also underscored how important the larger holistic discussion of Atlantic World History is to all who were formed by its events.

## What is Atlantic History?

When introducing the idea of the Atlantic World, one often encounters comments such as “this must be about fish,” or, more seriously, that it is about the habits of the ocean—from sea life, to currents, to the nature of the sea itself. This is partially correct. The Atlantic World is about much more than the Atlantic Ocean: it is about how the life of the ocean has shaped the world and civilizations of people living in countries around it; it is about how people have also shaped this oceanic world; and how Atlantic societies have, using the Atlantic, shaped each other.

Key to the understanding civilizations of the countries of the “littoral”—the technical term—is understanding how their interaction with the Atlantic has formed them.

The Atlantic World is of necessity diverse in terms of cultures and people. Geographically it takes in north, west and southwest Africa, the Caribbean Basin, Western Europe, North America and South America; and most essentially it includes Bermuda.

Atlantic History is a history of those relationships. Originally, it concerned the years from 1415 to 1850. Our new understanding has a much larger scope of time, of the last 1,000 years. Many of the forces that shaped the Atlantic World began as early as the year 1000, as did some initial forays. As history is about context as well as events, it is useful to begin so long ago: to include the Magna Carta, the Trans-Saharan trading system, the rise of the Toltec Empire, the formation of the Kongo kingdom: all of these events would contribute to the flow of history that poured into the Atlantic World. To understand the formation of the cross-cultural connections after the 15th century, Atlantic history encourages us to go back in time, to at least the beginning of the last millennium.

Atlantic History examines major events that shaped the people of the region and of today, especially as the Atlantic World laid the foundation of globalism and modern institutions. It encompasses Atlantic Age Enlightenment Revolutions

like the British American Revolution, the Latin American Revolutions including the Haitian Revolution, and the French Revolution; Abolitionism; Atlantic human trafficking; European colonialism; trading networks; smuggling; migration and population movement.

## How does Atlantic History affect Bermuda?

How did the Atlantic Age of Revolution shape Bermudian history? Where did its people come from? How did its people contribute to colonisation, smuggling and contraband, and did they shape the character of Bermuda’s political culture today? What were the Atlantic roots and influences of well-known institutions until now seen as local, from Bermuda’s distinctive architecture to its cassava pies and codfish and potatoes (clearly Atlantic products) to its Gombey’s? How have Bermuda’s people influenced the physical environment, and what is the history of that relationship that and repeats today in otherwise invisible cycles? How has Bermuda changed over the last 1,000 years, having had people on it for less than half of the millennium? Have Bermudians broken 1,000-year cycles or are they repeating them, unwittingly? Atlantic History tries to answer all of these questions.

## How is Atlantic history done?

Atlantic History requires a multidisciplinary approach. It is not inter- or intra-disciplinary in which one discipline tries to do what another discipline does better. Multidisciplinary means that one discipline communicates and cooperates with another and together as distinct disciplines answer and present on questions of history. It demands the involvement of archaeologists, geographers, poets, writers, paleontologists, meteorologists, psychologists, philosophers, political scientists, technologists, sociologists, communicators, actors and musicians. It requires experts in Bermudian History, Caribbean Basin History, African History, US History, British-American History, Latin American History, European History, Mediterranean History, even Asian History. The Atlantic Historical narrative is more than just research—it is also presentation: discovering new information about the Atlantic World and bringing it to the people in any form required. All of these disciplines examine an aspect of Atlantic World History and communicate their findings to each other and to society as whole.

Atlantic World History’s relevance is that it understands how these questions shape present lives and provides tools for the future. The past may not repeat itself, but past events can and often do. History gives us the tools to understand and to master these events, and thus avoid their negative consequences. By that we learn as a people. ■

The past may not repeat itself, but past events do. History gives us tools to understand





BERMUDA NATIONAL TRUST COLLECTION, BERMUDA ARCHIVES

*Panorama of St. George's, 1731 during the period when Bermuda mariners carved out a dominant position in the carrying trade*

# BERMUDIANS AND THE AGE OF REVOLUTION

*In the late 1700s and early 1800s Bermudians were at the forefront of the “Age of Revolution,” when the politics of the Atlantic littoral were dramatically reshaped*

**By Dr. Clarence Maxwell**

Associate Professor of History, Millersville University

From the 1760s to the early 19th century, the Atlantic World experienced the First Age of Revolution. This event dramatically altered international politics and laid the basis for more radical revolutions that later swept much of the planet. The world that existed before was one in which social hierarchy and especially slavery were generally accepted; in which natural and inherent social and political inequities between men and women were expressed in the political institutions of the age; in which virtually all societies built a social pyramid of elite classes, middling classes, and servile classes, the latter including the enslaved. Virtually all countries were monarchies and the majority of those were absolute.

But the Age of Revolution challenged each of these institutions. Its first event was the British American Revolution (1775–83) and the initial consequence of that uprising was the establishment of a fledgling republican state in North America. The French Revolution began in 1789 and took an extreme turn when the Jacobins executed the monarch, and most of the priestly class and nobility. The French Revolution would spread to the prosperous sugar island of Saint-Domingue—today’s Haiti—resulting in a mass rebellion of its enslaved beginning in August 1791. The French Revolution as expressed through



*Enslaved sailor  
Olaudah Equiano*

Saint-Domingue’s bondmen and women further radicalised France. Jacobin France became the first European empire to abolish both human trafficking and enslavement. When Napoleon Bonaparte attempted to restore each, Saint-Domingue’s black and brown population responded with a revolutionary war. The Republic of Haiti was the result.

The character of Bermuda’s involvement in the greater world must in part be understood in the context of the maritime and commercial society it became during the 1600s, and especially the 1700s. This saw the formation of what can be called a hydrarchy, as described by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. One aspect of hydrarchy for them was the construction of the maritime state, the “organisation of the maritime state from above”—the maritime and legal “consolidation” initiated by Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s. Out of this “New Model Navy” came the concentration and mobilisation of labour and capital as well as the erection of a protectionist legal system that served to defend the commercial interests of English capitalists in protecting them from overseas competition, in particular the Dutch. The Dutch had before then emerged as economic rivals of the English, which led to further attempts at organisation against them during the Restoration. Most notable of this legal protection was the first of a series of Navigation Acts that not

only served to defend English home commercial interests from foreign competition, but to reduce colonial actors to the position of economic dependency. Navigation Acts and restrictions on colonial trade were features of British mercantilism that made colonial trade a function of the success of metropolitan trade, reflecting the view that the colonies existed to serve metropolitan interests. Other colonial societies developed their own maritime economies and hydrarchies, consolidating and erecting legal and economic infrastructure to protect trade. More important, they also developed their own economic and political trade connections irrespective of the interests and needs of the metropole. The metropole, at least de facto, was often reduced to the status of another competing hydrarchy. This sets the foundation for the contested relations between the Crown and the colonial hydrarchy of Bermuda, a conflict that shaped Bermudian involvement in the British American Revolution.

Bermuda began the 18th century with largely positive relations between the Crown and the colonists, when Governor Benjamin Bennett ended an earlier period of conflict and corruption. But this changed. As the Atlantic World was convulsed with wars between Britain and France or Spain, from 1738–63 two brothers became governors of Bermuda, perhaps two of the most qualified men to occupy that position in the 1700s: Alured Popple, the eldest, who would govern only briefly from 1738–44; and William Popple III, who served from 1747–64—one of the longest tenures of any Bermuda governor. Both defended the Whig government of the 1700s, a government that developed largely as a consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. For William Popple, the behaviour of the Bermuda Hydrarchy reflected a self-absorption that made personal interests trump larger collective concerns: in his mind a political selfishness that had fuelled internecine conflicts as easily as it had fed acts of treason. It might have appeared an act of prudence to adopt such a mindset, this governor would lecture, but it did so at the expense of the needs of country and empire. Bermudians largely felt differently. The priority of their concern was to protect their hydrarchy—at least when that hydrarchy protected their interests.

However, Bermuda was a slave society, and the British American Revolution, with its rhetoric of political and social levelling, threatened to upend that social order. Using a mental framework of a “triangular war” to describe the competing and conflicting group interests of white loyalists and patriots vis-à-vis enslaved blacks, one can contextualise the actions of Bermuda’s enslaved population during this conflict. There was the presence of both pro-American (patriot) and pro-British (loyalist) contingents among the white colonists of Bermuda. Thus enslaved and free blacks shaped their involvement around their own engagement with the Atlantic World. Black sailors in particular had developed their own maritime economy. The predominant purpose of that economy—if not its only purpose—was to deliver them out of bondage. An example of this emerges in the life of Olaudah Equiano, who as a slave sailor knew Bermudian enslaved mariners. What emerged was an enslaved maritime network constructed within the bowels of slave society, one that carried on the often illegal business of white merchants and exploited the spaces created especially by



*The Popple Family in 1730*

ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST

contraband activities. It was a thalassocracy, the other meaning of hydrarchy introduced by Rediker and Linebaugh: an organisation of the maritime system from below, by enslaved men and women that reached to wherever Bermuda sloops and their sailors frequented in the Atlantic World. The British American Revolution and its competing triangular interests became another opportunity for enslaved sailors and their relations to achieve manumission.

Another opportunity and context emerged in the wake of these revolutions, what Caribbean historian Edward Brathwaite called the Humanitarian Revolution: movements further agitated by the wake of the French Revolution in Saint-Domingue and the Haitian Revolution that sought to end slavery and civil disabilities based on race. For Bermudians, this took a path of demanding the end of social and political inequities based on race and, equally important, the abolition of slavery. Demands for emancipation were especially articulated by two Bermudian “émigrés”: St. George Tucker, in his *Dissertation on Slavery*; and most especially Mary Prince. The slave experiences of Prince were transcribed and published, propelling the debate on slavery towards immediate emancipation, which was achieved through the British Parliamentary Emancipation Act of 1833.

But the demand for civil liberties in Bermuda was undertaken particularly by a group of “Free Blacks and People of Colour,” whose petition entered the debate on the Emancipation Act after the law was sent to the colonies for emendation. The consequence of Bermuda’s Humanitarian Revolution on the island was the passage of two Abolition Acts: Abolition Act I, which ended slave society in Bermuda, and Abolition Act II, which ended public-sphere civil disabilities based on race. From August 1, 1834, racial segregation would have to be restricted to the private sphere, until this too, beginning in 1959, was subjected to dismantling.

Such is the story of Bermuda’s role in the Age of Revolution—one of prudent involvement with roots in its maritime past; one that would help to unravel elements of the Old Regime as existed on the island. ■



# FINGERPRINTS OF SMUGGLING

## Slavery, race and the making of America

By Dr. Theodore Francis

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During the 17th and 18th centuries, both enslaved and freed black Bermudian sailors played a vital role in the Atlantic World trade network, which connected colonies in North and South America with the colonial metropolises in Europe, slave trading ports on the coasts of Africa, and the rest of the West Indies.

Within this trade network Bermudians engaged in the carrying trade, smuggling, and privateering. They transported products ranging from tobacco and rice, to sugar and enslaved Africans, between the colonies in the region through both legal and illegal (smuggling) networks. Bermudian mariners also ensured that British interests in the region were protected through privateering, which required ship owners to purchase letters of marque authorising their vessels to raid and capture ships flying flags of Britain's enemies.

Black enslaved Bermudians were essential to the success of these ventures. In fact, by the 1760s at least 40 percent of the island's enslaved black men had their occupations officially recorded as sailors, and while at sea they were responsible for a variety of roles onboard, as pilots, navigators, carpenters and cooks.

However, the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and the 13 North American colonies in the late 18th century would completely upend these trade networks and the way Bermudians operated within them. It began in 1774 when the British Parliament levied a series of trade regulations as a means of taxing the North American colonists. These "Intolerable Acts," as the Americans described them, were answered by an ultimatum from the Continental Congress for Parliament to repeal the laws, or colonists would impose a trade embargo with Britain and its colonies.

North America was critical to the wealth of the British empire, with



*Salt raking in the Turks Islands as depicted in Hall of History by Graham Foster*

colonies in New England alone exporting almost 80 percent of their products to the British West Indies. Similarly each year, sugar islands such as Barbados and Jamaica shipped tons of molasses to the rum distilleries of Massachusetts and the surrounding area. Many of the colonies relied on trade not only for economic reasons but also for food and inter-colonial trade would be derailed by an embargo, as well as wartime plunder by privateers, with devastating financial and human costs. This is perhaps most evident in Jamaica, where approximately 15,000 enslaved blacks died from starvation caused by food shortages during the Revolutionary War.

Bermudians, realising the threat this posed to the island's carrying trade as well as its main supply of food and market products, sprang into action. A Bermudian delegation visited the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, and successfully negotiated an exemption from the American blockade for Bermudian

ships, as long as they agreed not to trade American goods with other British colonies. This agreement was confirmed in August 1775 after Bermudians stole 112 barrels of gunpowder from the East End powder magazine and transferred them to two waiting American ships, which delivered them to Philadelphia and Charleston.

By 1776 the standoff between Britain and the North American colonies turned into an all-out war for independence and Bermudians were compelled to choose between three major economic options: military support and service to the Royal Navy, privateering against American vessels, or smuggling. Of these the most economically rewarding was smuggling and North American colonies were an ideal market considering the embargo exception brokered by the West End Hydrarchy, alongside the heightened demands of war.

Although the exception to the trade embargo had initially been granted to aid



*Black and Native American slaves and free men were skilled pilots who navigated Bermuda's reefs and narrow channels*

Bermudians' access to food imports it also presented an opportunity for white Bermudians to further maximise their returns by trading products to ports impacted by the war. In addition, American demand for salt—a vital preservative, especially for military meat supplies—boomed during the war and led to higher prices, creating another commercial opportunity for Bermudians.

Captains would depart Bermuda to rake salt in Turks and Caicos with a crew of half enslaved blacks and half free whites. In the Turks, the captain would order the whites ashore to rake salt, or pay local sellers for it, leaving an entirely black crew to sail on to Dutch or French ports to trade for consumer goods or even war materiel.

Black men would take dominant positions during these parts of the voyage, while at sea and in port, before returning to retrieve the white crew and sailing to North American ports to sell salt, market goods, or military supplies. The practice began before the war and had been reported to Governor George Bruere, who described it in the following manner: "The person that may be part owner for a captain or rather director, the mate doing the duty as captain or rather swearing master, the rest all negroes then in case any thing of contraband goods is to be taken in or discharged the swearing

captain may step aside and the negroes and their leader complete the business."

Why was this practice so prevalent? Enslaved blacks possessed a variety of skills and their sociopolitical position coupled with the legislative framework in Bermuda made them highly valuable to white merchants engaged in smuggling and trade during the war. Enslaved blacks had been engaged in maritime activities long before the war and consequently were highly skilled at sailing, navigation, cooking, ship carpentry and repair. Some also possessed language skills from travelling to other countries and colonies with their masters or having been raised in other colonies before being sold on to Bermuda. In either case, a multilingual slave was highly valued for the ability to translate business and social transactions while in foreign ports. Likewise, the sociopolitical position of blacks as enslaved chattels of a white master made them ideal for smuggling. Slaveholders would often hire out their slaves to ship captains, and the enslaved had no legal right to their daily wages from the voyage, although it was customary for masters to take between 65–80 percent, leaving the sailor with the remainder. Enslaved status benefitted those hiring the crew, as slaves received lower wages than free whites, no matter their capabilities.

Regarding race, it is critical to acknowledge its intersectional nature during the 18th century, and how it informed most other categories, especially enslavement. Enslaved blacks were selected for smuggling because their legal status as "slave" coupled with their racial designation of "Negro" prohibited them from testifying against whites, especially their masters. Smugglers desired the legal escape afforded by a racist judicial system that refused to accept enslaved black testimony against whites. Interestingly, the only time black testimony was deemed permissible was when enslaved or freed blacks testified against other blacks, such as witnessing an escape or plotting an uprising. Thus the legal rules that enabled opportunities for black leadership at sea were underwritten by an overarching context of white supremacy.

Still, enslaved sailors challenged their subordination in various ways, one the use of smuggling to benefit themselves.

Enslaved sailors challenged their subordination in various ways, one the use of smuggling to benefit themselves



While abroad, blacks would acquire products for their own, although it is unclear whether items were purchased independently, received as rewards for successful voyages from white captains, or stolen from shipments of smuggled goods. In any case, black mariners sold or traded these products upon arrival in Bermuda and through this trade were able to purchase freedom for themselves or a loved one, or support freed relatives to purchase property.

All these activities challenged the imagined stability of slavery in Bermuda, especially the notion that "property" should not be able to own, buy, sell, or trade property. In response, whites passed a series of laws prohibiting slaves and freed blacks from buying and selling certain goods, operating certain businesses, or owning real estate. Such laws show





how whites tried to assert their control over the material possessions of blacks and rearticulate the concept that enslaved blacks were property without rights to own and manage property.

In the 13 colonies, slavery and the issue of emancipation was critical in causing many colonists to finally abandon their allegiance to Britain. Following a rebel attack, aided by enslaved blacks, on the British ship *Liberty* in October 1775, Virginia Governor John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore, drafted a proclamation declaring “all negro slaves and indentured servants” who left their masters and joined British military forces in Norfolk would be set free. After hostilities erupted, other British officials published similar military manumission declarations, and by the latter years of the war more than 100,000 slaves had escaped and

made attempts to reach British lines.

Colonists who decided to break from Britain realised their current and future financial fortunes were linked to the maintenance of chattel slavery and Murray’s military manumission appeared to be a road from which there was no return. In the minds of colonists, his decision to emancipate and arm the enslaved as soldiers against rebellious Americans was tantamount to a white man fomenting a slave uprising. The fear of a black slave uprising was one of the reasons cited by colonists for finally declaring their independence from Britain, and establishing the United States of America. It is evident the new republic of American liberty was not revolutionary regarding race and slavery, its pioneering break with British colonialism notwithstanding.

Although it is easy for Bermudians to stand at arms length from such developments, it must be appreciated that some Bermudians made choices to uphold and support the establishment of a republic of racial tyranny. White Bermudian slaveholders engaged in smuggling and made conscious decisions to prioritise their own financial enrichment alongside transnational white relationships.

The American trade embargo would not have been successful without the efforts of Bermuda’s highly skilled enslaved black smugglers and consequently it could be suggested that the British surrender signed by General Cornwallis and General George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia, in October 1781 has black Bermudian fingerprints on it.

While enslaved Bermudian mariners negotiated within the context of slavery to better themselves and their families, they were not the architects of wartime smuggling, nor did their political decisions create the world of racial slavery that incentivised their use in the smuggling world. Yet they functioned and tried to thrive within its confines in ways that could best serve their limited opportunities for liberty.

The agency of enslaved sailors enabled the success of the American embargo, enriching Bermudian smugglers while temporarily impoverishing loyal British colonies and harming thousands of enslaved blacks in other parts of the Atlantic World. It also enabled the triumph of American patriots in their battle for independence.

Yet these “successes” can be seen as a charge of complicity, because white Bermudians aided and abetted the decolonisation of a British colony and laid the foundation of a slaveholders’ republic. It can also be understood as a contradiction because activities which enabled degrees of liberty for some regions of the black diaspora ensured levels of oppression for others, demonstrating the uneven outcomes of the revolutionary era. Still, it remains a compelling history that requires far more investigation as we consider the black Bermudian fingerprints on the foundations of the 18th century Atlantic World. ■

*The fast Bermuda sloop was an excellent vessel for wartime waters, portrayed by Nathaniel Currier*



## PRUDENT PRAGMATISM

### Bermuda and the economics of treason during the American Revolution

**By Alexandra Mairs-Kessler**  
University of Delaware

The American Revolution was an Atlantic World phenomenon. The war was fuelled not just by bold ideas of rights and government, but by the networks of people, goods and knowledge that crisscrossed the ocean. And the war, like the Atlantic system in general, owed a great deal to Bermuda. The geographic location of the colony, combined with the nautical skills of the population, allowed the small island to have a significant impact on the business of the Atlantic. This meant Bermuda was a valuable part of trade networks for both sides of the war, and both contributed to Bermuda's success. Bermudians were pragmatic actors in the American Revolution, generally offering support to the rebelling colonies, but only while it was also in their own interests. The majority of colonists ignored the orders of the British imperial government to ensure their own comfort. The idea of the "prudent rebel," prioritising person and colony over empire, is an excellent way to understand the economics of treason and the actions of Bermudians during the American Revolution.

When George James Bruere Sr. took his oath of office as Bermuda governor in 1764, he was optimistic about his relationship with Bermudians and his ability to serve the imperial government's interests. The British Empire was coming out of the costly Seven Years' War looking for ways to address the resultant debt. For other areas of the British Atlantic, colonists chafed under new taxes designed to raise

revenue. For Bermudians, a crackdown on smuggling caused tension between colonial and imperial interests. To officials, this "low hanging moral fruit" seemed an easy means of raising funds throughout the empire. Bruere promised he would provide "every information Relative to any illicit Trade that may be introduced or carryd on in these Islands." Once Bruere acquainted himself with the colony, he saw the potential for smuggling was obvious. Only the capital city of St. George's had a stationed Customs Officer for incoming vessels to declare cargoes and pay duties. Bruere was surprised to discover it was accepted practice for vessels to skip St. George's altogether and load and unload at their own door. He recognised this practice as the greatest opening for illicit trade.

Bermudians could avoid undesired duties, customs, and regulations with ease given the benefits of geography. Bruere attempted to fulfill the government's plan through various strategies: by forcing vessels to enter through Customs in St. George's; requesting the formation of a second town with additional Customs officials; and sending troops to the West End to enforce the law. His efforts were repeatedly thwarted because "every Person in these Islands, whether in Power or not are concerned in the Trade more or less." This observation was, perhaps, the most important for understanding the actions of Bermudians from every level of society during the war. Trade was vital for the whole economy, and people did not want to risk their own wellbeing. The Britain's need for revenue and Bruere's desire to enforce Parliament's wishes set up a tension



between colonist and government, a phenomenon happening with varying degrees of intensity throughout the Empire.

For the continental colonies, tensions with the British government came to a head with the Boston Tea Party and the occupation of Boston. This hit crisis point for Bermuda when the First Continental Congress formed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and representatives from the 13 colonies organised an embargo against Britain. The 1775 boycott included trade with Bermuda, which put Bermudians in a difficult position. Their economic system was tied so closely to North America that shutting down trade would be disastrous for their breadbasket needs and financial fortunes.

To shield the colony from the boycott, the Governor's Council and Assembly created a plan, despite Governor Bruere's objections. An act was passed in 1775 prohibiting export of breadbasket goods including wheat, barley, beans, rye, potatoes and rice. Any food entering the colony destined for other ports had to be sold on the island before the vessel could depart. People were genuinely concerned about food shortages from the Continental Congress boycott, but the Act proved useful on that front. When vessels stopped at Bermuda for emergency repairs or to replenish fresh water, they were unable to leave until they had sold foodstuffs, making captains unable to fulfill their predetermined transactions. As more vessels were trapped in Bermuda until they could secure buyers, the market became so saturated that some products were difficult to sell, even at low prices. Captains petitioned the Governor, who argued with the Assembly, but they would not remove the Act until there was some other way around the North American embargo.

Rather than wait for imperial politics to play out, a group of Bermudians, largely from the West End, decided to directly lobby the Continental Congress. Led by Col. Henry Tucker, the group sailed to Philadelphia to create a "Bermuda Exception." Initial appeals about the distressing circumstances Bermudians could find themselves in did not sway congress, so they changed approach. Bermudians had access to a product desperately needed by the Continental Army—salt. In addition to opening up the salt trade, they assured the Continental Congress that Bermudian ships could carry American goods to ports not under British control, trading instead with French, Dutch and Spanish ports. In this way the spirit of the embargo would be upheld, and both North America and Bermuda would benefit, with Bermudian merchants having a virtual monopoly on the valuable salt trade with North America.

But the fledgling American army had another vital need that Bermuda could address. Gunpowder manufacturing in North America was scarce and the product was typically imported from Britain. Bermuda had a store of British powder, and the Americans wanted it. At the time the Continental Congress was still seeking reconciliation with Britain and a full-blown revolution was not inevitable. So with an agreement for the seizure of the Bermuda gunpowder in place, Tucker's group secured the "Bermuda Exception" and set Bermuda's position for much of the war. When 112 barrels of gunpowder were subsequently stolen in the night, Governor Bruere offered a reward for information that ultimately went unclaimed. Like Bruere's previous efforts to stop smuggling, too much of the



*The Boston Tea Party, 1773*

economy was connected to North American business for anyone to jeopardise the effort. Other British colonies suffered during the war, but the smuggling trade was a financial boon for Bermuda. Bermudian vessels carried trade between North America and European-controlled ports, as well as trade for the British Empire. The fast Bermuda sloop was an excellent vessel for wartime waters, especially important when playing for both sides. Ships could be seized for enemy trade, but the financial gains were far too high to deter business. This trade relationship was also a notable benefit to the Revolutionaries, which was why Bermuda was granted the exemption from the embargo in the first place. The presence of British warships made people on the island nervous, but the risks did little to stop smuggling. Bruere asked for more troops, but manpower was needed in other parts of the empire. The lack of outright rebellion and their continual business with the British kept the islanders from becoming an overt target of Britain's war effort.

The smuggling trade was so successful that some merchants feared the end of the Revolution. The danger and stress of this treasonous economy had loaded the tables and padded the pockets of many Bermudians. Seeing signs of peace, more Bermudians joined the loyalists among them in privateering for the British for one last big lucrative move before the war ended. This legal pirating of American vessels also allowed colonists to reassert their loyalty to the British government. Bermuda officially remained a loyal colony throughout the war, despite the treasonous trade of the colonists. It was a financially sound and politically pragmatic move to reassert loyalty to the empire as the British Atlantic reformed.

The economics of treason were very practical. Bermuda was not in a position to join the American rebellion, but had familial and business connections up and down the British North American coastline that drove its economy. Bermudian vessels carried American goods to foreign ports and British goods to British ports, and prudently prioritised their colony's fortunes over any larger ideological forces. The role of Bermuda in the American Revolution is a reminder of the vital role of trans-Atlantic networks, and an example of the practical decisions people made to function in a wartime world. Bermuda's population of prudent rebels provided invaluable economic support for Revolutionaries and Redcoats alike, and successfully navigated a wartorn Atlantic. ■



"Cutting up the whale," by Johnson Savage MD, Royal Artillery, c. 1833–36

NMB

# Sea-beef: whale meat and race

'Manna to black people' was stigmatised as a food linked to enslavement

By **Monica Groth**

Curatorial Intern, Yale University

**D**r. Johnson Savage's incredible 19th century sketch, "Cutting up the whale," reminds us that in addition to valuable oil rendered from blubber and exported commercially, whale meat—or "sea-beef"—was an important product of whaling, especially for the less fortunate in Bermudian society. The meat was a boon to the underprivileged, especially the enslaved, who could not afford pork or beef. Richard Cotter, in *Sketches of Bermuda*, written in 1828, describes men, women and children flensing and processing a whale carcass, hoisting pieces of blubber and rendering them into saleable oil using huge iron trying pots:

"In a few hours, a whale approaching

60 feet is reduced to a skeleton, and there is scarcely [*sic*] a house, whether occupied by whites or Blacks, where a treat of whale beef does not take place that day or the next."

Cotter added that the Bermudian method of preparing the meat diminished its "fishy flavor" and tenderised it, perhaps making it a more palatable substitute for pork and beef. Despite the cultural variability in liking its taste, whale meat is incredibly nutritious. As deep diving mammals, whales have a high concentration of myoglobin, the protein responsible for holding heme (iron), in their musculature to ensure they can efficiently retain oxygen for long periods. This is evident in the dark colour of the meat, which is high in iron, low in fat and contains

many vitamins and antioxidants.

Compared to veal, venison, beef or even moose, reports of sea-beef range from delectable to inedible. However, a taste for whale meat, and other food, is determined not only by the physical nature of a food but also by the culture of its diners.

For thousands of years, Inuit populations of the Arctic, where the hunt has ceremonial connotations, have consumed whale meat and it is also embedded in the cultural traditions of native populations of the Makah Tribe of the Pacific Northwest, the people of the Faroe Islands and native tribes in Russia and Indonesia, whose historic practices of subsistence whaling exempts them today from the international

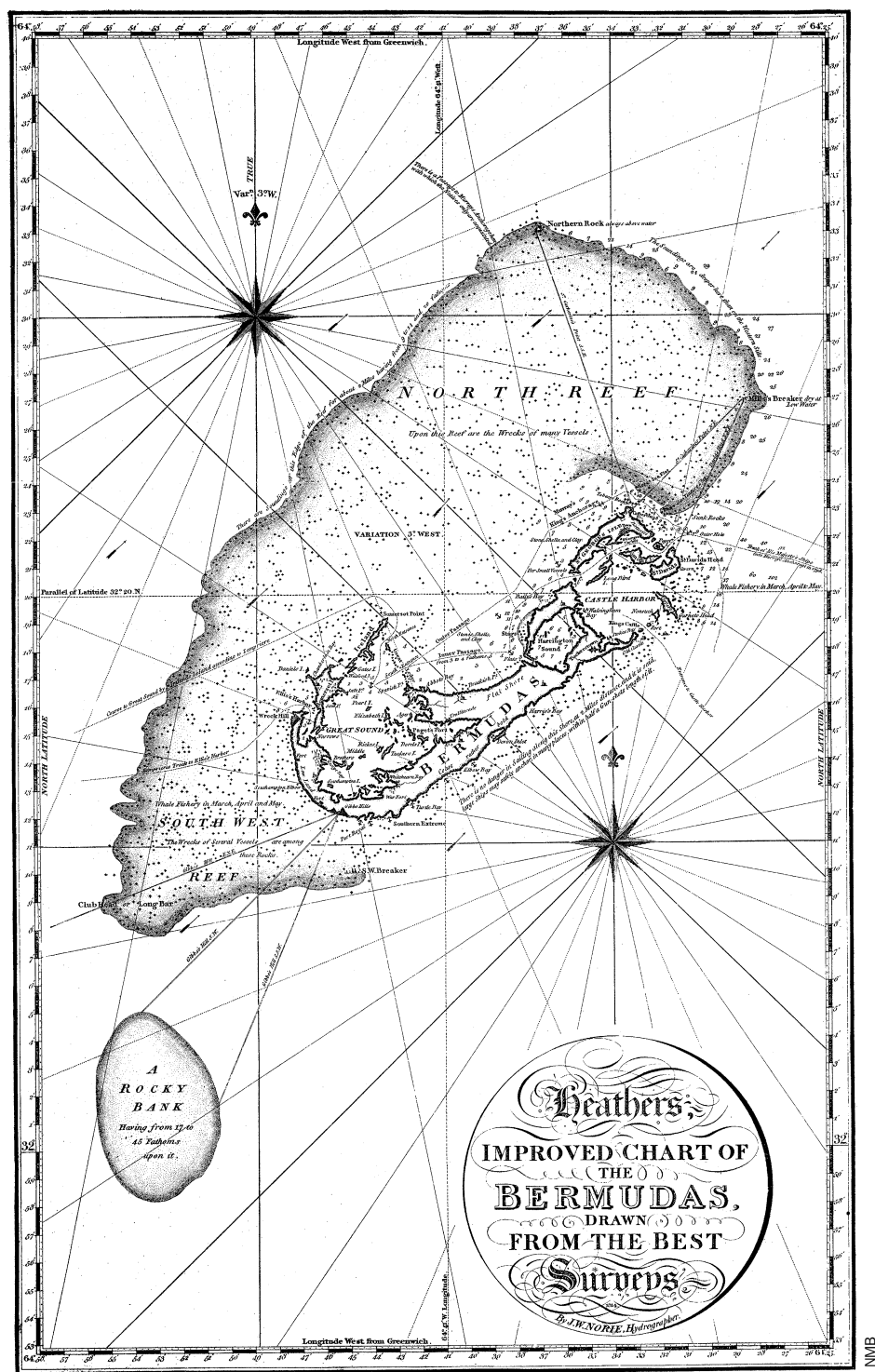


ban on commercial whaling.

Though consumption of whale meat is now viewed negatively by Western cultures, during the two World Wars it was encouraged as a food source in America and Britain to accommodate food shortages. Governments circulated recipes for whale meat to the general public: a 1918 recipe recommends soaking the meat overnight in milk to tenderise and remove “fishy”-tasting oils and heartfully urged diners to “make your home a demonstration center for...the new foods which are being discovered.”

Yet another recommendation included “curried whale,” which apparently was best served cold with crackers. Unfamiliar with the taste and preparation of whale, citizens appeared less than eager to consume a food they deemed strange and associated with the “primitive.” Briton Anne Addison, who ate whale meat during the Second World War, wrote: “I still cannot bear to see good food wasted or thrown away—but I think I could make an exception with whale meat.”

Prejudice against the consumption of whale has much to do with Western associations with barbarity, poverty, and race, which, despite Cotter’s insistence, once existed in Bermuda as well. Whale meat began to be consumed in Bermuda only after the Bermuda Company made attempts to establish an industrial oil industry in 1616. While their efforts met largely with failure, the Company, whose investors went by the name “Adventurers of Whale Fishing,” was legally afforded a monopoly on the industry, banning Bermudians from hunting, processing and eating whales. In those early years, economic stress forced Bermudians to turn to whaling as a means of obtaining oil for sale while ensuring those taking whales were landowners who could afford boats, equipment, and processing costs in defiance of the Company. In an atmosphere charged with class divisions, “pirate whaling” took root. In 1682, a particularly bad year of crop infestation and food shortage in Bermuda, Company investor Sir Robert Clayton complained



Heathers 1814 nautical chart of Bermuda by John William Norie showing whaling routes

about the illegal taking of whales by Bermudians, many of whom were jailed. However, even during these times of scarcity, wealthy white landowners did not eat whale meat, feeding it

instead to their enslaved workers.

Deemed “manna to black people,” whale meat was stigmatised throughout the 17th and 18th centuries as a food linked to race and enslavement. In 1727,

In an atmosphere charged with class divisions, pirate whaling took root. Even during times of scarcity, wealthy white landowners did not eat whale meat, feeding it instead to their slaves

## A petition sent to the king asking for relaxed regulations on the [whaling] industry cited consumption of whale meat by slaves as a primary reason for its necessity in Bermuda

a petition sent to the king asking for relaxed regulations on the industry cited consumption of whale meat by enslaved blacks as a primary reason for its necessity in Bermuda. Mid-18th century records of the Island's first privately-owned whaling stations, the Town Whaling Company and the Eastern Whaling Company, show the companies employed black oarsmen, led by white harpooners. This trend continued as 10 more whaling stations populated the Island from St. David's to Ely's Harbour throughout the century. Therefore, enslaved blacks were the people primarily employed in the hunting, cutting and rendering of whales into oil for their masters. Even after emancipation, the black community continued processing whales, as they had the skills to do so.

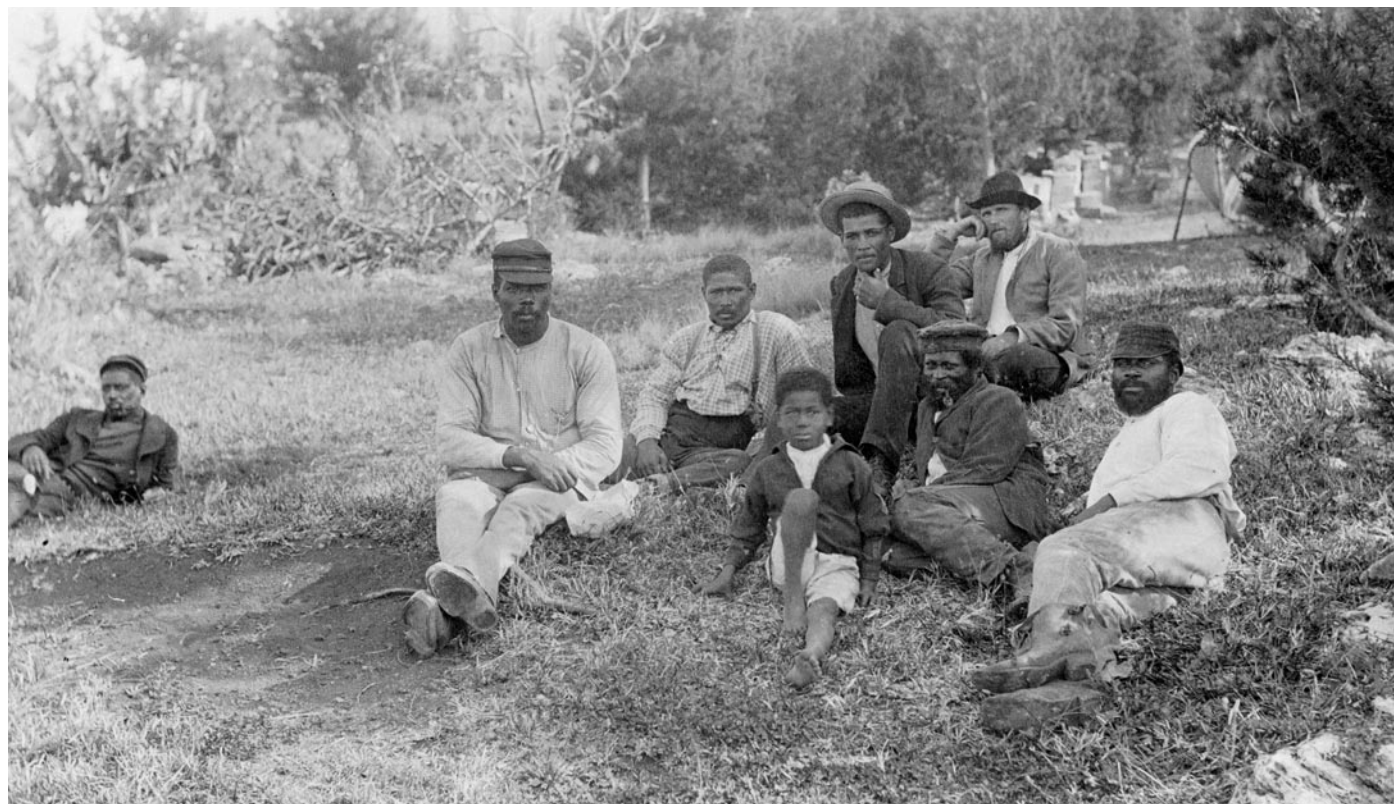
Why then, is there a discrepancy between the social edibility of sea-beef in Clayton's and Cotter's centuries when the demographic of the people primarily engaged in harvesting the whale did not change? The answer may lie in the annals

of Yankee whalers who plied the deep seas at that time. Consumption of whale meat in New England predates even Bermuda's slave economy. Pilgrims in 1621 observed Cape Cod Native Americans—including those who may have been sold into slavery following King Philip's War—eating the meat of beached pilot whales. Two centuries later, Massachusetts pilot-whalers continued to enjoy whale meat and blubber sandwiches.

During the American Revolutionary War, Nantucket loyalists (and avid whalers) spread Yankee techniques and knowledge to Bermuda. The *Bermuda Gazette* urged Bermudians to "observe [Yankee whaleships in] what we are less efficient than they are" around the time when new technologies, especially whale-boats and whale guns, were being imported from New Bedford and utilised by Bermudians. However, it is likely the shared selective and racialised cultural taste for whale meat developed not due to direct cultural adoption but instead

arose independently due to the spatial isolation and racial diversity shared by the pelagic whaleship and the island of Bermuda itself—the "mothership" to centuries of whaling adventurers.

Whaler Herman Melville writes in his American classic *Moby Dick* that whale meat "is so excessively unctuous that landsmen seem to regard the eating of him with abhorrence." Melville remarks with distaste that some whalers "have a genuine relish for that particular part of the Sperm Whale...comprising the tapering extremity of the body." Imaginatively playing to the tastes of his audience, Melville tells of Stubb, the *Pequod's* coarse second mate, dining upon his catch with an almost diabolical relish. Stubb's dinner is artfully paralleled with that of the sharks feeding on whale carcass below, suggesting his consumption of the meat makes him kin to the blood-lusty fish below. Meanwhile, Fleece, the old black cook whom Stubb bullies, deems the whale "the best steak I've ever tasted," while Stubb (whom Fleece



The crew of a Bermuda whaleboat in 1900

BERMUDA ARCHIVES





NMB

*Whaling in Bermuda declined during the 20th century, although a few whales were still captured as late as 1940. Here crowds gather around a crew distributing whale meat in the early 1900s*

declares “more Shark den Massa Shark himself”) decries it as short of gourmet, lecturing the practical old cook on the finer points of pickling and prepping cetacean delicacies.

In truth, American whalers enjoyed eating whale meat but did not do so out of necessity, as enslaved Bermudians did. American crews were reportedly rewarded for a successful whaling season with tasty “doughnuts”—bread fried in blubber—as well as other delicacies like porpoise brain pancakes and Dutch “fritters” (crispy pieces of blubber). As Stubb insists, the whale was a delicacy only to be enjoyed in ceremony and circumstance.

However, coming into contact with local tribes, particularly in the Arctic, who ate whale meat for subsistence “depreciated the whale as a civilized dish.” Whaler Charles Francis Hall wrote in the mid-19th century that “they of the darker skin” rejoiced when the Arctic expedition harvested meat and blubber from a whale. Yet Hall wrote of

the meat with disgust, claiming he could not help but “pity the human beings who could be reduced to such necessity as to eat the horrid stuff.” Because the only people whalers observed eating whale meat out of need were also those they considered racially inferior, its consumption as a nutritional necessity became associated with that inferiority and was shunned. A white man, Hall believed, should eat whale only for the experience.

It appears this understanding also rang true in Bermuda. If whale was consumed by whites not out of necessity but out of interest, then it was socially permissible. As the necessity created by difficult times in the 17th and 18th centuries wore away, wealthy whites could afford to view whale meat as a foodstuff to “experience” rather than be “reduced to” eating. Cotter’s account, certainly ringing with intrigue about the practice, credited Bermudian whaling with the same adventurous quality of which Melville writes, thus making sea-beef tasty. ■



NMB

*Henry Mortimer “Tommy” Fox sights down the barrel of an old whaling gun. Fox, known as the “uncrowned king of St. David’s,” was an active whaler in Bermuda waters during his younger days. He retained much of his whaling gear until the last, relics of a bygone island occupation*



A 19th-century pencil sketch of the Parsonage, Ireland Island, signed "Sabina"

## The Parsonage: a Dockyard gem

**B**uilt in 1828, at the same time as the Commissioner's House, the Parsonage is the oldest surviving Dockyard residence and is architecturally and visually significant as part of both the local landscape and the broader international history of the naval dockyards.

This was the Dockyard chaplain's home and was built before emancipation, the complex incorporating two service wings, flanking a courtyard, and slave quarters (later converted to a chapel). Typical of British military buildings of the period, it was roofed with Welsh slate, a feature which survived into the 20th century. It is one of very few domestic structures to have a damp-proofing course of slate in its Bermuda stone walls, and is one of first homes in Bermuda to have a late Georgian interior layout of entry hall flanked by reception rooms (along with its larger cousin, Commissioner's House).

The Parsonage, encircled by a verandah

on all four sides, is believed to be the first example of the use of verandahs in Bermuda, a feature not seen in local architecture to that point. This aspect of Caribbean vernacular architecture had been adopted in the 18th century by the British military, and was used for barracks and hospitals in the West Indies, and colonial bungalows in India. The use of verandahs was to become a feature of 19th-century Bermudian architecture and is reflective of the influence of the British presence on local culture.

The construction of the Parsonage is also illustrative of conflicts over the use of materials and cost overruns in dockyards of that period. Material from Commissioner's House, which ran excessively over budget, appears to have been used in unauthorised construction at the Parsonage, possibly due to a friendship between the then-Chaplain and the Commissioner of the Bermuda Yard.

With Lefroy House, the Parsonage



The "Oratory of St. George" chapel at the Parsonage about 1850





*From top: the Parsonage and its occupants in 1890; the rear of the complex in 1940; and in 1951, shortly before the Dockyard was greatly downsized*

bookends picturesque Lagoon Road, which once teemed with activity from a variety of now-demolished Dockyard buildings, from the Marine Terrace row houses to the Maria Hill Mess, and from the Sailors' Home to the massive Royal Naval Hospital.

Sitting on a small hill, it has wonderful views towards Grassy Bay and the Dockyard, where the Royal Navy fleet anchored in the 17th to 19th centuries. A kitchen garden replaced a likely courtyard at the rear and was curtailed by servants' quarters, the kitchen and a small above-ground water tank (as were nearly all such tanks in the Dockyard, to feed ships by gravity). It ceased to be a home for naval parsons in 1951, when the Dockyard was downsized.

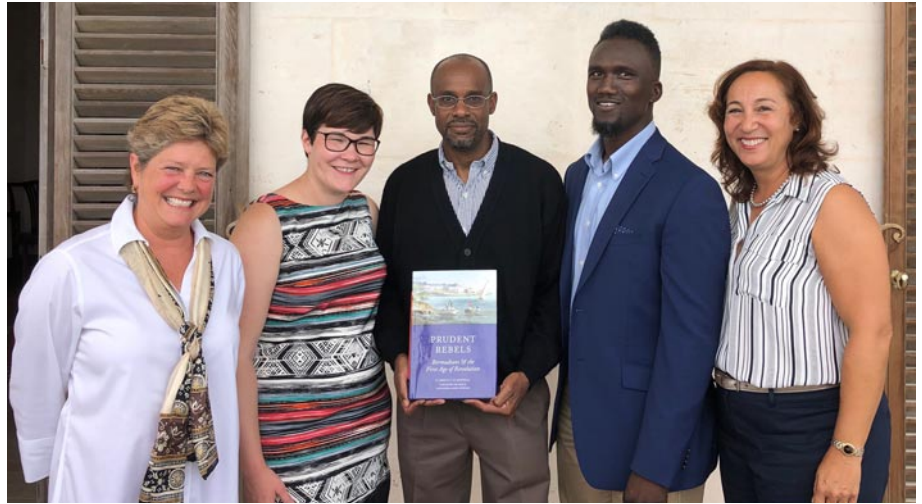
After falling derelict, a major restoration of the Parsonage took place in the 1980s, but the building was again left empty in the early 2000s and remains unused. ■





# Museum toasts launch of *Prudent Rebels*

The Museum celebrated publication of the groundbreaking book *Prudent Rebels: Bermudians & the First Age of Revolution*, by Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Dr. Theodore Francis and Alexandra Mairs-Kessler, with a launch at Commissioner's House. The book, a joint publication of the National Museum of Bermuda Press and the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, was sponsored by the Bank of Bermuda Foundation and individual subscribers. *Prudent Rebels* explores the role and response of Bermudians during the Age of Revolution (1774–1849), and is available at NMB, through the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and at bookstores islandwide.



From left: Margaret Hallett, Alexandra Mairs-Kessler, Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Dr. Theodore Francis, Allison Towilson Managing Director Bank of Bermuda Foundation



From left: Lionel and Cecile Simmons, Percy Ratteray and Martin Buckley



From left: Michael and Roderic Pearman, Mary Winchell, Shirley Pearman and Theodore Francis Sr.



Dr. Kim Dismont-Robinson with the Hon. Lovita Foggo, Minister of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports



The authors with NMB Board Chairman Rees Fletcher (left) and Executive Director Elena Strong



# Annual General Meeting of the National Museum of Bermuda

Minutes of the annual general meeting of the National Museum of Bermuda held at the Chubb Building, Woodburne Ave., Hamilton, Bermuda on July 18, 2019.

**Present:** Rees Fletcher (Chairman), Elena Strong, James Watlington (Secretary), Matthew Claridge (Treasurer), Theresa Mason (Assistant Secretary), Robert Blee, Timothy Davidson, Andrew Dias, Douglas DeCouto, Michael Grayston, James Hallett, Clarence Maxwell, Isabelle Ramsay-Brackstone, Robert Steinhoff, Neil Stempel, Charles Thresh, Sumner Waters, Deborah Atwood, Katie Bennett, Zoe Brady, Jane Downing.

1. The Notice was read by the Assistant Secretary.
2. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 2018, which had been published in the Museum magazine, *MARITimes*, were taken as read and approved without objection.
3. Report of the Auditors and Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 2017 and Treasurer's Report: Overall, the financial position of the Museum has decreased over previous year as a result of the Endowment Fund results and CCS fees. Admissions were higher year-on-year.
4. *Chairman's report:* With the 2014–16 Hurricane repairs and associated works (such as strengthening Upper Grounds roofs and Curatorial Department renovations) behind us, the Museum has been able to turn its attention from disaster recovery and construction to pushing forward with its 2016–26 Strategic Plan. This year the work of the Museum has focused on its five Strategic Objectives, which are:

- Be a must-see museum
- Strengthen local engagement in the enjoyment and protection of Bermuda cultural and historic assets
- Strengthen stewardship of the Museum's cultural assets
- Increase institutional stability and resilience to ensure longevity; and
- Facilitate research and advocate for the preservation of Bermuda history and cultural heritage.

*Education & outreach:* NMB developed and launched a new Education Strategy which aims to reposition the Museum as a multi-faceted community institution that encourages and supports the open exploration of history, heritage and identity. The strategy was developed by the Education Strategy Advisory Committee in consultation with key stakeholders, NMB Staff and board members. The committee comprised Dr. Janet Ferguson, Dr. Crystal Clay, Dr. Kim Dismont-Robinson, Jennifer Davidson, Rees Fletcher, James Hallett, Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Dr. Donna Outerbridge, Ru-Selda Severin and Elena Strong, who have now formed the permanent NMB Education Committee—a subcommittee

of the Board of Trustees. The strategy is the blueprint for safely and reliably plotting the learning landscape of the Museum.

NMB had advertised for an Engagement and Learning Officer who will be responsible for implementing the strategy.

NMB continues to assist local organisations and the public in protecting their historic collections and providing professional conservation, preservation and archaeological expertise. For example, Conservator Zoe Brady gave a conservation assessment and report on 13 17th–20th-century portraits for the Bermuda Archives. NMB also provided archaeological guidance for a development project at Watford Island which uncovered historic human remains. With the support of WEDCo, the Museum carried out rescue archaeology at the site and hired a bioarchaeologist, Dr. Thomas Crist, to conduct an analysis of the remains. A paper on the results is forthcoming.

Representatives from NMB were invited to sit on the World Heritage Site Management Committee and have been involved in developing the World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020–25 and providing professional guidance throughout the process.

*Fundraising:* NMB engaged an overseas consulting firm to carry out a fundraising feasibility study to help develop a 10-year strategy. This entailed consulting current donors, Trustees, US and UK Friends of the Museum and NMB staff. NMB will be focusing on supporting the education strategy and associated education initiatives, which include the Atlantic World History Research Institute, to be housed at Casemates.

*Admissions:* In 2018 we had a total of 76,775 visitors—a record number, which includes paying visitors and free admissions for students and children under 16. We have a rating of 4.6 in Google Reviews and the majority of ratings on TripAdvisor are five-star and include comments like: “a must see,” “best money spent on Island,” “great place for history of Bermuda,” and “good for all ages.”

Two thousand local residents took advantage of our Free for February initiative, doubling numbers from 2018. A local on Facebook shared: “If you’ve never gone to enjoy our National Museum, make sure to take advantage this month! It’s one of my top three favourite places on the island. World class.”

*Venue hire:* 2018 was a record year in rental revenue generation—a total of \$175,000—which directly supports the annual operating budget. All venue hires bookings are managed through Museum Services Limited.

*Facilities:* To better financially plan for future maintenance, a new Maintenance Committee was formed, chaired by Robert Blee. The committee is tasked with overseeing the

development of a maintenance plan.

*Publications:* Two NMB Press publications were recognised by the 2018 Bermuda Literary Awards: *Chained on the Rock* by Cyril Packwood was posthumously given the Founder's Award and *Bermuda Maps* by Jonathan Land Evans received an honourable mention. Volume 21 of the *Bermuda Journal of Archaeology and Maritime History* (BJAMH) was published online and is available for purchase via the NMB website with the last two issues of *MARITimes*. The Museum launched two books: *Heritage Matters 7*, by Dr. Edward Harris and *Prudent Rebels: Bermudians and the First Age of Revolution*, by Dr. Clarence Maxwell, Dr. Theodore Francis II and Alexandra Mairs-Kessler.

*Collections & Acquisitions:* The Curatorial department continues to address a backlog of collection management projects delayed by 2014–15 hurricane damage, including inventory and rehousing of the Museum's land archaeology collection and the documentation, accessioning, and rehousing of incoming artifacts.

*Volunteers and interns:* Curatorial launched its Digital Volunteer Research Programme, which invites members of the public to help transcribe references to Bermuda's maritime activities in the Bermuda National Library's digital collection of newspapers.

*Research:* Although no field schools took place last summer, work continues on the Morgan's Island Shipwreck and *Enchantress* projects, with reports and articles forthcoming from respective universities working on projects in collaboration with the Museum.

*Awards:* The Museum is the recipient of several awards in 2018 including Trip Advisor Certification of Excellence Hall of Fame, Trip Advisor's Traveller's Choice Award, TripExpert's Expert's Choice Award and Best in Bermuda Award for Wedding Reception Location.

5. *Election of Board of Trustees for 2019–20:* A slate of 24 Trustees for the forthcoming year was presented as follows: Dr. Douglas S. J. DeCouto, Dr. Kim Dismont-Robinson, Dr. Janet Ferguson, Neil Stempel, Charles Thresh, Col. Sumner H. Waters, James Hallett, James A. F. Watlington, Robert Blee, Andrew Dias, Michael Macguire, Dr. Clarence V. H. Maxwell, Robert Steinhoff, Pamela Ferreira, Rees Fletcher, Michael Grayston, Isabelle Ramsay-Brackstone, Jazmin Da Ponte, Tim Davidson and Jennifer Davidson. Trustee Philip Akeroyd retired as an active Trustee and we extend our appreciation for his generosity, commitment and support of NMB.

6. Auditors: It was resolved to reappoint the accounting firm of Mazars.

7. Any other business: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



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## THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BERMUDA, INC.

The American Friends of the National Museum of Bermuda 501(c)(3), initially called the Friends of the Bermuda Maritime Museum, was established in 1982. Its purpose is to raise funds to support the National Museum of Bermuda and museums in North America for education and scientific purposes. Donations are generally tax deductible for those subject to US income taxation.

You can help support the National Museum of Bermuda by donating to the American Friends. For information, please email [advancement@nmb.bm](mailto:advancement@nmb.bm).

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# Staff, volunteers and interns update

**Lisa Howie** has been appointed Director of Learning & Engagement (see *also page 3*). Having worked in both education and art, Howie brings a distinct knowledge base to NMB. She holds a BA in Literature from McGill University, a BEd in English Intermediate/Secondary from Dalhousie and an MEd from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

Howie worked for 10 years with the Bermuda National Gallery, first as Director of Education & Programming, then Executive Director. Since 2018 she has been an independent curator and consultant, assisting artists with their careers, crafting tours and professional development for the Hamilton Princess Hotel's art collection, and curating select exhibitions and programmes. In April she was an associate curator for the Havana Biennial, representing three artists from Bermuda, and in July she

launched Black Pony Gallery, a virtual space to showcase contemporary artists from Bermuda and the Caribbean. Howie has also joined the board of directors of the Bank of Bermuda Foundation.

Curatorial welcomed a record number of interns this summer.

**Monica Groth** and **Jessica Swain** helped with inventory and rehousing of our land archaeology collection. **Pedro Lopez** assisted with Portuguese translation of labels in the Museum's Azores exhibit. **Meagan Schulman**, **Olivia Adderly**, **Natalie Lightbourn**, **Samantha Stempel**, **Alice Moniz** and **Jaylen Simons** assisted with research, photography, exhibit maintenance, and collection management.

Welcome to our new Digital Research Volunteers **Conor Doyle** and **Louise Olander**, who are helping transcribe references to Bermuda's



*Pedro Lopez, Monica Groth, Megan Schulman and Jessica Swain*

maritime activities in the National Library's digital collection of newspapers.

If you'd like to join our team or learn more, please email [curator@nmb.bm](mailto:curator@nmb.bm)

The Museum was saddened to hear of the death of **Allan Gray**, a Bermuda resident, philanthropist and businessman whose impact on the island and his home of South Africa was immense. The Gray family sponsored the *Destination Bermuda: A History of Tourism* exhibit in Commissioner's House which opened in 2004. Our deepest condolences go to his wife Gillian and his children and grandchildren.



**CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS** Thank you to our corporate volunteers who again turned out in force to help with a variety of landscaping and conservation projects. We wouldn't be able to accomplish all the work we do without the dedication and support of volunteers. Exposed to the wind and rain, our historic anchors and cannon are at constant risk of damage from the elements. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers from NEON, AON and Deloitte, both have been protected for another year.

**If you are interested in becoming a corporate volunteer, contact Katie Bennett, Advancement Officer: [advancement@nmb.bm](mailto:advancement@nmb.bm)**



# ANNUAL APPEAL 2019

NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF BERMUDA

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