

P.O. Box 50004, RPO Fairfield Plaza, Victoria, B.C. V8S 5L8
Telephone: (250) 598-8870

E-mail oldcem@pacificcoast.net

Web Site: <http://www.oldcem.bc.ca>

January – February 2021

Tour Cancellations

Gerry Buydens

All tours for 2020 after **November 8** have been cancelled, this includes the December tours. We will start up again in mid-February contingent on the status of COVID. Check our website, our Facebook page or our telephone for announcement of startup date in 2021.

We would like to thank everyone for making this year a success. In particular I would like to thank the tour organizers for their efforts in adjusting to the pandemic laden year and still deliver one or two weekly tours and thank you to everyone who attended the tours.

Annual General Meeting

Gerry Buydens

Due to the pandemic, we will not be able to have indoor gathering for the foreseeable future, so do not expect an AGM in February. We are allowed to delay the AGM by 6 months under normal conditions but due to COVID, we have a 12 month window from the end of our season.

It is my hope that things start to lighten up & we get the virus under control, so that we might be able to hold an outdoor AGM in May or early June when the weather will be favorable. The current executive will remain in place until the AGM, whenever that may be. We will continue to operate as per whatever is allowed. You may see ZOOM tours at the start of 2021, if gatherings are still disallowed. Keep safe and everyone have

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Remembrance Illuminated

This is the link to the new Remembrance Illuminated YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChL4n4GZxOrj9NmSvMC5QZg>

Virtual Tours

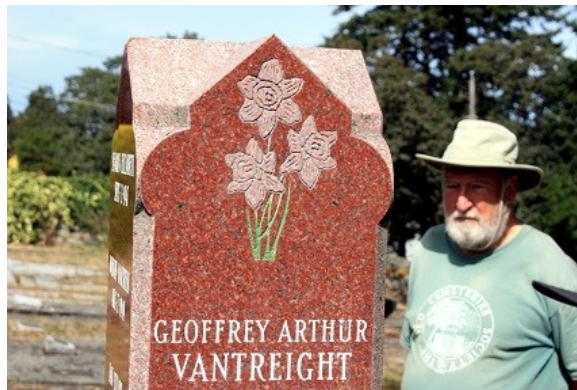
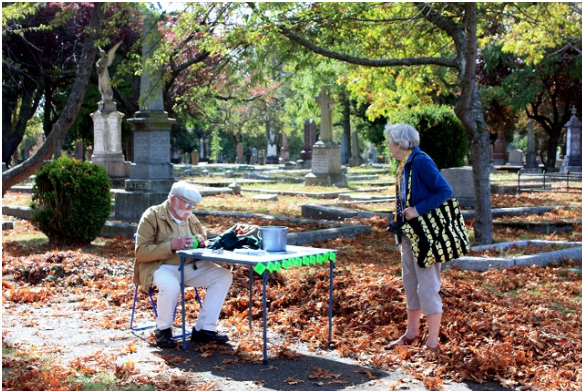
Thank you to John and Chris Adams for conducting virtual tours for the scheduled December 6 and 13 tours using ZOOM technology. A number of people tune in from the comfort of their home. The audience included folks from as far away as England, Virginia and Edmonton.

Page | 2

Thank you, John & Chris for conducting these tours and to the grandchildren for their assistance.

Photos from our Tours

Thanks to Paul Taylor



Last Post Monuments

On November 11th, 2020 a small group of us gathered at Ross Bay Cemetery to join the LAST POST Fund for the unveiling and dedication of three new headstones. These headstones mark the graves of three veterans whose graves had never been graced with a marker.

Page | 3



A ceremony, giving the name, rank and a short bio, took place at each grave. Taps was played and then a piper played while we observed a minute of silence. The three veterans are:

Lieutenant John Marsh Simpson, 77 th Foot	M57E4
Sargent/Captain Paris Carter, Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps	G31E14
Corporal James Normansell, Royal Engineers #2155	A48W28

No longer forgotten, their resting place shall be marked forever more.
The Last Post Fund's mission is to ensure that no Veteran is denied a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military gravestone.



4



Full Bios and more pictures can be viewed on our website www.oldcem.bc.ca what we do/current events

Black Pioneer's Gravesites at Ross Bay Cemetery

Fran Morrison, BC Black History Awareness Society

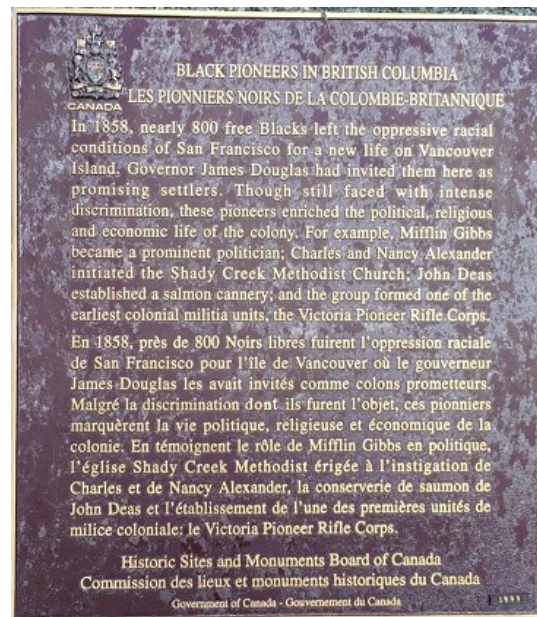
The gravesites include some of the original pioneers and their descendants. The oldest pioneer buried here is **Pompey Jackson**, estimated age between 108 and 111 years old. He died on January 3, 1873. (G.42.W18)

Page | 5

These pioneers, many from the western states, were free men and women seeking a place where they could raise their families, educate their children, practise their professions, and reap the benefits of hard work. While they had been led to expect that here in a British colony they could live with equality under the law; there are various instances of discrimination, prejudice and racism. The Black community in San Francisco was well organized for some time, holding regular meetings at the First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (established in 1852) to discuss how they could overcome the civil, business, labor and legal injustices they faced daily.

On the evening of April 14, 1858 at the Zion Church, the Black community was celebrating the release of a fugitive slave, Archy Lee. In the midst of these celebrations Jeremiah Nagle, (A.77.W32) Captain of the steamship Commodore which sailed regularly between San Francisco and Victoria, arrived at the meeting. Nagle presented a letter from "a gentleman in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company of undoubted veracity" giving details about the colony and inviting the Blacks to settle in Victoria. The letter has not survived but it is understood that because of the implications of the information provided by Nagle, the invitation could only have come from Governor James Douglas. Over the next year, 600 to 800 Blacks settled on Vancouver Island, Salt Spring Island and gold-rush communities throughout British Columbia.

The arrival of the Black Pioneers to B.C. in 1858 was designated as an **"Event of National Historic Significance"** by the Government of Canada on September 22, 1997. A plaque was commissioned by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board and was unveiled on February 20, 2000 at the Central Saanich United Church, formerly known as the Shady Creek Church at 7180 East Saanich Road. Blacks led the design and construction of this church. Some pioneers are buried at the Shady Creek Cemetery, others are buried at Pioneer Square, Royal Oak Cemetery, on Salt Spring Island and other communities such as Barkerville.



To learn more about these pioneers visit the BC Black History Awareness Society website www.bcblackhistory.ca. Here are a few of these intrepid pioneers' stories.

In 1858 the **Pierre and Alexander families** arrived in Victoria. These two families were brought together in Victoria through the marriage of their children, Corinthia Pierre and Thomas Alexander. Corinthia and Thomas had seven children. The gravemarker restoration and unveiling for Corinthia, aged 70 and her 1 year old daughter Eva(G.43.W9) was sponsored by the Old Cemeteries Society, the BC Black History Awareness Society and the City of Victoria. Today more than 100 descendants of Charles and Nancy Alexander live in B.C.

Page | 6

Samuel Booth, aged 91 and his wife Julia Ann, aged 87. Samuel Booth created a sensation in the summer of 1864, when he and three other partners George Munro, John Tyrel and William Dyer of the Industry Company discovered gold on the Leech River, near Sooke. On August 4, 1864 the local newspaper reported "This splendid specimen of gold appears to be entirely pure. On being weighed it was declared to contain 4 ounces, 6 dwts. \$73.20!!" (about \$2,500 in 2020 Cdn. dollars). Samuel Booth was also a member of the Island's first Masonic Lodge. (G.50/51.E9)

Paris Carter advertised regularly in the Colonist as a "General Agent, Collector of Rents and Debts" with an office on View Street; although he was sometimes referred to as a real estate agent. He **and his wife Mary Elizabeth** raised three children. Mary died on 13 October 1890, and just a few weeks later Paris would follow on 4 November 1890. Carter was one of the original members of the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Corps, an all-black volunteer regiment supported by Governor Douglas but disbanded in 1865. **This grave marker (G.31.14.E) was restored and unveiled on November 11, 2020. The restoration and unveiling ceremony was the untiring work of the Last Post Fund, whose mission is to ensure that no Veteran is denied a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military gravestone.**

Rebecca Gibbs was born in Philadelphia in 1808 and more than 50 years later she is listed in the Victoria Real Estate Directory 1864 as owning property on Fort Street. It is believed that she was married to Isaac Gibbs, one of Mifflin Gibbs brothers. Her death is recorded on November 14, 1873 at the age of 66. Three of her poems were published in the Cariboo Central. Her poem "The Old Red Shirt" about the struggles of gold miners is engraved on her grave marker. (A.71.E30)



When **John Robert Giscome** died in 1907 at the age of 75, he left his fortune valued at \$21,000 (about \$600,000 in 2020 Cdn. dollars), to his landlady Mrs. Ella Cooness. In 1863 a guide from the Lheidli T'enneh Peoples led him and another Black explorer Henry McDame across the trail that now bears the name **Giscome Portage Trail**. The trail was designated an official British Columbia Heritage Site in July 1997 and designated a Protected Area in the year 2000. (R.77.E0)

Nancy (nee Davis) Lester (1810 - 10 Feb, 1892). In one of the few letters surviving from that period Nancy wrote to her friend, American abolitionist William Still "... I feel somewhat encouraged to believe that ere long we may find a home for our children in the right place.." Nancy's thoughtfulness and kindness went beyond the Black community. The British Columbia Protestant Orphan's Home (Daily British Colonist July 8, 1874) gratefully acknowledged the donation of fruit, vegetables and eggs from Mrs. Lester. Her husband Peter returned to the states following her death. Here in Victoria Peter had been Mifflin Gibbs partner in the enterprise "Lester&Gibbs", dealers in groceries, provisions, hardware, boots, shoes and miners' outfits which at the time was said to be a rival of the Hudson's Bay Company. (G.29.W13)

Nathan and Sarah Ann Pointer Sarah was a dressmaker and Nathan owned and operated a "gentlemen's furnishings store" offering merchandise that included dressing robes, cashmere comforters, opera scarves and silk umbrellas. Goods were imported from London, New York and Philadelphia. Sarah died April 1, 1903, age 82 and Nathan died on August 30, 1903, age 81. His obituary in the Colonist reads "Many Victorians will learn with genuine regret of the death of Nathan Pointer, one of the oldest of Victoria's colored citizens... native of Milford, Delaware. He came to Victoria in 1858 and had been engaged in business here ever since. He is survived by 2 daughters, 5 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren". (G.46.E12)

Lest we forget.....

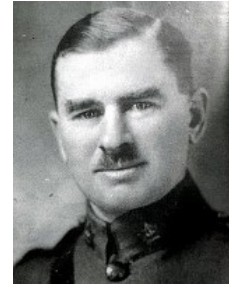
"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for their tomorrow we gave our today."
Rudyard Kipling

Kipling's son John was killed at Loos six weeks after his 18th birthday. His body was not recovered.

From the Daily Colonist November 12, 1920....page 6

The soldiers graves at Ross Bay Cemetery which have been under the care of the I.O. D.E, were covered with laurel leaves yesterday In commemoration of Anniversary Day.

Francis Clarence McGee (November 4, 1882 – September 16, 1916) played for the Ottawa Hockey Club, nicknamed the "Silver Seven". McGee was a prolific scorer. He once scored 14 goals in a Stanley Cup game and eight times scored five or more. He led the Silver Seven in its reign as Stanley Cup champions from 1903 to 1906. When the Hockey Hall of Fame was founded in 1945, McGee was one of the original inductees.



During World War I he inveigled his way into the army in spite of being blind in one eye, and was commissioned a lieutenant in the 21st Infantry Battalion. Lieutenant McGee was killed in action near Courcellette, France, on September 16, 1916. His body was never recovered. His brother Charles had been killed in May.

Tombstone Oddities



At the RSPCA Liverpool Animal Centre is an unusual and very rare grave. It's the final resting place of 'Blackie' – a war horse that served with the 275th Brigade Royal Field Artillery 'A' Battery – 55th West Lancashire Division during the First World War

Last Words

Lt. Maurice Edward Malone 1895-1916



Killed in Flanders, 15th Bn., Canadian Expeditionary Force
"Never mind me; carry on."

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your OCS membership for 2021 and for the board to thank you for your past support of our activities. Please circle type of membership: Individual \$30 Family \$45 Student \$20 Donations are greatly appreciated. \$_____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please make cheques payable to The Old Cemeteries Society and mail to P.O. Box 50004, RPO Fairfield Plaza, Victoria BC, V8S 5L8 NB: Membership cards are issued only if requested. Receipts issued for donations greater than \$10.00.