

## **Introduction to Africville excavation by Katie Cottreau-Robins, Curator of Archaeology, Nova Scotia Museum**

My name is Katie Cottreau-Robins and I'm the Curator of Archaeology for the Nova Scotia Museum. I'm really happy I've been asked to share with you a few thoughts about my work at an archaeology site in Africville located in the North End of the city along the Bedford Basin.

In the early 1990s, the city of Halifax was planning to install or construct a new road in the North End that was going to go through the former community of Africville. Particularly, the site of the Seaview African United Baptist Church. At that time, I was a graduate student at Dalhousie and my thesis supervisor asked me if I would like to direct an archaeology excavation of the Seaview Church site prior to the construction of the road.

The purpose of the excavation was twofold. One, it was important to conduct archaeology, record the remains of the church, and collect and record artifacts associated with the church before the site would be impacted by road construction. Secondly, all that information -and in particular the architectural information- we were going to record, was going to be given to architectural design students at Dalhousie and they were going to design a church replica model that would be used in the construction of an actual replica of the Seaview Church.

So as an archaeologist I was delighted to take on this project and I must that this was my first experience working in the realm of Black history in Nova Scotia and it really set me on a path of further work in that area.

And I must thank the descendants of the community of Africville and former community members that I worked with at the time. I must thank them and acknowledge them for their contribution to the project, for their support of my work there, for their stories, their insights, and their general sharing of their knowledge of the community of Africville. That relationship between the archaeologist and the community members is so important in the work that we do within cultural history and archaeology and the folks from Africville really made this project a success.

-- Catherine Cottreau-Robins, Curator of Archaeology, Nova Scotia Museum