

**Instructions to Teachers for the detective activity**  
**Was this the house of Colonel Stephen Blucke?**

**To do this as a class activity:**

The time required to do this mystery is as follows:

Reading Directions and assigning roles	5 min
Facts about Colonel Stephen Blucke	5 min
Set of Clues # 1	5 min
Set of Clues # 2	5 min
Set of Clues # 3	5 min
Set of Clues # 4	5 min
Set of Clues # 5	5 min
Set of Clues # 6	5 min
Putting it together	5 min

Total: 45 min

- ! Allocate 4 students per group. Students can find the clues on the web site at the locations shown on the Facts & Clues page, or you can give them print outs of the clues available in this package.

## **Instructions for students for the detective activity**

### **“Was this the house of Colonel Stephen Blucke?”**

#### **Your task:**

As Time Detectives, you are going to solve a case - a case that started over 200 years ago.

A few years ago, archaeologist found the location of an old house in Birchtown, Nova Scotia.

They think that this house may have belonged to Colonel Stephen Blucke (pronounced like “luck,” but with a “B” in front).

Your job is to look at the clues and decide whether or not you think the house the archaeologists found belonged to Colonel Stephen Blucke.

You will then make a 2 minute presentation to your class, explaining what your case was about and why you think the house was or wasn't Colonel Stephen Blucke's.

Why did you come up with the answer you did?

Record your answer and your reasons on the “Answer Sheet.”

## **Instructions for students for the detective activity**

### **“Was this the house of Colonel Stephen Blucke?”**

**Step#1:** If you are working as a team around the computer, each of you can pick one of the following jobs. If you are working alone, then you will have to be an expert detective - you're doing all the jobs!

**A.) Reader:**

You will read the facts about Stephen Blucke aloud. If you have problems with some of the words, get the rest of your team to help.

**B.) Time Keeper:**

You will make sure your group finishes its task on time, and you will also make sure that all of the group members' ideas are heard.

**C.) Recorder:**

You will write down the group's findings. Use the Answer Sheets that come with this file to help you organize the group's findings, or you can just use your own sheet of paper to write them down.

**D.) Keeper of the “Set of Clues”:**

You will be in charge of looking after the clues. This means that you will open them and share what is inside them with the rest of the group. If you are working on the computer, you will also be in charge of getting back to the Facts page on the web site so there is time to see all the clues.

**Step #2:** Get started. Read the facts about Stephen Blucke aloud so you can all hear.

**Step #3:** Follow the web links to the clues on the web site and do your detective work!

**Step #4:** If you are in class and working with a group, work on creating your presentation for the rest of the class. This presentation will be 1 to 2 minutes long.

## **The facts about Colonel Stephen Blucke**

Colonel Stephen Blucke was an important leader in the Black Loyalist community of Birchtown, Nova Scotia.

During the American Revolution, he served in a British military unit.

In 1783, he was asked by Governor Parr to set up the community of Birchtown. This community was the largest Black Loyalist community in Nova Scotia.

Colonel Stephen Blucke was still involved with the military while in Birchtown. He was the leader of the Black militia in Birchtown.

He had a wife named Margaret. She came from a family with some money.

The Blucke couple was unusual in the Black community, because they had some money. Stephen had some power too, since he was an officer in the militia.

He was a teacher in Birchtown too.

He was last seen in Birchtown in 1796, and was never seen again.

Some people say he was killed by wild animals, since all they found was one of Blucke's shirts. It was ripped and bloody.

Others say he and his family ran away because of money problems. What actually happened to him is still unknown.

# Answer Sheet

(page 1/3)

1.) During what years did people probably live in the house the archaeologists found?

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2.) When did Stephen Blucke leave New York?

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3.) How long did it take to sail from New York to Nova Scotia?

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4.) During what years did Stephen Blucke live in Nova Scotia? [Remember earlier clues.]

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5.) Was Blucke in Nova Scotia at the same time that people lived in the house the archaeologist found?

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6.) Is Aker's Inn and the place where the archaeologists found the house on the same site?

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7.) Why do you think the 1871 essay called it Akerman's Inn and it is called Aker's Inn on the 1888 map? Do you think this makes a difference?

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8.) What kind of house do you think Stephen Blucke had?

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9.) Do you think he could have afforded such a house? Why?

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10.) What kind of military artifacts are there in the cases?

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11.) Would it make sense to find military artifacts in Stephen Blucke's house? Why?

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12.) What do the buttons, buckles, and glass tumbler tell us about the people who owned them? [Read some of the labels in the cases. They will help you.]

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13.) Do you find it odd that a leader like Blucke would not be mentioned on this map? Why?

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14.) Do you find it odd that nothing was found that could tell us for sure that a Black Loyalist lived in this house? Why?

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Can you think of anything that could tell us for sure that a Black Loyalist lived in this house?

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# Yes/No Answer Sheet

(page 3/3)

Use this sheet to answer the question “Was this the house of Colonel Stephen Blucke?”

Examine all the clues in the kit, to answer this question.

If a clue makes you think it was his house, put it on the **Yes** side.

If a clue makes you think it was **not** his house, put it on the **No** side.

**YES, this was his house**

**NO, this was not his house**

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## Conclusion:

Do you think this was the house of Colonel Stephen Blucke?

Yes

Probably

Maybe

No

Why?

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## **Set of Clues #1**

### **What did the archaeologists find? [Part I]**

In 1998, archaeologists found part of the cellar of a house in Birchtown, Nova Scotia.

They also found over 13,000 artifacts.

None of the artifacts the archaeologists found were made later than 1800.

These artifacts were just like the kinds of artifacts found at White Loyalist sites.

The area where they found the house wasn't settled before the Loyalists came to Nova Scotia in 1783. Before that, the land was covered with trees, rocks, and bushes.

The site is known as the Aker site. Archaeologists also call it AkDi-23.

### **Question:**

- 1.) During what years did people probably live in the house the archaeologists found?

## Set of Clues #2

### *The Book of Negroes*

- In the envelope onscreen marked #2, you will find a page from the *Book of Negroes*.- or find the page from the *Book of Negroes* in your print outs. This is a list of 3,000 Black Loyalists who left New York on British ships in 1783.
- The book gives the name, age, and description of each Black Loyalist. It also states whether the person was free or a slave.
- The page you have is a part of the list of those who sailed on the British ship *L'Abondance* from New York to Port Roseway (later named Shelburne, Nova Scotia).
- You will read "GBC" in many of the entries. "GBC" means General Birch Certificate. These were "Certificates of Freedom," and they were the only proof the Black Loyalists had that they were free.
- The ship *L'Abondance* arrived in Shelburne, Nova Scotia on August 28, 1783.
- Look at the page from the *Book of Negroes*. Find Stephen Blucke's name. Answer the following questions:

### Questions:

- 2.) When did Stephen Blucke leave New York?
- 3.) How long did it take to sail from New York to Nova Scotia?
- 4.) During what years did Stephen Blucke live in Nova Scotia? [Remember earlier clues.]
- 5.) Was Blucke in Nova Scotia at the same time that people lived in the house the archaeologist found?

## **Was this the house of Col. Stephen Blucke?**

**Set of Clues #2** - A page from the *Book of Negroes* (page 1 of 2)

**29 July 1783**

### ***Stafford bound for Port Roseway***

#### **Robert Watson**

Bill Williams, 19, stout lad, (Donald McLeod). Formerly the property of John Frazer of White Bluff of Georgia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

Peter Johnson, 18, stout lad, (Donald McCrimmond). Formerly the property of William Johnson of Wilmington, North Carolina; left him 2 years ago. GBC.

Peter Johnson, 18, stout lad, (Donald McCrimmond). Formerly the property of William Johnson of Wilmington, North Carolina; left him 2 years ago. GBC.” [Note from John Gibson: “Lt. Donald McCrimmond of

John Ranger, 24, stout fellow (Donald McCrimmond). The property of James Wright by Certificate from David Matthews, Mayor of New York.

John Ranger, 24, stout fellow (Donald McCrimmond). The property of James Wright by Certificate from David Matthews, Mayor of New York.

William Williams, 23, stout fellow, (Donald McLeod). Formerly the property of Col. Warrington of North Carolina; left him 3 years ago. GBC. . . .

**31 July 1783**

### ***L'Abondance bound for Port Roseway***

#### **Lt. Philips**

John Green, 35, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Ralph Faulkner of Petersburg, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

David Shepherd, 15, likely boy. Formerly the property of William Shepherd, Nansemond, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

Cathern [Catherine] Van Sayl, 26, stout wench. Formerly the property of John Vanderveer of Monmouth, New Jersey; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

Mary Van Sayl, 5, likely girl. Formerly the property of John Vanderveer of Monmouth, New Jersey; left him 5 years ago. GBC. Daughter to Catharine Vansayl & born within the British line.

Peter Van Sayl, 2 months, healthy child. Son to Catharine Vansayl & born within the British line.

Cornelius Van Sayl, 30, stout fellow. Formerly the property of John Lloyd of Monmouth, New Jersey; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

Rose Bond, 21, stout wench. Formerly the property of Andrew Stuart of Crane Island, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

Dick Bond, 18 months, likely child. Daughter to Rose Bond & born within the British Lines. GBC.

Kate Mosely, 12, likely girl. Formerly the property of Andrew Stuart of Crane Island, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

Dick Wilkinson, 10, fine boy. Formerly the property of John Bond of Nancymond [Nansemond], Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

Charles Ford, 28, stout fellow. Formerly the property of William Hodges of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 6 years ago. GBC.

Hannah Ford, 30, stout wench. Formerly the property of Joseph Jolly of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 6 years ago. GBC.

Keziah Ford, 2, fine child. Daughter to Hannah Ford & born within the British lines

Joseph Elliot, 30. Formerly the property of John Elliot, Gloucester County, Virginia; left him 6 years ago. GBC.

Nancy Elliot, 26, stout wench. Formerly the property of Edward Mozley [Moseley] of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

Jenny Bush, 11, likely girl. Daughter to Margaret Willus [Wallis] and came from Virginia with her mother who says she is free born.

James Connor, 25, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Charles Connor of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him four years ago. GBC. . . .

## **Was this the house of Col. Stephen Blucke?**

**Set of Clues #2** - A page from the *Book of Negroes* (page 2 of 2)

Violet King, 35, stout wench. Formerly the property of Col. Young of Wilmington, North Carolina; left him 3 years ago. GBC. [Wife of Boston King; died in Sierra Leone 1792 c.]

Boston King, 23, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Richard Waring of [“Tranquil Hill” plantation], Charlestown, South Carolina; left him 4 years ago. GBC. [Died in Sierra Leone, 1802.]

Elizabeth Thomson, 28, stout wench. Formerly the property of George Ingram of Northumberland County, Virginia; left him 6 years ago. GBC.

Grace Thomson, 2, healthy child. Daughter to Elizabeth Thomson and born within the British lines.

Betty Thomson, 4 months, healthy child. Daughter to Elizabeth Thomson and born within the British Lines.

Charles Thompson, 33, stout fellow. Formerly the property of John Ustus [Eustace?] of Northumberland County, Virginia; left him 7 years ago. GBC. . . .

Samuel Walker, 13, fine boy. Formerly the property of James McKay of Norfolk, Virginia; left him 7 years ago. GBC.

Lydia Walker, 7, fine girl. Formerly the property of James McKay of Norfolk, Virginia; left him 7 years ago. GBC.

Duskey York, 24, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Nathaniel Degree [sic; Legare] of Charlestown, South Carolina; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

Betsey York, 24, stout wench. Formerly the property of John Boden of the Eastern Shore, Virginia; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

Sally York, 18 months, sickly child. Daughter to Betsey York and born within the British lines.

Richard Swan, 23, stout fellow. Formerly the property of John Willoughby of Norfolk, Virginia; left him 7 years ago. GBC.

Sally Dennis, 20, stout wench. Formerly the property of Lucas Burrell of Williamsburgh, Virginia; left him 2 years ago. GBC.

John Dennis, 19 months, likely child, M. Son to Sally Dennis and born within the British lines.

Tobia[s] Peterkin, 22, stout fellow. Formerly the property of William Wilder of Somerset County, Maryland; left him 3 years ago. GBC.

Harry Harrington, 40, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Lithrop [sic] Blake of Charlestown, South Carolina; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

Sally Harrington, 35, stout wench. Formerly the property of Smith McKenzie of Savannah, Georgia; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

George Talbot, 36, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Solomon Talbot of Norfolk, Virginia; left him 5 years ago. GBC.

Susannah Talbot, 37, stout wench. Formerly the property of Bayley Guy of Norfolk, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

James Talbot, 13, fine boy. Formerly the property of Thomas Ball of Norfolk, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.

James Hallstead, 65, feeble fellow. Formerly the property of Samuel Hallstead of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 7 years ago. GBC.

Jenny Herbert, 6, fine child. Formerly the property of John Willoughby of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 3 years ago. GBC.

Lancaster Herbert, 10, fine boy. Formerly the property of Robert Barron of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 3 years ago. GBC.

Peter Herbert, 28, stout fellow. Formerly the property of John Whitten of Norfolk County, Virginia; left him 3 years ago. GBC.

Rose Stewart, 25, stout wench. Formerly the property of Thomas Brown of Portsmouth, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC. . . .

Stephen Blucke, 31, stout fellow. Says he was born free in the Island of Barbadoes and produces General Birch's Certificate.

Margaret Blucke, 40, stout wench. Says she was born free in Mrs. Coventry's family in New York & bought her freedom 14 years ago. GBC.

Isabel Gibbons, 20, likely girl. Margaret Blucke purchased her of Mrs. Coventry's daughter and gave her freedom.

## Set of Clues #3

### “Where Akerman keeps”

- Almost all of the Black Loyalists in the Shelburne area lived in Birchtown. Colonel Stephen Blucke also lived there.
- How do we know where in Birchtown Stephen Blucke lived? There is a note in an essay written in 1871 that says that Blucke “*lived where Akerman keeps on the Birchtown road.*”
- This sentence may seem very strange, but the word “keeps” in this sentence means to run an inn or a hotel. This is where we get the word innkeeper.
- Archaeologists then looked at an 1888 map of the Birchtown area, and looked for Akerman’s Inn.
- In an envelope onscreen marked #3, you will find two maps: the 1888 map and a modern map showing where the archaeologists found the house cellar. If you aren’t working in front of the computer, find the print outs of the two maps.
- Find Akerman’s Inn (or Aker’s Inn) on the 1888 map. Then, look at the modern map and see where the archaeologists found the house.
- Compare where the Inn was and where the archaeologists found the house. [You may want to use Ackers Brook to help you find both sites.]

### Questions:

- 6.) Is Aker’s Inn and the place where the archaeologists found the house on the same site?
- 7.) Why do you think the 1871 essay called it Akerman’s Inn and it is called Aker’s Inn on the 1888 map? Do you think this makes a difference?



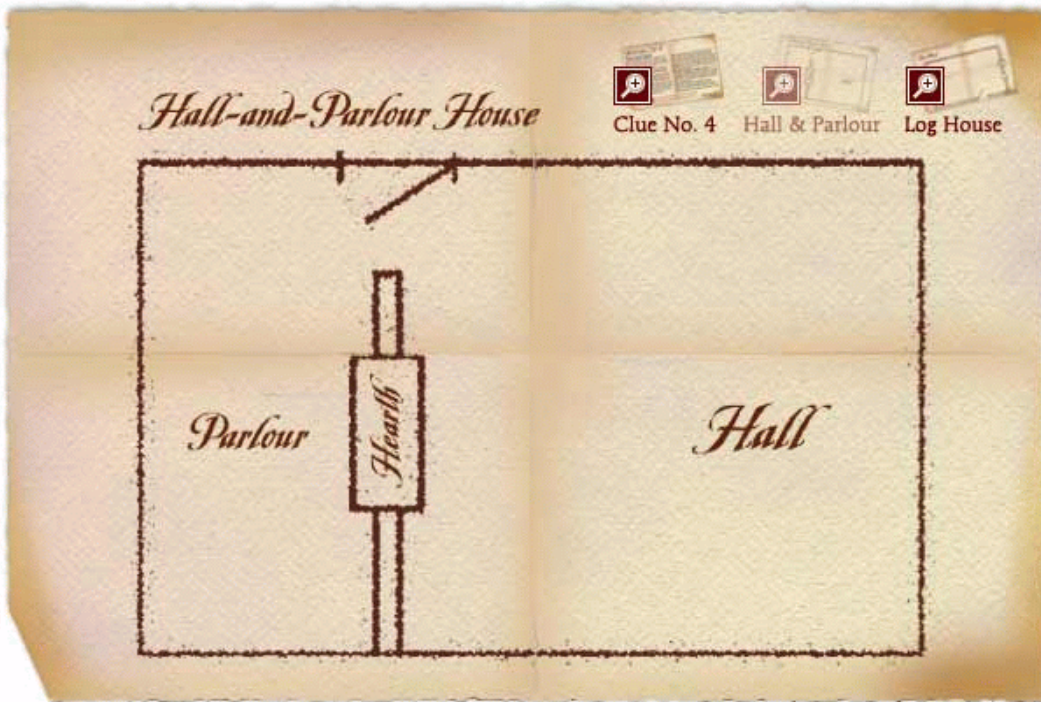
## Set of Clues #4

### “Home, sweet home???”

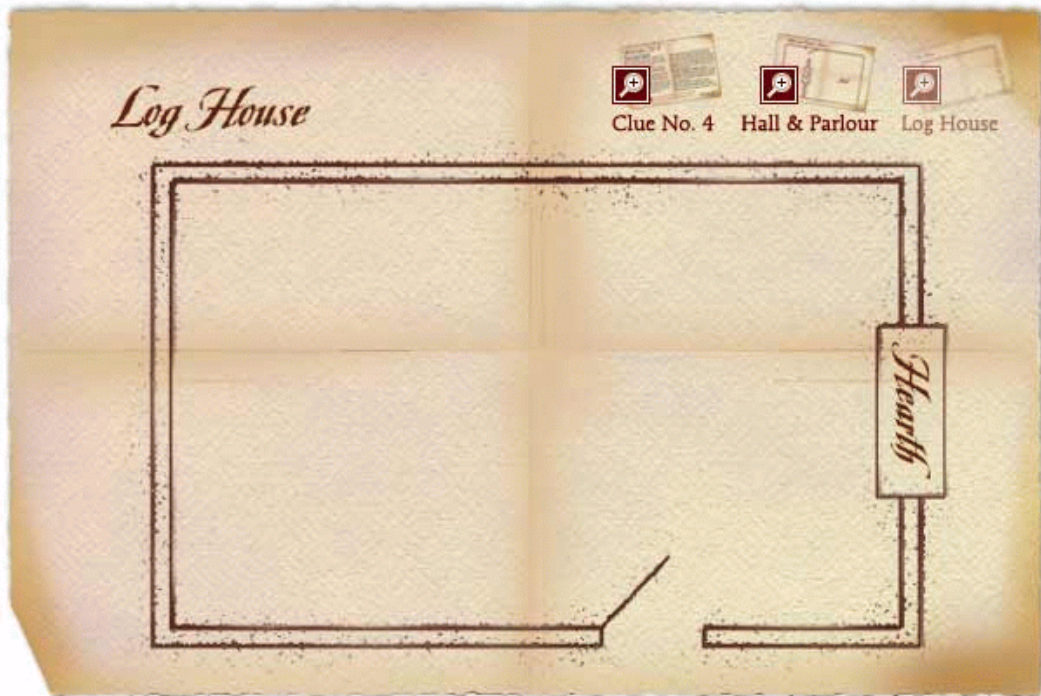
- Some of the Black Loyalists who arrived in the fall of 1783 did not have time to build a proper house. So, they dug holes in the ground and put up a roof of branches and canvas.
- These pit houses helped them survive the first winter. In spring, they built something better.
- Most Black Loyalists lived in log houses. These had one room. At one end of this room was a large fireplace. This is where they cooked. The fireplace also kept the house warm.
- The log houses were made of logs placed on their sides and stacked one on top of the other. Moss was used to fill in any gaps between logs. They had a very small cellar to store food.
- “Hall-and-Parlour” houses were also common in the 1780s. The “Hall” was a large room used for cooking, eating, doing chores, etc. The “Parlour” was a smaller room used for entertaining and for sleeping. These houses had bigger cellars.
- The Hall-and-Parlour house was a fancier house and cost more money to build.
- We have a description of Blucke’s house:  
*“He began by building a spacious house . . . but the building he [had] to stop the progress of; having only, as far as I could see, completed his kitchen, with a small room.”*  
Captain William Booth’s 1789 description of Blucke’s house
- In the envelope onscreen marked #4, you will find an outline of a log house and an outline of a Hall-and-Parlour house (or check to see if you have a print out of the outlines).
- Look at them, and compare them with Booth’s description of Blucke’s house.

### Questions:

- 8.) What kind of house do you think Stephen Blucke had?
- 9.) Do you think he could have afforded such a house? Why do you think so?



Hall and Parlour House outline (Clue No. 4)



Log House outline (Clue No. 4)

## Set of Clues #5

### What did the archaeologists find? [Part II]

- We can learn a lot about the people in the past by looking at the things they left behind.
- At the AkDi-23 site, they found dishes, bottles, and cups.
- They also found a jaw harp, padlocks, a bayonet, and a naval boarding axe.
- The quality of the artifacts found suggest that someone with some money lived in the house.
- There are artifacts from the AkDi-23 site on the web site. Go look at these items and answer the following questions:

### Questions:

- 10.) What kind of military artifacts are there in the cases?
- 11.) Would it make sense to find military artifacts in Stephen Blucke's house? Why?
- 12.) What do the buttons, buckles, and glass tumbler tell us about the people who owned them?  
[Read some of the labels in the cases. They will help you.]

## **Set of Clues #6** (last set)

### **But, on the other hand . . .**

- None of the artifacts had Stephen Blucke's name or initials on them. Sometimes personal items, such as watches, cuff links, or snuff boxes had people's initials on them.
- None of the artifacts can tell us for sure that Black Loyalists even lived in the house. The artifacts that were found were just typical items from the Loyalist time period.
- Many of the Black Loyalists had just escaped slavery in the 13 colonies. They arrived in Nova Scotia with nothing except their clothes and perhaps a small item or two.
- The government gave the Black Loyalists most of the things they needed when they arrived in Nova Scotia.
- The government promised each Black Loyalist family a land grant (some free land). Many of the Black Loyalists never received any land, but Blucke received land.
- In the envelope marked Set of Clues #6, you will find an old land grant map of Birchtown. Have a look at the map, and try to find Stephen Blucke's name.

### **Questions:**

- 13.) Do you find it odd that a leader like Blucke would not be mentioned on this map? Why?
- 14.) Do you find it odd that nothing was found that could tell us for sure that a Black Loyalist lived in this house? Why?