



Bicentennial Branch Newsletter

January - February - March 2008

Volume 1 - Issue 1

United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada

Regular Branch Meeting

March 8, 2008

1 p.m.

Church of the Epiphany

Kingsville, ON

Guest speaker Ken Turner, 1st VP of the Ontario Historical Society

Branch President's Message

As you will notice we have made some changes to the branch newsletter. It is with regret that we announce the retirement of our Branch Newsletter Editor Joy Bell Tweney. Joy has acted as Newsletter Editor for a number of years and always produced informative and entertaining issues for our members. We are very grateful to her and wish her well.

I am very pleased to announce that Bonnie Schepers has agreed to assume the role of Newsletter Editor. Bonnie has managed the Branch Website since its inception so the two tasks should work well together. Each edition will feature a 'Milestones' column wherein special events and happenings in branch members' lives will be highlighted. Milestones may include graduations, births, deaths, marriages, etc. We invite members to send submissions to Bonnie. Her contact information is provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

There will also be a special feature column in each newsletter edition. Plans for this column are

quite diverse and include (but are not limited to) book reviews, descriptions of Essex County's unique flora and fauna from a historical context, heritage fruit and vegetable reviews, etc. We are open to member suggestions and submissions.

In keeping with the urgent and ever growing concern for the environment we are now offering the Newsletter electronically to those with e-mail access. This 'paperless' edition will save many trees, postage costs and greatly reduce waste. Please consider this option for the future.

If you would like to receive an electronic Newsletter rather than a hard copy please send an e-mail to info@uelbicentennial.org and put 'newsletter' in the subject line. Please include your name, address and phone number in the body of the text.

We hope that you enjoy the revamped Newsletter and we look forward to another successful year.

Margie Luffman UE
Branch President

2008 Membership Renewal

2008 Branch Membership renewal is due. Single membership dues are \$50.00 per year. Family membership dues are \$70.00 per year. When paying your dues by cheque please make your cheque payable to Bicentennial Branch UELAC.

Payment may be made at the March 8, 2008 meeting or by Canada Post to our Branch Treasurer.

Mrs. Dianne Noble UE
R. R. #1 9E Conc. 10
Cottam ON
NOR 1B0

In order to receive your newsletter and benefits without interruption please prepare your payment for dues today. Thank you!

Calendar of Events

March 1, 2008 - Dominion Council Meeting
Toronto, Ontario

March 8, 2008 - Regular Branch Meeting
Kingsville, Ontario

April 19, 2008 - Central West Regional Meeting
London, Ontario

May 3, 2008 - Branch AGM

July 10 - 13, 2008 - UELAC AGM and Dominion Conference. Plan to celebrate the 225th Anniversary of the landing of our Loyalist ancestors 1783 in Saint John, New Brunswick. More information is available on the New Brunswick Branch UELAC website at <http://personal.nbnet.nb.ca/fmor/>

November 3, 2007

Church of the Epiphany, Kingsville

"If you don't know where you came from you probably don't know where you are going." This quote was shared by our guest speaker Trisha Bray of her father Melvin Simpson, founder of the North American Black Historical Museum in Amherstburg, Ontario.

Founded in 1971 through the efforts of Melvin Simpson, the museum centre was built in 1981. It features the Canadian historic site of the Nazrey African Methodist Episcopal Church and Cultural Centre established to preserve Black Heritage from African origins to present day. Focus is on the Underground Railroad Movement, Canadian Black settlement and the accomplishments of people of African origins. The museum contains exhibits that show not only slavery in all its cruelty but also the significant contribution that black citizens of the day made to Canadian life.



Ken Fitchett with guest speaker Trisha Bray

The first Blacks recorded in Amherstburg came with the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists beginning in 1784. Some were the slaves of loyalists, such as the 60 owned by Matthew Elliot while others such as James Robertson and James Fry were themselves granted land for their defense of the British Empire. By 1828 there

were 100 Blacks living in Malden and Amherstburg. One exhibit at the museum features Elijah McCoy, inventor of locomotive lubrication systems and dozens of other successful products. Also on display are the papers of Mary Ann Shadd, the first black woman in North America to edit a weekly newspaper, The Provincial Freeman of Windsor, in the 1850s.



Trisha Bray, Ken Fitchett, Bernice Flett and Margie Luffman

As part of her presentation, Trisha presented a 17 minute DVD titled Crossing To Freedom, a 2006 re-enactment of an Underground Railroad crossing of the Detroit River. The event was made possible through the participation of the Provincial Marine - Amherstburg Re-enactment Unit which also took part in our 2007 UELAC Dominion Conference activities.

We were particularly pleased to have Trisha join us after meeting her during the 2007 UELAC Dominion Conference in Windsor, Ontario. The NABHM was one of the sites included in the historic tour of Amherstburg. Two Loyalist rose bushes were planted at the museum in June of this year following the conference.

Bernice Flett and Ken Fitchett were on hand to make a special presentation to Trisha of two pen and ink prints of the Black History Museum drawn by Jane Hughes of London and Western Ontario Branch.

Amherstburg's North American Black Historical Museum, the first of its kind in Canada, preserves much of the history recorded in this area. It remains a work in progress for there is much of the town's Black history hidden among the keepsakes and records of the descendants of the founders. One area of interest is the identification of the descendants of the very earliest settlers - those who arrived as slaves and those who came as United Empire Loyalists.

Bicentennial Branch was happy to present a donation in the amount of \$500.00 to Trisha Bray to ensure that the research and preservation of Black history in Essex County continues.

2008 Calendars

by London and Western Ontario Branch

"**At the End of the Trail**", an 18-month calendar beginning July 2007, contains sketches of historical buildings and maps in the Windsor and south-western Ontario area. Sketches are by Jane Hughes, St. Thomas.

Price is \$15.00 for the calendar and prints will be sold for \$8.50 (plus mailing costs where necessary)

Further information may be obtained from Marvin Recker, UE , 1460 Norman Avenue, London, Ontario, N6K 2A7. Tel: 519-471-9546. mrecker@mnsi.net

Member Submissions

We would enjoy hearing from members who would like to submit articles to the Bicentennial Branch newsletter. Contact Bonnie Schepers at bschepers@govital.net.

Please limit your submissions to 600 words or less. Photos to accompany the article would also be appreciated depending on space available.

LOYALIST TRAILS

Past issues of Loyalist Trails, issues since October 2004 have been posted on the web at www.uelac.org

Please pass these newsletters on to others who may be interested; we welcome new subscribers be they members or friends.

If you would like to subscribe to "Loyalist Trails", please send me a note. I would be interested in knowing which branch you belong to, if you are a member, and which City and Province/State you are from. Likewise if you wish to unsubscribe.

Douglas Warner Grant UE
Loyalist Trails Editor, United Empire Loyalists'
Association of Canada
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Milestones



Laura Schepers Brandes U.E. has completed her Honours Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Guelph specializing in Wildlife Biology. She is currently working for Conservation Halton in Milton, Ontario.

Laura is a member of Bicentennial Branch and a descendant of Loyalist ancestors Abraham Pastorius and Martin Tofflemire. Congratulations Laura!

Book Review

by Bonnie Schepers UE

Old Canadian Cemeteries - Places of Memory is a new book by author Jane Irwin with photographs by John De Visser published by Firefly Books, 2007. Jane Irwin is a former assistant professor of English literature at Trent University and a member of the OHS and Assoc. for Gravestone Studies.

The book features beautiful and historic burial grounds from across Canada with over 250 colour photos. Jane Irwin approaches her subject from a literary and historical perspective and one is drawn into the mysteries suggested by the gravestone inscriptions.

Family history researchers walking historic cemeteries will wholeheartedly agree with the author that "those who love to explore old graveyards find in the monuments there an immediate and unique link with the past". She also cautions that "fascination with graveyards tends to grow with each exposure to them".

Of interest to naturalists and gardeners, cemeteries often hold rare surviving examples of trees planted more than a century ago or varieties of old roses and heritage flowers not found elsewhere.

The United Empire Loyalists are featured with a photograph of the Old Loyalist Burial Ground in Saint John, New Brunswick and the recognition that our Association is dedicated to honouring the graves of our ancestors.

At 320 pages this book offers a wealth of Canadian history complemented by stunning views of cemeteries and detailed gravestones found in tranquil and time weary cemeteries from coast to coast.

The UELAC: Its Beginnings and Evolution

This article was taken from the January 6, 2008 edition of Loyalist Trails.

A few years ago, Elizabeth Richardson and Arnold Nethercott wrote a short history of the UELAC. Under Fred Hayward's leadership, this has now been lightly reformatted and edited and posted to the Dominion website. See it at <http://www.uelac.org/UELAC-history/UELAC-history.php>

The celebrations by the Americans of the centennial of the Declaration of Independence brought focus to many Canadians who then celebrated the arrival of the Loyalists. Around the same time, several Loyal Societies were formed in different parts of Canada.

Common objectives and a meeting of the minds germinated the seeds of a National Association - UELAC - which was created by Act of the Canadian Parliament on 27 May 1914. Who petitioned for this Act? Read the history and find out.

Since UELAC was formed, a number of branches have been created. Many continue today, sometimes under new names; others did not survive. A note of these is made.

The history concludes with a list of those who have served as President.

Enjoy.

Cemetery Sighting



John Wendel Wigle gravestone, Greenhill Cemetery, Kingsville, ON

The Wigle Burying Ground was moved in 1925 from the original site on the lakeshore of Lot 6 because it was eroding into Lake Erie. Original site was approximately 2 miles east of Greenhill in Kingsville. This was a project for the 1926 Wigle Reunion.

Branch Executive for 2007 - 2008

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UELAC

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In Closing:

Sue Hines of Grand River Branch proposes a **225th Anniversary Celebration** of the Loyalist landing to be held within the Central West Region this September/October 2008. With the likelihood that not all members in the southwest will be attending Dominion Conference in Saint John we can participate in commemorating the event a little closer to home.

Sue is suggesting a **Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance** to be held at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario. Members from across the region are encouraged to come in costume to a Sunday 11 a.m. service, followed by a reception.

Please contact info@uelbicentennial.org if you are interested in attending.