

# The Longboats of Shelburne, Nova Scotia & Loyalist Landing 2008

By Brian McConnell, UE\*

What is the origin of the two longboats in Shelburne, Nova Scotia? They are based on the type of longboat used by the Royal Navy during the Loyalist period. How they ended up in Shelburne and used for events throughout the summer can be learned by the answer to another question. What was *Loyalist Landing 2008* in Shelburne about?

Planning for *Loyalist Landing 2008*, a celebration of the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Loyalists after the American Revolution in Shelburne, Nova Scotia in 1783 began two years before.

A non – profit Society, the Loyalist Landing 2008 Society was registered on June 8, 2006 with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies of Nova Scotia. Alan G. Delaney was the Chairman, Suzanne Mahaney was Secretary, and James K. Mahaney was Treasurer. They also served as Directors along with Allan C. Nelson, Diann Langley, Mary C. Manning, John W. Oswell, Susan A. Oswell, Pat B. Melanson, Robert G. Guay, and Fred M. Greenwood.(1)

The Society met with representatives of local as well as provincial and federal representatives of government to organize the celebrations. It also worked with the public and local groups. Events were planned for almost every weekend throughout the area involving many citizens in communities in and around Shelburne.

A collectible picture postage stamp was produced by the Society through Canada Post. (2) The stamp appears in the top right of the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary card below.



Shelburne County Archives and Genealogical Society received a grant of \$4,000 from the Government of Canada to be used for activities throughout the year to celebrate the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Loyalists in 1783.

Halifax – Dartmouth Branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada donated \$450.00 to be applied to the cost of constructing two longboats for use during *Loyalist Landing 2008* celebrations. The donation was initiated by member Lewis Perry.

One of the first events to take place was on February 4, 2008 hosted by the Black Loyalist Heritage Society. It was a Movie and Pasta Night that included the film premiere of the docu-drama "Rough Crossings", a film based on the book "Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution" by Simon Schama.

Stephen Kimber's book on the Loyalists of Shelburne, entitled "Loyalists & Layabouts: The Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia 1783 – 92" was published on May 17, 2008.

A re – enactment weekend was held from July 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>. The 3<sup>rd</sup> New Jersey Volunteers as well as the Shelburne Re-enactment Association recreated the landing of the Loyalists and arrival of Governor Parr.

The following Notice encouraged attendance:

**"Dear sirs and ladies...**

**With your kind permission regarding Loyalist Landing 2008, July 18-20 - Shelburne, Nova Scotia**

**In anticipation of a Grand Time in Nova Scotia in the Summer of 2008, from July 18 through July 22, as we celebrate the 225th Anniversary of the flight from America and Arrival in Canada of Thousands of Subjects Loyal to His Majesty, King George.**

**In conjunction with the Loyalist Landing 2008 Society, the Prince of Wales American Regiment, will be organizing this great event, which will include several opportunities for re-enactors to do what we all do so well.**

**Owen Hamlin - Kings Orange Rangers and Atlantic Region B.A.R. - has been an enormous asset thus far and assures us that we will have the full support of the KOR and regional B.A.R.**

**A formal request to the B.A.R. executive was made previously and we live in Great Hope that they will also agree to support this event.**

**During the prime re-enactment period above, we have plans for a large Encampment, many Suttlers, a re-creation of the Landing and arrival of Gov. Parr, some planned skirmishes, ships battles, longboats, parades &tc, &tc.**

**We have to date seen interest from Several Quarters and have room and Heart for hundreds more. For those interested, the region will also be hosting events at Annapolis Royal (date uncertain) and Louisbourg Surrender (Seven Years War : July 25-27).**

**Please look to your calendar for 2008 and plan to Join Us in New Scotland for a Grand time.**

**With warmest regards and expectations of seeing you in 2008,**

**I remain your humble servant,**

**Robert Guay, Commander, Prince of Wales American Regiment, Shelburne, Nova Scotia, Canada" (3)**

The most visible and important legacy left by *Loyalist Landing 2008* is the two Loyalist era longboats. The boats were built for, and as part of, the celebrations. They are the two longboats which the branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada in Nova Scotia helped build with a financial donation as did other groups. The longboats are replicas of one that had been on the Royal Navy vessel HMS Bounty commanded by Captain Bligh which sailed in the 1780s. They took part in many of the anniversary activities including re-enactment of the first Loyalist landing, mock battles on the waterfront, a mock ship attack and burning, a re-enactment of the landing of Governor Parr, and longboat races.

To carry on the success of the *Loyalist Landing 2008* celebrations the Shelburne Longboat Society was created. It was incorporated with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies on August 7, 2008 as a non-profit volunteer organization. (4)

The two main objectives of the Shelburne Longboat Society are:

- 1) The care, maintenance, management, ownership and use of the two replica Loyalist era wooden longboats;
- 2) To promote the town of Shelburne and Shelburne County's wooden boat building heritage. (5)

The longboats have continued to be a feature in many events including Privateers Days in Liverpool, Canada Day parade in Lockeport, Shelburne Founders' Days and Shelburne Parade of Lights.



**Two Shelburne Longboats**

**Notes:**

\* This article was completed on April 29, 2019 by Brian McConnell, UE. He can be contacted by email at [brianm546@gmail.com](mailto:brianm546@gmail.com)

(1) Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks and Companies website at <https://www.novascotia.ca/sns/access/business/registry-joint-stock-companies.asp> accessed April 28, 2019

(2) Photo received from Dorothy Meyerhof, UE on April 25, 2019

(3) "Loyalist Trails" , email newsletter of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada, 2006-47 December 10, 2006

(4) Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks and Companies, op. cit.

(5) Website of the Shelburne Longboat Society at <http://www.shelburnelongboats.com/>