

ASSINIBOINE BRANCH– Charter- 24 October 2015

2016 Spring

On 24 October 2015 our new Assiniboine Branch of the UELAC was granted a charter by Dominion Council. We were honoured to become the twenty-eighth Branch of our organization.

The name Assiniboine was chosen for the new branch because of the main waterway that runs through the region. The Assiniboine River, a 1,070-kilometer river that runs through the prairies of western Canada, is a typical meandering river that takes its name from the Assiniboine First Nation. The Assiniboine River rises in eastern Saskatchewan on the upper prairie level above the Manitoba Escarpment. Upstream of Brandon, the main stem of the river and its most important tributaries flow within a very large valley. The valley was cut by huge glacial melt water flows at the end of the last glaciations.

Our inaugural meeting was held on 14 November 2015 in Brandon, Manitoba, with twenty persons attending. As of today we have seven family memberships, seven individual memberships and eight members that have another branch as their home branch. We were especially pleased to have Barb Andrew UE, Dominion President UELAC, and Joyce Lidster UE, Prairie Regional Councilor UELAC, choose the Assiniboine Branch as their home branch at our first meeting.

Our executive was elected at our first meeting and consists of: Marg Hammell UE, Secretary; Lance Lidster, Treasurer; Liz Adair, Genealogist; Reg Hickmott UE, Vice-President; Dave Stantial, Publicity; and James Adair UE, President and pro-temp Membership Chairperson.

Our new branch was established to be better able to involve UE members in south west Manitoba and south east Saskatchewan in promoting, celebrating and preserving the history of the UELAC. We want to ensure the work of our ancestors in developing Canada and, in particular, our region of South West Manitoba and South East Saskatchewan is not forgotten. The new branch will allow greater involvement with UELAC activities, as many UE members in our area were unable to attend the meetings and activities of the Manitoba Branch based in Winnipeg. The two hundred mile distance between Brandon and Winnipeg requires a whole day's commitment and can prove to be a demanding journey during the winter.

We have started planning to become involved with several events in 2016 to promote and celebrate the Loyalist history in our area this year. The Assiniboine Branch intends to participate at local community fairs and functions within South West Manitoba to increase awareness of the history and influences of our Loyalist ancestors. We hope our visible presence will attract new members to the UELAC as people become aware of United Empire Loyalist history and become interested in learning of their family history. The education of students and young people about the influence of our Loyalist ancestors in the development of Canada and our prairie region will also be an important part of our future endeavors.

Our first Assiniboine Branch UELAC *Loyalist Dispatch* newsletter was published in December and a private member Facebook Page, "*Assiniboine UELAC*," was created in order to communicate within our Branch membership. The Assiniboine Branch has also requested and received vice-regal patronage from the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, Her Honour the Honourable Janice C. Filmon, C.M., O.M.

The Assiniboine Branch has set the goal of making participation enjoyable for all of our members as well as being effective in communicating the UELAC Mission Statement "to preserve, promote and celebrate the history and traditions of the United Empire Loyalists." It is early days for the Assiniboine Branch

UELAC but our hope and intention is to bring pride of and honour to our Loyalist forebears and ensure their memory never fades.

By James Adair UE, Branch President

2016 Fall

The Assiniboine Branch held their first General Meeting of 2016 on 12 March at Rotary Villas in Brandon with a good turnout of members. Dominion President, Barb Andrew UE, presented the Assiniboine Branch Charter, dated 25 October 2015, to Branch President, James Adair UE, making our Branch the twenty-eighth of the UELAC. Reg Hickmott UE gave a very interesting presentation on his Loyalist Ancestor, Simon Girty UE. Prairie Regional Vice-President, Gerry Adair UE, gave a presentation on how to apply for UE certification. Discussions took place regarding the future promotional activities of the Branch and also finding an electronic method of real time participation in meetings by members absent due to distance, health or weather.

Loyalist Day in Manitoba was celebrated by the Assiniboine Branch on 12 June at the lovely historic home of Reg and Heather Hickmott in Brandon. The formal ceremony began with the Trooping of the Colours by members, Lorraine Cook and Cathy Darbell, followed by the Royal Anthem. Toasts were given to Queen Elizabeth, our Loyalist Ancestors, and the Assiniboine Branch. Dominion President, Barb Andrew, addressed the gathering. Mr. Len Isleifson, the PC MLA from Brandon East, read out and presented a copy of the proclamation that was read in the Manitoba Legislature on 09 June 2016, declaring 12 June 2016 to be recognized as United Empire Loyalist Day in Manitoba. Mr. Isleifson was presented with a copy of Loyally Yours, 100 Years Of The UELAC by Branch President, James Adair, during the thanks to the speakers and guests. Deputy Mayor, Mr. Shane Berry, brought greeting from the City of Brandon. Prairie Regional Vice-President, Gerry Adair, read a Loyalist Prayer to the gathering. Following the singing of the National Anthem, a wonderful time was enjoyed by all during our pot-luck lunch.

The Assiniboine Branch Loyalist Day Celebration was recorded by Branch Publicity Chairperson, Dave Stantial, and a video has been posted on the Assiniboine Branch Facebook page. He is also working towards having it broadcast on the WCG TV Channel 12 network.

We are especially excited that the twenty-five Assiniboine Branch members who signed up on 14 November last year have grown to forty-four. As well our Branch Genealogist, Liz Adair, has helped two members apply for and receive UELAC certificates. We intend to have these certificates presented at our fall meeting.

There were thirteen Assiniboine Branch members, including five Founding Charter members that have another home branch, attending the UELAC Annual AGM and Conference held from 07 to 10 July 2016 in Summerside, P.E.I. The Conference was excellent, with many learning opportunities during the presentation sessions. The bus tour was really enjoyed as we travelled through the fabled "Green Gables" countryside. We met many old friends from across Canada and the United States during the Conference and made many new ones as well. The majority of us stayed extra days to travel and meet relatives who live in the Maritime Provinces. The Maritime Provinces are very scenic and the sea food menus were well appreciated.

The Assiniboine Branch will continue working towards reaching our goal of making participation in our branch activities enjoyable for all of our members. We also intend to become effective in communicating

the UELAC Mission Statement “to preserve, promote and celebrate the history and traditions of the United Empire Loyalists.”

By James R. Adair UE, Branch President

2017 Fall

On 10 May, the Assiniboine Branch had a meeting at the Fort La Reine Centre in Portage la Prairie. After the meeting and lunch, held in the old General Store, members could either take a guided tour of the museum grounds or were free to explore on their own. Even though the day was cooler, with a north wind, we all enjoyed the outing and were shocked by the number of items on display that we had either used ourselves or seen our families use!

Marlene Strang UE and Shirle McGimpsey UE, both Assiniboine Branch members, took advantage of the fact that Dominion President, Barb Andrew UE, was attending, so they brought their certificates for Barb to present to them. These certificates were completed by Alice Walchuk UE of the Manitoba Branch. It was a very successful meeting and activity for the group.

Three members of the Assiniboine Branch: Cathy Darbell, Liz Adair, and James Adair UE, joined the Manitoba Branch members in attending the Loyalist Proclamation in the Manitoba Legislature on 01 June. The Honourable Rochelle Squires, MLA for Riel, read the proclamation and provided copies to both UELAC Branches.

The day was perfect for socializing both inside and outside. The tables were full of items that the members provided for lunch. The BBQ was kept busy!

Marion Robinsong UE was presented with two certificates for her Loyalist ancestors: Philip Eamer UE and Michael Gallinger Sr. UE. The Assiniboine Branch extends congratulations to Marion on achieving her UE status.

23 June saw members of the Assiniboine Branch heading to London to attend the UELAC Conference and AGM. We were well-represented with eight members! The four days were full of information, social events and visiting with friends from other branches.

It was clearly a success. Congratulations are extended to the Conference organizers, branches and committees for their hard work in bringing this together for us once again.

We're already looking forward to Loyalist Ties Under Living Skies to be held in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, from 07 to 10 June 2018 and hope to get quite a few members attending.

While at the Conference in London, the Assiniboine Branch was presented with a certificate of appreciation from Bonnie Schepers for meeting and exceeding the Toonie Challenge to raise money for this year's Scholarship Fund.

We are continuing to work on identifying cemeteries in the Westman area that have Loyalists buried there and to make a list of the names of those Loyalists. Two plaques have been ordered and there will be a dedication ceremony at each cemetery when they are placed at a later date.

Promotional activity of the Assiniboine Branch included Barb Andrew UE, giving a presentation at the Brandon Genealogical Society earlier in April, and Liz and James Adair UE, setting up a table at the Hamiota Fair in July. Barb created a pamphlet for distribution to those attending and Liz and James developed a flyer as well. Interest has been shown from both activities.

Our October meeting was held in Brandon and two more UELAC certificates were presented. More applications are almost ready to go, so there may be more!

By James Adair UE, Branch President