

## Loyalist "Stones" in British Columbia

British Columbia celebrates Loyalist Day on July 22nd. This date was chosen to recognize Sir Alexander Mackenzie's, the son of a United Empire Loyalist, significant accomplishment.



Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1764 – 12 March 1820) was a Scottish explorer. He is known for his overland crossing of what is now Canada to reach the Pacific Ocean in 1793. This was the first recorded east to west crossing of North America, by a European, north of Mexico and predated the much celebrated Lewis and Clark expedition by 10 years.

In 1776, his father joined the King's Royal Regiment of New York. By 1778, to escape the ravages of war, young Mackenzie was either sent, or accompanied by two aunts, to Montreal. In 1779 (a year before his father's death), Mackenzie had a secured apprenticeship with Finlay, Gregory & Co., one of the most influential fur trading companies at Montreal. In 1787, the company merged with the North West Company.

In 1791, Mackenzie returned to Great Britain to study the new advance in the measurement of longitude. Upon his return in 1792, he again set out to find a route to the Pacific. He was advised to cross over the Coast Mountains and descend to the Bella Coola River. Following the river he reached the Pacific coast on 20 July 1793 at Bella Coola, on North Bentinck Arm, an inlet of the Pacific Ocean. He had unknowingly missed meeting George Vancouver at Bella Coola by 48 days.

He wrote a message on a rock near the water's edge of Dean Channel, using a reddish paint made of vermilion and bear grease, and then returned east.

The inscription read: "*Alex Mackenzie from Canada by land 22d July 1793*". The words were later inscribed permanently.



The site is now both a provincial park (Sir Alexander Mackenzie) and a designated National Historic Site of Canada.

The Victoria Branch 2014 Loyalist Day Picnic, held in Beacon Hill Park, celebrated both the 100th anniversary of the UELAC as well and the 75th anniversary of the planting of the Loyalist Tree. These anniversaries were commemorated by the installation of a new stone at the base of the Loyalist Tree.



Loyalist Tree 2014

The Loyalist Tree was planted in Mayor's Grove, in Beacon Hill Park in 1939. The tree was to commemorate the historic visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, which was the first time a reigning monarch visited Canada.



THE ARRIVAL  
of  
THEIR MAJESTIES  
KING GEORGE VI  
and  
QUEEN ELIZABETH  
MAY 29, 1939

Their Majesties King George and Queen Elizabeth

Commemorating the arrival of the King and Queen, the United Empire Loyalist of Victoria met that same evening at 7:30 in Beacon Hill Park to dedicate a maple tree in honour of the Royal Visit.

The ceremony took place at Heywood Avenue, adjoining the Mayor's Grove.



The Tree Planting 1939



The Loyalist (sapling) Tree in 1939



The 1939 Stone



Her Honour, Judith Guichon, OBC, Lieutenant Governor, British Columbia and  
Bonnie Schepers, Dominion President, UELAC unveiling the 2014 stone.  
The original 1939 stone can be seen just behind the new stone.

We are anticipating the installation of a new Loyalist commemorative planting, located in close proximity to the Conference Hotel, in time for the 2015 Conference. We hope you will seek out this newest addition that helps to reinforce the Loyalist presence in the Province.

When you attend the 2015 Conference, please plan on including a visit to these two sites. Your Conference hosts will be happy to assist in directions and transportation opportunities.

Visit the Victoria Branch website to keep up-to-date on the planning for 2015.

<http://www.uelac.org/uelvictoria/UELAC-Conference-2015-Victoria-BC.htm>

Conference 2015 Planning Committee