

Trip to Colonel Edward Jessup Branch, Saturday, 06 April 2013

On 06 April my wife, Grietje, and I arrived at the Annual General Meeting of the Colonel Edward Jessup Branch that was held in the picturesque village of Delta, Ontario, at the Delta United Church.



Following a delicious home-cooked dinner by the ladies of this church, incoming Branch President, Barbara Law UE, presided over the meeting. Second Vice-President, Roy Lewis UE, who is also the UELAC Central East Regional Vice-President, gave the assembled members a brief history of the historic village of Delta, mentioning its founder, Abel Stevens UE, and his old stone mill. Roy also mentioned the Brockville and Westport Railroad, known locally as the *Bump and Wiggle Railroad*, that once ran between Brockville and Westport with a stop at Delta. He also described the present-day fame the region has earned with its fine maple syrup and cheese as well as tourism in the beautiful Lakes District.

Don't let this sleepy town fool you. Its history involves the famous events of the early 1800s, including the rise of the Methodist circuit riders, the fostering of industry, the expansion of railway networks into central Ontario and the unrest leading to the Rebellion of 1837.

Colonel Edward Jessup Branch has just completed the restoration of the Wiltse Pioneer Cemetery with the help of members and friends. This 2014 Project for the Branch is located just south of Athens. The Branch has still another exciting project they are working on: a book



researching the history of the old stone houses dotting the countryside throughout this region.

I had the honour of presenting certificates to

Gerald (Jerry) Thomas Anderson UE whose Loyalist ancestor was William Fraser Senior UE, and to James Barry Gardiner UE, whose Loyalist ancestor was John Woolley UE. This is a wonderful way to honour the hours of research it sometimes takes to prove one's Loyalist lineage.

My talk was about Freemasonry and its connection to the United Empire Loyalists, some of whom settled in these rural Eastern Townships when their military units were decommissioned. In settlements where support consisted of family, church and good friends, Masonry thrived because it sustained the faith men



had in each other and built upon the assistance Masonic brethren could offer to each other and to the wider community.

Barbara Law held a draw for prizes based upon numbers printed on our programmes. As well, the Branch presented me with a beautiful wooden miniature of a bateau, complete with a stand, sail and oars! This craft was one of several designed as a thank you for guest speakers. The bateau and



canoe were used as the modes of transportation for bringing settlers along the Gananoque River from the St. Lawrence to the Lake District.

An excellent idea has been the use of a survey of the membership by the Colonel Edward Jessup Branch to elicit direction for programming and designing events for the next year. By consulting the members new ideas evolve.

I want to thank the organizers of this meeting for the effort put into preparing the dinner arrangements, the programmes, the prizes, and the short history of the region that needs to be seen to be appreciated. This is another example of teamwork producing excellent results. Congratulations on your hard work in the past and present.

Sincerely and loyally yours,

Robert C. McBride UE,
UELAC Dominion President 2011 – 2013.