

JUNE 2019

Volume 8 - Issue 3

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

<http://www.uelac.org/Chilliwack/>

First issue - November 1994

Link Up



Photo by M.L. Dance UE

**United Empire
Loyalists' Association
of Canada**

Chilliwack Branch

Your Management Committee
for 2019

President: Marlene Dance UE

Vice Pres: vacant

Past Pres: Shirley Dargatz UE

Secretary/ Treasurer:

Judy Scholz UE

Genealogist: Marlene Dance UE

Asst. Cindy Frizell UE

Web Mistress: Vicky Heibner UE

Newsletter: Marlene Dance UE

Directors: Carole Lefler UE

Cindy Lyftogt UE

Margaret Ströcel

Honourary Marian Reid UE

Flag Bearer: Alan Reid UE

Social Conveners:

Jan Duelliet & Emily Thomason

w/assistants Vicky Heibner UE

& Rebecca Heibner UE

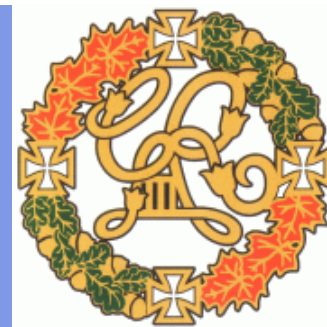
Life Member: Mildred Hall UE

Pacific Regional VP:

Carl Stymiest UE

Pacific Regional Councillor:

Frans Compeer



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President's Message

Well it is that time again when I get to relate all the goings on of the past few months. It has been a busy time, so lets get started with the news.

April saw us busy with the Spring Fleet meeting. The décor was lovely with pots of daffodils and sailing ships as the centrepiece. A slide show gave us a brief history of the Spring Fleet of 1783. Member Bonnie Corcoran drove down from Hinton, Alberta to be with us for the special presentation of her UE certificate.

Next was our participation in the Abbotsford LDS Church Family History Day on May 4th. We had quite a few visitors to our display and many enquiries about Loyalists. Thank you so much to the members who set up the display, took shifts staffing the tables and then helped take it down at the end. A very successful day.

The annual UELAC Conference was in Gatineau, PQ this year on May 30 to June 2nd. My husband Wayne and I left May 8th, taking a most circuitous route to get there. We drove over 15,400 kms and managed to include a 5 day visit to Newfoundland. We just got home and have lovely stories to tell and lots of pictures. You don't go to Newfoundland in May for the weather, you go for the icebergs and we saw plenty of those - as well as a snow storm, lots of fog and then clear amazing views. Wouldn't have missed it for anything. We can now say that we have now visited all 10 provinces.

I have included a few pictures from the conference on pages 6 and 7. I have also included three news items that were talked about at the conference. We will advise you in good time as to how and when to use the new online system for renewing your membership.

I would like to extend special congratulations to two of our members for their recent achievements: Koralee Heibner UE and Karissa Heibner UE (see page 4). In conclusion, branch member Chris Hay UE has done it again. Another wonderful article in the Loyalist Gazette. This is part one. Next issue is part 2. With his permission, we have included it here on our final three pages.

I hope to see many of you at 1:00 pm on June 22nd at the Triple Berry Social. We have a special guest speaker.

Details on page 4. See you there.

Loyally yours,
Marlene Dance UE



Calendar of Events for 2019

Print and save with your calendar



Meetings are held at Carman United Church Hall, 7258 Vedder Road, Chilliwack BC
Trooping of the flag will commence at 11:45am - followed immediately by lunch - then a planned program.

*****Note: any changes to starting time will be listed below in future newsletters and emails *****

Luncheon with coffee, tea and juice served at most meetings.

There is no charge for our regular meetings.

Members are asked to please bring food contributions to the meeting
or make a small donation into the refreshment basket.

We are pleased to present our calendar for the year:

2019

June 22nd - 1:00 pm - Triple Berry Social with guest speaker
Vivian Walker local Chilliwack historian on the pioneer Evans Family.

July 20th - BC Loyalist Day hosted by Ken & Shirley Dargatz at their home.

July 21st - Picnic in Queens Park, New Westminster to celebrate Loyalist Day.

August 5th - Fort Langley Fur Brigade Days Picnic at the Fort
hosted by Vancouver Branch

October 19th - Fall Fleet Celebration

November 11th - Remembrance Day and lunch at Canton Gardens

December 7th - Christmas meeting and social

Details and reminders about any change in time, location or about guest speakers
will be sent via email and in each edition of this newsletter.

Be sure to send suggestions, information and/or pictures for this publication to: chwkbrielcontact@gmail.com



United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada



Our partner is Heritage Chilliwack Society

Keeping the Past Present!

Spring Fleet Meeting: April 27, 2019

(pictures courtesy of Marlene Dance UE)



Above: **Bonnie Corcoran UE** receives her certificate for Loyalist: **Jacob Bonesteel Sr.** Congratulations !



Thank you Shirley Dargatz UE, for again giving us a beautiful setting for our gathering. Our agenda covered branch announcements, the upcoming Loyalist Conference in Gatineau and news of the progress of our archiving project. Then a slide show presentation covering the arrival of the Spring Fleet, and of course our Loyalist presentation to Bonnie. Just a small group on a rainy day, but full of enthusiasm. Bonnie announced that she would like to get a certificate for her son. So another new member coming up.

LDS Church, Abbotsford Family History Day, May 4th, 2019 Shirley and Judy on duty!



Triple Berry Social.

June 22nd, 2019
@ 1:00 pm



Carman United Church
7258 Vedder Road
Mixed Berry Shortcake
will be served.

Coffee, tea and juice

Our program includes

Guest speaker: Vivian Walker -

Evans Family Historian

Other items:

News from the Conference

Slide show

Door Prizes



CONGRATULATIONS !

Korissa Heibner UE:

Graduated from the University of the Fraser Valley with a Bachelor of Science, major in Physics. She is attending Simon Fraser University in the fall, enrolling in the teaching program.

CONGRATULATIONS !

Koralee Heibner UE

Graduated from Sardis Secondary School. She completed school as a Exemplary Scholar Graduate, earning straight A's in grade 10, 11 and 12 and a summa cum laude—in the top 5% of the graduating class.

Proud parents of these wonderful young ladies are Vicky Heibner UE and Kevin Heibner.



UELAC Medal w/your Loyalists names

One of the most popular items at the Conference this year was this medal with your Loyalist names engraved on plaques sewn onto the ribbon. Whether you have one or more, this looks excellent on your loyalist attire, or on a jacket lapel or your shoulder.

If you are interested, please contact:

Patricia.Groom.UEL@gmail.com

For details as to cost and delivery

I received mine and it is beautiful.



UELAC VANCOUVER BRANCH

Regular meetings at Bonsor will be on Tuesday evenings.

There will be four (4) meetings: September, November (AGM), March and May or June. No meetings are scheduled in January or February due to dark evenings and expected poor weather.

Various Social events annually include: Picnic at Queens Park in July and in Fort Langley in August; Spring (May) or Fall (October) Fleet celebrations within the Pacific Region as planned and a Branch Christmas Luncheon.

Community Engagement: Finding Your Roots seminars in October; Remembrance Day

June 15, 2019 - 88th Annual BC Highland Games at Lafarge Park, Coquitlam, BC

July 21, 2019 - BC Loyalist Day Picnic at Queens Park, New Westminster, BC

www.uelac.org/Vancouver

The branch is also on Twitter, Pinterest and Facebook.

Dates of upcoming events can be found on the webpage.



Vancouver Branch participated in the Spring Fleet Celebrations May 4th, 2019 with Victoria Branch UELAC.

Here are a few pictures from the Vancouver Branch Facebook page.



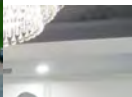
Victoria Branch UELAC celebrated the arrival of the Spring Fleet with a plated luncheon. A number of Vancouver Branch members were able to attend. Pictures include the special cake and at top right: Members busy with the set up
Left bottom: Frans Compeer, Pacific Regional Councillor and wife Betty Compeer UE
Left: Vancouver Branch UELAC President Christine Manzer UE w/ Pacific Regional VP Carl Stymiest UE



**THE CAPITAL CALLS:
May 30th to June 2, 2019**

Photos shared from various people and from the UELAC Facebook page.

**Just a few pictures to show all the happy faces at this conference.
This was a job well done by the members of Sir Guy Carleton Branch.
Attending the conference were approx. 150 people
from 9 provinces and four US states.
The winner of the Dorchester Award was Peter Johnson UE.
Congratulations Peter, so well deserved.**





Conference 2019
Genealogist Meeting
May 30th at Gatineau.

They work hard and volunteer countless hours to help our members find their Loyalist and the proofs needed to be awarded their certificates. They help and support each other. A very dedicated group!

Special “News” items announced at the Conference.

#1) New On line membership system - coming this Fall:

It is expected that effective November 1st of this year, all memberships both new and renewed will be done online. This new system has undergone various tests over the past 6 months and has worked well. The UELAC has chosen a system that is easy to use, allows the member to choose the branch they wish to join, and will remit dues directly to the branch named. The system will allow members to pay by either credit card or by e-cheque. The system does not retain credit card information and therefore you will need to enter the information each time you use it. This protects your credit card information.

Members who do not have computers, or do not wish to use the new system will be able to renew with the branch in the customary way. The branch will then process and mail the renewal to the Dominion Office in Toronto. This is an important and needed step for our organization. Most members do not realize the lengthy procedures now in place to handle memberships. This new procedure will allow your branch Membership person and your Treasurer more time to handle other important matters for the branch.

#2) Submission of UEL Applications totally on-line soon:

Applications and proof documents for a UEL Certificate have always been handled via the Postal system. As we know, this can be slow and cumbersome. Some of the application packages are large, heavy and costly. Two years ago, the UELAC introduced the fillable PDF Certificate application form as step one in the move to being able to submit applications fully online. This has been very successful and can be easily submitted online. The next step is to do the same with the proof documents that we use for each generation. Since we recommend the applicant scan the original document and send attached to an email to the Branch Genealogist, it is a matter of formatting the generational proofs and submitting them online to the Dominion Genealogists. Some testing has been done and the results are very good. While this procedural change is really internal and does not directly affect the applicant, it is important that the membership know the new and up to date steps we are taking to improve and streamline our systems.

#3) Loyalist Documentation available online soon:

The digitalization of old Loyalist documents and applications is well underway. Mindful of ensuring that information for living persons is not included you will already find lots of detailed information at the www.uelac.org website under “Loyalist Directory”. This work continues and is going well. We are committed to having as much information as possible available to the public and to our members. Meetings are underway to see what can and cannot be linked or shared with the “Family Search” web site. More news ahead.



CHRIS HAY UE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Hay UE, a long-time member of the Chilliwack, British Columbia Branch of the UELAC, is a graduate of the University of British Columbia with majors in both History and Anthropology. It was while raising his family that Chris was able to return to his passion of history after his introduction to his UEL family history. This was followed by his discovery in 2000 of a lost Vancouver Rock Garden in Stanley Park, a National Historic Site of Canada. Begun in 1911 by his great-grandfather, John Montgomery, it was later determined to be the first public garden in the City of Vancouver. On 15 May 2013, the Stanley Park Rock Garden was recognized as an official heritage landscape of the City of Vancouver and, in 2015, was recognized with a City of Vancouver heritage award. In 2016 Chris was chosen as the winner of the annual British Columbia Genealogical Society's 'Most Improved Genealogy Contest.' He won for his story on Major Richard Witham Stockton, 'Family Mystery Revealed After 240 Years.' After a varied career Chris recently retired from Canada Post and is now greatly enjoying the uncovering of new discoveries in his genealogical pursuits.

PART ONE

BENNETT'S ISLAND: 18 FEBRUARY 1777

NEW JERSEY'S FORGOTTEN REVOLUTIONARY BATTLE

In the early morning hours of 18 February 1777, Colonel John Neilson, of the Second Regiment, Middlesex County Militia, launched a well-planned surprise attack on the British military outpost of Bennett's Island, New Jersey. The main mission was to disarm this new strategic post and capture Richard Witham Stockton, the infamous local Tory guide to Lieutenant Colonel William Harcourt, who just recently, on 13 December 1776, had played a key role in the capture of General Charles Lee, second-in-command to the American forces under General George Washington.¹ The story of the surprise attack on this strategic site and the significance of the capture of Loyalist, Major Richard Stockton, had long been forgotten until an amazing chain of events led Stockton's fifth great grandson, Chris Hay UE, and well-



➤ Colonel John Neilson, 2nd Middlesex Militia. Although John Neilson later received several higher military ranks, he still remained documented as Colonel John Neilson.

recognized American Revolutionary War author, Christian McBurney, to unravel this intriguing tale of Revolutionary history.²

Soon after establishing their new winter command post at New Brunswick in January 1776, British officers had quickly realized the adjacent Raritan River to be the safest and most efficient supply route to their nearby post at Perth Amboy. This was soon to change as the local American Militia Commander, Colonel John Neilson, of the Second Middlesex Militia, had also realized the military importance of controlling the surrounding road access routes and the strategic Raritan River waterway.

In order to ensure the unobstructed use of this river, the British had quickly



➤ Major Richard Stockton

established military posts at Raritan Landing and Bennett's [formerly Lawrence] Island, both at key locations on the lower Raritan River. The post at Bennett's Island lay about three miles south east of New Brunswick, New Jersey, on a high point of land with strategic river views as far away as the City of Perth Amboy.³ The British had occupied a large farm house here with numerous outbuildings in order to build their new post.⁴ Stockton and his officers had made the main house both their headquarters and sleeping quarters.

Just below the new British post at Bennett's Island, Neilson's militia forces had established a favourite and most annoying tactic of harassing British ships using the "Roundabout" [see map] as an ambush.⁵ Located on the Raritan River within view of Bennett's Island, the Roundabout was close to where the mouth of the South River meets the Raritan. Here, at a sharp bend in the river, boats were much more vulnerable as they navigated slowly through this particular stretch. The first use of this ambush appears to be on 03 February 1777 when the senior general of the Continental Army in New Jersey, Major General Israel Putnam, stationed at Princeton, ordered "50 good riflemen" from Princeton to the Roundabout "to annoy the enemy's boats that are passing and repassing with provisions and stores."⁶ Colonel Neilson also added additional support ordering "Sergt. John Voorhees with 7 others of that Co. go with the Rifle Men as Pilots."⁷

On 05 February, the "very advantageously placed" riflemen spotted a boat coming down the river from Brunswick with about twelve men on its deck. According to their officers' report to General Putnam, twenty-five Pennsylvania sharpshooters "gave them a how do you do . . ."⁸ This action had alerted the British military who responded quickly to this new American threat. Immediately, Brigadier General



➤ Major General Israel Putnam.

Cortland Skinner, a former attorney general of New Jersey and commander of the New Jersey Volunteers, sent Major Richard Stockton and one hundred soldiers of the same Loyalist corps to reinforce the new British post at Bennett's Island.⁹ Skinner hoped to quell any further military action and to prevent the Americans from controlling the heights along the lower Raritan. Richard W. Stockton had first been appointed Captain of the New Jersey Volunteers in August 1776 when the unit was stationed on Staten Island and still gathering troops.¹⁰ He was later promoted to Major for his services as the main Guide who helped to capture

General Charles Lee.¹¹ American General, Israel Putnam, in a letter to the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, described Stockton as the enemy's "renowned land pilot."¹² Stockton had just recently been identified in the media as having been involved in an attack on American troops at Drake's Farm near Metuchen, New Jersey, on 01 February 1777.¹³ This notoriety, as well as his role in the capture of General Charles Lee, had given the Americans an urgent desire for his apprehension.

Their chance came soon, on or around 17 February 1777, when an unnamed deserter from Bennett's Island arrived at Colonel Neilson's post at Cranbury about fifteen miles south of Bennett's Island and provided enough vital details of the new British post for the Americans to plan a quick attack¹⁴. It appears, from Neilson's documents, that the deserter had likely advised him of the lax guard, the stockade to mount, the sleeping arrangements for Stockton and his troops, and the presence of an additional sixty British Troops stationed across a strategic bridge over Lawrence Brook, at nearby Longfield's farm.¹⁵ Most important was the news of the name of the new commander of the post, Major Richard W. Stockton, the "renowned Land Pilot." Stockton commanded only Captain Dunham, four subalterns and about one hundred



➤ This map gives a good overview of the Raritan River from Brunswick to Amboy where all of the story actions took place. The smaller house helps to show the actual location of the island and house.



➤ A map showing the current battle site location. Source Wikimapia.

privates from several Battalions of the New Jersey Volunteers.¹⁶

Neilson, recognizing the opportunity, planned for a quick attack, and stated his objectives of not only disarming this strategic Raritan River post but also of capturing its infamous commander, Richard W. Stockton.¹⁷ Colonel Neilson immediately sent a message to General Putnam at Princeton requesting additional reinforcements if available. Putnam's response was quick and favourable. On 17 February, he returned a note to Neilson stating: *"I am pleased at your forming a party against Stockton & I wish you success."*¹⁸

On the evening of 17 February 1777, Colonel Neilson, along with one hundred and fifty men of the Middlesex Militia, and fifty riflemen of the Militia from Bedford, Pennsylvania, sent as reinforcements by General Putnam, marched in a surprise attack on the British post at Bennett's Island.¹⁹ At sunset Neilson ordered his men to begin their march, guided by Andrew McDowell, and, although a brisk night, with the ground covered in snow, no storm threatened. The Patriot troops made good time.²⁰

Neilson continues with a detailed first hand description of the surprise attack in his personal officer's order book:

"The first stop was at David Williamson's Tavern, which lasted until 11:00 p.m., and from there they went on to 'old Ogden's,' within one mile of Bennett's house."²¹ (Ogden's house, located one and a half miles inland from the Raritan River, on the South River, was likely the family home of

Benjamin Ogden, a young private in the raiding party.)²² There they waited until the moon went down at 4:00 a.m. and then moved on to Bennett's Island."

Neilson describes what happened next: *"The main Body the moment they got over the causeway at the foot of the Hill*

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fronting the house (where we Expected to have met with a Sentry) rush'd up to the house with the utmost Expedition in order to surround the house, which was done --- Piloted by McDowell & Fisher. At the same time a detachment being the Rifle Men to hasten up to the guard house

& endeavour to surround them & cut off their communication with the house --- Piloted by Ogden & a deserter."²³ A third detachment of men, led by Lieutenant Nathaniel Hunt, the moment they saw the house was surrounded, hurried to capture a bridge that led over Lawrence Brook to Longfield's farm, thus completing the conquest of Bennett's Island. Seeing themselves surrounded, and with no avenue of escape, Major Stockton and his men surrendered.²⁴ A handful of soldiers under Stockton's command, perhaps thirty, escaped and made their way back to New Brunswick. In addition, a Captain with five or six men of the New Jersey Volunteers, retreated to a cellar in one of the two dwelling houses, and tried to hide there. Neilson's men discovered the position but, rather than engage in a firefight against a well defended post, or burn the house to the ground and force the Loyalists out, Neilson left them unharmed.²⁵

Colonel Neilson's force captured Major Stockton, Captain Dunham, Lieutenant Francis Fraser, one Ensign, a Volunteer and fifty-five privates.

To be continued...

Part two of this article will be in the Fall 2019 issue, pick up the consequences or ramifications of the loss to the British of Bennett's Island.

Editor's Note: *Individuals wishing to obtain the endnotes and other sources of this article should email: gazette.editor@nexicom.net*