

FEBRUARY 2024

Volume 13 - Issue 1

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

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

First issue - November 1994

Branch Chartered October 19, 1990

Link Up



Photo by M.L. Dance UE

President's Message

The last few months have seen the passing of an era.

Two of our members are now with the angels: Marian Reid UE and Shirley Dargatz UE.

I know we sent out emails advising you, but please take a moment to read the tributes on pages three and four. They both gave so much to our branch and they will be missed.

That heavy dump of snow on January 17th certainly caused a few problems. I remained house bound for quite a few days as it changed from snow to sleet, to ice and then pouring rain and gradually melted. Schools and libraries were closed. The monthly Genealogy workshop, which I facilitate at the local library was rescued by the generous offer of use of a Zoom license belonging to a member. It was much appreciated and was well attended.

We have included a few pictures of the Christmas gathering hosted by Vancouver Branch members, Ed and Rose Marie Curylo. See the pictures on page fifteen. What a fun afternoon!

Next, we have included the information needed for our upcoming AGM. These are the agenda, the 2023 YTD Financial statement and the minutes of our 2023 AGM.

Please mark on your calendars, and watch for further details as to whether or not the meeting will be in-person or via Zoom, depending on the weather.

I want to take a moment to congratulate Ken Vance UE, on achieving another Loyalist certificate. Working diligently and needing to move from one loyalist to another as the way was blocked by lack of a paper trail, he succeeded in proving his third certificate to John McWilliams of the Kings Royal Regiment of New York, who settled in Osnabruck. In addition, we are so proud to include an article from the Fall issue of the Loyalist Gazette. It was written by our own Chris Hay UE. This is an adventure that was first reported in our newsletter in June of 2017. Each step of the research revealed new information and culminated in our story here. This is a must read.

Your management group will be meeting in early February to set the plans for the coming year. These will include our AGM, a follow up on our membership renewals, checking on our archiving projects, looking for members to fill the empty jobs on our executive list, and scheduling our meetings and guest speakers.

Your renewal form is on page sixteen. Please don't forget.

Loyally yours,
Marlene Dance UE



**United Empire
Loyalists' Association
of Canada**

**Chilliwack Branch
Your Management Committee
for 2023**

President: Marlene Dance UE
Vice Pres: vacant
Past Pres: Shirley Dargatz UE
Secretary: Judy Scholz UE
Treasurer: Carole Lefler UE
Genealogist: Marlene Dance UE
Asst. Genealogist: vacant
Web Mistress: Vicky Heibner UE
Newsletter: Marlene Dance UE
Branch Directors:

Margaret Strocel UE
Chris Hay UE
Cindy Lyftogh UE
Jan Duellat

Flag Bearer: Alan Reid UE

Social Conveners:
Vicky Heibner UE and
Rebecca Heibner UE

Pacific Regional VP
Diane Ferris UE
Pacific Regional Councillor
Christine Manzer UE



Calendar for 2024 Page 2

Last Post Page 3 - 4

Items for the AGM
Agenda, Minutes of the
2023 meeting and the
2023 Year end
Financial Report Page 5 - 8

From the Bookshelf Page 9

The Battle of Bennett's
Island by Chris Hay UE Page
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2023 Xmas gathering Page 15

Membership Renewal Page 16



Calendar of Events for 2024

Print and save with your calendar



Meetings will be scheduled individually.

Chilliwack Alliance Church, 8700 Young Rd., Chilliwack, BC

Unless otherwise advised.

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

Schedule for 2024:

- March 2 AGM details TBA Agenda/Financial Report on page 4-7
- April or May Spring Fleet celebration/ Berry Social TBA
- NOTE: MAY 11, 2024** **UELAC Annual General Meeting via Zoom (this is new)**
- June 6 - 9th Annual Conference in Cornwall, Ontario Canada
- July 22nd BC Loyalist Day TBA
- October Fall Fleet celebration TBA
- November 11 Remembrance Day and luncheon to follow
- December Christmas Social TBA

Be sure to send suggestions, information and/or pictures for this publication to:

chwkbrielcontact@gmail.com

Please visit our branch webpage: <http://www.uelac.org/Chilliwack>



United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada

Partnering with Heritage Chilliwack Society since 2019

Keeping the Past Present!

www.heritagechilliwack.org/

"On the Porch" - beautiful old homes in Chilliwack.
Just Google to find all eight episodes on YouTube.

Featuring:

- Hazel House, Carmichael House, Higginson House,
- Gwynne Vaughan House, Brock House, Skelton House,
- Gibbons House.

As well as District 1881 - the new downtown rejuvenation.





LAST POST:

MARIAN Ada REID UE

October 17, 1927 – November 26, 2023

Written in collaboration with son, Alfred Reid UE.

Marian passed away at Cascade, Chilliwack, BC where she had lived these last few years.

In the Chilliwack community, where she lived with her late husband Irving (for almost 60 years), she will be remembered through her commitment to Christ.

She belonged in turn to Carman United Church, Sardis Community Church (where she dedicated many hours in the kitchen of Open Door in support of single mothers

with preschool children), and finally Southside Community Church. She was a long time active member of Chilliwack Branch, United Empire Loyalists and she attended many hockey and ball games where she cheered loudly for her sons and grandchildren.

Marian was born in the small village of Melfort, Saskatchewan, to parents Rupert Brown and Katie Pearl Young, and was the second youngest of eight. There were only one-room schoolhouses in the district, which Marian and her siblings attended.

She is a Loyalist descendant of James Brown of Clements Township, Nova Scotia, and was granted her UEL certificate in the Fall of 1999. She was bestowed an honorary membership in the Chilliwack Branch UELAC in April 2019.

Marian married her childhood sweetheart Irving St. John Reid in June of 1946. They celebrated their 71st Anniversary prior to Irving's passing in February 2018. Irving was also of Loyalist descent.

Together they raised a family of seven sons and one daughter, all born on the farm in Saskatchewan. In 1948, the Reid family became part of the Laurel Farm Co-op. Mixed grain and canola were grown and they fed beef cattle through the winter. Marian was an avid gardener throughout her life enjoying growing flowers as well as a huge vegetable garden. Farmyard chickens, two milk cows and tons of canning, preserves and bread making rounded out the food requirements to feed a growing family on the farm.

But, in the summer of 1966, the entire family moved to Chilliwack where Irving had purchased a chicken farm in Sardis, BC. They were soon part of the "BC Hatching Egg Producers" Industry.

Later, Irving and Marian moved to a nearby house. Their chicken farm was gone, and in its place was a fire station and the running track for Sardis Secondary School.

Once retired they spent winters in Apache Junction, Arizona, and enjoyed many trips throughout the world. As mentioned, they were also active in their church.

Both were proud of their Loyalist descent and supported our branch and the activities scheduled.

You would always find them in pictures with big smiles on their faces.

Marian was a wonderful lady with an infectious laugh. She had a great sense of humour and a big heart.

She was predeceased by sons Harold and Bradley.

She is survived by her brother Arnie Brown, her children – Maxine, Alfred, Gregory, Rodney, Alan and Robert along with 19 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and 2 great, great grandchildren.

Our condolences, thoughts and prayers go to the family from all our branch members.

We have missed you at our meetings. But you are now back with Irving.

Picture credit Alfred Reid UE "Marian's last ride May 2015" taken at Anaheim Lake, BC



LAST POST: Shirley Dargatz UE

February 24, 1938 - December 31, 2023

(From the Chilliwack Progress January 5, 2024)

On December 31st, 2023, our much-treasured Sister, Aunt, and Matriarch of the Thornton family, Shirley Anne Dargatz, has gone to dance and sing in the angels' choir with her Lord.

Born in Chilliwack, BC, she was nearing her 87th birthday.

Funeral Services will be held at Carman United Church with Reverend Kristin Autio officiating on January 13, 2024, at 1:00 pm, with a reception to follow at Bridlewoods Event Center (Chilliwack Lake Rd).

Shirley was predeceased by her loving husband, Kenneth Dargatz (2020); Father Russell Thornton (1982) and Mother Constance Thornton (1995). Shirley's siblings: Valeda Mae Broadbent (1989), Maury Thornton (2010), Lorne Thornton (2019) (Vi), Ron Thornton (2020) (Ina & Bill).

Shirley was the Loyalist Ancestor of John Thornton.

Shirley is survived by her youngest brother Tim Thornton (Marge), and Doug Thornton. She was blessed with so many nieces and nephews, great and great, greats whom she loved enormously! Shirley wrote "Love is the product of communication." All who came into contact with Shirley felt her genuine and inclusive love. The influence she had on people was profound. Shirley was a remarkable sister, aunt, friend, strong leader, wise counsellor, mentor, educator, historian, and what she called "The town decorator." Music, dance, and her faith was the thread of whom she was.

Shirley devoted her life to her family, Carman United Church, her community, and country. Her grandparents were pioneers of Chilliwack United and in 1898 founding members of Carman United. Shirley was an integral member of her church, served on a myriad of committees and was honoured with the church naming her to be a Trustee Mentor.

She taught 32 years of her 35 years at Sardis Sr. Secondary School, in English, Social Studies, Physical Education and grade 12 counsellor. Her impact on her fellow teachers and students was profound and she was known to be the students favourite teacher. Shirley maintained friendships with her fellow teachers for the duration of her life.

Shirley's community involvement stretched far beyond being a favourite teacher, to being awarded "Chilliwack's Woman of the Year" (1997) and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012).

In 2000 she received the Betty Urquhart Service award for her commitment to changing lives and building community.

She was past president of the United Empire Loyalist Chilliwack Branch, and had a deep passion for learning about her Loyalist roots. She was recognized for her commitment to the UELAC with the 2007 Philip E. M. Leith Memorial Volunteer award and again in 2012 she received the UELAC Lord Dorchester Award. She was also past president of the Chilliwack Retired Teachers Association, involved in the Chilliwack Community Arts Council, Club 28, CGIT, Happy Tappers and Promontory Heights Historical Committee.

Along with teaching, Shirley enjoyed expressing her beauty and creative side when she became a Mary Kay consultant. She continued to impact the lives of people she came in contact with and her fellow Mary Kay consultants for several decades.

The family wishes to extend their immense and heart felt gratitude to all the staff at Waverly Seniors Village, Dr. Basson, Dr. Marky, Dr. Low, the many amazing nurses, and care aids who continued to make her look beautiful during some of her toughest days. Simply said, your care and love for Shirley and others battling Alzheimer's Dementia was heroic.

If friends so desire, maintaining the integrity and history of Carman United Church was important to Shirley. Donations may be made in Shirley's memory to:
Carman United Church, 7258 Vedder Rd, Chilliwack, BC, V2R 4E4, (carmanuc@telus.net) .

(The Chilliwack Branch UELAC made a donation in Shirley's memory to Carman United Church)

**UELAC Chilliwack Branch Agenda
Annual General Meeting
March 02, 2024**

We are honoured to live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Stó:lō Coast Salish peoples.

- 1. Meeting called to order 2:00 pm
Playing of God Save the King and Parade of Flags**
- 2. Declaration of Quorum:**
- 3. Introduction of Guests:**
- 4. A moment of silence for the loss of
Shirley Dargatz UE and Marian Reid UE**
- 5. Adoption of the agenda as presented: moved and seconded**
- 6. Adoption of the minutes of the February 11, 2023 AGM:
moved and seconded**
- 7. Adoption of the Financial Report: year ending 2023:
moved and seconded**
- 8. Adoption of all reports presented or included in AGM package:**
- 9. The slate of officers presented for the 2024 term is as follows:
President: Marlene Dance UE
Vice President: vacant
Secretary: Judy Scholz UE
Treasurer: Carole Lefler UE
Genealogist: Marlene Dance UE
Assistant Genealogist: vacant
Web Mistress: Vicky Heibner UE
Call for nominations from the floor for two vacant positions.
Election if needed.**
- 10. Appointed positions for 2023:
Past President: Shirley Dargatz UE (in memory)
Directors: Chris Hay UE
Cindy Lyftogt UE
Margaret Strocel UE
Jan Ouellet
Flag Bearer: Alan Reid UE
Social Conveners: Vicky Heibner UE & Becky Heibner UE as needed
Newsletter Editor: Marlene Dance UE**
- 11. Floor open to questions**
- 12. Adjournment at:
Playing of O Canada**

Retire for refreshments

**UELAC Chilliwack Branch
Annual General Meeting via Zoom - Minutes of February 11, 2023**

We are honoured to live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Sto:lo Coast Salish peoples.

In attendance via Zoom: Members in attendance: Marlene & Wayne Dance UE, Judy Scholz UE, Margaret Strocel UE, Vicky Heibner UE, Christine Manzer UE, Diane Faris UE, Koralee Heibner UE, Carl Stymiest UE. Late arrival Carole Lefler UE

1. Meeting called to order at 2:11 p.m.

Playing of God Save the King and Parade of Flags on the screen.

2. Declaration of Quorum was not met. Only 9 people as of 2:11 pm.

As per Article 3.4 of the branch Constitution, we waited 15 minutes for another member to join us. We then declared those in attendance to be the Quorum and proceeded . Another member joined us later in the meeting.

3. Introduction of Guests: members only were present.

4. Special Happy Birthday wishes were sent out to Shirley Dargatz UE.

5. Adoption of the Agenda:

Moved by Margaret, seconded by Diane, carried.

6. Adoption of the AGM Minutes of the Feb. 26, 2022:

Moved by Carl, seconded by Vicky, carried.

7. Adoption of the Financial Report for year ending 2022:

Carl moved, Vicky seconded, carried.

8. Adoption of President's Report: Christine moved, Vicky seconded, carried.

9. The slate of officers presented for the 2023 term is as follows:

President: Marlene Dance UE

Vice president: position vacant

Secretary: Judy Scholz UE

Treasurer: Carole Lefler UE

Genealogist: Marlene Dance UE

Assistant Genealogist: vacant

Web mistress: Vicky Heibner, UE

There were three calls for nominations from the floor, none received.

All the above were declared elected by acclamation.

10. Appointed positions for 2023:

Past President: Shirley Dargatz, UE

Directors: Chris Hay UE, Cindy Lyftogt UE, Margaret Strocel UE, Jan Ouellet

Honourary Life Branch Members: Shirley Dargatz UE & Marian Reid UE.

Flag bearer: Alan Reid UE

Social Conveners: Vicky Heibner UE and Becky Heibner UE

Newsletter Editor: Marlene Dance UE

Names in #9 and #10 are our Board for the term 2023.

11. Floor open to notices, questions, comments:

#1) Marlene will be giving a talk on March 11 at the Abbotsford Genealogy Society meeting at the Reach Gallery.

#2) Abbotsford Family History Day April 14 in Abbotsford. Chilliwack Branch has booked a display table. Marlene Dance is giving 2 presentations. Also attending are Judy Scholz, Margaret Strocel and Carole Lefler. Vancouver Branch would be interested in attending and arranging a display table beside ours. Information sent to Vancouver Branch.

#3) UELAC Convention June 1 - 4, 2023. Registration form and all information is on the UELAC.ca website. Christine Manzer mentioned that registrations are coming in from all over. Judy Scholz and family have been asked to look after the centerpieces for the banquet room.

#4) Discussion about membership cards. Due to the increased cost of mailing a membership card, letter could be sent by email. Sample shown. It was agreed to copy the layout provided by Victoria Branch and try this out for a year. Discussion as to whether membership cards are necessary.

#5) To date, 47 people have renewed their Branch membership for 2023.

12. Adjournment at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Judy Schulz UE

Secretary



Notice of Annual General Meeting for March 2, 2024

As per Article 3.5 of the Constitution and By-laws of Chilliwack Branch UELAC at least fourteen (14) days notice shall be given to members of the place, date and time of the Annual General Meeting. This notice can be given by email, Canada Post, phone call or the newsletter.

Please review pages 5 thru 8 for information on the upcoming AGM. Also please note that we have jobs on the management team that need filling.

They include:

Vice President, Assistant Branch Genealogist, and Branch Directors.

The position of Past President, will remain vacant after the AGM as all the previous Branch Presidents are now deceased.

Please consider helping by emailing us at chwkbuelcontact@gmail.com

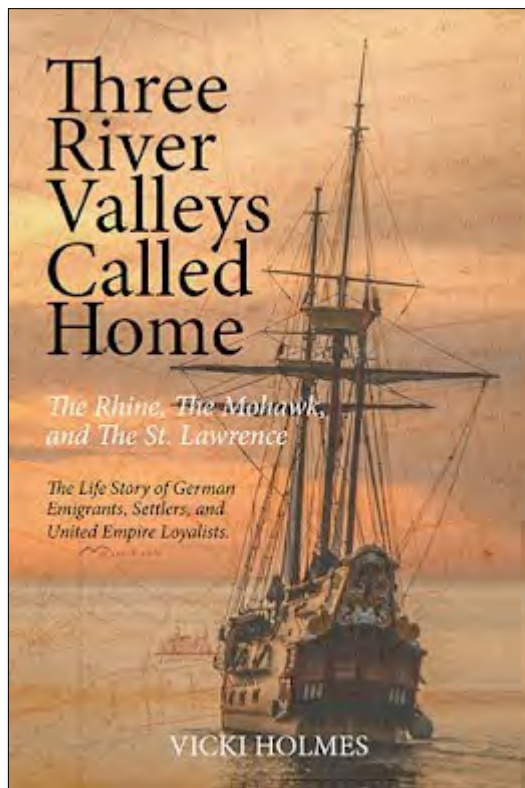
**UELAC Chilliwack Branch
2023 Year End Financial Report**

Dec. 31, 2022	Bank balance forward:		\$ 3,091.61
INCOME:	2023 Memberships	480.00	
	2024 Memberships held:	175.00	
	2024 membership portion to be retained:	75.00	
	Net Income from Journals sold.	390.34	
	Income from misc. clothing items sold	168.00	
	Share of 2023 Conference proceeds	760.61	
	Sub. Total:	\$2,048.95	\$5,140.56
EXPENSES:			
	Service Charges (\$1.95 x 12)	23.40	
	Meeting/rental/refreshments	200.00	
	Misc. Stat./Chq. printing/Journal costs/ postage/ Photocopies/Brochure/Hon. Memberships	279.56	
	UELAC Scholarship donation	200.00	
	Remembrance Day (2 wreaths)	150.00	
	2023 memberships remitted to Dominion	635.00	
	Insurance coverage	90.75	
	Insurance from 2021/2022 owing	148.50	
	TOTAL expenses:	\$1,727.21	
		Net Balance:	\$3,413.35
Dec. 31,2023	Bank Balance:		\$ 3,413.35

NOTES:

- #1)** Unused portion of 2020 Archives Grant \$111.38 held in balance.
- #2)** Proceeds received of share of 2023 Conference profits \$760.61
- #3)** Annual insurance pd. \$90.75 up from previous year of \$68.50
- #4)** Balance includes portion of 2024 memberships to be remitted in new year \$255.00
- #5)** Asset Purchased in 2019: Projector: Epson LCD Model: H719A S/N: WDPK5X02985
Purchase Cost second hand was: \$200.
- #6)** 2023 Year end membership was 58.
Consisting of 7 Families w/total of 31 members, 6 Assoc., 2 Honourary, 19 individual.

Prepared and reviewed by: Carole Lefler UE – Treasurer
and Marlene Dance UE – President



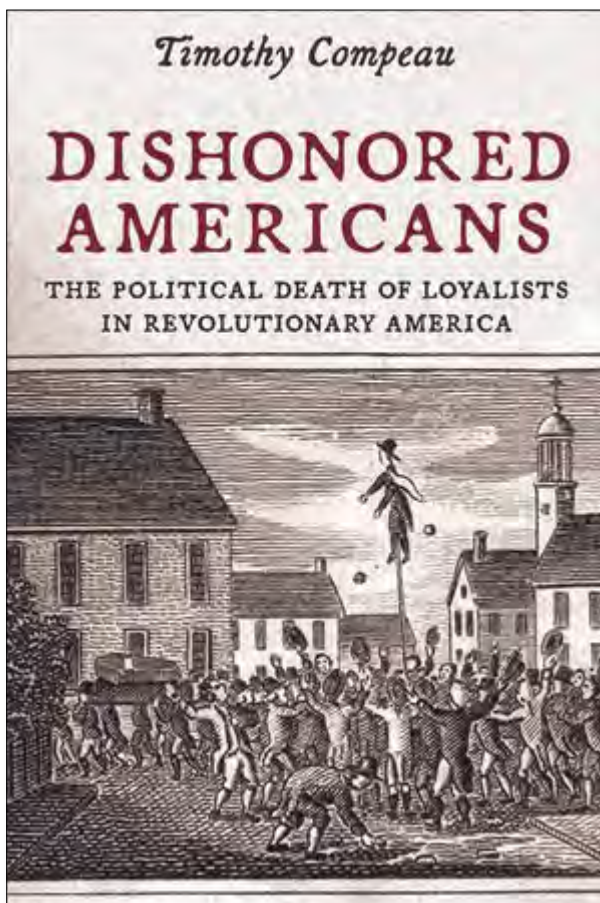
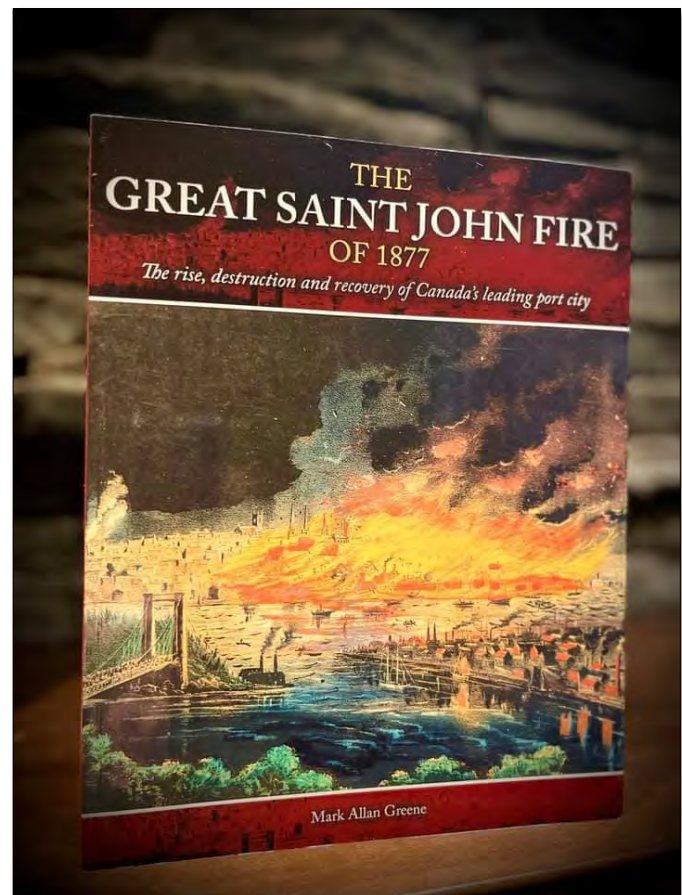
From the Bookshelf:

Some interesting reading for you:

At left: *Three River Valley Called Home*: by Vicki Holmes

Below:

The Great Saint John Fire of 1877: by Mark Allan Greene



New book! At left:

Dishonored Americans.

Sincere congratulations

to UELAC Scholarship Committee member

Timothy Compeau - Assistant Professor of

History at Huron University College at the

University of Western Ontario,

on the publication of his in depth research on

more of our Loyalist history.

From the Loyalist Gazette, December 2023
by branch member Chris Hay UE



CHRIS HAY UE

LOYALIST BATTLE OF BENNETT'S ISLAND

FINALLY RECEIVES HISTORICAL RECOGNITION

Against incredible odds, Bennett's Island, the site of an important Loyalist battle of the American Revolution finally received long overdue official historical recognition on May 18, 2023. Although Bennett's Island, also spelled Benner's, is officially listed as a battle site of the American Revolution, its military role had never been thoroughly researched, the last published story of the battle appearing in the book *Historical Discourse: Delivered at the Celebration of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the First Reformed Dutch Church, New Brunswick, NJ*, Richard H. Steele, 1867.

Since the historical importance of the battle site was mostly recognized only by amateur historians, the history of this location was overlooked in the 1950's when it was developed into what became the largest landfill in New Jersey. This later created a definite barrier to historical recognition as a large portion of the primary battle site had disappeared. However, remarkably, some of the surrounding areas such as Lawrence Brook, where the bridge to Longfield's farm was

seized in battle, and the neighboring greenbelt along the Raritan River remained relatively untouched. It was this that inspired the continued efforts to achieve full recognition for the site with the installation of a historical plaque.

The location of the original battle site at East Brunswick, 3 miles east of New Brunswick, in Middlesex County, New Jersey also posed an obstacle due to the island having had several different names over the years and with the lack of those

names appearing on vintage maps to help identify it. Fortunately, this would be resolved in 2017, when a New Jersey historian made a key discovery of a 1762 John Dally New Jersey map at Princeton University. This was the first map listing the exact location of Bennett's Island, formerly called Lawrence Jr. Island, and so detailed that it even showed the exact orientation of the main house. The 1762 map provided much needed historical verification of this elusive island location.

On or around February 17, 1777, the Americans received key British intelligence from an escaped Bennett's Island informant.

Under the command of Colonel John Neilson of the 2nd Middlesex Militia, plans were quickly devised for a pre-dawn surprise attack on February 18, 1777, at the British outpost of Bennett's (Lawrence) Island, high above the Raritan River. Neilson's orders were to disarm this strategic, new British post and to capture its commander Major Richard W. Stockton.

Richard Witham Stockton was born May 19, 1734, to a prominent Princeton, NJ family and was a first cousin to Richard Stockton Esq., a signer of the



BENNETT'S ISLAND



Declaration of Independence. Maj. Stockton and his brother Joseph had remained loyal to the crown. Joseph was to die in military service as a British guide while Maj. Stockton was to settle in New Brunswick, Canada until his death on May 08, 1801.

On January 14, 1999, I received a certificate proving my descent from my Loyalist 5th great-grandfather Major Richard Witham Stockton of the New Jersey Volunteers. I had been researching him for some time but could find little new information about his military service. However, while searching some rare book sites on the internet I made an incredible discovery. I had only seen a few family history books with information on both the Stockton and Nelson families of New Jersey. I suddenly came to a bookstore site advertising a rare one-of-a-kind book titled *Colonel John Neilson and the Revolution in New Jersey* by George W. Dress,

New York University, June 1961. It was actually a bound one-of-a-kind, never-published thests. In 1973, the Bronx Campus of New York University, where the thests was held, was sold and its books dispersed. Although quite pricey, I thought it was worth the gamble just to know even a little bit more about the man who had captured my 5th great grandfather.

It turned out this thests was based on a little-known military order book of Colonel John Neilson located in the Neilson family documents at Rutgers University. This order book described fully the names and roles of both the soldiers and the events of the battle – a definite goldmine of information which led to even more information in American Revolutionary War Pension Records. My research into the specifics of the battle and the actions of the key participants took off.

During my research into Maj.

Stockton's military background, I found a remarkable amount of information regarding his capture at Bennett's Island, but no real indication of why American military officials so wanted him. I was also fascinated that Major Stockton was mentioned in several letters from George Washington including the announcement of Stockton's capture which was read aloud to Congress. Another amazing discovery was about to reveal the important historical connection of this battle to yet an even more significant event of the American Revolution.

In 2014, I received a Christmas gift of a copy of the book *Kidnapping the Enemy* by Christian McBurney, Westholme Publishing, 2013. Upon reading it, I finally discovered some new information regarding the long-suspected involvement of Major Stockton in the extraordinary capture of the American General Charles Lee, second in command to General George Washington.

BENNETT'S ISLAND



FISH-KILL, February 27.
Extract of a letter from an officer at Murriss-Town,
dated February 21.

"I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that a few days ago a party of General Putnam's division, attacked and defeated a party of Tory soldiers, in Munmouth, killed a number, and took about 40, with their arms, and one Major Stockton, an infamous Tory, who commanded them. [The above Major Stockton, is the identical villain that betrayed his Excellency General LEE into the hands of the enemy.]

Independent Chronicle
Boston, Massachusetts
March 6, 1777

While in command of 3,000 troops, General Lee unexpectedly decided to spend a relaxing night away from his troops with only a small guard at Widow White's Tavern in nearby Basking Ridge, NJ. The following morning, December 13, 1776, while on a scouting patrol deep into enemy territory, a small troop of 38 British Dragoons learned the location of General Charles Lee from an informant. Led by Colonel William Harcourt and with then Capt. Richard W. Stockton as their guide, the patrol, realizing the vulnerability of General Lee, made a split-second decision to attack and capture him.

This was done swiftly, with great precision, and soon after the patrol celebrated what was ultimately the capture of the highest-ranking American officer ever captured in the American Revolution. British troops relied heavily on local Loyalist guides as they moved through the countryside and, for his role in the capture of General Lee, Stockton was promoted to Major. This finally explained why Maj. Stockton, known as the renowned or infamous "Land Pilot," was wanted so badly by American military officials.

Newspaper articles at the time immediately suspected Maj. Richard W. Stockton, in the capture of General Lee, but Stockton never admitted to it either after his own capture or even after the cessation of the war. Christian McBurney, an American Revolutionary War author from Washington, DC, had noted in his book that he personally could not fully verify Stockton's role as no official military records from either side had been found to confirm it. In December 2015, I decided to contact McBurney myself as I had some new British military proof for Richard W. Stockton's role as a Loyalist guide. McBurney was very

BENNETT'S ISLAND



interesting. We subsequently agreed to work together for a chapter in his new book *Abductions in the American Revolution*, McFarland, and Company, 2016. This story told, for the first time, the verified role of Maj. Richard W. Stockton in the abduction of the American General Charles Lee.

We then collaborated for a story for the online *Journal of the American Revolution*. Our story "The Battle of Bennett's Island: The New Jersey Site Rediscovered" was published on July 10, 2017. We waited for any interesting feedback to follow. A few comments appeared but provided no new details to assist us in our research. I then published several stories in *The Loyalist Gazette*: the Spring 2017 issue featured a cover story "Major Stockton's Secret Unlocked after 240 Years" and the Spring and Fall 2019 issues ran a two-part story "New Jersey's Forgotten Revolutionary Battle".

We were a very small group of historians working on this early research and realized that we could use more help to advance our project. I suggested a Daughters of the American Revolution member who had contacted us following our

Journal story. When contacted she was very interested in joining our group along with her cousin. There were now four of us in the group, including three who were actually descendants of soldiers in the Battle of Bennett's Island – two Patriot and one Loyalist descendant.

It was around this same time in March 2020, that I decided to check a fact in our Journal story. Scrolling down to the bottom of the story, much to my amazement, I found a new comment by Rev. Fredric A. Freese Sr., added three years following the publication of the story. We all now desperately wanted to contact him to learn about his connection to this historic site and to invite him to

the sister of Richard Witham Stockton, and amazingly we are also both personally linked by marriage to Colonel John Neilson, thus to both Commanders in the battle.

Now—with one final addition—our group of six dedicated historians from Canada and four US States adopted the name *Patrons of the Heritage and Battle of Bennett's Island*. Our goal was to create the first comprehensive report on the Revolutionary War battle site to be titled *Battle of Bennett's (Clancey) Island, NJ Project - History and Geography to Present: Summary Reference Report* along with a quest for historical recognition in the form of a plaque to follow.

From: Rev. Fredric A. Freese, Sr

March 4, 2022 8:53pm

Thank you for an intriguing article regarding the Battle of Bennetts Island in East Brunswick, N.J. It was also referred to as Clancy's Island when I was growing up as a boy on School House Lane in the 1950's.

I used to ride my horse on the Island long before it became a ugly landfill. Time does not change things. I remember the timber frame of a heavy beam and wooden peg structure still stood about halfway up the road leading to what must have been the farmstead. If one continued on the road till it eventually followed a railbed road surface through the marsh to the Raritan River. I can almost imagine battles taking place there and attempts to hinder the British from sending supplies to New Brunswick.

It was a beautiful location and the Farm land was rented out from time to time. I believe that Rutgers Agricultural College did some farming up there for a time.

By the way my distant relative owned 144 acres along the Lawrence Brook off Ryder's Lane (now part of Rutgers). His name was Johannis Ryder.

Well so much for fond memories. Great stories to tell my grandsons.

Join our group as well.

After some challenging searching, we were finally able to contact Rev. Freese in Florida who was delighted to join our group although he stated that he had no family connections to the Battle of Bennett's Island. However, he had lived near and explored the battle location as a youngster in the 1950's before the site became a landfill. Incredibly, we were to discover later that Rev. Freese is actually related to me through marriage, through Ruth Stockton,



BENNETT'S ISLAND

Upon completion of our report, we applied for historical signage but, as we had long expected, an historical sign at or near a landfill was simply not a popular option or something that people would really visit. An alternative suggestion was then made to place a sign alongside the Raritan River and across from the island, and this proposal immediately received much more interest. The term viewscape, a site viewed from a distance, is often used at less accessible locations such as the Navaho Cliff Dwellings or Mount Rushmore. This idea was also well received as the proposed plaque location was already easily accessible and only the greenbelt surrounding the landfill would be visible across the Raritan River.

The only challenge now was the rather unusual fact that the battle site and the proposed sign location were in two different Townships of Middlesex County, NJ so formal approval for the historic plaque would now be required from both townships. Formal approval for an historical marker was soon forthcoming from both the Townships of East Brunswick, the location of the actual battle site now known as Clancey Island, and from the Township of Edison, the location of the Boat Launch, the proposed site for the signage directly across the Raritan River.

A formal historic plaque unveiling for the Battle of Bennett's Island was held on May 18, 2023. In attendance were the mayors of both townships, representatives from both the Sons of the American Revolution and the Daughters of the American Revolution, local historical societies, as well as several of the individuals involved in achieving the site's formal recognition. The quest for historical



signage of this forgotten battle prior to the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026 had now been accomplished by a small, determined, and dedicated group of historians who had each made a significant contribution towards achieving its historical recognition.

It is most unusual for there to be historical recognition of a Loyalist battle including the recognition

of a Loyalist participant featured prominently on the plaque. Loyalist Major Richard Witham Stockton should be remembered for his key role as the guide who safely assisted British troops in the capture of General Charles Lee and whose military prowess concerned the Americans so much that it led to his own unfortunate capture at Bennett's Island.

DID YOU KNOW?

The only battle between rebels and British forces in what is now present day Nova Scotia was fought at Fort Cumberland (today's Fort Beausejour National Historic site) in November of 1776.

2023 Christmas with Vancouver Branch

An invitation was sent to all branch members to join with Vancouver Branch for a December 10, 2023 Christmas gathering hosted at the residence of Ed and Rose Marie Curylo. A number of us were able to go and a carpool was organized. The décor was set with a Christmas tree, bunting of British Flags, a King Charles banner, and a buffet table of finger foods and nibbles to share. A UEL certificate was presented to Sue Sullivan and everyone went home with a door prize from Santa . A great time was had by all. Here are a few pictures of the occasion.



Philip E.M. Leith Memorial Volunteer Award Winners





UELAC CHILLIWACK BRANCH NEW/RENEW MEMBERSHIP 2024

Many thanks for your continued support.

Annual dues are as follows:

Individual Memberships: \$40.00 (to the UELAC) + \$15.00 (Chilliwack Branch) = \$55.00

Family Membership: \$55.00 (to the UELAC) + \$15.00 (Chilliwack Branch) = \$70.00
(A Family membership is for all persons residing at the same address)

If already a member of another branch = \$15.00

Please indicate name of branch: _____

If it is July 1st or later, the membership fee for the balance of the year is ½ price.

Please make your cheque payable to UELAC – Chilliwack Branch

Your Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Postal Code _____

Phone: _____ Email address _____

Loyalist Ancestor (s) if known: _____

Membership Fees: Please circle the membership category chosen above.

Please mail to Marlene Dance UE, President

5546 Highroad Crescent

Chilliwack, BC V2R 3X9

Or Please use our online New/Renewal at: www.uelac.ca

Your membership includes receiving a copy of our Magazine “The Gazette” twice yearly,
6 issues of the Chilliwack Branch newsletter - “Link UP”
as well as email reminders for events, sign ups and items of interest.

Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) requires that our Branch have your consent for us to contact you electronically. By joining our Branch, you are consenting to receive electronic communications from us. You may ask us to remove you from the group email list at any time by replying to one of our communications and asking us to remove you.

If renewing by mail: Please return this form with your membership.