



UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

NEW BRUNSWICK BRANCH



FALL 2016 NEWSLETTER



Chief Hugh Akagi (left) receiving plaque from Dave Laskey in recognition of the Passamaquoddy people at Beaver Harbour.

Remembering the Dark Winter of 1783-1784

By Peter Conley

On September 10th, our branch along with the Black Historical Society of New Brunswick and the Archives and Museum of Beaver Harbour, held a gathering at the latter in recognition of the Beaver Harbour settlement, the challenges it faced and its legacy, and the role the Passamaquoddy people had in helping ensure the survival of those who settled there. The program was emceed by Ralph Thomas of the Black Historical Society.

To begin, the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, the Honorable Jocelyne Roy Vienneau, was invited to share some remarks. She noted how proud she was

to be in attendance as an Acadian girl sharing in a meeting with the Passamaquoddy people, Black New Brunswickers, and Loyalists, "one New Brunswick recreating a relationship developed more than two centuries ago". The Passamaquoddy helped the French on the St. Croix, she remarked, and now we know the rest of the story!

Jason Gaudet, President of the Charlotte County Branch of the NB Genealogy Society and ministerial aid to the Honorable Rick Doucet, MLA for Fundy-The Isles-Saint John West, saluted Jimmy Hawking on behalf of the provincial government for all the work he had done to preserve Beaver Harbour's history in years past. MLAs Trevor Holder and Ross Wetmore also shared brief remarks.

Thomas then introduced the keynote speaker, Deborah Coleman. Coleman, he noted, was one of the

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original team members who helped “bring about all this,” uncovering Beaver Harbour’s rich and largely forgotten history. Coleman welcomed everyone in attendance, noting the presence of folks from Virginia, Ontario, New England and across the Maritimes. As if to provide a disclaimer to all she would soon speak of, she began with the cautious words: “The present is never qualified to condemn the past.” It’s incorrect to think that America started with Plymouth Rock, she explained, for the Aborigines had lived here for thousands of years. And even before Plymouth, there were settlements like the lost colony of Roanoke and the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia. In the early days, most colonies were seen as places to die. Colonists came for many reasons: adventure, lack of choice, the pursuit of wealth and of course religious freedom. In the case of Jamestown, the settlement struggled through the first winter, and it was thanks to the help of the local natives that many survived. Despite this help, relations would eventually deteriorate and the Jamestown colony descended into what historians now know was that most awful and inhuman act of cannibalism – all for the sake of sheer survival.

Some fortunate Jamestown settlers did survive the ordeal, and went on to become wealthy plantation owners. Of course, as we know, the growth of these plantations demanded a source of cheap labor, and slavery was introduced as the remedy, with all the accompanying racism.

European settlers viewed the aborigines with a similar distaste. As a case in point, when the Puritans found an entire Patuxet village destroyed from disease, with not a living soul in sight, they saw this as God’s providence, viewing the natives as savages to be cleared out before them. At the beginning of the 17th century, Coleman noted that there were likely about 80,000 aborigines

in New England and the Maritimes, but by 1620, due to disease, the numbers would have dropped to about 20,000, a devastating loss of about 75%.

Enter the Society of Friends – a religious movement in England whose members faced regular persecution and incarceration. Also known as Quakers, these men and women refused to participate in war, promoted prison and education reform, and made the unpopular claim that the Anglican Church has become corrupted. As for gender equality, Quakeresses could express their opinions freely in Quaker gatherings, and members in general became early civil rights leaders, condemning the institution of slavery. William Penn, a prominent Quaker, was granted land to be called Pennsylvania, America’s second oldest state, and brought many Quakers to the New World. Despite being some of America’s first settlers, Quakers were often attacked by other colonists, suffering extreme violence and often ridiculous accusations such as witchcraft. They would soon become non-persons in many places.

During the American Revolution, 22 prominent Quakers were carried off from Pennsylvania to Virginia by the American rebels under the charge of treason. Consequently, one Quaker, Joshua Knight, sought refuge with the British in New York City. He began promoting the idea of settling Quakers in Nova Scotia, and published a newspaper announcement to recruit his fellow brethren, with one very blatant stipulation – “No slave master admitted.” This was 50 years before the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, and 80 years before Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. In all, 49 people signed the agreement. The ship *Camel* carried the refugees from New York City to Saint John, and then on to their new home on the Passamaquoddy Bay. Aboard the ship were 104 men, 51 women, 30 children age 10 or over and 46 under ten, 13 black settlers, and 7 indentured servants. They disembarked on September 20th, 1783.

To survive, the new colony needed fresh clean water, shelter, food and fire. They could not have arrived at a worse time, as the Dark Winter of 1783-1784 settled in quickly, and even the heartiest could not prepare for the suffering to come. They had nothing but green wood for their fires, which burns smoky if at all. Their livestock was quickly targeted by local wildlife, including the notorious “Lucifer panther,” which was still seen in New Brunswick into the 1890s. Rations faced ever increasing cuts, and as the winter nights descended, the settlers would take turns staying awake at night to ensure the fires kept burning. Everyone cried, even the strong men. Many died and were buried in the cemetery

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at the heart of Beaver Harbour, which the settlers had named Bellevue. They prayed for divine intervention, and providence came with the Passamaquoddy people!

When snow was high the Passamaquoddy could track the moose, and the sea animals could be hunted for their rich blubber, which contained Vitamin-C and could prevent scurvy. The natives would search for bear in hibernation by searching for steam coming from dens and caves, and they also helped the settlers with agriculture, fishing, and even provided some wild honey. With this help, the new colony emerged in the Spring of 1784 having survived one of the worst recorded North American winters.

Some Quakers managed to build nice houses in Bellevue. Bellevue was incorporated in 1785, by which time the town possessed 800 residents and 15 streets. At the entrance to the new town was a sign, stating "No slave-master admitted." In 1790, however, disaster struck. A tragic forest fire largely wiped out the village. Only Elias Wright's house survived. A few others would rebuild in Bellevue, but most chose to start anew somewhere else, diminishing the role this young settlement would play in New Brunswick's future. As for the Passamaquoddy people, only 157 of them still lived in New Brunswick when the Census of 1851 was conducted; a few others lived in Maine. Knowledge of their role in the area's development consequently suffered.

Following Coleman's speech, Chief Hugh Akagi of the Passamaquoddy people was welcomed up to share a few words. He noted how little attention had been paid to Passamaquoddy history in the past, but in 2004,

the Canadian government acknowledged the role of the Passamaquoddy in saving the French colony on the St. Croix River in 1604. This proved to be just the beginning of our rediscovery of Passamaquoddy history. The story of the Passamaquoddy, being displaced in their land, Akagi observed, is similar to the Quakers themselves, who were also displaced from the homes. He thanked Deborah and the others involved for bringing all of this history to light, for it helped even the Passamaquoddy

chief himself learn more about his people's past. He then presented Coleman with an eagle's feather, which is the highest honor an aboriginal people can bestow upon a non-aboriginal. Needless to say, we at the New Brunswick are very proud of her!

In return, our branch's very own Dave Laskey then made a presentation to Akagi, a plaque to him and the Passamaquoddy people, recognising the compassion shown to the Quaker Loyalists in the Dark Winter of 1783-1784. Skip Talbot also made a similar presentation on behalf of the Black History Society.

In conclusion to the afternoon's program, Deborah Coleman made a very special presentation to Jimmy and Florence Hawking, in their role as managers of the Archives and Museum of Beaver Harbour. As a descendant of Benjamin Brown,

one of the Quaker Loyalists being remembered, she presented the Museum with six plates that Brown has brought with his family to Beaver Harbour in 1783. All in all, there were over 100 people in attendance for this event, and we would like to thank everyone who came. It should be noted that a process will be soon initiated to have the Quaker cemetery and meeting place designated a national historic site - we will keep you informed! 🇬🇧



Above: From left, Chief Hugh Akagi, Ronald Vienneau, the Honorable Jocelyne Roy Vienneau, Deborah Coleman, Ralph Thomas. Below: Chief Hugh Akagi receiving plaque from Skip Talbot.





THE UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
NEW BRUNSWICK BRANCH CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

THE TOMBSTONES OF KINGS COUNTY

OCTOBER 13, 2016 7PM

At the Saint John Free Public Library, Market Square.
Our guest speaker will be local historian and author John Elliott,
who will lecture on transcribing tombstones in King's County.

Light refreshments will be served.



New Brunswick Historical Society President Kathy Wilson addresses the crowd at the Loyalist House re-opening on July 13.

Loyalist House Grand Reopening

By Ruth Lesbirel

Loyalist House, owned by the New Brunswick Historical Society, has just had a remarkable \$600,000 exterior renovation in only 2.5 months! This work repaired decades of deterioration, due to lack of funds. The house, also known as the Merritt House, now stands proudly on its spot at the corner of Union Street and Germain, in the centre of the city, with its gleaming white painted clapboards offset by striking green shutters, matching its new reproduction front door and Quaker staircase. It even sports a new “1810 Loyalist House” sign on the corner of the building. Thirty-one rotting windows were replaced with newly hand-crafted, period-authentic ones, wooden gutters were replaced, its four great chimneys repointed, rotted siding replaced, three primer coats, and three finish coats of paint. Fences and gates were repaired

and painted, gardens rejuvenated, even the exterior of the adjacent coach house was repaired and painted. Although a National Historic Site, Loyalist House receives little and sporadic government funding. The work was sponsored by various monetary donations, volunteer work, and gifts of construction materials, and the result of this herculean effort is spectacular! It was truly a fantastic amount of quality, period-authentic work accomplished in record time.

It was a wonderful, sunny evening in Saint John for the grand reopening celebration on July 13, where police cordoned off the street so members, friends, and well-wishers, several in period dress, could spill across it in front of the house to hear speeches by Mayor Don Darling, MLA Ed Doherty, Kathy Wilson, President of the New Brunswick Historical Society, and others all given from the top of the Quaker staircase. DeLancey’s Brigade re-enactors performed a march past and demonstration of arms. Various renovation organizers

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and workers were acknowledged and thanked and afterwards, visitors were invited inside for cake, punch, and tea or coffee. Many people toured this venerable 1810 house or lingered in the gardens or coach house area till nearly dark.

Loyalist House, Georgian in architectural style, is a fine example of the standard of living achieved by the wealthier Loyalists and their children soon after their exile from the United States. It is the oldest, unaltered wooden structure in Saint John and was home to six generations of the Loyalist-descendant Merritt family before its acquisition by the Historical Society in 1959. It escaped both the great fires of 1833 and 1877, which devastated most of the city, and due to the foresight of the Merritts, this house still contains much of its original furnishings over 200 years later.

Loyalist House is open for guided tours from May 18, Loyalist Day in Saint John, through the fall, when many cruise ships come to our port on an almost daily basis. The tours generally begin in the foyer with its sweeping curved wall and elegant staircase, proceed through the gentlemen's and ladies' adjoining parlours with excellent examples of Thomas Nisbet furniture and a rare, functioning 1830 vintage piano-organ, through the servants' back hallway, examining original 1830s era account books from Mr. Merritt's store, as well as his clerk's desk and chair. Access to a back kitchen garden and narrow spiral stairs lead from this back hallway to the floor above. The downstairs tour, however continues through the kitchen, with its large fireplace with crane and beehive oven, all its original pots and utensils, then past the butler's pantry, and on into the very genteel dining room, with its splendid dining room table and brass inlaid, rush-seat chairs, and its outstanding buffets and china cabinets, some locally made in the early 1800s and others even earlier, imported by the Merritts from England. The upstairs features a large north-lit, ladies' sewing and handwork area, a dear nursery with a canopied crib and War of 1812 stretcher converted to a cot for nanny, the master bedroom with its Prince of Wales bed and serpentine front dresser, and a second bedroom, with the original four-poster Merritt bed by Thomas Nisbet and a Thomas Nisbet hanging hooded cradle. The back hallway contains a curved-wall liquor cabinet and the large wood box, where the Historical Society found the original deed and many receipts for furniture pieces throughout the house, when they were cleaning and restoring it in 1959.

Readers will remember that our NB Branch funded the refurbishment of the dining room in 2014. Reading

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of the remarkable ongoing work this spring and early summer at Loyalist House, other branches have already expressed interest in helping with some refurbishment of the inside. Sadly, due to lack of funds, the interior décor has not been renewed, except for the dining room, since the 1959 work was done when the Historical Society acquired Loyalist House, so the need is great!


Any organizations, groups, or individuals with an interest in Loyalist House are welcome to help us make the inside of Loyalist House as spectacular as the exterior now is, so that together we can see Loyalist House returned to its original glory by the end of Canada's 150th birthday year next year. A project towards this interior work would make a wonderful way to commemorate this historic year for Canada, built on the spirit of Loyalists like the Merritts and so many others, and would be very much appreciated by present day visitors to and guardians of this house. Why not make this your celebration of Canada's birthday! Brass plaques will be prepared and prominently displayed in each room noting all contributions. There will also be a future article in the NB Branch Newsletter of donations made and the spectacular results of this interior refurbishment. Maybe you, or a few of your friends, can help us to re-drape one parlour window, upholster a sofa, or buy some wallpaper for the nursery. And it's tax deductible! If you would like to help, some examples of the needs and costs are:

Double parlours:

- Period-authentic reproduction draperies and valances with lining and tassel trim for 8 windows \$1,336.13 per window.
- Period-authentic reproduction wallpaper \$4,116.
- Period-authentic reproduction upholstery of one sofa \$2,900.
- Period-authentic reproduction upholstery of two fainting couches \$2,600 per couch.

Nursery or Children's Room:

- Period-authentic reproduction draperies and valances with lining and tassel trim for 3 windows \$1,426.67 per window.
- Period-authentic reproduction wallpaper \$1,780.

All donors will receive a charitable donation receipt for Income Tax purposes. Expressions of interest in helping to make Loyalist House the showpiece that it should be, can be made directly to Kathy Wilson, President of the New Brunswick Historical Society at wilsokat2467@gmail.com or 506-738-8182. Any help would be greatly appreciated! 





The Pennfield Colony at Beaver Harbour was remembered at an event on September 10. See pages 1-3 for more information.

Untold Loyalist History

*What Your Teachers Might Not Have Known
About New Brunswick's Refugee Founders
by Deborah Coleman*

Stephen Davidson recently presented a group in Saint John with what he claims are some lesser-known facts regarding our Loyalist ancestors, in a lecture at the Chateau De Champlain. The following are some facts he put forth.


- The Loyalists were refugees like those of the 21st century. Loyalists came from all walks of life. Primarily from the middle and working classes, not fashionable nobility.
- From 1776 to 1783 Staten Island, Manhattan Island, and Long Island were all within the British lines.
- Hundreds of Loyalists lived in refugee camps during the American Revolution. Fort Franklin was the largest, named for Benjamin Franklin's son, who was a Loyalist.
- Most Loyalists came from New York, followed by New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.
- In 1782, fleets left from Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; and Boston, Massachusetts. Six fleets of evacuation vessels brought the Loyalists to New Brunswick, from New York City in 1783.

**In 1783, the
Pennfield Colony
at Beaver Harbour
was the only place
in British North
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permitted.**

- Not all Loyalists were able to complete their journey. The Martha sank off Yarmouth, Nova Scotia losing 113 of her 181 passengers.
- Loyalists first sailed into Saint John Harbour on Sunday, May 11, 1783, not May 18th.
- Loyalists sought sanctuary in the midst of miserable weather. The fall fleet could not have arrived at a worse time.
- One out of ten refugees were of African descent. Loyalists took fifteen thousand slaves with them when they left the thirteen colonies.

- In 1783, the Pennfield Colony at Beaver Harbour was the only place in British North America where slavery was not permitted.
- In 1755 roughly 11,500 French Acadians were expelled from the Maritimes. The Loyalists who arrived in 1783 greatly outnumbered them.
- After living in the Maritimes for nine very unhappy years many Black Loyalists leave for Sierra Leone. They numbered

about 1,196.

- Hundreds of Loyalists returned to the USA. Most loyal Americans did not become refugees, but would draw their shades on the 4th of July.
- The Royal Coat of Arms was "borrowed" from Boston and can be found at Trinity Church in Saint John. 



Loyalist House Miniatures

By Ruth Lesbirel

Seen above is kitchen fireplace at Loyalist House, with crane, beehive oven, and many of the pots and accessories replicated in 1:12 scale, as found at Loyalist House. The “coals” under the logs light up and wisps of cotton wool smoke curl around the cauldron and up the chimney. There is a wooden peel in the very deep oven and the Loyalist House wooden bench in front of the fire, holding bellows. Along with an array of brass, copper, and iron pots, there is a bed warmer, bean crock, and skewers. On the mantel are a crock, pierced tin lantern, trivets, flat iron, coffee pot, foot warmer, more copper pots, and candle moulds.

The Butternut Table (right) is from the back hallway at Loyalist House. It is rather unassuming in style but a nice little piece, similar in character to the Saint John-made desk in the gentlemen’s parlour. It was probably made by the same craftsman. It has two drawers in the front and a curved back rail. 🇬🇧





Minister's Island

By Peter Conley

These photos are of the homestead of Samuel Andrews, a Loyalist clergyman who settled on Minister's Island (named after him) off St. Andrews in 1790. A trip across the low-tide breakwater can take you to the island, which was the sprawling estate of Sir William Van Horne, the man who led the creation of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and is now a provincial heritage park. Van Horne began construction of his estate in the 1890s, a century after Samuel Andrews constructed this house, which is still standing strong. 🇬🇧

Genealogy Queries

Send your genealogy queries to newsletter@uelac-nb.ca.

"I am hoping someone might know something about Thomas French. He married Elizabeth Belyea on Sept 11, 1823 at old St. Peter's, Westfield Woodman's Point. I assume the Thomas French I am looking for is a son, possibly even a grandson of some member of the French family that came to New Brunswick. Any leads on a Thomas French born circa 1800?" ~ Richard Chambers

"I am looking for information on Katherine Margaret Seaman who married Robert Trenholm. Katherine born in New York, possibly in Dutchess County and maybe in 1778. She married Trenholm in New Brunswick in 1795, according to a certificate issued by the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick. She may have died in October, 1852 in New Brunswick. They are buried in the Pointe de Bute Methodist Cemetery. I am trying to get admitted to the Canadian Society of Mayflower Descendants through her as a descendant of Edward Doty." ~ Sharon Reid

If you can help with either of these queries, contact us at newsletter@uelac-nb.ca.

United Empire Loyalists New Brunswick Branch Executive

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REMEMBRANCES



Libby Lowe (1916-2016)


By Deborah Coleman

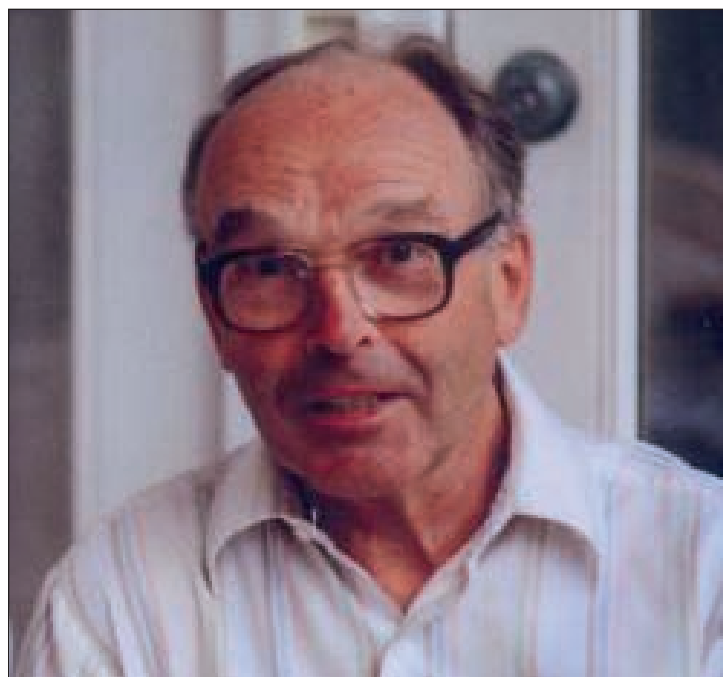
It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our eldest member Elizabeth Louise Burnham Lowe on July 25, 2016. Libby, as she was called, was born in Saint John on March 16, 1916, the daughter of the late O. Arnold Burnham and Myrtle (Holder) Burnham.

A graduate of Saint John High School's class of '33 and the Saint John Hospital School of Nursing class of '39. She enlisted in the army in 1940 and served as a nurse in England, Italy and Sicily before returning to Saint John in 1945. She attended McGill University for Public Health Nursing and later moved to Ontario. She returned to Saint John in 1959, became school nurse at Saint John Vocational and initiated a training course for nursing assistants.

In 1964 Libby became Provincial Director of Health Services for Canadian Red Cross NB Division. She retired in 1981 and in 1983 was awarded the International Red Cross Florence Nightingale medal for her work with wounded soldiers in Italy during WWII.

Libby was a charter member of our branch when the charter was granted in 1967. She worked faithfully throughout the years as she fulfilled many executive positions. She was Branch president from 1975-1977. She fought for representation of the Atlantic provinces on the Dominion council and became our first regional

Vice-President. In 2015 I was honored to present Libby with her Past President's pin. Libby was loved and will be sorely missed. 




Graeme Fletcher Somerville (1926-2016)

By Peter Conley

Graeme Fletcher Somerville passed away peacefully surrounded by loving family at Bobby's Hospice in Saint John on Aug 24th, 2016. He was the son of the late Malcom M. and M. Freda (Jenkins).

A graduate of Mount Allison University, Graeme went into the life insurance industry, working with Canada Life Assurance Company until his retirement in 1996 after a 50-year career. He was predeceased by his wife Catherine in 2014 and eldest son Peter of Fredericton in 2008. He is survived by two children, five grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Graeme had long been a presence in Saint John's history community - authoring several books on the region's history, including "Some Burial Records of the Loyalist Burial Ground," which our Branch recently reprinted for sale with Graeme's permission. Lately, Graeme had been researching what he believed to be a long-forgotten burial ground in Saint John's South End, believed to have been used by the Loyalists just prior to the better-known Loyalist Burial Ground on Sydney Street, and was expected to give a lecture on the subject for our members this autumn. His presence will be missed by our members and the heritage community at-large. 

The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada
New Brunswick Branch cordially invites you to attend our

Christmas Gathering

12:30-3pm December 5th at the historic Union Club



A full course turkey dinner with all the trimmings will be served, including soup, hot mulled cider and olde English trifle.

Our Christmas program will be presented by Ruth Lesbirel and Don Flewelling. Come and join in the caroling and fun!

Always a great way to start the Holiday Season. Tickets \$40.

For more information, contact Deborah Coleman at 634-7783 or Jim McKenzie at 832-5334.