

**Denise McGuire**  
**2011 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship Award Recipient**



The 2011 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship was awarded to Denise McGuire, a PhD candidate in the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology at Newcastle University in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. She received her Hons. BA, Archaeology and Classical Studies from Wilfrid Laurier University in 2003 and continued into graduate studies at the University of British Columbia obtaining an MA, Classical Archaeology in 2005.

Prior to starting her doctoral studies at Newcastle, Denise worked for several years as a field and then staff archaeologist for ASI Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Services in Toronto. In her years at ASI, Denise excavated, analysed, and wrote reports relating to Euro-Canadian settlement in Ontario and attained a provincial professional archaeology license.

In January of 2011, Denise commenced her doctoral research at Newcastle University under the supervision of Dr. Jane Webster and Professor Susan-Mary Grant. The central objective of her thesis focuses on the material culture recovered from the archaeological investigation of the Colonel John Butler homestead in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario to examine the family's homestead and household formation processes during the early period of Loyalist community foundation in the Niagara region. The Butler homestead site has unique cultural and heritage value in Ontario due to its association with John Butler, who is considered to be a founding father of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and one of its earliest Loyalist settlers. It is one of the few Loyalist homesteads in the province to have been the subject of a full-scale archaeological excavation. The recovered artifact assemblage from the site consists of approximately 120 000 individual pieces (mostly ceramics) and is representative of two generations of the Butler family who lived on the property before it was destroyed during the War of 1812. A memorial cairn and bust were established on the site in 2008.

While the personal history of the Butler family and the material culture recovered from their homestead forms the central case study, other grey literature from Ontario's Archaeological Sites Database will be analysed (where possible) to establish a more complete picture of the creation and development of the province's Loyalist communities, especially as it pertains to their migration, settlement and lifestyle in eighteenth-century Canada.

In the first year of her research, the UELAC Loyalist Scholarship enabled Denise to make extensive use of the Loyalist Collection established by the UELAC at Brock University in St. Catherine's, Ontario, the Archives of Ontario, Niagara Historical Society Museum, and RiverBrink Art Museum, amongst other archival repositories. It was also partially applied to payment of tuition.

In 2012, due to personal health issues, it was necessary for Denise to take a leave from her studies, which was granted by the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences Graduate School at Newcastle

University and generously accommodated by the UELAC Scholarship Committee. In an attempt to stay connected to her studies while on academic leave, Denise attended the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference in Quebec City in 2014 and presented a paper in a session dedicated to research on small artifact finds from archaeological sites. The topic of her presentation focused on a small cache of mustard bottles recovered from the Butler homestead excavation and a cultural examination of the importance of mustard in eighteenth and nineteenth-century households. Her conference paper has since been expanded into a journal article and is due to be published by the end of 2016.

In the autumn of 2015, Denise was able to return to her studies on a part-time basis and is currently in the second year of her PhD program. A continuing UELAC Loyalist scholarship was awarded for her second year with the final year of her studies scheduled to begin in September 2017. The anticipated date for her thesis submission is 2019 – 2020.

Following is an overview of the Doctoral Thesis project – “Creating Community and Identity in Loyalist Ontario: Messages in the Material Culture of the Butler family household at Niagara”:

In recent decades, a considerable amount of new archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in the Canadian province of Ontario, in advance of development. The latter has started to encroach upon home lots principally shaped in the first decade of Loyalist settlement (generally 1784-1794, though this occurs a few years earlier in Niagara, *circa* 1780-1790). As more sites are discovered and recorded, this body of evidence is providing new insights into the material culture and worldview of individual Loyalists and their households, as they constructed a new physical and social environment.

The central aim of this thesis is to collate data from the archaeological reports on domestic sites dated between 1780 to 1830 and to ask what these data reveal concerning patterns of identity and the networks and alliances which these communities established whilst integrating themselves into a global British empire. As Mary Beaudry and Diana DiPaolo Loren have noted, "Identity formation must be understood within local communities and within the larger surrounding conversations or discourse that impacted how people created identities and how others viewed them within colonial society" (Beaudry and Loren 2001: 256). With this in mind, the key research questions in this dissertation are focused on determining how Loyalist households regrouped in their new settlements and how they chose to represent themselves during a period of flux in early modern Canadian history.

By employing the use of archaeological data, it can be asked - What was the role of material things in this process? And, what do the material culture and site formation processes reveal concerning the interconnectedness of a socio-cultural community that was outwardly dependent upon British colonial directive, yet inwardly focused on the creation or recovery of individual and community identity? Given the variety of backgrounds that the Loyalists came from (in terms of geography, ethnicity, race, gender, and socio-economic status) these questions will be analysed through the archaeological documentation and material culture collected through excavation on sites associated with Loyalists, with particular focus on the micro-history of the John Butler homestead in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. The Butler homestead assemblage can then be compared to assemblages from other Loyalist sites in Ontario, other eastern Canadian provinces, and finally in cultural comparison with other contemporary British colonial societies in Australia and South Africa at the end of the eighteenth century.