

Toronto Branch Tea Echoes Earlier Times

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Toronto Branch UELAC

by Bonnie Schepers UE

The week of October 20 – 27 was a busy one for UELAC. For me it began with travel to Montreal and ended with a full-on UELAC weekend in Toronto. Members of the Dominion Council executive arrived in Toronto on Thursday in order to participate in a one day strategic planning session scheduled for October 24th at George Brown House. Following a successful day of discussion we met again on Saturday for the Fall 2014 Dominion Council meeting.

After two days of business I had the pleasure on Sunday afternoon of speaking to members of Toronto Branch at the Toronto Branch office on Scollard Street. When Andrew Fleming tweeted that 'the silver is polished!!!' he wasn't kidding. On entering the room I was pleasantly surprised to see a lovely table setting to rival afternoon tea at Downton Abbey.

The beautiful silver service certainly set the tone for our afternoon as we explored the first 100 years of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.



Martha Hemphill shared that the silver, the tray, coffee pot, cream and sugar were given in memory of Gertrude Wood who joined Toronto branch in 1934. Her loyalist was listed as John McClelland who settled in the Eastern Townships.

The tea urn was given by Margaret A. Stewart in memory of her sister Louis Stewart. Their grandfather was Dr. Nathan Smith UE, a surgeon in DeLancey's Reg't., 1st Battalion. After the Revolution he practiced medicine and opened an apothecary shop in St. John, NB. Toronto Branch also has the door knocker that he brought from his home in New York.

So you can see we were immersed in history from the moment we arrived.

Using a slideshow of early photographs and WWI posters to accompany the presentation, we visually stepped back in time to follow the progression of our Association to 2014. The afternoon ended with questions and discussion from the group about the future of UELAC. Questions were raised about reaching out to a younger demographic and how to remain relevant in a changing social environment. Everyone present expressed a keen interest in preserving our shared Loyalist history.

My thanks to Toronto Branch members, to Martha Hemphill for her warm welcome, to Andrew Fleming for the invitation, and to everyone who contributed to the 'tea'. It was a perfect ending to a week on the road.

