## **HISTORY OF BICENTENNIAL BRANCH UELAC 1984 - 1993**

In the early 1980's a group of people in Kingsville, Ontario, met for eight Thursday mornings in January and February for fellowship and to study the history of our local area: Kingsville and the townships fronting along Lake Erie. During the sessions, the group leader, a local historian (who by the way had no family roots here) made this statement, "I have been told that Gosfield Township was a Loyalist Settlement between 1780-1800. But this is a mistaken idea. This was not a place where Loyalists settled but rather where free lands were deeded to disbanded soldiers and squatters." This statement made two of us bristle, because our fathers and grandfathers had told us consistently that our forefathers were indeed of United Empire Loyalist stock. Immediately my friend and distant cousin proceeded to apply for her UEL .certificate which she received about a year later through her third great-grandfather, a Butler's Ranger, Jacob Arner UE. Subsequently she gathered together several descendants of Loyalists for information meetings in the summer of 1983. Marie Gordon UE of Windsor, a member of the O.G.S., gave us help. Immediately I worked on my application and in mid 1984 I received my UE certificate through my third great-grandfather Leonhard Kratz UE, also a Butler's Ranger. At this point several others began to apply for regular membership and several received certificates.

Also in 1983, Jean Walton met Meryl Courtenay UE at an O.G.S. seminar. She shared her concerns about the "lost" Loyalist history in Gosfield and Colchester Townships. Mrs. Courtenay encouraged her to get together with other Loyalists to discuss the feasibility of starting a U.E.L. branch in Essex County and Windsor. About this same time Mr. John Chard, a member of Dominion Council and Editor of the Gazette, was in touch with U.E.'s of Windsor encouraging them to form a Branch. A small group met at the home of Sharon Kominar U.E., to set up a Pro-Tem Executive as follows: President Sharon Kominar UE, Secretary Jean Walton UE, Treasurer Gwendolyn Malkin U.E., Genealogist Marie Gordon UE. Our initial fee started at \$12.00 (\$2.00 joining and \$10.00 membership). Also a nominating committee was formed to present a slate of officers at the first General Meeting on May 31, 1984 in the Windsor Public Library. Charter members were Sharon Kominar, Marie Gordon, Gwendolyn Malkin, Jean Walton, Meryl Courtenay, Eleanor MacDonald, Donna Harvey, Alice Pollock and Margaret Lewis.

The charter for the Branch had been received on March 24, 1984 and its name would rightly be "The Bicentennial Branch". By the time the second General Meeting was held on September 20, 1984, there were 28 paid-up members. Of course this was an encouraging sign to the founders that Bicentennial Branch was on its way.

Since our beginning we have faithfully held 5 General Meetings a year with an Executive meeting a week or so before each. Executive members have been keen to do their jobs well making the President's leadership a pleasure. During the past nine years we have had five presidents; Sharon Kominar U.E. (1984-86), Jean Walton U.E. (1986-88), Lorraine Baldock U.E. (1988-90), Debra Honor U.E. (1990-92), and Margaret Lewis (1992-?). Three secretaries have held office; Jean Walton U.E. (1984-86), Margaret Lewis U.E. (1986-92), Josephine Orton (1992-?). Our present treasurer is Lorraine Baldock UE (1992-?) while her predecessors were Grace Paquette U.E. (1991- 92), Sharon Kominar U.E.

(1986-91), and Gwendolyn Malkin U.E. (1984-86). Jean Walton U.E. has served throughout the 9 years as Corresponding-Secretary and also as Press and Publicity chairman. Marie Gordon U.E. has been •our one and only Genealogist. Program chairman is now Debra Honor U.E., taking over from a two year stint by Gwen Overholt. In the beginning this office was done by the President and executive.

Attendance at meetings remains quite stable, at between 20 and 40, except for our picnic meetings which draw crowds of 45 to 60. Our largest general meeting (115 attended) was September 27, 1990 when we introduced our paper "The Loyalists of Ontario and the New Settlement" written by Mona Gleason, graduate history student of the University of Windsor, working for us through our Ontario People's Grant of that year, and under the guidance of Jean Walton, Mr. Mark Walsh,

Archivist, City of Windsor, and Dr. Larry Kulisek. We hope to have this paper published in the future. Second largest, March 6, 1986 (attendance 70) was when Mr. Gerald Rogers U.E. of Heritage Branch Montreal spoke on the Mohawk Valley and introduced us to our bus trip to that place in October of 1986.

1.	May 31, 1984	<ul> <li>(a) Marie Gordon - "How to become a U.E."</li> <li>(b) Sharon Kominar - "Bicentennial Events"</li> <li>(c) Jean Walton - "Brief Description of the New Settlement"</li> </ul>
2.	Sept 20, 1984	<ul> <li>(a) Robert Honor - "History of Fort Malden"</li> <li>(b) Pat Parks - "Her Work on the Bicentennial Committee of Amherstburg Relating to Loyalists"</li> </ul>
3.	Nov 29, 1984	Mrs. Netta Brandon of London - "Loyalist Slides of the Maritimes Bicentennial Celebrations"
4.	Feb 24, 1985	Mr. John Chard - Formally presented our Charter and brought greetings.
5.	May 9, 1985	Mr. Mark Walsh - Presented his thesis "Your Humble and Obedient Servant, Wm. Caldwell."
6.	June 22, 1985	Tour of the Loyalist New Settlement in Gosfield South Township
7.	Sept 25, 1985	Marie Gordon-"Loyalist Sources for Tracing Our Roots"
8.	Nov 28, 1985	"Show and Tell" - Members participating were Margaret Lewis, Lorraine Baldock, Jean Monk, Jean Horton, The Brockways of Dewitt, MI, Sharon Kominar, Jean Walton. Show and Tell articles all related to Loyalists.
9.	Mar 6, 1986	Mr. Gerry Rogers - "The Mohawk Valley"
10.	May 8, 1986	Ms. Sally Scherer, Resource Centre Specialist at Fort Malden – "Loyalist Items in Collection at Fort Malden".
11.	June 21, 1986	Pot Luck Picnic at Lakeside Park – Members shared information about Loyalist ancestors

12.	Sept 11, 1986	Mrs. Gwen Overholt – Book Review of "The Butler's Rangers"
13.	Nov. 27 1986	Mrs. Alice Pollock UE – "The Nehemiah Hubbell Story" Alice brought Hubbell scrapbooks and artifacts
14.	Mar 5, 1987	Dr. John Dulong – Descendant of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, "The French Loyalists"
15.	May 7, 1987	Ms. Gwen Overholt – Review of our trip to Mohawk Valley
16.	June 20, 1987	<ul> <li>Picnic at Point Pelee National Park.</li> <li>(a) Shirley Wilcox – "Stories of Elisha Wilcox Sr. and Elisha Wilcox Jr., Butler's Rangers in the Battle of Detroit"</li> <li>(b) Mr. Don Wilkes – "The Part Point Pelee Played as a Landmark for Early Travellers"</li> <li>(c) Madeline Wallace (descendant of Edward Hazel U.E.) "Early Loyalists of Point Pelee"</li> </ul>
17.	Sept 19, 1987	A bus load of 40 members travelled to Murray Killman's Art Gallery and Animal Farm at Caledonia
18.	Nov 5, 1987	Alice Dalligan, Curator at the Burton Collection in Detroit – " The Burton Collection and how to use it in Research"
19.	Mar 3, 1988	Mr. Alan Douglas, Curator of Hiram Walker Museum – "Uppermost Canada – U.E.L.'s and other Ethnic Groups"
20.	May 4, 1988	<ul> <li>(a) Alice Pollock U.E. – "What one Person Can Do to Change Things"</li> <li>(b) Mr. Robert Ellerbeck – "The Story of Emmanuel Ellerbeck U.E."</li> </ul>
21.	Sept 22, 1988	Theme "Highlights of the Symposium on the war on the Great Lakes 1812-14 (This was staged at Amherstburg and Windsor). Reports by Ms. Gwen Overholt; Debra Honor; Mr. Bob Sutherland; Lorraine Baldock.
22.	Nov 24, 1988	Mr. Murray Killman U.E. – "Loyalists at the Crossroads"
23.	Mar 2, 1989	Mr. Gerry Rogers – "Famous Americans Who Became Loyalist Settlers in Canada"
24.	June 24, 1989	Picnic at Margaret Lewis' Cottage in Loyalist New Settlement. Report on Annual Meeting in Lennoxville, Que., given by Jean Walton, Don and Edna McIntosh, and Rev. Bob and Mary Carson, all of who had attended.
25.	Sept 1989	10 Members set up and presided over U.E.L. booth at the International Ploughing Match which was held near Windsor. A lot of interest shown.
26.	Nov. 16, 1989	Debra Honor U.E. – "Who is a Loyalist?"
27.	Mar 1, 1990	Dr. Vera Vanderlip – "The present Status of the U.E.L.'s "

28. May 3, 19	990 Mary Gallag	er U.E `The Story of her ]	Loyalist Ancestor, Leonhard Kratz`
29. June 30, 1		n R. Park Homestead. Our Donald Pennell, "S.A.R 7	guests were S.A.R`s from Detroit. The S.A.R., What is It?"
30. Sept 27, 1	1990 Public introd	luction of our paper	
31. Nov 22, 1	.990 Joint meetin Research Ne		Speaker Debra Honor U.E "How To
32. Mar 7, 19		niversary speaker Mr. Arnol My Brief to the Spicer Con	d Nethercott U.E., Dominion President nmission"
33. May 16, 1	1991 Mr. Bill Yea Museum	ger, Curator of Eva Brook I	Donly Museum -"the Eva Brook Donly
34. June 29, 1		loody Bible Institute - "The	r Robert L. Iler, former assistant Music Story of Jacob and Elizabeth Iler
35. Sept 19, 1	1991 Barbara McI in 1992"	Lachlan, O.G.S. – " Outline	of Projects for Windsor's Bicentennial
36. Nov. 21,	1991 Mr. Dan Wa Cowan U.E. <sup>3</sup>		al Society – " The Story of David
37. Mar 5, 19		Carter Edwards, First Vic ng to Become a U.E."	e President of Ontario O.H.S "Helps
38. May 21, 1	Walton; (c) Heil D.A.R.;	Mary Gallagher; (d) Eileen	part were (a) Debra Honor; (b) Jean Hartford; (e) Don McIntosh; (f) Irma ine Orton; (i) Vi Michie; (j) Ray sford. Excellent meeting.
39. June 27, 1		n R. Park Homestead. Spea g's Town Crier. Topic "Histo	
40. Sept 17 19	•	by Prof. Ttrevor Price - "W	rsity of Windsor. Review of his book indsor 1892-1992- A Centennial
41. Nov 19, 1		rcia, Librarian at Fort Malde g, 1796-1818"	en -"Matthew Elliott, Sr. Indian Dept. at

We feel our meeting over the years have been interesting, informative, and relevant to Loyalist history.

Fees for Bicentennial Branch have changed several times since 1984. Initially they were set at \$10 membership plus \$2 joining. In nine years fees have gone through the following changes: March

1985, \$12 plus \$3 joining fee; Nov. 1985, \$13 plus \$3 joining fee; Nov.1986, \$15 plus \$3 joining fee; Oct.98, \$17 plus \$3 joining fee; March 1990, \$20 plus \$3 joining fee; Feb. 1991, \$30 plus \$3 joining fee. This is now current. Even with the afore-mentioned increases, our Branch has just barely kept up with expenses. We are finding that the increase in Membership Fees is making it difficult for some of our people to keep up their dues. However, we encourage everyone to attend our meetings any way. As of December 31, 1992, we report 26 regular members, 3 affiliate members, and 32 associate members. Our membership has dropped for several reasons. Six early members have died, two were belonging to more than one Branch and dropped ours, several have become unable to attend because of age and do not want to pay fees. These are circumstances beyond our control. Fewer people are now seeking to apply for regular membership for several reasons. First, they feel the fee structure is now too high (ex. \$3.00 joining fee, \$30.00 membership, \$5.00 to fill out associate yellow sheet, and \$35.00 for regular application, for a total of \$73.00 plus all the costs of paying for proofs and photocopying). Secondly, they are finding the rules laid down by the Genealogical Team so stringent, in many cases it is almost impossible to find all proofs. Thirdly processing of applications is too slow. This is not encouraging for growth of any Branch.

In 1988 Bicentennial Branch applied for and received membership in Ontario Historical Society. In 1992 we sought and gained membership in the Southwestern Heritage Council (under the umbrella of E.R.C.A.). This last membership includes us in all Heritage events taking place in Essex and Kent counties. We make a special effort to join in as many as we can.

During the years, we have had information booths at local fairs, Victorian Days, Migration Festivals, Apple Festivals, International Ploughing Match, and Heritage Week Displays in Windsor. Our main purpose has been to make the general public aware of our Loyalist Heritage, of the tremendous contribution the Loyalists have made down through the past 200 years in the development of this area of Ontario and to encourage those interested to prove their Loyalist ancestry.

Of further interest is our recent association with the newly-formed Historical Park in Kingsville under the auspices of the Kingsville Legion. They are preparing an area for us to permanently display our Loyalist artifacts. This area will, in the future, be manned by our Branch members(in costume of course) on holidays and for other special events in the town. In so doing we have a chance to inform interested people how to trace their roots and pass out our own Bicentennial Branch brochures which our former president, Sharon Kominar, designed and composed a few years ago. In the entrance to Kingsville's Town Hall hangs a beautiful display case filled with Loyalist Memorabilia. Our early group(1984) applied for a Bicentennial Grant before we became a Branch. With it we had this permanent display case made, also a portable one which we take to events. procured costumes, had built a display booth and donated Loyalist roses for the lawns of Kingsville Town Hall and the Gosfield South Township Hall. We indeed have been a busy group in nine short years. You will notice that the active group is a small one (note how the names switch around on Executive). All these accomplishments have been the results of hard work on the part of a few dedicated people. Our meetings are well attended because of faithful phoning for every meeting and Jean Walton's careful attention to advertising through posters and the media. However, many of those who often attend cannot take active roles in the organization. We have held our meetings in

such places as the Windsor Public Library, church halls and now the Library of Essex District High School at no charge. We are careful to keep our costs low and our efforts high. We are proud that, because of these efforts, there is a very real awareness in Essex and Kent counties that this was a place where Loyalists sought refuge, built homes and raised great families to carry on the Loyalist tradition.

Loyally yours, Margaret Lewis, UE President, Bicentennial Branch

## January – December 1993

In order that our history will be up to date, I am recording for you our activities for 1993.

First I shall list our General Meetings:

42. Ap	oril 1, 1993	This meeting should have been held on March 4 but was postponed due to a bad snowstorm. Since speakers could not attend, the program was five-minute talks from several members about their Loyalist ancestors. Good program!
43. Ma	•	Jean Walton U.E. gave a report from Southwestern Heritage Council about "Births, Deaths and Marriages of the 1800's Customs". She gave each person attending a Loyalist Rose cane to plant.
44. Jui	ne 26, 1993	Luncheon meeting at Lakeshore Terrace Hotel with the Sons of the Revolution (S.A.R.'s) of Detroit and surrounding area. Speaker – Mr. Donald Pennell. Topic "Hessian Soldiers of the American Revolution".
45. Sej	A	Speaker – Mr. and Mrs. John McLeod of Fort Malden and the Baby House. Topic – "Costumes of Loyalist Times". Excellent program!
46. No <sup>,</sup>	v. 18, 1993	Speaker – Mrs. June Dicken. Topic – "Quilts, Then and Now". Beautiful display of quilts!

We also held five Executive meetings throughout the year.

In February 1993, Jean Walton and Margaret Lewis hosted a display at the Maple City Mall in north Chatham, for Heritage Days. This generated much interest so that we acquired a few new members from that area. In May several of our members attended Kingsville's Victoria Day celebrations in Loyalist costumes and presided over our display uptown.

Jean and Margaret attend the meetings of Southwestern Ontario's Heritage Council about four times a year. This is an umbrella organization for all heritage groups in Essex County and Windsor. It provides a good atmosphere for sharing heritage news and ideas with each other. As a result of June Dicken's quilt presentation last November, two members of our branch have completed a 30"x30" wall hanging for the auditorium of Leamington's Sun Parlour Home (\*there will be dozens of hangings from various groups in the county which will fit together to cover one wall). Our entry, beautifully done by Lorraine Baldock U.E. and Diane Noble an associate member, depicts our 1790 Loyalist New Settlement entitled "United Empire Loyalist Country". Lorraine crocheted the grey and blue heading in afghan stitch while Dianne quilted the body on a royal blue broadcloth background with Essex County in dusty pink. The loyalist lots were outlined in green embroidery; waterways are worked in royal blue. We are truly proud of this keepsake.

Once again our meetings were well attended – average 35. Several associate members have ordered Associate Certificates (5 I think). Three or four will complete their regular applications in 1994. We kept our dues at \$30.00 in 1993.

Loyally yours, Margaret Lewis, U.E. President, Bicentennial Branch.

## January 1994 – December 1995

General Meetings:

47. March 3, 1994	Speaker John Karry of Kingsville, president of S.O.S. (Save Ontario's Shipwrecks) accompanied by Grant Black, photographer for the Windsor Star, presented an interesting dialogue accompanied by slides and a video; of interest to our group since many shipwrecks occurred off the coast of our Loyalist settlement in Lake Erie and involved Loyalist settlers and their first and second generation descendants.
48. May 9, 1994	Program took the form of a workshop when genealogist Marie Gordon and past president Debra Honor offered help to people who were working on their certificates. They reviewed ways of finding proofs for applications. The press and cameraman from Channel 16, CHWI BBS were present to take pictures of the Tweney family who received certificates.
49. June 24, 1994	Noon luncheon at Kingsville's Lakeshore Hotel dining room with 55 present. Claude Dafoe (descendant of the Loyalists) was honoured guest on his 93 <sup>rd</sup> birthday. Speaker Valerie Buchie, curator of the Park House Museum, Amherstburg, spoke on "Pioneer Herbs - Their Uses Then and Now." Delightful presentation and most informative.
50. Sept. 15, 1994	Meeting held at Memorial Hall, Kingsville, to launch our book "Loyalists of the New Settlement" – A Study in Multiculturalism" which we had printed during the summer by Speedprint Press of Learnington. (Note that in 1990)

we had Mona Gleason comp8ile this book through our Ontario's People's Grant. ) We had 5090 copies printed at a cost of a little over \$1500.00. Our books are to be distributed for a donation to our Branch of \$10.00 each book. Dignitaries present were Town Crier Frank Gorham, Dr. Larry Kulisek (University of Windsor History Professor), Fred Gale (artist), Helen Huebert (president of Speedprint), and Mayor of the town of Kingsville. Speaker was Grace Austin, a Branch Associate Member who reviewed the book most capably. Attendance at book launching was one hundred or more.

- 51. Nov. 17, 1994 Speaker, Gene Alfred Lotz, a Mason of Windsor, spoke about many landmarks still present in the county which date back to the days of Loyalist settlement. A beautiful; painting of an 1806 Landmark Windmill was displayed.
- 52. Feb 16, 1995 Speaker, Ellen Clarke, on staff at Fort Malden. Topic "Preservation of Old Documents." Excellent tips and methods were given.
- 53. May 18, 1995 Speaker, Madeline Malott, author of a new book "Simon, Peter and Polly," a chronicle of the Malott and Girty families. She outlined the life history of Simon Girty U.E. and related facts about his character which she learned in her research. Her presentation set the stage for our Gala Plaqu Unveiling in honour of Simon Girty scheduled for July 8, 1995.
- 54. July 8. 1995 Plaque unveiling ceremonies at Amherstburg on Simon Girty's crown land. Arrangements made by Mary Beacock Fryer of Toronto Branch and Debra Honor of Bicentennial branch. Approximately 200 in attendance. Speaker – Mary Beacock Fryer
- 55. Sept 21, 1995 Meeting was one of participation by members. They were asked to bring an antique article in their possession something which might stump the audience. Participation was great, interesting and entertaining.
- 56. Nov 16, 1995 Grace Austin, who had recently received her Affiliate Certificate as a member of our branch. Her topic was "Tracing My Roots."" This was an excellent account of her search, the how's and where's and descriptions of her ancestors as she went along. Colourful! Her Loyalist ancestor is Philip Buck who settled at Niagara.

Our meetings were well attended, between 20 and 40 people at our regular evening meetings in the library of Essex District High School. This location is excellent as it is central to everyone in the county and Windsor. Members from Kent County find it is too far to drive as a rule; although one gentleman from Wheatley is usually present. Of course, our noon luncheon had 55 present and our Simon Girty Day attracted approximately 200.

In the spring of 1994 our Wall Hanging created by Dianne Nobel and Lorraine Baldock was presented as part of "The Portrait of Essex County' which graces the wall of the auditorium of Learnington's Sun Parlour Home. Ours received acclaim as the best represented history (I described it in the 1993 notes.) We were indeed proud of the efforts of these two ladies! Getting our book "Loyalists of the New Settlement" (of course this refers to our settlement on the north shore of Lake Erie along the coast of Gosfield South and Colchester South) was a big task both financially and work-wise. We finally recruited sponsors who donated \$25.00 to \$100.00 each to" the project to get us on our way in the summer of 1994. Besides circulating many copies for a donation of \$10.00 each, Jean Walton and Margaret Lewis spent many hours visiting the schools of Essex County to donate a copy of the book to each School's library. This was well received and much appreciated by teachers who had not been aware of this local Loyalist history.

This winter we are planning to finish this job by going to the Windsor schools with our book. Besides this, we donated a copy to every library and historic site of Essex County and Windsor. Our biggest aim, when we formed our Branch, was to get the accurate Loyalist history out to our local area. It had almost been lost. We are proud to say that this book project is close to completion has accomplished our purpose.

In the fall of 1994, Mary Beacock Fryer approached our Branch aboutbuying and installing a plaque at Amherstburg on Simon Girty's crown land to honour this colourful pioneer Loyalist and British Indian Agent. She had secured from Toronto Branch the offer of \$1000.00 toward costs plus \$400.00 from the Ontario Heritage Foundation. Debra Honor, past-president of Bicentennial Branch offered to work with Mrs. Fryer on the project and with the support of many Branch members a gala celebration took place on July 8, 1995 at the unveiling ceremonies. We are indeed proud of this local Loyalist Heritage Site and are grateful, both to Mary Beacock Fryer and the Toronto Branch, for their interest and support. Present at the ceremonies were local dignitaries as well as well known historians from Ohio, California, Michigan, London, and Toronto. We even had a script-writer from Hollywood who is hoping to write a documentary on the life of Simon Girty. Also, four re-enactors of Girty history attended, travelling all the way from Maryland and Pittsburg. Girty descendants came from as far away as Wisconsin, Ohio and Pennsylvania as well as from Michigan and many parts of Ontario.

During the years 1994-95, several people filled out the yellow form and became Associate Members. Others went on to become Regular and Affiliate Members. Our dues during both these years was \$30.00.

In February 1994, several of our members set up and presided over a display at the Park House Museum in Amherstburg to celebrate Heritage Week. In May of 1994, we had a booth at Victorian Days in uptown Kingsville. These displays give us a chance to talk to many interested people and follow up on these leads for meetings.

The town of Amherstburg is celebrating its Bicentennial in 1996 and for this an historical book is being printed. Bicentennial Branch was asked to submit a chapter on Amherstburg's Loyalist history. Debra Honor kindly accepted the challenge to write this for us and it has been entered into the publication.

Bicentennial Branch's Executive Officers for 1994-95 have been:

Past-President - Debra Honor U.E.

President - Margaret Lewis U.E. Rec.-Secretary - Robert L. Iler Cor.-Secretary - Jean Walton U.E. Treasurer - Lorraine Baldock U.E. Program Chairman - Debra Honor U.E. Newsletter Editor - Joy Bell Tweney Genealogist - Marie Gordon U.E.

As president of Bicentennial Branch, I carefully go over the minutes from Dominion Council and bring to the Executive and General Meetings matters which I feel are relevant to the general membership. I have especially informed members concerning the financial crisis at headquarters and of the "I Care" appeal. How they have responded I do not know.

I have to confess that, as Branch president, I have not attended any meetings of Dominion Council because for me it is financially and physically impossible. No one else on our Executive feels able to attend either. It seems to take all our efforts to keep our Branch operating. In view of this, I do appreciate the dedication of all those who serve on Dominion Council.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention in this report the immeasurable work Jean Walton has done all throughout the twelve years of our Branch's existence in writing on a regular basis Loyalist articles for 6 local town papers. Her work in this regard keeps our history constantly before the public. She also gets notices for all our meetings into all these papers as well as placing 50 notice-posters in prominent places throughout the area. Added to this she does a fine job of applying for our grants and getting good results. We thank her!

Loyally yours, Margaret Lewis U.E. President, Bicentennial