

BICENTENNIAL BRANCH – *Charter- 24 March 1984*

1985 December

Along with the exceptional work and leadership of the President, Mrs, Sharon Kominar the following have contributed greatly to the development of the branch: Mrs. Marie Baker Gordon, Genealogist; Mrs. Jean Arner Walton, Secretary; and Mrs. Gwen Malkin, Treasurer.

At its June meeting, the Bicentennial Branch met in Kingsville to tour the New Settlement. The New Settlement consists of the original lots which were allocated to the Loyalists after the Revolutionary War. This land is located on the North shores of Lake Erie. The tour, which was planned and conducted by our Kingsville contingent, comprised 25 focal points ranging from a stop at the Gosfield South Municipal Building, which houses a display of Loyalist books and artifacts, the Arner log cabin, and a wave and drive-by of Alvin Scratch's home. Mr. Scratch was waiting for our group to pass by his home and was flying his Loyalist flag. Mr. Scratch is only four generations from his Loyalist ancestor, Leonard Scratch and was presented with his Loyalist Certificate during Bicentennial year. After the Tour, our group returned to the Kingsville United Church for a final wrap up of the day's events together with refreshments.

In order to interest new members, our September meeting was a working meeting entitled 'Loyalist Sources' and was conducted by our Branch Genealogist, Mrs. Marie Gordon. This drew new people from the Windsor and surrounding area as well as from Chatham and the Michigan area and one person came all the way from Arkansas.

Along with the members Mrs. Marie Gordon, Mrs. Jean Walton, Secretary, and Mrs. Sharon Kominar have contributed greatly in developing this branch.

Anyone interested in joining this branch, please write to Mrs. Sharon Kominar, 3462 Driftwood Drive, Windsor, Ont. N9E 4A9.

1986 June

The impetus that inspired the Loyalist Bicentennial activities poured over into "Bicentennial-Plus-One" at the Windsor Public Library beginning with the observance of the Branch's first anniversary with a decorated cake and Mr. E.J. Chard, of the National U.E.L. Association and editor of The Loyalist Gazette as special guest. Mr. Chard made formal presentation of the Branch's Charter and a gavel to the president, Mrs. Sharon Kominar, the charter president whose major contribution of hard work and organization made the branch possible. Mrs. Marie Baker Gordon gave great impetus to the formation of the branch through her thorough genealogical research for new members and her genealogical seminars and courses in various locations including Michigan. The secretary, Mrs. Jean Walton aroused extensive public interest by her series of over forty press articles, as well as holding numerous local meetings and events in south Essex, assisted by Mrs. Jack Lewis, Mrs. R.A. Gallagher, Mrs. H.E. Boggs, Mrs. R. Monk, and Mrs. M.D. Salmoni. Mr. Chard told of his pleasure with this new Branch and the way it has developed quickly and successfully, even reaching to Michigan members. He challenged the Branch to keep a strong purpose, to preserve Loyalist heritage and traditions and to promote these through books, schools, teachers, articles, brochures and pamphlets on the Loyalists of Essex County and beyond.

In May, Mr. Mark Walsh, Municipal archivist, Windsor Public Library and former archivist with the Hudson's Bay Company gave a stirring summary of the thesis he prepared for 1984 for his M.A. degree in history at the University of Windsor on Captain William Caldwell, of the Windsor area whom he came to

believe was "the quintessential Loyalist". Only as he researched did he begin to "get a sense of what being a Loyalist was." What perplexed, confounded, and hurt him was the way we treat our Loyalists. He emphasized the loyalty and commitment exemplified in every event and aspect of Caldwell's life, stating that had he been an American he would have been honoured as a hero. His account of Caldwell's complete and total rout of the Americans and his sound defeat of that great American of wit, Daniel Boone, at the Battle of Blue Licks, Kentucky - just one of many feats left us all wondering why there are no plaques, no books, no monuments to this man.

This thesis by Mark Walsh should be made into a book. In his speech, he emphasized Caldwell's loyalism throughout his life a real inspiration.

In June, the Branch held its meeting in Kingsville on the shores of Lake Erie for a tour of the Grosfield part of the Loyalists' "New Settlement of the Western District" (as it was known 200 years ago), They visited the original Crown lands of Jacob Arner, Leonard Scratch and John Wendell Wigle, and met their descendants who still occupy the original land grants. They saw the site of the first mill run by Andrew Ulch, the land of Martin Tofflemire, the grinding stones of Peter Scratch, the Loyalist rose beds planted at both Kingsville Municipal Hall and Gosfield Township Hall, the Loyalist display show case placed in Kingsville Town Hall for Bicentennial Year and other points of interest.

1986 June – Second Report

The Branch is starting into "Bicentennial-plus-two" with a colour-slide lecture by Mr. G.A. Rogers, of Heritage Branch, on "Where Your Ancestors Came From" and is considering the possibility of a bus tour of the Mohawk Valley next fall.

A crowd of more than 70 attended the Civic Centre, Essex, when the Bicentennial Branch, celebrated the second anniversary of its formation on March 6, 1986.

Mrs. Grace Austin, accompanying herself on the piano accordion, sang the Loyalist Song, "Our Pledge to Our Heritage" which was followed by a rousing cheer to "The Loyalists". The words were composed by the late George VanKoughnett and the music by Mr. Douglas Page of the Heritage (Montreal) Branch. The focus of interest centered on the large "cake" surrounded by little Loyalist flags, designed by Mrs. Margaret Lewis who described the significance of the decorations. The colours red, white and blue symbolize "be brave, be pure and be true", or loyal. Inscribed in red around the four sides of the cake was the quote: "They Drew Lots For Their Lands and With Their Axes Cleared The Forest and With Their Hoes Planted The Seed of Canada's Future Greatness" (taken from the U.E.L. statue in Hamilton). Surrounding the title, "Bicentennial Branch U.E.L.A." on top of the cake, were simulated blush-pink Loyalist roses and on the four corners were four tiny gold crowns representing the monarchy. Everyone sang "Happy Anniversary".

Mrs. Mary Gallagher UE introduced the guest speaker, Mr. Gerald Rogers of Heritage Branch, Montreal, who with his colour slide presentation took everyone on a journey to the land of many of their forefathers. He traced these from Stuttgart in the Upper Palatinate Region of Germany and down the Rhine River to Frankfort and Cassel, near Heidelberg, to Rotterdam, and then to England, where Queen Anne had camps for them and provided ships for them to sail to the American Colonies. These people were fleeing from religious persecution and remained ever grateful to England's monarchy for the assistance given them in such a time of crisis. There were also scenes in the Mohawk Valley of New York including the areas of Albany, Schenectady, Amsterdam, Ft. Johnson, Utica, and Rome and the homes of John Butler at Butlersbury and Sir William and Sir Guy Johnson in Johnstown, the Johnson monument, the first Erie Canal, and the Queen Anne Chapel within Ft. Hunter. Mr. Rogers has guided many tours

along the Mohawk on the long weekend of Canadian Thanksgiving, when the colour in northern New York State is at its height and the Adirondacks are so beautiful. This trip is being considered by the Branch for October 10, 11, 12 and 13. If interested call (519) 733-5732.

The Ontario Genealogical Society's 25th Anniversary and annual Convention, a seminar, is at the University of Windsor, May 23, 24, 25, where the Branch has been asked to provide a U.E.L. display. Mr. Shirley Wilcox of Chatham spoke briefly about the book he is writing on The Willcox Family and Others of Kent and Essex County.

Mrs. Madeline Brockway of Michigan, showed two new books she has on Palatine Families of New York by Henry Z. Jones.

Compliments are extended to Mrs. Margaret Lewis, U.E., for the informative article in The Loyalist Gazette, December 1985, on "Loyalist Beginnings on Kingsville Townsite" of which she was the compiler and author.

1986 December

The Branch Annual Picnic which drew 33 members and friends was held in June at Lakeside Park. Kingsville, Ontario. This is the site where the first mill in the area was built by Andrew Ulch. Also at the Highland Games held a week later at the same location. our members manned a booth for information on Loyalist history. The result was several applications for associate membership. Mrs. Marie Gordon, Genealogist, reports a continuing good increase in membership while Mrs. Sharon Kominar, Treasurer and past Charter President, reports good financial conditions.

The highlight of the year just had to be the bus trip to the Mohawk Valley. It was a two-day "total immersion course" in the basics of Loyalist history with Mr. Gerry Rogers of Heritage Branch of Montreal as guide and commentator. For two months previous, Mrs. Jean Walton, President, had contributed columns to the Leamington paper describing the Valley, its settlements, the story of its prominent figures, and the buildings and memorials that remain.

It was a glorious trip with perfect weather and the Valley in full autumn colour. Among the passengers were Mr. and Mrs. James Humphreys, who read about the proposed trip in The Loyalist Gazette, came from Calgary specially to join us, several young teen members and a number of equally enthusiastic non-members. We were most fortunate in having Mr. Rogers as guide. His personal acquaintance with the Langs who own and cherish the Butler home, which is not open to the public, opened the way for us to be warmly and graciously received there. His acquaintance with Mr. Lewis Decker, historian of the region made it possible to have Johnstown's Old Court House opened by a bush ranger in buckskin, a militiaman in white trousers and a lady in 1770's dress. At Fort Stanwix (Rome, N. Y.) Mr. and Mrs. Hines, also in period costume took us through the barracks and storehouse of the forts remains and showed us a film that re-created the Butler's Rangers' attack. We also viewed other Revolutionary battle sites like Oriskany nearby. We learned also from Mr. Rogers' commentary the vast experience that Butler and Johnson had gained in the Seven Years War and in their full involvement with the Six Nations which prepared them to be the greatest leaders of Loyalists of the area. Had they been on the other side they would have been national heroes known to every citizen today.

The Johnson homes reflect so well the owner's prominence and his efforts to develop the community that became Johnstown. For Johnson is truly a historian's dream - three floors of memorabilia, documents, old guns, and artifacts. The highlight of the tour was Johnson Hall, a well designed mansion with a formal dining room and a drawing room that reflected an era of elegance. The chatelaine, of course, was Molly

Brant. Other places seen or visited were Rev. John Stuart's parsonage. Guy Park. Herkimer House and the many early churches founded by Johnson and still in use.

Tour arrangements couldn't have been better. Hospitality everywhere was generous. Considering the enthusiasm of all in the tour party, there is hope that Canadians will re-learn their colourful past and come to recognize the stature of their heroes.

We thank Mr. G.A. Rogers for being such an excellent travel guide and for his exceptional knowledge on Loyalist history of the Mohawk Valley. He has conducted many such tours for other branches and is willing to do so again. Mr. Rodgers is a past president of the Heritage Branch. Montreal. and has served on the national executive of the Association in recent years.

1998 Spring

The Bicentennial Branch hosted a special "12-Noon Luncheon" at Epworth United Church on Saturday. Mrs. Jean Walton, UE, was pleased with the support shown by fellow Loyalists who came from as far away as the Niagara Region. Saturday's get-together featured live musical entertainment as well as a few words from guest speaker, Bernice Flett, Association President.

1998 Fall

Princess Alice Meets Queen Victoria

Each year on the Victoria Day weekend, the town of Kingsville, Ontario, hosts a Victoria Days Festival. Festivities include rides, crafts, a town crier contest, costumed participants, music, pipers and a parade. The highlight of the parade is the arrival of Queen Victoria in a horse drawn carriage. The Bicentennial Branch of the United Empire Loyalist Association sets up a booth in order to promote the organization and maintain a presence in the community. This year's festival was particularly rewarding as the Branch President, Margie Luffman, UE, met Queen Victoria herself. This is especially relevant as Margie's beloved dachshund, whose name is "Loyalist", was given the birth name Princess Alice after one of Queen Victoria's children. In fact, the name theme of the entire litter was for Queen Victoria's children. Loyalist had 2 sisters: Princess Louise and Princess Victoria, and a brother, Prince Edward.

Other Activities

On Saturday September 19, 1998, the Bicentennial Branch of the UELAC held a special lunch meeting. Approximately 90 guests attended; this included 13 members of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) organization in the United States. Prominent among these guests were Mr. Don Pennell, the SAR Ambassador for the National Society, and Mr. Dave Pruitt, the Vice President of the Detroit Chapter who brought greetings to our Branch. Myrna Fox, UE, the Past Dominion Membership Chairperson, was the guest speaker. Along with her sister, Betty Roelofson, UE, she made a fascination presentation about her Loyalist ancestors and a trip that she and her sister made to explore sites, homes and buildings that were relevant in the lives of those ancestors.

A very special UE certificate presentation was made to Althea (Peggy) Levy at this meeting. Peggy's quest to prove her Loyalist ancestry has been a very long, sometimes frustrating process. She had been able to put together all the proofs except for one single elusive piece of evidence that would tie together all the generations. Fortunately, our recently appointed genealogical committee, recently found that last corroborating documentation. Members of Peggy's family were present to see her proudly receive her certificate. It was an emotional moment for many.

By Margie Luffman UE, President, Bicentennial Branch

1999 Spring

LOYALIST WEDDING DRESS

Mr. Robert (Bob) Her, a member of the Bicentennial Branch of the UELA and a descendant of Jacob Her, recently acquired a wonderful artifact. Bob has brought home the wedding dress of Susannah Wigle who married John D. Her in 1830. This is the actual wedding dress worn by Susannah and it is in remarkable condition for its age. Some months ago, Bob learned that a distant female relative of his, Mrs. Richard Speirs (maiden name: Ruth Shay), who lives in Sun City, Arizona, planned to give the dress to an American museum. Mrs. Speirs is the great-granddaughter of Susannah Wigle. Bob convinced her that the dress should be returned to Canada to Essex County, Ontario, the home and place of marriage of Susannah. Susannah Wigle was the daughter of John Wigle and Susannah Scratch. That particular lineage, coupled with the fact that she married John D. Her, means that myriads of the present day United Empire Loyalists in south western Ontario are her descendants! Susannah and John had 11 children and 38 grandchildren. Susannah was a midwife for countless Essex County women, so many more people in this region are connected with her in this way.

The dress, accompanied by a photograph of Susannah herself, has been displayed at three Bicentennial Branch functions. It is expected that the dress will eventually be on permanent display in the Charlie Campbell Memorial Museum in Kingsville, Ontario. The Bicentennial Branch is very grateful to Bob who so thoughtfully cared enough to understand the significance of bringing the dress home and to Mrs. Speirs who so graciously and generously allowed this to happen.

By Margie Luffman UE, President of Bicentennial Branch

2001 Fall

At its last regular meeting of 2000 our Branch presented the Past President's jewel to Margaret Lewis AUE. Margaret has been an indispensable, active Branch member and has served on the Branch Executive since 1986. Margaret is a charter member of the Branch and was a driving force behind its development and growth when the Branch received its charter on 24 March 1984. Margaret served as Secretary from 1986-92 and President from 1992-98. She has served as Branch Genealogist and Corresponding Secretary since 1998. It is largely due to the efforts of Margaret Lewis and Grace Austin UE, who is also currently a Branch Genealogist, that almost 30 certificates have been presented to grateful members since 1998.

By Margie Luffman

2002 Fall

Bicentennial Branch members and friends of our Branch, many of them descendants of the earliest settlers of Grosse Ile, toured the historic island on June 15, 2002 re-tracing the steps of their Loyalist ancestors. Documented history of Grosse Ile, Michigan begins July 6, 1776 when the original owners, Potawatomi Indians, deeded the land to Detroit merchants, William and Alexander Macomb.

Early history of Grosse Ile reveals influence by French rule thereby explaining the name la grosse ile given by the first French explorers along Lake Erie and the Detroit River. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many couriers de bois and voyageurs travelled the Great Lakes waterways. Following the French surrender of Fort Pontchartrain at Detroit on November 29, 1760, Grosse Ile came under British control. Isabelle Swan in her book, The Deep Roots Grosse Ile 1776 - 1876, writes of the new period of development that began in the Great Lakes region under the British.

During the Revolution, Loyalist families captured by Indians in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio were often brought to Detroit and released for ransom. The Macomb family willingly paid the ransom in blankets, rum or other goods and offered tenancy on Hog Island or Grosse Ile to Loyalist families.

On Saturday, June 15, 2002, hosted by members of the Grosse Ile Historical Society, forty-six Bicentennial Branch members and friends toured the East River Road National Historic District of the island.

Using a copy of the Grosse Ile Tenant Farms Survey dated 1785, participants of the tour were able to view the lots designated to their ancestors.

By Bonnie Schepers UE

2003 Spring

On September 14 that the Bicentennial Branch Annual Luncheon, President Margie Luffman UE received a Certificate of Appreciation from Richard Steele, President of the Michigan State Society Sons of the American Revolution. It was awarded for her personal effort in fostering good relations between our organizations. Aside from Mr Steele, other special guests included Richard's wife Gloria, Bernice Flett UE, Honorary member of Bicentennial Branch, Giovanna Johnson, member of the North American Black Historical Museum, Amherstburg, and her friend Martha Grayer. Oldest present was Mary Gallagher who turned 90 in 2002, and youngest was Eric Tofflemire, six months, grandson of Walter Tofflemire UE.

The guest speaker was Peter Meyler, famous for his book, *A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpoint*. Pierpoint was born in Africa, served in Butler's Rangers, and was one of Ontario's first African settlers. Pierpoint also served in the War of 1812, and held land in Grantham Township. He died at age 94.

Thanks to the continuing excellent research work of Margaret Lewis UE and Grace Austin UE, twelve UE certificates were presented to the Branch.

The UELAC met the S.A.R. at a luncheon at The Grosse Pointe War Memorial, Grosse Pointe MI, Sep 21, 2002. The luncheon was hosted by Stuart Shuster, President, Detroit Metropolitan Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution.

The program was presented by the 13th Pennsylvania State Regiment re-enactors.

By Bonnie L. Schepers UE

2003 Fall

Bicentennial Branch participated in Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society's Open House Special Event on 27 March 2003. HEIRS is located at 243 McAfee St., Harrow, Essex Co ON.

2004 Fall

Bicentennial Branch is Buzzing !

On the 3rd of April our members attended an Open House at HEIRS (Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society) In Harrow, Ontario. It was a great day to get out and mingle with other local Historical Groups and educate the public about the United Empire Loyalists and the Bicentennial Branch. Having borrowed Linda Iler-Totten's laptop computer, I was able to do Loyalist lookups for everyone interested and found quite a few that day. It was very successful, with a steady stream of people all day. We love being invited to attend this annual event and creating a "buzz". Great job everyone!!!!

The Mary Hutchins Memorial Loyalist Project At Kingsville Historical Park

In 2004 a long-anticipated UEL project finally took place at Kingsville Historical Park. Mary Hutchins UE worked with Kimberly Hurst UE on the design and layout of this Loyalist Project. Mary died January 9, 2004 and in her honour this project has been named for her in recognition of all her contributions to the Bicentennial Branch. Mary also served as Dominion Secretary (2002- 2004) and died while still in office. She is greatly missed by all of us.

The Bicentennial Branch in partnership with Kingsville Historical Park created an amazing Educational Project for the Grade 7 students of Essex and Kent Counties in Southern Ontario. The project was presented to two classes in two days.

The students were shown a twenty minute slide presentation, demonstrating what life was like for the Loyalists before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

It took them along the Loyalists' journey to various parts of British North America and showed the students what it was like to arrive in such wilderness conditions.

Following the presentation the students were invited to participate in six interactive displays in small groups. Each student left with a better understanding of what the Loyalists had endured and realized what an important contribution these refugees made to Canada as a whole.

The Bicentennial Branch is still in need of funding for this incredibly important project and encourages those interested in preserving Our Loyalist History, to make a Tax Deductible Donation to the Mary Hutchins Memorial Loyalist Project c/o Bicentennial Branch.

Please Contact Dianne Noble UE at: gdtncoble@gosfieldtel.com for more information on how to make your donation.

By Kimberly Hurst UE

2005 Fall

ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS

Algonquin Club

In March 2005 Kim Hurst UE, Bicentennial Branch Outreach/Education Coordinator, was the guest speaker at the Algonquin Club made up of Canadian and American members. She presented the development of the Loyalists of Essex County Program and has been asked by Dr. Price (President of the Essex County Historical Society) to speak to his class at the University of Windsor in the fall on this subject.

Local Volunteers Honoured by United Way

Bicentennial Branch member, Ken Turner UE, was honoured at an awards reception on 19 April 2005. Ken received the "Light the Way" award recognizing outstanding contributions of voluntary service in agencies or other formal networks in either Windsor or Essex County. Ken Turner formed the Essex County Historical Cemeteries Preservation Society in 1999 helping to document many forgotten and forsaken pioneer cemeteries in the Kingsville, Harrow and Amherstburg areas.

Permanent Essex County Loyalist Display, Charlie Campbell Museum, Kingsville Historical Park

Bicentennial Branch now has a wonderful Loyalist Display at the Kingsville Historical Park. A great deal of time and effort went into getting this project together. This is an ongoing project and will be updated as more artefacts become available. At 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, 18 June 2005 at the Charlie Campbell Military Museum, the Loyalist Flag was raised to celebrate 19 June Loyalist Day. A piper from the Kingsville area played during the raising of the flag. Following the ceremony the Charlie Campbell Military Museum opened its doors for participation in the Loyalist demonstration with interactive stations placed throughout the grounds as well as in the museum.

By Bonnie Schepers UE, Branch Secretary

2006 Fall

Negro Cemetery Receives Historical Designation

Kingsville's only known Negro Cemetery was dedicated on Saturday, 3 September 2005, with the unveiling of a special monument. The site, located between Roads 3 and 4, west of Division Road, is the final resting place of some of Kingsville's early black settlers. The first known black settlers of Essex County were military men, some black United Empire Loyalists, who fought for the British in the American Revolution and were given free land grants for their service. Many other blacks were brought to this area as slaves of other Loyalist settlers in the late 1700s. Following the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833, blacks fled to Canada until the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

By Bonnie Schepers UE

2007 Spring

Early in 2006 David Strand of Duval House Publishing Company contacted Kim Hurst UE in regards to our United Empire Loyalist Education Program. They were interested in including it in the new Grade 7 History textbook they were preparing. The new History text, Their Stories, Our History, was printed in August 2006 and in Chapter 5, *Loyalists in British North America*, pages 132 and 133, you will find our little program.

The Bicentennial Branch is proud to report that we have received a copy of the August 2006 Duval Press publication. It is beautiful and combines illustrations and photography with the text. There are three photographs taken at a Bicentennial Branch Loyalist presentation at the General Isaac Brock Public School in May of 2006. Sarah Hurst UE demonstrates to other students how clothing was washed by the Loyalist pioneers, Bill McAgy UE and his wife, Tilly, give students a taste of how difficult it was to saw through logs with the two-man saw, and Linda Lynch of Kingsville Historical Park teaches students how to grind corn in order to make flour for bread. We are very proud to have been able to contribute to such a wonderful history textbook and hope to increase awareness of our Loyalist ancestors one step at a time.

We would like to thank our volunteers, past and present, because without them this program would not be possible.

From Bicentennial Branch: Susan Hutchins UE, Alice Gray Williston UE, Linda Iler UE, Sarah Hurst UE, Christine Rawlins UE, Bill and Tilly McAgy UE

From Kingsville Historical Park: Linda Lynch, Stewart Cruickshank, Bob McCracken

By Kimberly Hurst UE, Education/Outreach, Bicentennial Branch UELAC

2008 Spring

Bicentennial Branch UELAC Regular Meeting 3 November 2007 *“If you don’t know where you came from you probably don’t know where you are going.”* Our guest speaker Trisha Bray shared this quote of her father Melvin Simpson, founder of the North American Black Historical Museum in Amherstburg, Ontario. We were particularly pleased to have Trisha join us on 3 November 2007 after meeting her during the 2007 UELAC Dominion Conference in Windsor, Ontario. The NABHM was one of the sites included in the historic tour of Amherstburg. Two Loyalist rose bushes were planted at the museum in June of this year following the conference.

Amherstburg’s North American Black Historical Museum, the first of its kind in Canada, preserves much of the history recorded in this area. The first Blacks recorded in Amherstburg came with the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists beginning in 1784. Some were the slaves of Loyalists: for example, the sixty owned by Matthew Elliot UE, others such as James Robertson and James Fry, were themselves granted land for their defence of the British Empire. By 1828 there were one hundred Blacks living in Malden and Amherstburg.

The museum remains a work in progress for there is much of the town’s Black history hidden among the keepsakes and records of the descendants of the founders. One area of research is the identification of the descendants of the very earliest settlers – those who arrived as slaves and those who came as United Empire Loyalists.

Bernice Flett and Ken Fitchett were on hand to make a special presentation of two pen and ink prints of the Black History Museum (drawn by Jane Hughes of London and Western Ontario Branch) to Trisha. Bicentennial Branch was happy to present a donation in the amount of \$ 500.00 to the North American Black Historical Museum to ensure that the research and preservation of Black history in Essex County continues.

By Bonnie L. Schepers UE

2008 Fall

On 8 May 2008, Margaret Lewis UE and I were given a personal tour of the Kingsville Historical Park in Kingsville, Ontario. Bicentennial Branch has an ongoing successful relationship with the Kingsville Historical Park Museum due in part to the participation of our Branch President, Margie Luffman UE, as a member of the Board of Trustees.

The mission of the Kingsville Historical Park is to provide information for future generations pertaining to the sacrifices of the men and women in the military as well as the contributions of early settlers and native Canadians of Essex County.

One area of the museum has been set aside to present the history of the United Empire Loyalists of Essex County. Peter O' Shaughnessy, the Curatorial Director, was our guide for the morning and gave an informative tour filled with interesting anecdotes about the families represented in the museum exhibits. In the past our Branch has celebrated Loyalist Day, June 19, with a flag raising ceremony at KHP and our Branch Education and Outreach programs to Grade 7 students are presented on the museum grounds. Kingsville Historical Park, the home of the Charlie Campbell Museum, is located on Division Street South, Kingsville, Ontario, Canada. Further information about the museum is available at www.kingsvillehistoricalpark.ca.

By Bonnie L. Schepers UE

2009 Spring

Shaymus the Storyteller, an amateur historian and lifelong entertainer from Chatham, Ontario, shared the fictional story of his youth in the New Settlement at our November meeting. The original plan for the New Settlement was a military settlement because of its strategic significance with regards to Detroit and the Indians of the Ohio/Illinois region. Should the need arise, the area could then be defended by reduced officials of the Indian Department and Butler's Rangers. "*The decade of apparent peace following the treaty of 1783 was in reality a period of constant military alert along the Detroit frontier.*" - Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online. Many of the families who defended the British cause in the Revolutionary War were called upon again to volunteer with Caldwell at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. Again in 1812, Caldwell and four of his sons took up arms, along with Loyalists who remained above reproach in their support of the British Crown. Shaymus provided a heartfelt glimpse into history as he described the trials of early settlers who came as farmers to clear the forested acres of Essex and Kent Counties.

UEL certificates were presented to Mary Jane Cree (Loyalist ancestor: Richard Whittle UE), and to Evelyn Cartwright and her grandson, Scott Clark (Loyalist: Philip Fox UE). Jo-Ann Jenereaux also received a certificate this year through Loyalist Simon Girty UE. Member Adam Gaines has a keen interest in his family history. To his UEL certificates for Loyalist ancestors, Miller Turner UE and Richard Whittle UE, he has added a certificate from The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, dated 5 November 2007, for ancestor Richard Warren and The General Society of Mayflower Descendants, dated 5 June 2008, also through Richard Warren. Congratulations to all of our 2008 UELAC Certificate recipients.

by Bonnie L. Schepers UE, Branch President

2009 Fall

2009 – A YEAR OF CELEBRATION –

The 2009 Branch Annual General Meeting was an opportunity to look back on the twenty-five year history of Bicentennial Branch since its first meeting on 31 May 1984.

At our May 9 meeting we were very proud to recognize Margaret Lewis UE, a member in good standing since 1984, who is still actively involved on the branch executive and is a wonderful source of information on local history.

Congratulations to member Debra Butler Honor UE who received six UELAC certificates honouring Loyalist ancestors Henry Buchner Sr. UE, William Pickard UE, John Freeman UE, William Ousterhout UE, Edward Hazel UE and Walter Scott UE. Debra is now the proud recipient of seven UELAC certificates. Other members receiving certificates were Duncan Overholt UE, Jean Overholt UE and Robert Honor UE for Loyalist ancestor Rudolph Huffman UE.

In honour of Loyalist Day in Ontario and to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Bicentennial Branch, more than seventy-five people gathered at *Kingsville Town Square* on June 20 for the dedication of a historical plaque honouring the first land grants to the United Empire Loyalists of the New Settlement. The Kingsville area was well represented with participation by members of the 2nd Kingsville Scout Troop, Kingsville Historical Park, Kingsville Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee and the Mayor of Kingsville. Bonnie Schepers UE, Central West Region Vice-President, extended congratulations on behalf of Dominion President Frederick H. Hayward UE. Members of the Ulch family, descendants of Andrew Ulch UE, who settled Lot 1 in the New Settlement, joined us for the event. The plaque was unveiled by Branch President Margie Luffman UE and Margaret Lewis UE, Branch Charter Member and Past President.

We look forward to our Annual September luncheon where a special twenty-fifth Anniversary Certificate will be formally presented by Dominion President Frederick H. Hayward UE.

by Bonnie L. Schepers UE