

## HALIFAX-DARTMOUTH BRANCH

### 1981 Spring

The newest branch of our Association is the Halifax-Dartmouth Branch presently serving the main areas of Nova Scotia. It meets .on the fourth Thursday at the Nova Scotia Archives. The Branch is progressing well and it is holding regular monthly meetings after a somewhat slow initial growth which characterizes all new branches. There is a lively participation by the members and a fine dedication by all.

Special mention is given of Mr. E.J. Chard of the Dominion Headquarters who initiated and formed the Branch along with the fine participation by Mr. R.A. Stanley-Chisholm of Dartmouth and Dr. Phyllis R. Blakely, C.M of Halifax, and later by Mrs. Isabelle C. Matchett, Acting-President. Also very significant support was given by Mrs. Kathryn Watson, Mr. C.R. Muggah and Mr. Donald McAlpine. The Branch is now developing well under the capable leadership of Mr. E.M.C. Morrissey, President and Mr. Ernest Clark, Vice-President.

Several good programs have been held, in particular, Dr. Brian Cuthbertson lectured on Richard John Uniacke, a famous Nova Scotian. (Dr. Cuthbertson's new book on Uniacke is reviewed elsewhere in this publication) .

Extensive discussions by full participation of the membership have been held embracing such topics as Loyalist identity, preserving one's heritage, the Branch's place in the community, Loyalists place in today's and tomorrow's world, and types of significant commemorative actions for the 1983 Bicentennial. Community and provincial resources include the Provincial Archives, museums, libraries and assistance from history professors at the three nearby universities.

Persons wishing membership in this Nova Scotia Loyalist Branch please contact Mr. E.C.M. Morrissey, 106 Spring Ave. Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 4C5.

### 1982 Spring

**W**e had a most interesting meeting on September 24 during which several members gave background information on Loyalist families. Our membership is growing and new people are attending each meeting. To them we extend a hearty welcome, and trust they will return again to join us in our efforts to expand the membership and to share in the common goals concerning our heritage.

Mr. Roy Stanley-Chisholm, presented the Branch with the official UEL flag or the 1602 flag which was in use during the 1780's. It consists of the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George, (the cross of St. Patrick had not yet been added). Many thanks to Roy for his thoughtfulness.

The President, Mr. E.M.C. Morrissey announced with regret that one of our members passed away a short while ago. To the family of Kenneth Eaman Alexander we extend our sincere sympathy.

The Branch held its October 29 meeting at the Nova Scotia Archives in Halifax. Mr. Terry Punch spoke on "Halifax Loyalists, a Minority Appeal", a copy of which is now on file for future reference. Mr. Punch spoke of the minority groups who were part of the Loyalists' movement: the

Blacks, the Irish, the Germans and the Dutch. His talk centred on the Blacks and Germans and their similarities. Both were "slaves" in their former countries and both welcomed the opportunity for a new start in what is now Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, the Blacks remained slaves for a further period of time while the Germans were able to overcome their difficulties within a generation or two. Our thanks to Terry for his most interesting topic.

Membership Certificates which were well documented were presented to new members Ernest Decker, Henry Decker and Merlin Crawford. Neither Ernest nor Henry Decker were present to receive their certificates, but Cecil Decker accepted them on behalf of his brothers. Mr. Crawford was present to accept his certificate.

The evening's refreshments were provided by Mrs. Helen Decker with Cecil Decker; our thanks are extended to them.

November 26th meeting was held in the Nova Scotia Archives as is customary on the fourth Thursday of each month except for December, July and August. Mrs. Donna Gorber gave her treasurer's report, saying there were 24 paid up members and a bank balance of \$271.00. A revitalized membership list had been prepared and anyone interested in joining or bringing a guest is to telephone a member of the executive.

Mr. Ray Blakeney, secretary, showed many fine brochures and publications regarding the Loyalists as well as information for parties of Irish descent. Mr. Ernest Clark, vice-president, gave an excellent talk on Military settlements after the war of 1812-14 in the Upper St. John River in New Brunswick. He was thanked by the president, Mr. Ed. Morrisey.

Following the refreshments the branch involvement in the 1983 bicentennial was discussed. Since we are a new group. letters were composed and sent to different organizations asking their particular participation in 1983.

Mr. Ernest Clark felt that the branch should be on record as encouraging institutions to participate in the Bicentennial. Sixteen letters and many sample letters were read. A follow-up to these letters has been suggested and the form letters were approved by the membership with particular reference to the Nova Scotia branch participation in the Bicentennial celebrations. Suggestions were brought forward that Branch reference material be housed in the Public Archives and that each member draw up a biographical sketch of his or her Loyalist ancestors.

Mr. Ed Morrisey thanked everyone for attending.

The speakers for our meetings scheduled for next year are January 28 - Marjorie Whitelaw, Editor, Dalhousie Journal; February 24 - Mr. Roy Stanley - Chisholm, Loyalists in Guysboro County; March 25 Mr. Lou Collins, Slides on Historic Buildings in Halifax; April 20 - Presentation of our Branch Charter; April 22 - Dr. Allan Marble, President of Nova Scotia Historical Society speaking on Loyalist Doctors; May 20 - Mrs. Elwood, China Belonging to Loyalist Families; and June 24 - Dr. Phyllis Blakeley, C.M., LL.D., Provincial Archivist for Nova Scotia speaking on Military Settlements of Loyalists on Nova Scotia.

**1982 Autumn**

**CHARTER PRESENTED**

The Halifax-Dartmouth Branch has been developing well with a membership presently of about fifty members. The early stages of the Branch moved slowly while many persons arduously searched new areas of Loyalist family histories in Nova Scotia. Several persons made remarkable breakthroughs at finding rare documentation which had previously been reputed as non-existent.

More and more members continue to find conclusive proofs of Loyalist family lineage in the true characteristic manner of the perseverance and ingenuity of their first Loyalist ancestors. These searchers uncovered sources and references which when accumulated make it much easier for their relatives and others to qualify fully for regular membership. We congratulate these members and are pleased to find that more of the other members continue their fascinating searches.

The Halifax-Dartmouth Branch, through efforts by Mr. E.J. Chard and Dr. Phyllis Blakeley, was granted its charter on December 1, 1979 with Mr. Barry Watson as the first President. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Isabelle C. Matchett took over as President. It was during these months that under Mrs. Matchett a good foundation was being built with outstanding stalwart support and initiative, especially from Mr. R.A. Stanley Chisholm and Dr. Phyllis Blakeley, as well as from Mr. C.R. Muggah and Mrs. Myrtle Robinson and a few others that comprised the nucleus of the new Branch.

Slowly the Branch developed and Mr. Edward M.C. Morrisey became President in the latter part of 1981.

On April 20, 1982 the branch charter ceremony took place on a most memorable occasion when a Charter Dinner was held in the church hall adjoining the famous and historic St. George's Anglican Church. Mr. Donald C. Lordly with his committee arranged a significantly impressive setting of beautifully decorated tables and a specially well organized program so capably directed by the President, Mr. Edward M.C. Morrisey.

Among the several historical items displayed around the hall were large paintings of striking beauty prepared for this occasion by the Vice-President, Mr. Ernest A. Clarke - The Landing of the Loyalists at Halifax, the Armorial Bearings of the Association, and a map of Loyalists' settlements in the Maritimes. Hasti-notes in black and white of the landing scene were on sale.

About sixty members and families formed the particularly gala occasion generating a vibrant spirit of goodwill.

Those members attending from a distance were Mrs. H.V. Morrisey in her 90's, mother of the President, who came from Saint John, N.B., Mrs. Rita Bower, President of the Shelburne Branch, Mr. John Eaman, Dominion President from London, Ontario, Mr. E.J. Chard, Chairman at the Dominion Headquarters, Toronto and Editor of the Loyalist Gazette, and Mr. and Mrs. Ian M. Campbell of Bridgewater. Greetings were received from several branches.

After the attractive and particularly delicious dinner Mr. John Eaman delivered an address on the Association followed by the presentation of the branch charter. Mr. Ronald Blakeney, Newsletter Editor, recorded the event by taking several photos. Dr. Phyllis R. Blakeley, Branch Genealogist and Mr. E.J. Chard presented eight certificates, recipients among whom were Mr. Raymond

Blakeney, Branch Secretary, Mrs. Lori Papaioannon, and members of the Decker and Crawford families.

The evening closed with a tour of St. George's church and an extensive historical commentary with numerous anecdotes by the Rector and Church Warden.

This branch, central to Nova Scotia, continues to expand and offers particularly stimulating and historically informative programs.

On April 22 at the regular meeting of the Branch Dr. Allan Marble spoke on the contributions of Loyalist physicians and surgeons to medicine in Nova Scotia. His talk compared the state of medicine in 1775 to that of 1784 along with a general overview of the period 1749 to the mid 1800's Mr. Cecil Decker introduced the guest speaker at the May 20 meeting, Mrs. Elwood, a curator of the Nova Scotia Museum.

She gave a very interesting slide presentation on china brought to the Province by the Loyalists. The highlight was a collection of 300 pieces donated to Kings College over 100 years ago by Mrs. Weldon, daughter of E.D. Haliburton. Mrs. Elwood indicated that the collection appears to be the oldest china collection in Canada. The President, Mr. Edward Morrisey thanked the speaker.

At the June 24 meeting Dr. Phyllis R. Blakeley, C.M., spoke on the "Military Settlements of the Loyalists of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island". She gave a detailed account of where the many regiments settled in the Maritimes, where they fought, and whether they stayed on their grants or left shortly afterwards. In particular there were two interesting facts - in 1783 the Loyalist influx resulted in the doubling of the population of Nova Scotia from 20,000 persons to 40,000. This rapid expansion resulted in making Shelburne the fourth city in North America. Dr. Blakeley gave a most informative talk.

The branch fees were increased to \$15.00 per annum beginning in 1963. Mrs. Donna Gorber, the Treasurer reported \$432.00 on hand. Mr. Roy Stanley-Chisholm reported on the Loyalist activity at Country Harbour. It was reported that there was a good response to the advertisements that - Mr. E.J. Chard placed in several newspapers.

At the September 23 meeting, Mr. Ray Blakeney and Mr. Ron Blakeney spoke on the Blakeney / Blakeley Family Reunion on their family reunion, held August'24 to 28, at which 270 persons attended. Their genealogical charts contained over 1000 descendants and measures 140 feet in length. The family came from Ireland to South Carolina and then after the American Revolutionary War to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The reunion was a great success.

Mrs. Donna Gorber is heading a new project for a Branch Loyalist library.

### **1984 December**

**A**s the destination of the first wave of Loyalists, Nova Scotia was in the vanguard of the Bicentennial celebrations of 1983-84.

The Halifax-Dartmouth Branch commenced these eventful years in February by co-hosting the reception at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia at the opening of the exhibit, "Unshaken

Attachment". Over two hundred guests attended, including Lt. Governor John Shaffner. The exhibit remained on display until October.

In June, a Drumhead ceremony and parade were held on Citadel Hill, the historic Halifax fortress. Members were invited to the unveiling of a plaque by HRH Prince Charles who with Diana, Princess of Wales, attended a dedication service in St. George's, the Church designed by his ancestor, Prince Edward of Kent, while Commander of the garrison.

The Branch held a commemorative service in St. George's Church, followed by a Garden Party featuring Loyalists foods, with a band playing appropriate music for members and guests.

A concert was held in October at St. Georges, with music of the Loyalist era provided by Lorne Rozofsky and his ensemble.

On November 5, 1983 a tree planting ceremony was held in the Halifax Public Gardens. The ceremony was performed by the Honourable John E. Shaffner, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. Mrs. Mary Gillis, President United Empire Loyalists' Bicentennial Association of Nova Scotia (UELANS), introduced the dignitaries in Loyalists costumes who included, the Lieutenant Governor, Mayor Ron Wallace of Halifax, Mayor Danny Brownlow of Dartmouth, Reverend Peter Mason, Rector, St. Paul's Anglican Church and President Ray Blakeney of Halifax - Dartmouth U.E.L. Branch.

President Blakeney stated that we were, in fact, replacing a cherry tree that had been chopped down, over two hundred years ago, by a young lad named George Washington.

### **1985 June**

This Branch staged a play on the Siege of Fort Cumberland in November 1776. It was put on by the members themselves with very little practice. Most of the players were in costume and the audio background was provided by Don Lordly who was in charge of the entire production.

The play itself was researched and written by Ernie Clarke who is writing a book on Cumberland. The entire play is made up of the exact words of each of the participants through their different descriptions of the Siege or the events surrounding the Siege. The attack on Cumberland by Eddy was the only attack by American Forces on Nova Scotia during the American Revolution other than some sea-based privateer attacks on different towns along the sea coast. It was very simple to perform and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Other productions are planned for 1985-86.

Continually good programs for each meeting draw out a lot of interesting people. We are very lucky to have the Provincial Archives and the beautiful facilities available. A lot of people from out of town will come in to spend their day at Genealogical Research and then come to the meeting on the last Thursday evening of the month.

We plan also to continue as an annual event our George III dinner.

### **1985 December**

The September meeting of the Halifax-Dartmouth Branch featured Miss Julie Ross who presented her M.A. thesis in History, entitled, Jacob Bailey, an Anglican Clergyman. Jacob

Bailey, Loyalist, teacher, clergyman and missionary was forced to flee to Halifax in 1779 from his work as a missionary on the Kennebec River in Maine. He later moved to Annapolis Royal where he opened several missions in the area and was instrumental in assisting the large influx of Loyalists who settled there.

Our special guest at the October meeting was Marie Nightingale, popular author of the best selling cook book, *Out of Old Nova Scotia Kitchens*. She gave a very interesting account of what the Loyalists ate and how they prepared their food, entitled, *So Many Mouths to Feed*. This article forms part of the book, *Loyalists of Nova Scotia* which was published in 1983 during the Bicentennial of the Loyalist Landing in Nova Scotia.

Doris Hilchey will speak to us at our November meeting. She will be speaking about her latest published work, *Refuge: The Loyalists Come to Nova Scotia* which won the Bicentennial Award for best non-fiction.

The Branch is planning to stage another play in March of next year. This play will be about the evacuation of Boston in 1776 and the move to Halifax of several thousand British troops and Loyalists. Through preserved written accounts and personal diaries we are able to use the exact words of those present. These plays are researched and written by our Branch member, Ernie Clarke who is the Branch Genealogist. Mr. Clarke has a special talent for writing and staging fine historical plays. We commend the other branches in Canada to turn their Loyalist background into drama.

Anyone wishing to join a branch in Nova Scotia please contact Mr. L.L. Perry, President Halifax Branch, 7 Cathy Cross Drive, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2W 2R5.

### **1986 June**

The president, Mr. Lewis Perry, reports that this fourth year of the branch's establishment has been rewarding and entertaining. Programs were invariably well received and included Peggy Armstrong speaking on Col. Delancey under the intriguing title of "Outlaw of the Bronx", Bishop Leonard Hatfield speaking on the Loyalist Hatfield of Colchester County, and Lois Kernaghan's presentation entitled "A Most Eccentric Genius: The Private Life of J.F.W. DesBarres."

The fall programs included Julie Ross speaking on "Jacob Bailey, Loyalist" Marie Nightingale on "So Many Mouths to Feed" (Loyalist cook book), Doris Hilchey on her book *Refuge: The Loyalists Come to Nova Scotia*; and a movie, "The World Turned Upside Down." A report by archaeologist Katie Cottreau described the discovery of thousands of mid-eighteenth century artifacts at a recently excavated site in downtown Halifax. Mrs. Marie Elwood, curator of history at the Nova Scotia Museum displayed and spoke on The Lord Dalhousie Collection, which is mainly drawings and paintings by draughtsman J.E. Woolford, and satirical sketches of the Nova Scotian and Upper Canada society, 1816-28.

Another contribution to our knowledge of Loyalism was made by Mr. Barry Cahill of Public Archives of Nova Scotia, speaking on Stephen Delancey under the title "A Lawyer Goes to War."

Branch members recently gave an excellent performance of their rendition of "A Tale of Two Cities", a dramatization of the 1776 evacuation of Boston and arrival at Halifax of the first wave of Loyalists. It was researched, edited, and produced by Ernie Clarke with fantastic sound effects by Don Lordly.

The Branch newsletter lists over 40 books of Loyalist history already collected for the branch library, and mentions each new book donated by individual members. One member regularly donates the coffee for meetings and the proceeds are used for book purchases.

The branch newsletter has, among many fine features, a page called "This Month in History" which lists a half dozen events of a particular month in the eighteenth century followed by a half-page explanation.

Though a relatively new branch, Halifax-Dartmouth already has 61 members.

### **1986 December**

**H**alifax-Dartmouth Branch planned a full schedule for fall meetings on September 25, October 23 and November 27. In September a good method for brushing up our history was introduced: branch members reviewed, discussed and read from branch library books. One recent addition to our library, the three-volume set entitled *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War* by Murtie June Clarke was evaluated by Ernest Clarke.

Light is also shed on the Loyalist scene in a novel entitled Oliver Wiswell by Kenneth Roberts, who also wrote North-West Passage. The donor is Daniel Finch. This novel, set in the American Revolution, took its author three years of research. Members will find it worth the trouble to look up this interesting book.

Our branch extends good wishes to Dr. Vera Vanderlip of Grand River Branch on being elected Dominion President of the U.E.L. Association of Canada and expresses thanks to Mrs. Gwen Smith. Dr. Vanderlip visited our branch in October and two of the other Maritime branches.

Tricorn hats are in fashion for Loyalist costume functions. Halifax has found a source at a good price - \$15, reduced from \$25, for bulk orders from Loyalist Days office in Saint John, N.B.

In the September newsletter edited by Lewis Perry, President, Ernest Clarke, Genealogist researched and wrote an article on Christopher Harper a Nova Scotian Loyalist. Harper's misfortunes demonstrate for us that the price of loyalty could be just as high within the borders of what is now Canada as it was in the Thirteen Colonies. Christopher Harper's loyal service was performed in Nova Scotia and the property he lost was located there. This happened in the invasion and siege of Fort Cumberland in November, 1776. The invaders burned all Harper's farm buildings while he was serving at the Fort. Harper was only one of many Nova Scotian Loyalists who rendered service at the price of their possessions. They provided three provincial regiments and a large land militia which took part in the defence of Quebec and in the raids on what is now Maine. There was also a "sea militia" which did privateering in leased ships.

The newsletter also has an interesting section called "This Month in History". This time it contained a thumb-nail sketch of the career of Benedict Arnold.

### **1988 Fall**

The Halifax-Dartmouth Branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada held its

fifth annual King George III birthday celebration on June 4 in the Red Chamber of Province House on the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

This festive occasion began with a reception and a visit by His Honour Lieutenant Governor Alan Abraham. Music was provided by the Oxford Players under the direction of Priscilla Evans. Accounts of earlier King George III birthday celebrations in Nova Scotia were read by Branch members.

An interesting and informative tour of the Red Chamber, the library and the Legislative Chamber was conducted by Legislature guide, Nancy Hay, who it was discovered has Loyalist ancestry. After the tour, a toast to King George III was proposed by Mr. Roy Chisholm in Gaelic.

The evening ended with coffee and a delicious birthday cake created by Ernie and Alberta Clerk. To quote an old cliché, “a good time was had by all”.

### **1989 Spring**

The October 1988 meeting of the Halifax-Dartmouth Branch was held on October 27 at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Jean Addison, Campaign Manager for the Old Burying Ground Foundation gave a most interesting talk and slide presentation on the plan to restore Saint Paul's Cemetery and the Welsford-Parker Monument.

‘To Restore, Remember & Reflect’ is the motto of the Old Burying Ground Foundation. The campaign goal is \$795,000, with 60% coming from Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments, 25% from individuals, churches and communities groups and 15% from the corporate sector.

The Old Burying Ground was the first cemetery in Halifax on land granted outside the stockade. The first grave was dug the day after the founding of Halifax in 1749. the oldest stone is dated 1754 and marks the grave of John Conner, who ran the first ferry across Halifax Harbour. Several well-known Haligonians are buried there, including Malachi Salter, John Howe, the father of Joseph Howe, Samuel Cunard's wife Susan and the Jewish merchant Nathan Nathans. Of the 1200 headstones remaining in the cemetery, you can find one for Daniel Shatford, one of the founders of Halifax and for Major General Robert Ross, who was killed in the attack on Baltimore in 1814.

The cemetery was closed in 1844 after over 12,000 burials.

The Welsford-Parker Monument (below) was the city's first public monument. It was erected in 1860 in memory of two Nova Scotians who fought in the British army in the Crimean War. Major A.F. Welsford of the 97<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Captain William Parker of the 77<sup>th</sup> both died in 1855 at the storming of the Redan.

### **1991 Fall**

The 253<sup>rd</sup> birthday of King George III was celebrated in fine style by our Branch on June 9, at the Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Museum. Branch members and their guests, many garbed in their best eighteenth-century attire, toured the farm on that beautiful Sunday afternoon.



Ernie Clarke proposed a toast to HRH King George III, who appeared in person. Members and guests also took advantage of the cosy fire in the Giles House. This house, which was moved to the farm in 1976, was built by a probable Loyalist, Joseph Giles, in the later part of the eighteenth century.

Supper was served in the Rose and Kettle tea room at the Harris Hose and consisted of Love Apple (tomato) soup and biscuits, chicken in sherry ginger sauce with brown rice and chartreuse. Trilby (date and oatmeal turnovers) tea and coffee were served at the end of the meal.

### **1992 Fall**

The ninth annual George III's birthday celebration was held on June 7 at the Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Museum. This was the King's 254<sup>th</sup> birthday and the tenth anniversary of our Branch.

Members and guests paraded in their best eighteenth century finery and drank a toast to His Majesty in the Giles House. A fine dinner, was completed with a delicious birthday cake created and donated by Branch President Taunya Dawson.

After the dinner, Lew Perry reported on the National Convention and James Hall read his "Loyalties, Loyalists, and National Unity", which won the Branch Essay Contest.

[image] Halifax-Dartmouth President Taunya Dawson presents James Kumar Hall his prize for winning the branch essay contest.

### **1996 Fall**

#### **LOYALIST HOME IN DIGBY, N.S.**

The family home of UEL members, Capt. David Judson Gray, USNR and Edward S. Gray is located at the corner of Carlton Street and Maiden Lane just off the Cannon Banks in Digby, Nova Scotia.

Digby is a town in western Nova Scotia which lies on the Annapolis Basin of the Bay of Fundy. Digby is the shire town and commercial hub of Digby County. The town is famous for its scallop fishing fleet. The home is built on property granted by the Crown. The oldest portion of the house appears to have been built around 1835-1840. The dating of the back portion of the house is based on the pinion and truss method of construction used around that time. The main portion of the house was built before 1878. An artist's conception of the town dated 1878 show the house as it currently stands. There were two additional houses between the Fenwick House and the Annapolis Basin, but one was destroyed when part of the bluff it sat on was collapsed into the Basin. The other house was removed to allow installation of oil storage tanks to allow refuelling of RCN submarines during World War II.

The house was previously owned by the current owner's mother, Mrs. Alice C. (Neily) Gray, who is also a member of the UEL. Her mother, Mrs. Jennie B. (Cornwall) Neily was born in the upstairs bedroom in 1880. She emigrated to the United States in 1906. Prior to that, the house was owned by her mother, Mrs. Carolyn (Carrie) Fenwick Cornwall. Mrs. Cornwall is buried in the Anglican Cemetery, Digby. The home is still occupied by a cousin of Mrs. Gray, who keeps

it in very good shape.

The Admiral Digby Museum on Water Street has several artifacts from the house on display. The Museum has become a mecca for local genealogists who are researching Loyalist families in the area. The Museum has set aside an area for genealogy and the associated materials.

The Annapolis Basin is considered one of the most historic areas in the Maritimes. Samuel de Champlain wintered there in 1605/1606 and there is a reconstructed Fort (Port Royal) that draws a lot of visitors. Besides the replica French fort, there is also the Fort Anne Historical Park which is in Annapolis proper. The garrison house and magazine are still extant and open to the public. Fort Anne was built by Royal Army engineers after Nova Scotia was ceded to the British by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 following Queen Anne's War.

### **THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF BIRCHTOWN**

*[Extracted from The (Shelburne) Coast Guard newspaper]*

*NOTE: Following is the complete text of the address by former Annapolis Mayor Daurene Lewis on the "Historic Significance of Birchtown" presented on Saturday July 20 during unveiling ceremonies for two plaques recognizing the national historic significance of the settlement by Black Loyalists at Birchtown in 1783.*

The African presence in North America was not expected to be permanent. The life expectancy of a slave was anticipated to be seven years. The projection was that every seven years the labour force would have to be replaced. We were not viewed as human being, but rather instruments in the labour process. Our story started with the most dramatic forced migration in history, which saw 15,000,000 of us brought from Africa in bondage to the Western Hemisphere. We were dumped into a cauldron of unfamiliar cultures, unfamiliar language, unfamiliar religions and an unwelcoming land. Our tribal groupings were destroyed, our families separated, but against all odds we survived. Many of us survived to reach Nova Scotia.

There were three main sources of black settlers in Nova Scotia:

- 1) "servants for life"
- 2) black pioneers
- 3) black Loyalists

"Servants for life" was a euphemism for slaves since slavery was not officially condoned because the removal of slaves from their owners in the U.S., violated the American provisional articles. Many of these "servants" were offered freedom after the death of their master and came to Nova Scotia with the United Empire Loyalists. Others were still being referred to as servants even when they were sold.

The second group of settlers was the black pioneers. They were labourers who followed the army and provided maintenance functions. They were paid for their work, but were not fighting men. The third group of settlers was the black Loyalists. They were recruited by the British as early as 1775 to serve in the army and navy. There were two main reasons for the recruitment: 1) to deplete the American (rebel) workforce, and 2) for the British to gain a workforce for themselves. Both men and women were welcomed by the British to serve in the military. The women cooked, did the laundry and sewing or served as nurses. The men served as teamsters, and they were armed and fought alongside of the British troops.

Sir Guy Carleton, Commander-in-Chief of the British troops in North America, guaranteed their freedom if they joined the military to fight against the Americans in the war of independence.

In nearly every location in Nova Scotia, the black settlers were segregated frequently in unyielding sites. In Annapolis County, 76 free blacks received land grants in 1785; all were for a single acre. This compared to grants of 50 to 200 acres for white settlers.

It was expected that Shelburne would be a model community for the resettlement of blacks in Nova Scotia. The `servants' in Shelburne continued to live with their masters, but most blacks lived in a community of their own called Birchtown. By 1787 there were approximately 200 families in Birchtown and another 70 families in the northern division of the township. In July 1784 the muster roll showed a total of 5,900 whites and 2,700 blacks. Of these, 1,521 blacks were free.

They came with a variety of skills -- carpenters, rope makers, boat builders, sawyers, chimney sweeps, seamstresses and sailors. Therefore, our labour was useful to the white inhabitants in helping Shelburne become the most prosperous community in the province in those early days.

Harmony between the whites in Shelburne and the blacks in Birchtown did not last. In July 1784, to quote Simeon Perkins, "an extraordinary mob" comprised of hundreds of disbanded white soldiers rampaged through the settlement of Birchtown and destroyed many homes.

Relations between the whites of Shelburne and the blacks of Birchtown were never the same.

By 1789 the town fathers of Shelburne passed an ordinance warning blacks against holding dances and frolics in the town of Shelburne. The exodus of free blacks to Sierra Leone in 1792 accentuated and accelerated the decline of the community of Birchtown. The optimism and success of the early days were lost. The glory days passed and the harsh reality of new struggles began. Here we stand more than 200 years later to applaud and celebrate the brief but glorious success of the community of Birchtown.

A tribute to our quest for freedom.  
A pillar of our heritage.  
A beacon for our future.

## **2004 Spring**

The University of King's College UEL Halifax-Dartmouth Branch Bursary. The Branch's long intended goal to establish a Loyalist related scholarship/bursary at King's College became a reality on November 20th 2003 when the Deed of Gift was signed and endowment cheque presented to launch The United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada Halifax-Dartmouth Branch Bursary. In conjunction with King's Building on a Strong Foundation capital fund raising campaign, the bursary in the amount of \$500 will be awarded annually, starting in November of 2004, to a student enrolled in the Foundation Year Program, with preference given to a student intending to major in 18th century North American History.

The recipient will be apprised of the background of the bursary fund and of the significant role the Loyalists played in the early history of our country, in particular the Maritimes. The UEL Association will be recognized on the King's Building on a Strong Foundation capital campaign donor wall. Although the original objective of the UEL Bicentennial Association of Nova Scotia

and the Halifax Dartmouth Branch was to establish a Loyalist Studies Foundation at King's from the financial results of the bicentennial year, in the intervening years it became apparent that it would not be feasible or possible to pursue that idea. And now, 20 years on, the consensus is that the best purpose to which the funds can be applied is to provide the above described bursary, thus capturing in essence the then UEL Bicentennial Association of Nova Scotia Chair, Association Honorary Vice-President Mary Gillis' vision "... to ensure that the interest generated in the Loyalists in the past year (1983) is sustained in the future. It is hoped that this support of Loyalist studies will encourage both research into Loyalist history and its eventual publication, and that the youth of our province will gain enthusiastic awareness and greater understanding of the Loyalist Tradition. Through the bursary now established at King's we are encouraged that this will happen and that the close ties the Association has enjoyed with King's--which was founded by Loyalists in 1789--will flourish."

### **2007 Spring**

At our AGM, held in Toronto on 3 June 2006, the President of the New Brunswick Branch, Jim MacKenzie UE, made a motion that the Association should donate money to the Black Loyalist Heritage Society. They had lost their building and most of the contents in a tragic fire earlier in the year. He set the amount to donate at \$2,500.

During the discussion on the motion, our UELAC Historian/Archivist, Elizabeth Richardson UE, gave a short history on how badly the Blacks had been treated when they came to Nova Scotia. She then made an amendment to the motion that we should double the amount. With very little discussion the motion and amendment were passed unanimously.

On September 18th, Lewis Perry UE, President of the Halifax-Dartmouth Branch, was in Birchtown to present a \$5,000 cheque to Richard Gallion, President of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society. Daryl Currie UE, of the Governor Simcoe Branch, also presented the Society with a Loyalist flag.

In attendance were members of the Halifax-Dartmouth Branch, members of the Black Loyalist Heritage Society, members of the Loyalist Landing 2008 and other interested personnel.

After the presentation a reception was held in the Community Centre in Birchtown.

By Lew Perry UE, Branch President

### **Honorary Vice-President Mary Geraldine (Teed) Gillis UE, Middleton, Nova Scotia**

#### **GILLIS, Mary Geraldine (Teed) –**

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Mary Geraldine (Teed) Gillis, age 89, of 42 Victoria Street, Middleton, Nova Scotia, on 27 June 2011, at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital, in Middleton.

Born in Saint John, New Brunswick on 13 August 1921, she was the daughter of John Francis Hannington and Muriel Vivian (Wetmore) Teed. She is survived by daughter, Mary Heather, Annapolis Royal, NS; sons, Donald T. (Victoria), Middleton, NS; W. Bruce (Deborah), Paradise, NS; Thomas G. (Dorena), Halifax, NS; James B. (Flora), Arlington, Texas; Timothy D. Middleton, NS; G. Scott (Josephine), St. John's, NL; Shaun A., Saint John, NB; and grandchildren, Robbie and Kendra; Jamie, Andrew and Alex; Mhorgan, Chelsea and Kirsten; Shamus and Brianna Gillis, and Michael Young. She is

also survived by brother, Hugh (Betty), Toronto, ON, and sister, Gloria Trivett (Donald), Clifton Royal, NB. She was predeceased by: her husband of fifty-one years, Donald Archibald Gillis of Paradise, NS; her infant daughter Melody Anne; brothers, George and Eric; and sisters, Hazel Hazen, Beth Young and Alice Teed.

She received her early education in the public schools of Saint John and then at Edgehill School for Girls in Windsor, NS. She then attended the Modern Business College in Saint John.

A passionate historian, she fought fiercely for her adopted province of Nova Scotia while always remembering her New Brunswick roots. A life-long member of the United Empire Loyalist Association, she was President of the United Empire Loyalist Bicentennial Association of Nova Scotia for the 200th anniversary celebrations in 1983. She was a founding organizer of the Annapolis Valley Highland Games. For many years she was on the executive of the Soldiers' Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, the Provincial Hospital Auxiliary, and the Annapolis Valley Historical Society.



She played a pivotal role in saving two of Middleton's most historic buildings from demolition: she led the charge which resulted in Canada's first MacDonald Consolidated School being reborn as the MacDonald Museum and was instrumental in having the old Holy Trinity Anglican Church declared a Heritage Site.

She also took great pride in the Gillis family's association with the Clan MacPherson and led two family excursions to Scotland to take part in the Clan Gatherings.

Mary was an avid badminton and tennis player who was still giving her seven sons grief on the courts on her eightieth birthday. She will be lovingly remembered and sorely missed.

The funeral service was held at Old Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Lower Middleton at 2 pm on Friday, 01 July 2011. Interment followed in Old Holy Trinity Cemetery, Middleton. Donations may be made to the Annapolis Valley Historical Society Foundation or to the Old Holy Trinity Charitable Trust.

**Mary Geraldine (Teed) Gillis UE, 13 August 1921 – 27 June 2011**

By her son, Thom Gillis UE, 01 July 2011

Our Mum, Mary Geraldine Gillis UE, was born in Saint John, New Brunswick on 13 August 1921. For many who know her, it is hard to believe that she was sickly as a child. She overcame much illness as a youngster, to become the strong determined woman whom we all remember. She came of age during the war years and luckily for us met a dashing young Air Force pilot from Paradise, Nova Scotia, and that was the beginning of a family of which we are all proud to be a part.

She was married in 1943 and had her first child, a son, in 1944, while our dad was overseas fighting for our country. Following the war, Mum and Dad added one more boy to the brood before relocating from the Maritimes to Ontario. Every two years thereafter another child seemed to creep into the picture, including one girl, Heather, amongst the first five. There was a brief hiatus after the death of the second

daughter, our infant sister, Melody Ann. In 1956 Mum and Dad returned to their roots and established a home at 185 Main Street in Middleton. Thankfully for Tim, Scott and Shaun, the family was not yet completed until 1962.

Shortly after moving to Middleton, Mum started to make an impact on the community, which lasted until this very day.

She was an avid sportswoman, particularly adept at racquet sports. She excelled at badminton and tennis and was one of the founding members of the rejuvenated Middleton Tennis Club in the 1960s. She played well enough to win many awards and to frustrate many younger competitors, including her sons, until she was well into her 60s. For years she travelled all over the province competing in tournaments and, even on her 80th birthday, was making life difficult for her sons on the courts.

She was also involved with many charities and benevolent causes.

As a member of the executive of the Soldiers' Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, she, along with an amazing troupe of amateur performers, raised thousands of dollars towards completing the construction of the hospital and raising funds for the Candy Stripper Program.

She was without doubt the single most important person responsible for saving the MacDonald Consolidated School from demolition and turning it into the MacDonald Museum. She personally did the research, long before the internet age, to find the interested parties in the MacDonald Stewart Foundation who eventually contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to renovate the school and turn it into the facility of which we are now justly proud.

Her family were from Loyalist stock and her dedication to the United Empire Loyalists' Association was a lifelong passion. In 1983 the bicentennial of the Loyalist immigration to Canada was celebrated and Mum took on the task of chairman of the organizing committee for the celebration. She logged thousands of miles on her own car at her own expense, travelling from one end of the province to the other, to spread knowledge of the history of the Loyalists.

Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Middleton was founded by Loyalists and Mum always had a soft spot in her heart for it. When some members proposed that demolition might be in the best interest of the parish, she went to great lengths to preserve this historic edifice. At one point, in an interview with the media, she threatened to chain herself to the building to bely the wrecking ball. In spite of the unsupportive reaction of certain members of the community, her efforts resulted in the church being declared a heritage site. That is why we are able to gather here today to celebrate her life.

In 1985, when two of her sons decided to make a trip to Scotland to explore their Celtic roots, Mum got involved and turned it into a family pilgrimage to connect with the Clan MacPherson Association with whom the Gillises were believed to be linked. We made an impression on the MacPherson clan and on international gatherings that I doubt will ever be forgotten and that continues to this day, exemplified by a close relationship between our family and that of the Chief of the Clan MacPherson. She was a founding member of the Annapolis Valley Highland Society which in the late 1980s broke new ground by conducting very successful Highland Games here in Middleton. She was also a member of the NS Highland Society.

Mum had a unique sense of humour. All her sons can remember at some time her being incapacitated with laughter when we had committed some slapstick-like trip, stumble or fall while descending the stairs at 185 Main Street. It was not at all mean or vindictive; she just couldn't help herself.

We were taught that no-one would be harder on us for our misdeeds than our parents but at the same time they were undaunted backers if they believed us right. I still remember one time when one of us was marked down on an English grammar test for using a rule which had no documented exceptions but which contradicted the common usage. Mum went to the teacher and then to the principal to protest and was finally acknowledged as right.

She was a very intelligent woman, but could also be surprisingly naive. I guess it was just her innate faith in the goodness of her fellow man that allowed her to occasionally be hoodwinked by strangers to whom she was just offering a helping hand. Several years ago she was at the post office and noticed a young fellow selling watches. They looked like a nice product at an unbelievably reasonable price. She promptly offered to buy one and suggested that some of her sons might be interested in them as well. She invited the vendor down to the house for a drink of peach juice and started calling to see which of the boys needed a new watch. When she reached Bruce, he was a little sceptical and contacted the local police chief who soon put an end to the chicanery.

Mum raised us with certain values and traditions which were not always clear when we were younger but which we soon grew to appreciate as we gained a little life experience. Things like: never feel inferior to anyone, but don't treat anyone in a condescending manner; always give a firm handshake; always address your elders as Mr., Mrs. or Miss; always hold the door open for a lady; and treat all those whom you meet as ladies and gentlemen, unless they prove otherwise.

Looking out and seeing all of the faces here today just reaffirms the impact that our mother had on this community. She achieved much more than I could ever hope to and our family and I believe the whole community will be indebted to her for years to come.

We, her family, thank all of you for coming to celebrate her life and faith. We thank you for the gift of flowers and for the donations to her favourite charities. She will be very pleased.

I will close by quoting a phrase which was a favourite of my mother's and her mother's: "Dare to be a Daniel." At the time I didn't know the source of the phrase but was explained the meaning. They both were adamant that we should not fear to have a view that differed from the main stream but dare to be different and strike out on our own for something in which we truly believed no matter what the popular wisdom suggested.

Mary Gillis dared to be a Daniel.

