

Trip to Edmonton Branch, Edmonton, Alberta: Saturday, December 1, 2012



On a day that saw de-icers washing the wings of our airplane, we set out for Edmonton, Alberta. In contrast to the minus 14 degree temperatures on arrival, we were warmly greeted at the airport by Gillian and Dave Rolls UE, Edmonton Branch Genealogist, and driven to the hotel located almost adjacent to the beautiful First Presbyterian Church where we would meet Edmonton Branch members the next day. Trevor Angell UE met us for dinner. We shared stories about his family history and ours and ways to increase membership in the branch. Both Trevor and Heather Traub, Acting

President for the Branch, told me about the importance of receiving news from the areas in Eastern Canada where their Loyalists first settled. Stories and articles about Loyalist subjects draw them closer to their own roots whether it comes by electronic means or in the form of *The Loyalist Gazette*.

The next morning we met John Maher UE who took us on a tour of the Royal Alberta Museum and the impressive First Presbyterian Church.



The museum houses a breathtaking collection of

environmental and natural exhibits as well as cultural displays such as an on-loan large display of hand-made Inuit dolls and a large aboriginal gallery including a diorama of Anthony Henday's arrival in Alberta in 1754. John reminded us that Edmonton is not as far north as people think, as it is located in the lower half of the province. This city is a "young" city with few buildings as old as the one-hundred-year-old church. Over lunch John spoke about his Loyalist ancestor, Hugh Munro(e) UE, and about the thrill of the quest to locate parts of the family history, especially when he discovers something long forgotten about an ancestor and his life. We can all relate to this feeling.



Arriving back at the church at 4:00 p.m., we met many branch members who shared stories about their ancestors and their success or difficulty in tracing their history. It was particularly enjoyable meeting Robert Morgan UE who shares my Adam Young UE Loyalist ancestor, Earl and Betty



Fladager UE who shared a few stories, and the Lund family who are searching for passenger lists for their Loyalist ancestor. Heather Traub and branch volunteers prepared a warm, welcoming setting for this special dinner and ran the meeting with much variety. After the presentation of the



Photo by Irene Chapman UE

Flags and the Royal Anthem, Skyler Harrison welcomed my wife, Grietje McBride UE, with a “red red rose”, followed by a video clip of Robbie Burn’s ballad, “My Love is like a Red, Red Rose”, being played.



Al Dodd, an Edmonton Branch Past President, explained the protocol of selecting a Branch President and I then installed Trevor Angell UE as the newest Edmonton Branch President.

A delicious catered dinner was served buffet-style.

Following dinner, UELAC certificates were presented to Kristina Harrison UE for her Loyalist ancestor, Andrew

Ritchie UE, and to Donald Fraser Chapman UE, for his Loyalist ancestor, William Cadman UE. Both Kristina and Don then gave brief accounts about their Loyalist ancestors, Don pointing out that he received his first UELAC certification from Peter Johnson UE, then Dominion President, and now his tenth and last UELAC certification from me as the current Dominion President.



After I brought greetings from the office of the Dominion President, my wife and I presented our skit about my Loyalist ancestor, Adam Young UE, and his wife, Catherine Elizabeth Schremling, telling a very familiar tale of persecution and loss suffered by all of our Loyalist ancestors. We were thanked by Edmonton Branch Social Convenor, Fran Losie UE, with the presentation of Wild Alberta at the Crossroads by Marion and Robin White, an award-



winning book endorsing responsible development of resources in Alberta. In addition we received a kitchen wall hanging depicting the humorous rights and privileges of a Scottish cook!

After an appropriate break in the evening, a gift basket was professionally auctioned off by Trevor Angell to the great delight of all attending.



Many in this branch took the opportunity to tell me how happy they were to meet someone representing the UELAC Dominion Office and that the connections to the history of the Loyalists and their adventures in Canada are very dear to them as they are so far removed from the place where their ancestors settled.

Communication is the key that ignites their enthusiasm for Branch activities. Teamwork is evident in the centennial project of the Edmonton Branch. They are collecting the stories about how their families found their way westward. The stories are to be published in a book for the enjoyment of interested readers and the wider community. This book is well worth waiting for.



My wife and I were struck by their western hospitality that didn't end, even when Gillian and Dave Rolls once again met us to take us back to the airport.

We have many to thank for a most memorable visit very capably organized by Heather Traub and her team of welcoming volunteers.

Truly, teamwork encourages active members!

Sincerely and loyally,

Robert C. McBride UE,
UELAC Dominion President 2011 – 2013.