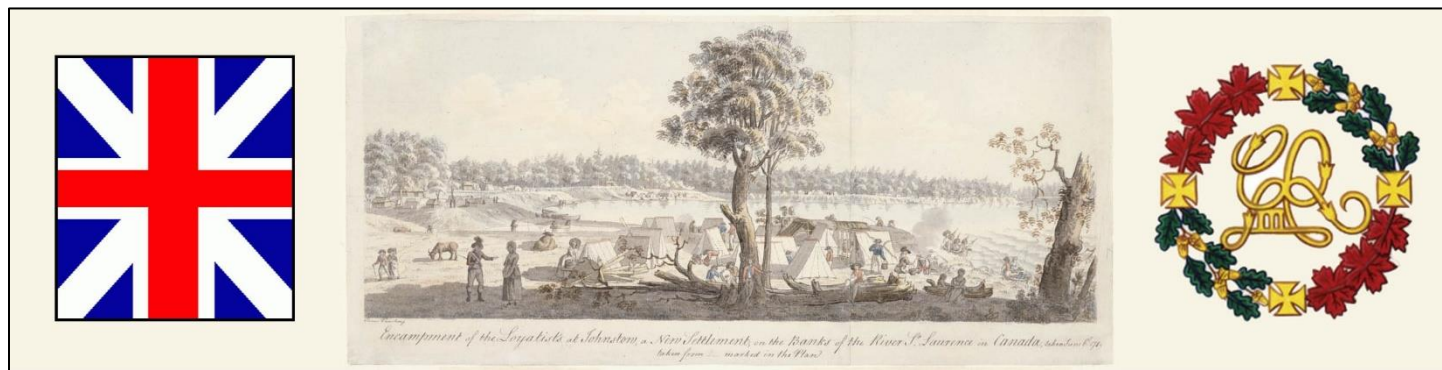


THE ROYAL YORKER

The Quarterly Newsletter of the St. Lawrence Branch, United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada

❧ SPRING 2017 ❧



WHO WE ARE

The association is dedicated to promoting the history of the United Empire Loyalists: North Americans who remained loyal to the Crown during the American War of Independence, and who later settled in Canada. The St. Lawrence Branch serves the Ontario counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, comprising the former "Royal Townships" of Lancaster, Charlottenburgh, Cornwall, Osnabruck, Williamsburgh and Matilda.

Branch Executive: President: Lorraine Reoch; Vice President: Vacant; Past President: Vacant; Secretary: Carol Goddard; Treasurer: Michael Eamer; Genealogist: Lorraine Reoch; Social Conveners: Carol Goddard & Lorraine Reoch; Webmaster and Facebook Admin: Jennifer DeBruin; Newsletter: Stuart Manson.

Acknowledgement: The Ontario Ministry of Culture provides a heritage grant to the branch for its outreach program.

WHERE TO FIND US

 Website: uelac.org/st-lawrence/

 Facebook: www.facebook.com/StLawrenceUELAC/

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 21, 2017: Our Spring and Annual General Meeting, at the Bethune-Thompson House (19730 John Street, Williamstown) starting at 1:30 p.m. See President's Report for more details.
- June 25, 2017: Our Summer Picnic, at the Lost Villages Museum, starting at noon. See President's Report for more details.
- August 17-20, 2017: Loyalist Days, Prescott, ON (Fort Wellington National Historic Site).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



It is forty years since the St. Lawrence Branch was formed in 1977.

Another long winter has finally ended and spring has begun with bright flowers and the cheery sound of twittering birds. I hope everyone is healthy and ready to get out and enjoy the warmer weather.

We are beginning a new year with a few changes and some of the same. This year there will be no re-enactment at Upper Canada Village, so we are looking at Loyalist Days in Prescott. Some more information will follow later.

Our first meeting will be at the Bethune-Thompson House in Williamstown. David Anderson will be our guest speaker. Ladies can bring a few cookies. Time is at 1:30 p.m. on May 21.

The picnic will be at the Lost Villages Museum again this year on June 25 at noon. Bring something to share for lunch and cold drinks will be supplied.

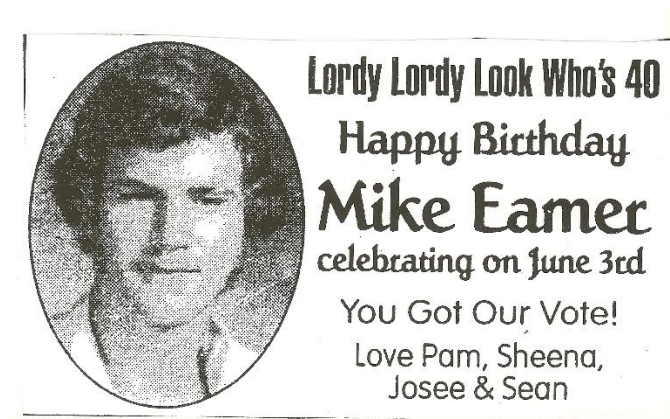
The Annual Dinner will be held at St. Mathew's Presbyterian Church in Ingleside on September 23. More information to follow later.

The October meeting will be an open house and show-and-tell. The time and place will be determined at a later time.

-Lorraine Reoch

LORDY, LORDY LOOK WHO'S NOT FORTY

Don't you wish you had this number and that much hair?



Happy Birthday Mike!

Mike will receive a 20-year Ontario Volunteer Service Award on June 20 at the Best Western Parkway Inn.

Congratulations Mike!

TREASURER'S REPORT



In this week's executive notes we are listed as 108% overall for membership. It's a welcomed note from previous years of drops in membership. This year to date our membership is 22 individuals; 7 family; 12 other family; 3 life

and 4 additional branch. Last year we were 16 individuals; 3 family; 7 other family; 3 life and 6 additional branch.

Our prices have not increased in years and we are not currently looking at any increases. But the Dominion Headquarters has put a time limit of one year on applying at a reduced rate for additional certificates. Please note this for future certificates of members who already have one.

We now are paying a significantly larger amount of rent and are fortunate to have been given a large bequest from a long time member and former honorary president. We are still looking for a new location.

Will bequests and donations are always welcome. We are fortunate to have Dominion Headquarters that is registered as a charitable organization and can issue tax receipts and return the money to the branches. Please keep this in mind when you are looking for places to make donations, like when a member/former member passes, or to note a special life event. Note this spring's issue of *The Loyalist Gazette*, page 49, "Honouring our Donors."

Dues are listed in previous newsletters (fall/winter) when they are due. Thanks for all who renewed. If you haven't yet, please consider doing so.

-Michael C. Eamer, CD,UE

FOR SALE

For researchers, we have some second-hand books:

Reid's - *The Loyalist in Ontario*; Carter's - *The Story of Dundas*; Cruikshank & Watt - *King's Royal Regiment of New York*; *Loyalist Lineages of Canada*.

Prices will be based on condition and postage.

GENEALOGIST'S REPORT



We continue the work of sorting through Lynne's collection and are happy to report that we have been able to find documentation to complete Stuart Lyall Manson's descent from George Barnhart UEL. (We are so pleased to have Stuart as a new member, and as our new newsletter editor.)

Born in Germantown, Columbia City NY, George Barnhart was a farmer - a successful one judging from his claim for restitution. He claimed loss of 180 acres on the Delaware River, nine horses, 28 horned cattle, 44 sheep, 50-60 hogs flour, grain, wool, deerskins, leather and furniture, all of which were sold when he was a prisoner of the Rebels.

Barnhart served with Sir John Johnson's KRRNY, and in Brant's Volunteers under the leadership of Captain Joseph Brant. At war's end he received several Crown Grants in the Cornwall area where he and his wife, Catherine Sharpstone eventually settled. In 1795 he leased for 999 years, from the St. Regis Indian tribes, what is now known as Barnhart Island. (It is now St. Regis Reserve.) At the time of his death in 1811, he was one of prominent men in the community.

I am presently working on 13 more applications and we are hosting researchers at the archives at 3 Augusta St. in Morrisburg, ON, K0C 1X0. We welcome any and all researchers every Tuesday and Wednesday 10:00 - 4:00. Please encourage anyone you know to visit us. Travellers may be able to book alternate days by emailing me directly.

-Lorraine Reoch fancylass@hotmail.ca

ST. LAWRENCE SUNDRIES

- The latest issue of *The Loyalist Gazette* (Vol. LV, No. 1, Spring 2017) contains a reprinted newspaper article describing the efforts to find a new home for Lynne Cook's Loyalist Resource Centre, Morrisburg.
- The same issue also contains a notice that the 2019 UELAC annual conference will be held in Ottawa-Gatineau, just a stone's throw from our backyard.

SIGNPOSTS

"Signposts" is a recurring feature in *The Royal Yorker* that points to a current place name in our region that has Loyalist origins.

In this issue, we examine Gray's Creek, a small watercourse, marina, and conservation area located in the south-western corner of Glengarry County, adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the City of Cornwall.

Many a local resident has walked the nature trails that form part of Gray's Creek Conservation Area. In winter, chickadees flutter from branch to branch; in spring, frogs begin their early evening serenades; in summer the forest foliage bursts forth, its deep green tones eventually transforming to the brilliant colours of autumn.



Few nature trekkers enjoying these sights and sounds realize that the area was named after the man who was second-in-command of one of the largest and most active Loyalist military units, the King's Royal Regiment of New York (KRRNY).

Major James Gray was a military man long before the Rebels decided to take up arms against the Crown in the American War of Independence. He served during the earlier Seven Years War, including service in Cuba during the siege of Havana. An ardent Loyalist to boot, he naturally became Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Johnson's right-hand-man in the KRRNY. Due to Sir John's

occasional absences from the theatre of war, the command of the regiment sometimes fell to Gray.

When the war was lost, Gray became one of the thousands of refugee Loyalists who sought new homes in the Royal Townships on the upper St. Lawrence River. In 1784 he settled on riverfront land at a small creek then called Rivière de la Traverse (many early place names along the river bore French names, due to the region's use as a highway into the interior during the French Regime). "Traverse" means "to cross," which is likely a reference to the fact that the Mohawk village of St. Regis lies directly across the river from the spot. It was therefore a natural crossing place.

Gray became one of the leaders in the local community, for example, serving as a magistrate. Eventually, Rivière de la Traverse became known as Gray's Creek. He died in 1795.

-Stuart Manson

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The Royal Yorker heartily welcomes submissions from our membership. Please send information on upcoming events, photos, or articles for consideration to newsletter's new editor, Stuart Manson. His current email address is: Manson1763@gmail.com.

THE BOOKSHELF

"The Bookshelf" is a recurring feature in *The Royal Yorker*. Here we examine books of interest - old or new - whose subject matter is dear to our hearts: The early history of our region, genealogy, the American Revolution and War of Independence, and related topics. Our common interest in the Loyalists might be just as strong as our common interest in books!

History is one of those disciplines where some publications retain their informational value for some time. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in works that offer detailed accounts of events, or on subjects off-the-beaten-path.

Recently, one of our members, while perusing the contents of a second-hand bookshop in Ottawa,

stumbled upon a 1927 publication titled: *Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany: The Romantic Story of the Repulse of St. Leger's British Invasion of 1777 Told for the First Time in Chronological Order and in Detail - Mainly from Contemporary Reports, Letters and Diaries, with All Sources Indicated*. The author was John Albert Scott.

The volume was published to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the siege of Fort Stanwix and the nearby Battle of Oriskany, events which figure large in our history due to the participation of Loyalist troops (King's Royal Regiment of New York, Butler's Rangers, and Brant's Volunteers, for example).

As indicated in the title, the book makes heavy use of primary sources, frequently quoting or transcribing their contents. The author was fearful that this approach would turn away some readers:

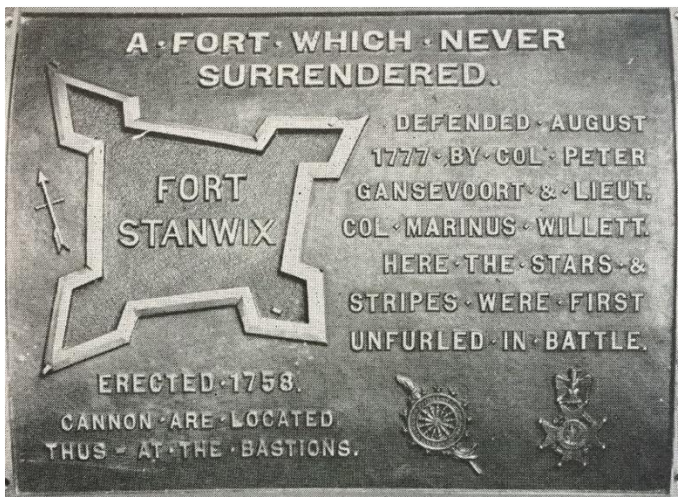
"Writers of fiction have sought to apply a sugar coating to history and so get it down the throats of their readers without strangling them. Every individual reader will doubtless discover a dry spot here or there in the present narrative, according to his own predilections, but it is the fond belief of the author that through the simple, though perhaps unusual, expedient of dissecting letters, journals, orderly books, and official reports, and rearranging the passages chronologically, the past will be made to speak alike in a variety of languages and more accurately than any work where paraphrasing is the rule."

When this book was published, the Oriskany battlefield was a well-established historical site, complete with a towering stone obelisk. Its landscape had been generally preserved. The site of Fort Stanwix, however, had suffered a completely different fate: It had become completely built over by the City of Rome, NY. It was a victim of urban expansion. One of the photographs in the book highlights this fact. Reproduced below, it illustrates a substantial house, occupied by the Rome Club, which sat on the site of the fort's south-west bastion. (A bastion is a diamond-shaped protrusion at each corner of a

fortification, designed to allow defenders to fire along its walls for better defence.)



Scott also explains that, in 1927, cannons marked all four of the fort's bastions. Each cannon had a bronze plaque, one of which is illustrated below.



The government reconstructed Fort Stanwix later in the 20th century. It now serves to inform visitors about its fascinating history. More than a few members of the UELAC have ventured there, and to the surrounding Mohawk Valley region, in order to visit these historic sites and to imagine the events that lead to their ancestors' migration to what remained of British North America.

-Stuart Manson

A PRE-LOYALIST GLIMPSE OF THE UPPER ST. LAWRENCE RIVER

In the autumn of 1783, the American War of Independence was over. In Québec and in other British-held areas, thousands of refugee Loyalists were now permanent exiles from their former homes in the new American republic. British administrators hastened to find lands that were agriculturally fit for their resettlement in the remainder of British North America.

Québec Governor Frederick Haldimand, a key figure in this effort, looked westward towards the upper St. Lawrence River. He sent men to explore and to report on the area. The report of one such explorer, described below, offers an early glimpse of the lands that later became the Loyalist settlements covered by our branch of the UELAC.

The author of the 1783 report, unknown because he did not sign his oeuvre, travelled west up the St. Lawrence River, beyond the last French Canadian settlement at "Pointe au Beaudet" (present-day Rivière Beaudette, Québec). The lands are depicted in a 1776 map at the end of this article.

His impression of the first lands he saw, which later became the Township of Lancaster, was mixed: They were "interspersed with swamp and drowned lands," he reported about those near the river. Inland from those moist areas, however, the land was "very good for three miles back," and in some cases "excellent" with stands of pine and hay meadows. Nonetheless, other parts of the same area he described as "very wet and swampy." Hence the reference to Lancaster as the "sunken township," and its most prominent headland as Pointe Mouillé.

Our explorer, continuing westward, then reached the Raisin River near the boundary between present-day Lancaster and Charlottenburgh townships. He ascended this significant stream for several miles, to a waterfall suitable for a mill (present-day Williamstown). "From the lake to the falls the land for the most part is bad, except some points," he reported. This area was not without notable attractions; nearby he had cast his eye upon "the largest cedar I ever saw."

Better lands were evident as he moved further west along the St. Lawrence River. Between Raisin River and Mille Roches, which covered all of present-day Charlottenburgh Township and a good part of Cornwall Township, he considered the land “excellent” for three to six miles back from the river. The soil was deep and the forests offered a variety of species such as maple, hickory, beech, white oak, and bitternut. He was less impressed with the area immediately west of Mille Roches, near the boundary between present-day Cornwall and Osnabruck townships: “For the most part bad, having much broken ground and a pine ridge, the soil is light and stony near the river, but a mile back the land is good.”

He then trekked further west to the area covered by present-day Osnabruck Township. He liked what he saw, and was particularly enthralled with a large “pine flat” that contained plenty of good timber and was surrounded by good land.

As he ranged further westward, near what is now the townships of Matilda and Williamsburgh, it was clear that Nature saved the best for last. He described the land as “as good as any I ever saw, it is well watered with several fine creeks.” He considered this region to have the largest acreage of lands suitable for settlement.

After reading this and other reports, Governor Haldimand was optimistic. He wrote in an official

report to Britain that the districts pegged for Loyalist resettlement could produce “great quantities of wheat and other grains and become a granary for the lower [downstream] parts of Canada.” In the end, the lands on the upper St. Lawrence were surveyed as “Royal Townships” for the Loyalists, but they would suffer many hardships before attaining the lofty predictions of the governor. The original of the anonymous report can be found in the Haldimand Papers, available on microfilm at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa (MG 21, Add. MSS. 21661-21892, Vol. 21829).

-Stuart Manson

THE LAST WORD

“Sir John Johnson and about 200 followers arrived here from the Province of New York. He represents to me that there are considerable numbers of people in the part of the country he comes from, who remain steadily attached to His Majesty’s Government, and who would take up arms in its defence had they sufficient protection; on which account, in the meantime, they suffer all the miseries that the persecuting spirit of the Rebels is able to inflict upon them.”

- Guy Carleton, Governor of Canada, to Lord George Germain, British Secretary of State for America. July 8, 1776.

