

UELAC

CALGARY BRANCH END of YEAR NEWSLETTER: 2025

Linda McClelland and Suzanne Davidson



**UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA**

Calgary Branch

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President Message

Hope your Christmas gatherings included many family members. We wish for a prosperous and less tumultuous New Year. Our Facebook page is no longer functioning. If anyone is interested in reviving a Facebook page please contact me. We can increase the activity by connecting with Facebook pages of other branches. Our 100 anniversary is approaching in 2028. We need input as to what activities should be planned. Please send me any ideas. We have some older files which we used for our 90th anniversary. For our 90th anniversary we had a presentation by the Legal Archives Society of Alberta on some of our founding members many of whom were lawyers. Short biographies of the founding members are on our website uelac.org/calgary under Biographies. The website uelac.org/calgary is being revised to include a notice for our Spring Meeting and some information on our October meeting.

Our History Prizes at the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge are increasing in value. See the notes on the awards later in the newsletter.

Spring Meeting

We are planning our Spring meeting for Sunday April 19 at the Alberta Family Histories Society Resource Centre. Bruce Miller will be presenting a talk on The Journey of a Loyalist from captivity to settlement. Bruce recently moved to Calgary. He has been a member of UELAC for six years. He has written a book on his family, of which a copy is at the AFHS Library. He taught religion courses at the University of Alberta and was the MLA for Edmonton Glenora from 2004 to 2008.

Membership Renewal

It is time to renew your membership, if you have not already done so. Thank you to those who have renewed their memberships. This can be done in a few ways. First one needs to sign in to the uelac.ca website. You open the "Add/Renew Membership button at the top of the page. Go to the bottom of the page and find Calgary branch. After opening Calgary Branch your personal information will open. You can use a Credit card or Paypal to complete the renewal transaction. Our branch can accept payment by e-transfer. Please contact William Simpson at ([William.simpson\(@\)live.ca](mailto:William.simpson(@)live.ca)) or me for the address. A cheque can be mailed to Bill Simpson at 339 Evanston Dr. NW, Calgary, AB T3P 0E4. A one year family membership is \$70. A one year individual membership is \$50 and a membership for Calgary as an additional branch is \$10. To use the additional membership, one needs to have a main membership with another branch.

MINUTES of the Fall Meeting

Date: October 26, 2025 Location: at Alberta Family Histories Society Resource Centre and Online (via Zoom)

Meeting Time: 12:05 p.m. Meeting Type: Fall Branch Meeting

Attendees

Present: Suzanne Davidson (Chair), Frank Clifford (Secretary) Bill Simpson (Membership) Linda McClelland (Newsletter), Ian McIlreath (Awards), Anne Redish (President Kingston), Karen Stevenson (Director), Elaine Rewcastle, Bruce Miller, Christine, Terry Holland, Lorna Laughton, Darlene Asquith, Neil Garlough, Cheryl Hanna, Jacquie McGowan, Marion Peterson, Dorothy Clements, Eugene Peters

On Zoom: Wayne Hovdestad, Gord Miller

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Suzanne at approximately 12:05 p.m. The agenda was reviewed and approved by all present, with no objections.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes from the Spring Meeting (May 2025), previously distributed in the branch newsletter, were reviewed.

Motion to approve the minutes: Ian

Seconded by: Bill

Motion carried unanimously. No corrections were noted.

3. Reports

a) Website and Facebook Updates

Suzanne reported that the branch website has been updated to include notice of the current meeting and remains current with all working links. Facebook activity has been limited due to Beatrice's absence. Anne volunteered to assist with managing the Facebook page moving forward.

b) Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported a current bank balance of \$4,636.21. Major expenses included insurance (\$605, reduced to \$35 after rebate) and per capita payments to National Headquarters (\$740). Membership remains steady with approximately 68 members, including 14 family memberships and 25 individual memberships. The figures are consistent with previous years.

c) History Awards Report (Ian)

Ian reported on the two sponsored Canadian History Awards at the University of Lethbridge (UofL) and the University of Calgary (UofC).

At UofL, the 2025 recipient was Mark G., a third-year History student. Both universities continue to match donations to the branch's endowment funds.

As of March 31, 2025, the market value of UofL's fund was \$56,606 (up 13%), and UofC's fund was \$43,103 (up 26%).

Prize values for UofC increased from \$900 to \$1,200, exceeding previous goals. The students are appreciative, and write-ups are circulated following the awards.

4. Old Business

Membership engagement and recruitment remain ongoing challenges. Suggestions included reaching out to local history and genealogy groups such as the Chinook History Society, Alberta Family History Society, and senior centers like the Kerby Centre.

Linda will contact the Kerby Centre regarding possible outreach opportunities, and Suzanne will follow up with the Chinook History Society.

Articles in community newsletters and human-interest pieces in publications like Unison News were discussed as effective low-cost awareness methods.

5. New Business

a) National Conference

The National Conference will now be held biannually instead of annually, with the next scheduled for 2027.

There was general discussion about the feasibility of hosting a future conference in Calgary, though no decision was made.

b) Branch 100th Anniversary (2028)

Preparations for the branch's centennial are underway. Suzanne invited volunteers to help review and organize historical branch files currently in her possession.

Wayne Hovdestad volunteered to assist and assume genealogical file responsibilities. Plans will be developed to document branch history and update archives.

c) Remembrance Day Wreath

The branch will again participate in the annual Remembrance Day ceremony at the Military Museums.

Anne will assist with wreath design, and Terry will liaise with museum contacts to ensure placement and storage.

Elaine and Karen volunteered to represent the branch at the ceremony, weather permitting.



Karen and Suzanne at Military Museums



Terry Holland at Military Museums

Bill will lay the wreath at the Shrines' service.



6. Other Business

a) Outreach and Public Speaking

Bruce offered to provide presentations and talks related to Loyalist history, drawing from his past experience as a speaker and author.

Members were encouraged to contribute short historical or genealogical articles for newsletters and partner organization publications.

b) National AGM

The National Annual General Meeting will be held online in May 2026. Suzanne will circulate notice and coordinate branch representation.

7. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.

8. Speaker



Our speaker was Stephen Davidson talking about a range of Loyalist facts on Zoom. Stephen is a retired teacher, who lives in Nova Scotia and writes a column for the Loyalist Trails newsletter. He has also contributed to the latest Loyalist Gazette with an article on Pierre Berton, an article in the 2024 Gazette highlighting Lower Canada Loyalists and 2023 Gazette highlighting Maritime Loyalists. He has authored two books on Black Loyalists and assisted Peter Newman with his 2016 book on Loyalists.

A summary of facts that were presented

Fact 1: The Loyalists were refugees like those of the 21st century – not fashionable nobility who were en route to a glittering ball.

Fact 2: Most Loyalists were from the middle and working class.

Fact 3: Staten Island, Long Island, and Manhattan were all within the British lines from 1776 to 1783.

Fact 4: Hundreds of Loyalists lived in refugee camps during the American Revolution, one at Fort Franklin, New York, now Fort Hill

Fact 5: There were refugee camps in Canada at Sorel and Yamachiche along the St Lawrence River and Fort Niagara

Fact 6: Some colonies generated more refugees than others – New York produced the most.

Fact 7: 10% of Loyalists in the Maritimes were Black. (20% of the population in the American colonies were black and enslaved.)

Fact 8: Loyalists took 15,000 slaves with them when they left the 13 Colonies -- with most going to the Caribbean and about 2,500 to Maritimes.

Fact 9: Loyalist Quakers and Baptists who settled in New Brunswick created the first slave-free settlement in the British Empire.

Fact 10: The majority of Loyalists did not become refugees, but remained in the new republic. Based on recent research it has been deemed that only about 2.5% left.

Fact 11: While some Loyalists fled overland to Canada, the majority left in 6 fleets of evacuation vessels from New York City. Fleets also sailed from Boston, Savannah and Charleston.

Fact 12: There were 40 shipwrecks of Loyalist evacuation vessels with that of the *Martha* being the most noteworthy. Survivors mainly settled near Fredericton.

Fact 13: September 1783 was the wettest on record in the Maritimes followed by an early and extremely cold winter. The later refugees used army tents for the winter and pit houses were built in Birchtown.

Fact 14: Thousands returned to the USA, perhaps as many as 20%. One of the notable Loyalists was Dr William Paine, who settled initially in New Brunswick and returned to Massachusetts. Widows also returned.

Fact 15: Loyalists founded and operated Canada's first Indigenous residential schools in New Brunswick in 1786. The Sussex Vale Indian Day School closed in 1826.

Fact 16: Sierra Leone was founded by Black Loyalists leaving the Maritimes due to failed promises.

Fact 17: Loyalists brought in some basic democratic rights to their new lands before Americans. In the New Brunswick's 1785 elections any white male could vote since not all land had been distributed and women as heads of households could vote.

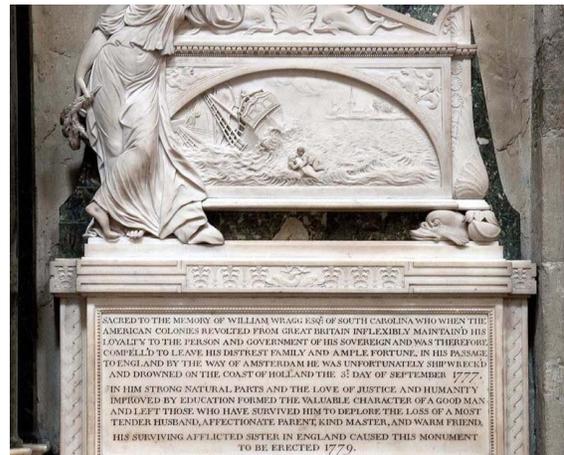


Sussex Vale Indian Day School lithograph from CBC article of 2021

Fact 18: Very few Loyalists received financial compensation for their losses. Hearings were held until May 1788; only 4% of all Loyalists received any compensation.

Fact 19: The British government recognized six classifications of Loyalists. Some of them were those who rendered service, bore arms and those who took oath of American allegiance and then changed.

Fact 20: Only one loyal American is memorialized in Westminster Abbey at the south choir aisle: William Wragg of South Carolina. He died during a shipwreck en route from Charleston, South Carolina to Europe. His infant son and a slave boy survived.



William Wragg memorial from mycandles.blogspot.com [Westminster Abbey Westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/William-wragg](http://WestminsterAbbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/William-wragg)



General Burgoyne and Major John Andre (executed as a spy) are buried at Westminster Abbey in the cloister and nave respectively. Thomas Aston Coffin, an assistant to Sir Guy Carleton is buried at St Margaret’s Church, a chapel of Westminster.

John Andre memorial at Westminster Abbey Nave from Wikipedia

Fact 21: Canadian Anglicans observe August 12th as a feast day for a Loyalist – Charles Inglis, the first Anglican bishop to serve outside of the UK. He was consecrated on that day in 1787. The day is noted in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Fact 22: Some Loyalist child refugees lived long enough to have their photographs taken in the mid-19th century. A Photo of Sarah Harding who became Sarah Hay was taken in 1867 to the age of 90 years. A description of Sarah’s life is in the Loyalist Trails newsletter of 2017 at [Loyalist Trails 2017-17 – UELAC](#)

Fact 23: Five British colonies were established by refugees of the American Revolution. These include New Brunswick, Upper Canada, Sierra Leone, Florida and Cape Breton. Florida was returned to Spain in 1783 and Cape Breton rejoined Nova Scotia in 1820.

Fact 24: Loyalist Heraldry shows in the New Brunswick flag and coat of arms. The ship on the flag represents the evacuation vessels used to transport Loyalists. The motto is “Hope restored”



New Brunswick Flag By Dbenbenn (original)E Pluribus Anthony (current) - Government of New Brunswick, Communications New Brunswick: Logos/Symbols.Adapted by E Pluribus Anthony., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=356605>

Fact 25: The royal coat of arms that had graced the Boston Council Chambers was rescued from Patriot destruction and now hangs in Saint John, New Brunswick's Trinity Anglican Church. It was rescued during the 1877 St John fire.

United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada History Prize

Ian McIlreath reported that the 2025 winner of our History Prize at the University of Calgary is Nick Irwin. He received \$1200, the first recipient to receive \$1000 or more. He is currently in political science with aspirations of going to law school.

There have been some changes to our contacts in the History Department as Paul Chasto has replaced Jewel Spangler as the Head of the Department, and the Department AA is now Kyra Caner replacing Sarah Stevenson.

During the month of April any donations made toward the prize will be matched by University of Calgary. Information on how to donate will be sent at the end of March.

Nick Irwin

Recipient of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada History Prize

I grew up in Calgary and have loved living in the city my entire life. I attended Centennial High School, where I confirmed what really interested me, and that, coupled with my love for Calgary, made it an easy decision to come to the University of Calgary to pursue a degree in political science. I've really enjoyed my time in university and have become active in the school community over the last few years, playing for the Dinos Men's Rugby team. I fill my course load with political science and history, as those subjects have been extremely interesting to me for much of my life, but my ultimate goal is to continue my academic career by attending law school and eventually practicing law.

Receiving this award is an honour and is without a doubt one of, if not the most, gratifying achievements of my academic career. I have always had a love for Canadian history and have taken many classes on various aspects of our nation's past. I believe that when doing something you love, it is a lot easier to put your all into it; however, while proving that to be true, receiving this award has also helped open my eyes to what I'm capable of academically and has instilled a motivation in me that I already see helping with all aspects of my academic career. Pursuing a degree in law is highly competitive, but being recognized with an award such as this has only further cemented my belief that I can excel at what I put my mind to.



University of Lethbridge UELAC Calgary Branch Prize in History

The recipient of the 2025 prize was Mark G. He is a local student in his final year in the Faculty of Arts and Science studying History, Philosophy and Religious Studies. His main area of study is Medieval History and plans to attend a seminary after graduation. The University of Lethbridge will match donations made throughout the year.

250th Revolutionary War Commemorative Coins

United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada has facilitated commemorative coins to honour the 250th Anniversary of the start of the American Revolution. See below for order information.

Newly Arrived for 2026!

Order Now, Limited Quantities!

UELAC Challenge Coin



UELAC Challenge Coins are 2 sided and measure 1.75" x 1.75"

ORDER YOUR COINS TODAY!

\$20.00 EACH, PLUS SHIPPING

250th Revolutionary War Coin of Remembrance



UELAC Coins of Remembrance are 2 sided and measure 1.75" x 1.75"

ORDER YOUR COINS TODAY!

\$20.00 EACH, PLUS SHIPPING

To Order Contact us at promotions@uelac.org

Loyalist Information sites

Information on sites for Loyalist research are listed on the UELAC website at [Research Resources – UELAC](#) and our website uelac.org/Calgary at [Loyalist Links – Calgary Branch UELAC](#)

Organizations that might be of Interest to you

Alberta Family Histories Society [Alberta Family Histories Society: Home](#)

The next meeting is on Monday, February 9 at 7:00 pm. The topic is Genealogical Research in BC. Register for the Zoom link on the website or attend in person at the Resource Centre. The society has a Resource Centre at 8500 Macleod Tr SE Suite 251S which has a number of books on Genealogy and areas of the world, including United Kingdom and all provinces and territories of Canada. It also manages a number of databases on local cemeteries, births, marriages and deaths. Access to Newspaper Archive for Canadian papers, MyHeritage, family search.org locked microfilms and Findmypast are available at the Centre. There is a section that includes books that our branch contributed. Other Loyalist related books are also part of the collection.

Historical Society of Alberta [Historical Society of Alberta - Keeping Alberta's History Alive](#)

Chinook Country Historical Society is the Calgary chapter of the Society [Chinook Chapter - Historical Society of Alberta](#) It has monthly meetings and newsletters and has a presence on Instagram, Facebook, X and LinkedIn. Its next meeting is on Saturday, February 8 at 2:00 pm at the Calgary Central Library. The topic is Archeology and History.

Lethbridge also has a branch [Lethbridge Chapter | Historical Society of Alberta](#) They have a newsletter, monthly meetings and a presence on Facebook, X, Instagram and You Tube.

Southern Alberta Pioneer Society [Southern Alberta Pioneers and their Descendants](#)

They have monthly meetings along with other special events at the Memorial Building at 3625 4th Street SW, Calgary. Their next meeting is on Wednesday, February 18 at 7:00 pm with the topic of George Lane. They have a presence on Facebook and Twitter and produce a newsletter three times a year.

Alberta Genealogical Society [Alberta Genealogical Society](#)

Both Lethbridge and Calgary have chapters that can be found at [Calgary](#) and [Lethbridge](#)