

Presenting the Marion Phelps Award

Introduction

- *My name is Michel Racicot, genealogist of Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch of The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.*
- It is my honour to present this year's Marion Phelps Award.



L-R Simon Jacobs President QAHN, Adelaide Lanktree, Louise Hall, Michel Racicot.

- As you already know, the Marion Phelps Award is presented annually by QAHN in recognition of outstanding long-term contributions by an individual to the preservation and promotion of Anglophone heritage in the province of Quebec.
- This year, we have a first. The Marion Phelps Award is presented not to one individual like the previous years, but to two individuals, two sisters, Louise Hall and Adelaide Lanktree, both of Farnham.
- Last March, James Caputo of Heritage Gaspé and member of Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch of The United Loyalists' Association of Canada, phoned me. Jim told me that he had the intention of nominating Louise Hall and Adelaide Lanktree for the Marion Phelps Award and he wanted to know if I would support these nominations as Genealogist of Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch. I gladly accepted and told Jim that I was proud to support the nomination of Louise and Adelaide for the Marion Phelps Award. For the last 12 years, I have had the privilege of working with Louise and Adelaide on several heritage projects. I also know that for several decades, Louise and Adelaide have contributed much towards the preservation and promotion of Anglophone heritage and have been among the finest examples of true volunteerism.

Promoting Heritage

- Here are a few examples of their contributions to the preservation and promotion of Anglophone Heritage:
- In 1992, Louise and Adelaide joined Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch, one of the 27 branches forming the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada. Louise and Adelaide are descendants of Loyalists Jeremiah Spencer and Edward Savage. Ever since, they both have been very active members of the Branch. Louise has been our treasurer since 2003 and Adelaide was Branch President from 2003 to 2007 and has held different functions on the executive board. The mission of the association is to unite together the descendants of those families who during the American Revolution sacrificed their homes to remain loyal to the British Crown and to preserve the history and traditions of these Loyalist families.
- Since 1998, Adelaide has been an active member of *La Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson*. The mission of *La Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson* is to restore Sir John Johnson Family Burial Vault at Mont-Saint-Grégoire, a historic site that was accidentally destroyed in the 1950s. Sir John Johnson, 2nd Baronet of New York, was a Loyalist Leader. At the beginning of the American Revolution, he left his home in the province of New York and came to Montreal where he raised and led the King's Royal Regiment of New York. Sir John died in Montreal in 1830 and was buried in the family vault on Mount Johnson, today Mont-St-Grégoire. In the 1950s, the Johnson funeral vault was accidentally demolished. The Johnson Funeral Vault is now nearly restored and there will be a re-dedication ceremony on August 23, 2014.
- In June 2000, representing Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch, Louise and Adelaide participated at QAHN's founding conference that took place at Bishop's University in Lennoxville and at the first AGM held at Macdonald College in 2001.
- Most of you know that the first recipient of the Marion Phelps Award was Marion Phelps. Always interested in history, Miss Phelps was a leader in organizing and giving classes in local history for the Missisquoi Community School in the 1950s.

Following the footsteps of Miss Phelps, Louise Hall, with the help of her sister Adelaide, was the leader of the history class at Missisquoi Community School for nearly 15 years, and most years, Louise would organize a visit with her students at the museum in Knowlton to meet with Miss Phelps.

- For more than 10 years now, Louise and Adelaide have been active members of the *Comité du patrimoine* of the town of Farnham. This committee, created in 2003, has instigated a heritage trail in Farnham, le *Circuit patrimonial*. This heritage trail has over 25 plaques located in front of historic buildings all around town. Plus, every year, in August or September, the *Comité du patrimoine* has been organizing a heritage day, la Journée du patrimoine.

Other involvements in the community

- After a distinguished career in education, Louise and Adelaide felt the need to stay deeply involved in the community.
- For years, they both have been volunteering with the Auxiliary of the Brome-Missisquoi-Perkins Hospital, in Cowansville, giving a helping hand at the boutique.

For years, Louise has been the leader of a team of women who make teddy bears for children admitted at the emergency and knit hats for newborns and mothers with cancer. And for more than 10 years now, on Christmas day, Louise and a friend go to the BMP Hospital and visit every room offering a gift to each of the patients.

Not only Louise has been volunteering with the Auxiliary for more than 70 years, since 2002 she has been a member and co-founder of Le Petit Musée BMP Heritage, a museum committed to the preservation and promotion of the history of the Brome-Missisquoi Perkins Hospital.

- Another example of their involvement in the community, for more than 60 years, Louise and Adelaide have been “very” active members in the Order of the Eastern Star, Cowansville Chapter No. 17.

Recognitions

- In 1958, Louise, with the help of two friends, founded a municipal library in Farnham. At the beginning, they had to rely on book donations from the population, going door to door to collect books. Last September, the town of Farnham paid tribute to Louise by naming the municipal library, *Bibliothèque municipale Louise Hall*.
- In 2003, Louise Hall was honored by the Townshippers’ Association, receiving an Outstanding Townshippers Award, award given to people who have made considerable contributions to the life of the Eastern Townships English-speaking community.
- On April 25, 2013, Louise Hall and Adelaide Lanktree were awarded the Governor General’s Caring Canadian Award. Created in 1995, this award recognizes individuals who volunteer their time to help others.

Conclusion

- Louise and Adelaide are truly deserving of the Marion Phelps Award and I know of no one more deserving.

So, ladies and gentlemen, please acknowledge the recipients of the 2014 Marion Phelps Award, Louise Hall and Adelaide Lanktree.

(Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) Annual General Meeting, June 7, 2014, Stanbridge East, QC)