



# Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch, UELAC

## Newsletter *Spring 2011*

Another winter is behind us and spring is definitely upon us.  
It is time to invite you to our 44<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 for 12:00 Noon**

To be held at the Philipsburg Legion Hall

Guest Speaker: Raymond Ostiguy

Topic: The history of the development at Mount Johnson,  
particularly the history of the evolution of  
the Johnson Family Vault property

**Lunch: \$17.00 per person (wine included)**

**Please reserve by June 14th with:**

Adelaide – e-mail: [adelaidel@sympatico.ca](mailto:adelaidel@sympatico.ca)

Telephone: (450) 293-6342

or

Linda – e-mail: [lilac23@axion.ca](mailto:lilac23@axion.ca)

Telephone: (450) 306-1096

*Payment may be made at the door  
but please remember that we must pay for the number of places we reserve.*

### President's report

With the melting of the snow, the foundation of the Sir John Johnson burial vault, located on the slopes of Mount Johnson, (now renamed Mont St. Grégoire), is again visible and we turn our thoughts to its restoration. Our Vault Committee has worked diligently, with *la Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson*, for many years toward the time when reconstruction could begin. Last fall with an agreement on the ownership of the land, the parcel set aside for vault was delineated and we had it surveyed. This spring the Vault Committee and *la Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson* prepared a detailed, joint proposal describing the vault, a timetable for rebuilding and preliminary cost estimates

<http://www.uelac.org/SirJohnJohnson/vault/2011/03/>. This was presented at the March 5<sup>th</sup> Dominion Council with a proposal that it be made a UELAC centennial project. This recommendation was accepted and initial funding provided. It will be a challenge to our branch to find additional funding for the project.

The vault was a very sturdy structure with walls over three feet thick so that the masonry work required to restore it is considerable. It is also necessary to repair the steel doors, interior grill and lock and to replace the memorial stone with either the original or a duplicate. The site will be landscaped and lighting, both interior and exterior, installed. Finally, the remaining Johnson family bones will be returned to the vault and it will be rededicated. It is not clear whether all this can be completed in 2011 but there should be ample time to do so well before the 2014 centennial.

We have arranged to have our annual general Meeting on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at the Philipsburg Legion Hall at which time we should have more information available concerning the vault restoration progress. For those interested, the UELAC AGM will be held at Brockville between June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Details and registration forms are available on the UELAC website < <http://www.uelac.org/> >.

Roderick Riordon UE

### **UELAC Membership Challenge 2010**

Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch received a \$100 award for passing the 110% level of 2010 membership compared to 2009. Our branch ranked third in the membership challenge and we will have tickets in the draw for one of four prizes which will be held at Conference 2011 in Brockville.

### **\*\*2011 Annual Dues \*\***

Please renew your membership if you have not already done so. Send payment to:  
Louise Hall,  
140 rue Principale ouest,  
Farnham, QC, J2N 1K0

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, we greeted some 53 Loyalist members of the Mohawk Fall tour at the site of the Sir John Johnson burial vault on Mont St. Grégoire (formerly Mount Johnson).



Greeting committee at Mont St. Grégoire: Louise Hall, Treasurer – Gerry Thomas, Vice-President – Rod Riordon, President – Adelaide Lanktree, Past President and Claude Neveu - President of *La Société de restauration du patrimoine Johnson*.

### **Saint-Lambert's Legionnaire - Okill Stuart - 90 Years Young**

A crowd gathered on Saturday, March 5, 2011, in the elegant surroundings of the Macdonald Stewart Foundation's headquarters in Montreal (1195 Sherbrooke West), to celebrate the birthday of former Dominion President Okill Stuart, who turned 90 on March 10. The venue was the still sumptuous mansion of the late Senator Louis-Joseph Forget (1853-1911), the first French Canadian stockbroker, situated on Sherbrooke Street, in the very heart of Montreal's "Golden Square Mile". The party-goers included a veritable legion of men and women belonging to different organizations with which Okill has been involved over the years, including, among others, the 78th Fraser Highlanders, the UELAC, the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, the Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem, the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, the Royal Commonwealth Society, the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion, Bishop's College School, the Saint-Lambert Lawn Bowling Club, etc., etc. Friends and neighbours were there in force too, as well as family members.

After words of welcome were spoken by Lt. Col. Bruce Bolton, Executive Director of the Macdonald Stewart Foundation, and Major Peter Ferst, Officer Commanding the Fort Ste-Hélène Garrison of the (re-raised) 78th Fraser Highlanders Regiment, a large birthday cake was piped into the main room of the mansion by a piper of the 78th Frasers in full 18th century regimental uniform, and the assembled multitude joined in lusty choruses of "Happy Birthday" and "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow". Okill, sporting his finest Highland day wear and miniatures, then cut his cake with a claymore to the cheers of the crowd. Unfortunately, the smoke from the sparklers set off the fire alarm in the old building, with the result that Montreal firefighters, sporting their full regalia, soon arrived on the scene and, after being informed of the cause of the alarm, were invited to join in the celebration (they gracefully declined).

Robert Wilkins, at Okill's request, read a message from H.R.H. the Prince Philip, Okill's one-time classmate at Gordonstoun School, noting that he too would become a nonagenarian this coming June, and a covering letter from the Prince's Private Secretary. A second message was read, from His Excellency David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. Robert then read the touching inscription on the beautiful certificate issued to mark the occasion by The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada and signed by the Dominion President and the Secretary. The "Ode to a Loyal Heart", a poem first composed by Mr.



Wilkins when Okill turned 80, and lengthened several times since, was read by its author, with a further addition to take account of the great man's 90th birthday. Wally Charron, a Saint-Lambert friend, also read his poem honouring Okill.

The whole atmosphere was a heartfelt tribute to a man who had touched all present and inspires us still, and to his devoted wife, Sylvia. Mark Jodoin, the well known author of *Shadow Soldiers of the American Revolution*, put together a moving video (YouTube) of Okill's life from photos stretching back over the last nine decades. The video has the haunting melody of Lili Marlene playing softly in the background. Major Ferst took many photos of the event and Warren Thwing did a video of the party. The guests gorged themselves on delicious refreshments prepared or ordered by Maura Wilkins, Social Convenor of Heritage Branch and other contributors. The great man thanked all present and invited them to return for an even bigger party when he turns 100. Knowing Okill, it might be wise to save the date right now.

Robert C. Wilkins, President Heritage Branch UELAC.

*Members of our Branch present at this celebration: Adelaide Lanktree, Louise Hall, Phyllis Hamilton, Michel Racicot, Mark Jodoin, Robert C. Wilkins, Maura Wilkins, Sylvia Stuart and Okill Stuart.*

## My Loyalist Ancestor

My Loyalist ancestor is John Robinson, the third surviving son of Col. Beverley Robinson and Susannah Philipse. The Robinsons came to North America from England in 1666 when Christopher Robinson (1645-1693) and his two sisters settled in Virginia. Beverley Robinson (1722-1792) was the third generation in the new world and, in 1746 he raised a company of volunteers to fight the French in Canada. After brief service on the northern border of New York colony, the company was disbanded and, instead of returning to Virginia, he went into business in New York. In 1748 he married Susannah Philipse, the daughter of Frederick Philipse, a wealthy resident of Dutch origin who gave the newlyweds 1000 acres of land on the Hudson River. (Susannah later inherited an additional 60,000 acres.) Meanwhile, Beverley Robinson became a very successful landowner and businessman, prominent in Dutchess County. The posts that he held were, among others, Colonel of the local militia, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and Commissioner and Paymaster of the New York Forces. Both Beverley and his wife were strong loyalists and when, in 1777, the rebels demanded a commitment to their cause, Beverley proclaimed his loyalty to the crown and enlisted the support of his friends and neighbours to form the Loyal American Regiment (LAR).

It is against this background that John Robinson joined the LAR along with three of his brothers, the fourth being too young to serve. John joined as ensign in 1779 at the age of 18. One of his first battles was the attack on the salt works at Horse's Neck. In due course, he was appointed Lieutenant and served with the Regiment until the end of hostilities in 1783, at which time, he sailed with other Loyalists to Nova Scotia and thence New Brunswick. It must have been difficult to start afresh in the relative wilderness of New Brunswick after leaving "Beverley House" in the Hudson Valley. However, he married Elizabeth; daughter of Chief Justice George D. Ludlow and went into business in St. John. He was well liked and well connected through his family and, in his lifetime served in a number of positions, among them being: Sheriff of Queens County, Deputy Adjutant General of Militia, Member of the House of Assembly, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Acting Deputy Paymaster General of the Forces during the 1812 War, Province Treasurer and Mayor of St. John. In 1818, he was appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province, Major General George Stacey Smyth, to the Council, the third member of his family to hold the highest office.

John Robinson was active in the formation of the Bank of New Brunswick and, in 1820, at the first shareholders meeting was elected to the board of directors and then promptly elected the bank's first president.

Robinson resigned from the Council of New Brunswick in 1826 but retained his offices of Mayor and Province Treasurer until his death on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1828.

*Roderick Riordon, UE*



STORIES TOLD ABOUT NEW BRUNSWICK LOYALISTS  
BY THEIR DESCENDANTS  
SUBMISSIONS REQUESTED  
FOR BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF NEW BRUNSWICK LOYALISTS  
FOR  
LOYALISTS ALL  
VOLUME TWO

LOYALISTS ALL, published by the New Brunswick Branch of the United Empire Loyalists Association, is a collection of biographical sketches of New Brunswick Loyalists, with lines of descent to the contributing author. The first volume of 56 Loyalist Ancestors, was compiled and edited by Gail Bonsall Pipes in 1985, and is still available from the New Brunswick Branch. It provides a unique and invaluable contribution to the resources for Loyalist genealogical and family history data available for 21st century research.

One volume cannot begin to include the tens of thousands of Loyalist families who fled the ashes of the American Revolution, and found refuge in the Province of New Brunswick, and to that end, a second volume is being organized. With descendants of the Loyalists now spread across Canada, the United States, and beyond, many more of their stories need to be recorded, in a drive to keep them alive for Their Ever-Expanding, Ever-Connected, Ever-Proud, and Ever-Curious Descendants.

If you have genealogical and biographical data related to your Loyalist Ancestor who settled in New Brunswick, please consider submitting their story, and your line of descent, for inclusion in Volume 2 of Loyalists All, by contacting the editor. An example of the format of the story will be provided, as well as information on those Loyalist Ancestors covered in the first volume. In the case of more than one descendant offering their Ancestor's story, those 'cousins' will be asked to combine their work into one narrative, with multiple lines of descent. If you are not a writer, an interview can be arranged to record your Loyalist story.

Please Contact the Editor:  
Eric C. Langley UE  
Email: ecldesign@mac.com  
1-250-334-3392  
220 Urquhart Ave, Courtenay, BC  
V9N3K1

### **Alice Hope Cotton (1920-2011)**

Alice Hope Cotton was born in Cowansville, Quebec, in 1920. The Cotton family was one of the first families to settle in the Cowansville area. Her great-great-grandfather was the Reverend Charles Caleb Cotton, better known as Priest Cotton, the first minister of the Church of England officially appointed in 1808 to the pastoral charge of Dunham Township (today Cowansville and the municipality of Dunham) where he lived and worked for more than 40 years. Her great-grandfather Charles Edward Cotton was one of the first doctors to practice in Cowansville, her grandfather Charles Stuart Cotton was the sheriff of the district for more than 20 years and her father William Ulric Cotton was a lawyer and owner and editor of the local newspaper, the Cowansville Observer.



Alice Hope Cotton was also a proud UEL. She joined Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch in 1978 and participated to all the Branch's activities. Her Loyal Ancestor was the Reverend John Stuart, an ardent Loyalist who came to Canada in 1781 where he was appointed Chaplain to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the King's Royal Regiment of New York. In 1785, Rev. Stuart settled at Cataraqui (Kingston), becoming the first resident Anglican clergyman in what is now Ontario.

Alice Hope Cotton passed away at her home on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 after a courageous battle with cancer. Celebrating her life and all she gave them, her husband of 65 years, Edwin Jenne, her children: the late Polly (Robert Svestka), Edwina (Jerry Bougie), Brian (Marie Lefebvre), Keith (Brenda Mudie), Susan (Jeff Clarke) and Michael (Karen Crandall), her 12 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

Family and friends will be welcomed at the Emmanuel United Church in Cowansville on May 7, 2011 from 10 a.m. followed by a celebration of her life at 11 a.m.

### **Major Clarence Arthur Smith (1914-2011)**

Major C. Arthur Smith UE died peacefully in hospital on Tuesday, January 11, 2011, in his 97th year. Devoted husband of the late Isabel E. Smith (nee Morgan). Loving father of David (Diane) and Karen (Bob Irvine). Cherished grandfather of Stephen. Beloved brother of Doris Walker of Winnipeg. He was an intelligent, generous man and will be sorely missed.

C. Arthur Smith became a regular member of Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch in 1986. His Loyal Ancestors were Isaac Yerex and Arthur Yeomans. He was Branch President from June 1989 to June 1991. After moving to Ottawa in 1993, he joined Sir Guy Carleton Branch where he was secretary for a few years.



### **Mary-Gordon Johnson Leonard (1925-2011)**

It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of Mary-Gordon Johnson Leonard who peacefully passed away at the Lachine General Hospital on Saturday, January 29, 2011 at the age of eighty-five. Beloved wife of the late Vincent de Lourdes Leonard (predeceased in 2010) and loving mother of seven children Peter (Darlene), Gordon (Monica), Ruby-Alice, Philip (Dale), the late John, Jennifer (Ian), and Scott. She will be lovingly remembered by her grandchildren, Sian, Cassie, Julia (Eric), Stewart, Kendra (Jon), Erica, Andrew, Sarah (Ben), Connor, Alexander, Justin, Martin, Kaitlin, David,



Kaiya, Aiyana, great-grandchildren, Stella and Theresa, and loving sister Phyllis Hay (late husband Ian) and nephews Leonard (Joan), Robert, and niece Cathy.

Mrs. Leonard was an active member of our Branch for many years. On behalf of all members, we would like to extend our deepest condolences to the Leonard family.

## ***Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch Executive 2010-2011***

- Honourary President: **Sir Guy Johnson**
- Patron: **John E. Chard**
- Past President: **Adelaide Lanktree** 140 Principale Ouest, Farnham, QC, J2N 1K6 Tel. 450-293-6342
- President: **Roderick Riordon** 4512 Principale St., Dunham, QC, J0E 1M0 Tel. 450-295-2382
- Vice President: **Gerald Thomas**
- Secretary: **Phyllis Hamilton**
- Treasurer: **Louise Hall**
- Genealogist: **Michel Racicot** 129 Church St., Cowansville, QC, J2K 1T9 Tel. 450-260-1736
- Publicity: **Evelyn Lewis**
- Membership: **Adelaide Lanktree**
- Card Convener:
- Vault Committee: **Charles Harbec**
- Hospitality: **Linda Howman**  
**Joan Lee**