



Bridge Annex Launches Fundraising Campaign for Johnson Hall Restoration on behalf of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada (UELAC)



Johnson Hall. Johnstown, New York. June 2018

UE Loyalists Bridge Annex, the first virtual branch of UELAC, recently made a grant submission to the UELAC to help support the restoration of Johnson Hall in Johnstown, New York, which is undergoing an extensive restoration to ensure it survives for future generations. We are thrilled to report that the UELAC Grants Committee recommended this project for consideration and in a unanimous decision by the UELAC Board of Directors, UELAC is granting a sum of \$4000.00 (CAD) to the project. The Friends of Johnson Hall, who are spearheading this project called, “*Majesty on the Frontier*,” are to be commended for their success to-date, as this is a significant undertaking for this historic group.

With our close Loyalist ties to the Mohawk Valley, and Johnson Hall, Bridge Annex wants to get UELAC membership and friends involved in supporting this restoration project, which would further enhance our endeavour to educate the public on UE Loyalist history. We are pleased with UELAC’s contribution and want to build on this by providing ways for UELAC branches, Loyalist descendants, and others to contribute. As such, we have started a fundraising campaign on our new website: www.uelbridgeannex.com. We are acting as the fundraising managers and all monies will be put in a special fund and contributed on behalf of all UELAC contributors. In discussions with Wade Wells, Historic Site Director of Johnson Hall, we have been assured UELAC will be listed as contributor at the site. The specific method is yet being determined. An official press release will be forthcoming from Johnson Hall, and we’ll post this on our website, as well as UELAC official sites.

The following is an excerpt from the official Bridge Annex Grant Submission to the UELAC Grants Committee and Board of Directors:

Importance of Johnson Hall in Telling the History of the United Empire Loyalists

The significance of Johnson Hall in telling the story of so many United Empire Loyalists cannot be underestimated. Key historical figures including: Sir William Johnson[1], Sir John Johnson[2] and Molly Konwatsitsiaenni Brant[3], among many others in relation to this historic site, are not only

interpreted in detail throughout the site itself, but also through the events that the Directors create to engage the public. In addition, staff are extremely knowledgeable about Loyalist history and even provide insight to Loyalist families seeking to better understand the history of their ancestors in the Mohawk Valley.

It is important to remember that we can only fully understand the experience of our United Empire Loyalist ancestors by knowing more of their history – not just that which began after the American Revolution. To know the history of these once colonial Americans, is to understand the dire circumstances they found themselves in at the outbreak of war. Places such as Johnson Hall provide a tangible reminder of the time of so many Loyalists prior to the outbreak of war; a war which saw many of our Loyal ancestors facing the known enemy, once called family and friends. To label this a ‘civil war’ would not be overstating the dreadful situation our ancestors faced. In order to understand their life in the American colonies, the experiences of the men, women and children before, during, and after the American Revolution, must be interpreted. Places such as Johnson Hall are an integral part of the education and outreach opportunities for not only descendants of the UE Loyalists, but those who are just discovering this part of our North American story. Along with the work UELAC continues to put into ensuring Loyalists are not forgotten, it is places such as Johnson Hall that are our partners in ensuring the places they once called home, the places they saw in their lifetimes, yet exist. Tangibility is a powerful tool to helping people connect with a past that seems very far back until they can touch, see, and explore the places of that time. Suddenly, they might imagine themselves in that time and place, and they are ‘hooked.’ A visit to Johnson Hall is a powerful experience for descendants of the area. While all are made to feel welcome, UE Loyalist descendants are made to feel as though they are ‘home,’ and share in the story. Helping to ensure that the places our ancestors came from are preserved by groups and organizations dedicated to a multi-faceted telling, provides invaluable educational opportunities not only for the descendants of UE Loyalists, but also the public at large, which enhances UELAC’s ability to engage and interest others in preserving our complex and fascinating history.

[1] Sir William Johnson. Dictionary of Canadian Biography http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/johnson_william_4E.html

[2] Sir John Johnson. Dictionary of Canadian Biography http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/johnson_john_6E.html

[3] Molly Konwatsitsiaienni Brant. Dictionary of Canadian Biography http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/konwatsitsiaienni_4E.html

Read more about Johnson Hall, “Majesty on the Frontier” Restoration Project, and our UELAC fundraising campaign at: <https://uelbridgeannex.com/johnson-hall-restoration-fundraising-campaign/>

To donate, simply press the **DONATE** button on our new website! Thank you for considering supporting this important UE Loyalist site.

www.uelbridgeannex.com