

'They gave their lives for a principle which is now firmly embedded in the constitution of this country..!'



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Lounts and Hollingsheads descendants abounded at the reunion at Heintzman House last Friday, including (from left) Doris Miller, Joyce Dixon, David Spear, Deon Smith, Brian Hollingshead and Frank Johnson.

Family aims to clear 1837 rebel's name

BY FRED SIMPSON
Staff Writer

He was hanged for treason during the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837, but Samuel Lount's spirit was alive and well at Thornhill's Heintzman House last Friday afternoon.

The occasion was the reunion of the Hollingshead family, whose long-ago ancestor, Anthony Hollingshead, built Heintzman House.

"The execution of our great-great-grandfather, Samuel Lount, was a devastating and tragic event in our family's history," said Joyce Dixon, a Lount descendant.

Dixon, of Alva, Okla., was standing on the front lawn of Heintzman House, along with some of the other 80 descendants at the reunion.

The Lount/Spears of Michigan and Oklahoma reunion was appropriately interlocked with the Hollingshead gathering.

Samuel Lount's wife, Elizabeth Soules, was the maternal granddaughter of Anthony and Elizabeth Hollingshead.

"The fate of Samuel was a long-kept secret by his wife and other members of the family until a few years ago when my grandmother died," continued Dixon.

"We found this little box in her

china cabinet that had been carved by someone who was in prison with Samuel. We started to do some research on it and that's when the secret came out."

Lount came to Canada in 1811 from Pennsylvania, settling with his wife in Holland Landing and raising seven children. A plaque honoring him is located at Holland Landing's Anchor Park on Doane Road.

Lount was a prominent member of the community, a blacksmith and storekeeper.

Lount, who Dixon describes as "a tall, large man and very literate, very well-spoken", was a Reform member of the legislature and trusted lieutenant of 1837 rebellion leader William Lyon Mackenzie.

Doris Miller of Canadian Lakes, Mich., another descendant, said the night before Lount was executed, he wrote "this wonderful poem to say goodbye".

"He had made his peace with God."

After the defeat of the rebels, the luckless Lount tried to escape to the United States in a small boat, but the tide forced it back and he was captured and subsequently hanged, along with Peter Matthews, a farmer, on April 12, 1838.

His wife sought her husband's freedom from the gallows with a mass petition calling for clemency that was circulated throughout

Upper Canada. Lount and Matthews are buried in one grave in the Toronto Necropolis.

Thornhill author Mark Frank, along with Family and Friends of Peter Matthews and Samuel Lount, have, to no avail, petitioned both the Mulroney and Chretien governments to officially exonerate Lount and Matthews from the charge of treason. Frank said the two men had been officially pardoned in 1849 by Queen Victoria, 11 years after their execution.

The governor-general of the day made the decision to execute Lount and Matthews as an example for others who might be tempted to follow in their paths, he said.

"Our argument is that they weren't traitors because they were fighting for the people of Canada. We don't think Lount did anything to be pardoned for," said Frank, who has authored two books on the 1837 rebellion.

"We would like to see an appropriate statement issued honouring their contribution to our democratic heritage."

Frank also wants a plaque recognizing both men placed on the site in Toronto where they were hanged.

An epitaph to the Lount and Matthews tragedy appeared in the Brockville Recorder July 4, 1934: "It is now almost unanimously admitted that the execution of Lount and

Matthews at the hands of the Executive ruling Upper Canada at that period was a tragic error, the full force of which stands more clearly revealed as time passes.

"They gave their lives for a principle which is now firmly embedded in the constitution of this country and which was recognized at the close of the Rebellion."

Also attending and organizing the reunion was Brian Hollingshead of Burnaby, B.C., who said, "The Hollingsheads have always marched to the beat of a different drummer."

He was referring to the decision Hollingshead, a practising Quaker, made in 1776, to take up arms in defence of the Crown during the American Revolutionary War.

The Hollingsheads originally came to Nova Scotia and then to Ontario more than 200 years ago with the hope of making a new beginning in the lake country of Upper Canada (Ontario).

The Heintzman House was recently honoured by the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada with the presentation of the First Union Loyalist Flag in recognition of its historical heritage.

Joyce Dixon would like to hear from anyone with artifacts, tools or other items once belonging to Samuel Lount. Call (905) 731-6196.

REGIONAL News Digest



PERFECT PUTT

Laura Barbara sinks the putt, much to the delight of Amy Shotboll, at the tournament at Rolling Hills Golf and Country Club in Stouffville July 11 in aid of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

Province spends \$3.9 million to upgrade Hwy. 48

The provincial government will spend \$3.9 million to upgrade an 11.8-kilometre stretch of Hwy. 48 from north of Aurora Road to north of Mount Albert Road.

Transportation Minister David Turnbull awarded the construction tender to King City's K.J. Beamish Construction Company to resurface the roadway, including the installation of a 2.7-kilometre southbound truck lane north of Davis Drive to south of Mount Albert Road.

"In an increasingly global economy, good highways truly are roads to prosperity," said Turnbull in a statement. "The Ontario government continues to invest in safe and efficient highways to support jobs and growth across Ontario."

The investment is part of the government's five-year, \$20-billion SuperBuild initiative designed to improve capital planning, job priority and investment.

Work on the highway will begin immediately and should be completed by mid-September.

"Upgrading this section of Hwy. 48 reflects the government's commitment to a first-class highway system," said York North MPP Julia Munro in the same release. "Efficient road transportation supports the residential, business and tourism sectors in York Region."

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