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**Canada's History Society Announces 2025 Recipients of the
John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada**

Three organizations to receive \$50,000 each for projects that share the stories of inspiring individuals who shaped Atlantic Canadian history and society.

WINNIPEG, June 25, 2025 — A pioneering Black physician who treated hundreds following the Halifax Explosion and served as the publisher of Canada's first African Canadian newsmagazine. A legendary Acadian writer whose literary works helped revive and define Acadian identity. A master carpenter and visionary who led the construction of North America's tallest wooden church alongside 1,500 Acadian volunteers.

The lives and legacies of these remarkable Atlantic Canadians will be honoured through the John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada. The award is a granting program made possible by the River Philip Foundation, dedicated to preserving and promoting the histories of people whose contributions shaped the region.

"Local communities play a vital role in preserving and sharing Canada's diverse histories," said Melony Ward, President and CEO of Canada's National History Society. "The John Bragg Award provides meaningful support to the dedicated individuals and organizations in Atlantic Canada who are working to honour these stories and ensure they are accessible for generations to come."

"The John Bragg Award continues to support creative, community-led efforts that highlight the lasting influence of Atlantic Canada's remarkable leaders," said John Bragg on behalf of the River Philip Foundation. "By investing in these meaningful projects, we help ensure their stories remain a vital part of our cultural landscape and continue to shape how we understand and celebrate our shared history."

Each of the recipients' projects aims to expand knowledge and increase public awareness of key leaders in their communities. The 2025 recipients are:

- **Le Pays de la Sagouine**, Bouctouche, New Brunswick – *Antonine Maillet, Chantre de l'Acadie*, a new interpretive space
- **Association of Nova Scotia Museums**, Halifax, Nova Scotia – *Dr. Clement Ligoure – Halifax's First Black Physician*, a province-wide educational and exhibit initiative
- **Association Sainte-Marie héritage et développement**, Clare, Nova Scotia – *Léo Melanson and the Acadian Builders of Sainte-Marie*, a multimedia exhibition and 3D documentation project

Each organization will receive \$50,000 to implement its initiative.

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About the John Bragg Award

The John Bragg Award was launched in 2022/2023 to support projects that conserve and promote the history of individuals who have had a significant impact on communities in Atlantic Canada. The award is administered by Canada's National History Society, with the support of the River Philip Foundation. CanadasHistory.ca/BraggAward

About Canada's National History Society

Canada's History Society is a national charitable organization that seeks to encourage Canadians to engage more deeply with their country's past. It shares the stories behind the history through its magazines, *Canada's History* and *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, digitally at CanadasHistory.ca, as well as through education and award programs, including the Governor General's History Awards. Canada's History Society believes all Canadians should see themselves reflected in its publications and programs.
CanadasHistory.ca

About the River Philip Foundation

Named for the waterway in Nova Scotia's Oxford County, the River Philip Foundation focuses on grants and funding for initiatives addressing poverty, supporting at-risk youth, education programs, community infrastructure projects, and enriching Canadian culture through performing and visual arts. Additionally, the foundation is committed to funding transformative medical research at Canadian universities and medical schools. RiverPhilipFoundation.ca

BACKGROUNDER

John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada Recipients 2025

Le Pays de la Sagouine, Bouctouche, New Brunswick

Antonine Maillet, Chantre de l'Acadie

A new interpretive space at Le Pays de la Sagouine will celebrate the life and legacy of Antonine Maillet, the award-winning author of *La Sagouine* and *Pélagie-la-Charrette*. The immersive installation will feature archival materials, filmed interviews, and interactive storytelling technology, spotlighting Maillet's role in Acadian cultural revival. Born in Bouctouche and the first non-European to win the Prix Goncourt, Maillet's work gave international voice to Acadian resilience, identity, and language. Her literary universe has drawn over 1.5 million visitors to the cultural site inspired by her vision.

Association of Nova Scotia Museums, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dr. Clement Ligoure – Halifax's First Black Physician

Dr. Clement Ligoure was a community leader, physician, and editor who treated hundreds after the 1917 Halifax Explosion and helped recruit for the No.2 Construction Battalion — the largest Black military unit in Canadian history. He also published *The Atlantic Advocate*, Canada's first African Canadian newsmagazine. This multifaceted project will digitize archival materials, produce a bilingual portable exhibit, create curriculum-linked educational resources, and develop podcast episodes. In partnership with the Africville Museum, Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, and Loyalist Connections Creative Society, the project aims to make Ligoure's legacy a cornerstone of African Nova Scotian history education.

Association Sainte-Marie héritage et développement, Clare, Nova Scotia

Léo Melanson and the Acadian Builders of Sainte-Marie

This project commemorates Léo Jean Melanson, an Acadian carpenter who led the construction of Sainte-Marie, the tallest wooden church in North America, which is currently facing the threat of demolition. Built between 1903–1905 by 1,500 Acadian volunteers, the church is a powerful symbol of cultural pride and perseverance. The initiative will document the church's unique design through 3D scanning and develop a multimedia exhibition, preserving its architectural legacy and oral histories. Whether the building is preserved or not, the project ensures this historic feat remains accessible and celebrated for future generations.