

King's Colourful History

Lady Eaton, one of King Township's outstanding women



Nurse Flora McCrea, born in Omemee, Ontario, was assigned to care for John Eaton at a private Toronto hospital. The patient and the nurse fell in love and were married in 1901. They raised their children in Toronto while John headed the family retail business, founded by his father Timothy.

Eaton's was a famous name, known across Canada as the leading department store selling almost everything a household needed.

For outstanding public services Sir John received British knighthood and Flora became Lady Eaton. Friendship and common interest in horses led their neighbour, Sir Henry Pellatt, to suggest that the Eatons buy land in King Township. They chose a prime tract with gentle hills, ponds and a wooded site for the impressive home known as Eaton Hall, now a landmark at Seneca College's King campus.

Widowed in 1922, Lady Eaton's vision influenced Eaton's policies in offering management and social opportunities for women; with her encouragement, French designer Jacques Carlu, planned the elegant art deco restaurant in Montreal and in Toronto; Canadian architects designed Eaton's National Historic Site, the Round Room and Auditorium.

She became a benefactor of many worthy causes and enjoyed being honorary "Master of the Hunt" to King equestrians. Aware of the heritage represented by Eversley Church neighbouring her estate, she provided for its future. For several years it was maintained by the King Township Historical Society. Lady Eaton's cookbooks are in the local history collection at the King City Public Library where you can find her autobiography, Memory's Wall.

Submitted by the King Township Historical Society
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