

King's Colourful History

Blazing a trail through King's past



King's rich past as seen along the blazed trails winding through the forest offers a practical history lesson.

A starting point is 300 metres south of the 16th Sideroad on the west side of Dufferin Street. Follow blazes at the bottom of the first hill, cross the rail bed of the former Schomberg and Aurora railway, which operated between 1902 and 1927 and allowed Schomberg people to shop in Toronto, and students to attend high school in Aurora. This surviving section leads south as a side trail.

Continue west past an old fireplace near Eaton Hall where Lady Eaton entertained guests. Built in 1940, Eaton Hall served as a rehabilitation hospital and children's home during WWII. Heading southwest, the trail emerges at Seneca Lake, one of many kettle lakes formed by a glacier receding from the Oak Ridges Moraine. In 2006 an archaeological excavation there revealed evidence of pre-contact First Nations settlements estimated between 2,800 and 10,000 years old.

Skirting the Eaton Hall Wetland Enhancement Project, the trail rises. Look southeast across the property once owned by Sir Henry Pellatt whose architect E.J. Lennox designed both Casa Loma in Toronto and the barn at the Lake Marie estate, now Marylake Augustinian Monastery. Beyond there are remnants of a small barn and a nearby house, the home of Pellatt's farm manager.

As the trail crosses Keele Street, follow what was a spur of the railway used by Pellatt to bring building supplies for the impressive brick barn. Walk toward Marylake, another kettle pond and don't miss the sign.

Going west you'll pass an ancient log cabin, associated with William Lyon Mackenzie, brought by Pellatt from another location. Next an old gate with tall cement posts marks the former game enclosure. King George V sent deer after one of Sir Henry's London visits. Your journey ends at Jane Street's 1930s Sacred Heart Community, but that's another story.

*Submitted by Ed Millar
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