



LOWELL TANNERY KINGHORN 1903.



NOV • 63

CROSSLEY HALL

by

Mrs. Wm. J. Houston

February 15, 1967-- No trace remains to-day of the 64-year-old Crossley Hall in King City where famed Canadian E. Pauline Johnson once recited her poems.

Making way for business progress, the natural pine structure on the south side of King Sideroad, next to Bethel Baptist Church at the corner of Fisher St., was razed by the owner, Carlton Crossley, in 1963.

The resulting space increased the parking area needed by patrons of the King City Cold Storage business operated by Art Rigg.

Built in 1899, the hall was opened January 1, 1900. Operated by the late William J. Crossley, it soon became a popular social meeting place.

As the only hall located in a large area, the Crossley building functioned until the middle of the first world war.

Buggies were the popular mode of transportation when the young people congregated for dances. Crossley Hall was the focal point for political campaigns of the day. Visiting public figures were heralded and escorted by booming bands to the crowded community centre.

On different occasions Prime Minister Mackenzie King, the late Postmaster-General William P. Mulock, Hon. A.B. Aylsworth, Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of Crown Lands Hon. E. J. Davis and Member of Parliament Herbert Lennox greeted their supporters from the platform at the south end of the hall.

Beneath the platform were kitchen facilities used for favorite get-togethers, oyster suppers. The Masonic Lodge had its annual social night there. Congregations enjoyed "Christmas Trees", and community concerts were the result of diversified talents originating on the village's surrounding farms.

A few King residents remember when the late George Stone entertained with Irish songs. The second owner, Carlton Crossley, one-time bush pilot, vividly recalled early in the century when Pauline Johnson recited, "Song My Paddle Sings", in a program featuring her poetry. She was more accustomed to the larger audiences of Toronto's Massey Hall.

The final social event was held in 1916 and by that time other halls and meeting places came into prominence.

Crossley Hall was then used commercially. Pickling onions grown on the Crossley property along Fisher and Patton Streets were stored. For one season the place was rented for ice cut four miles eastward on Lake Wilcox.

For many years it was vacant and in final years used to protect lumber and furnace equipment.

The original owner died in 1938, well-known by the many people who had spent leisure hours in the hall he built, large enough to seat 280 people.

The one-storey structure belonging to the past era of the village's social life was demolished by Carlton Crossley with the aid of another King Township resident, retired farmer Wib. Burns.

RE PICTURE:

Snapshot taken May, 1963 of Crossley Hall shows demolition work already started on the roof. At this stage few of the newcomers, forming the majority of the village's population, were aware the unpainted shed was once the vital social hub. At left can be seen Bethel Baptist Church at the corner of Fisher Street.

EATON HALL, KING CITY, ONTARIO

By

Lady Eaton.

It was a cold February day, below zero, when we first looked at Eaton Hall. Our neighbour in Toronto, Sir Henry Pellatt of Casa Loma, came over to Ardwold one evening to tell us that next to his farm at King, Lake Marie, there was another farm, with a lake, for sale. This was in the year

Although the lake was frozen over and snow covered the ground as far as we could see, and in spite of the biting cold, we fell in love with the farm. That was the south half where the farm buildings stood, and the woods through which the drive winds. The woods were up for sale for cutting and there was an option on them. We made an offer for the farm, and before a week passed we were the owners, with only legal matters in connection with the purchase to be completed. Before the next year we had bought the second half.

We soon discovered that most of the top soil had long since left these parts, and was down in Lake Ontario. Too much wood had been cut, too much had been taken out of the soil, too little had been put back. The hills were covered with thistles and mullins, the woods had been pastured, the lake was full of carp. So, there was not much left of what had once been good farm land and wood lots. In Canada even carp was despised. So began the long slow road back to production. The first year by use of fertilizer we doubled the yield of grain per acre but even that was a low yield by Ontario standards.

We have used contour plowing, fertilizer, rotation of crops, but the woods are still a problem. We keep a Friesian-Holstein herd, and at one time we used horses almost entirely for farm work. Now, however we have just four farm horses, and the farm is becoming mechanized. We cultivate and pasture about three hundred acres.

We have also re-stocked the lake. While Canadians generally despise carp, others find them good, and they often appear on the menu as a special dish. They are bad in a small lake for they eat the spawn, and young fish. First, we had an Italian firm come, and they fished with their nets for weeks, and took most of the carp out. Then, we put in first, green bass; later on rainbow trout from British Columbia, and later still, brown trout. There are also perch. The reason why we can have three varieties of fish is that the lake is very deep in parts, while shallow in others, and it seems these fish live at different levels.

We raise turkeys and chickens, and so we have for sale besides cattle and horses, (I raise hunters), eggs, cream, broilers and turkeys. It is more economical for us to buy the ducks and geese we need for home consumption and fatten them. Broilers, turkeys, and all the poultry, are killed at the proper time and put in the deep freeze.

We started a reforestation plan, and have planted hundreds of thousands of trees, using

the kinds suitable to the place to be planted.

We have had the original woods inspected and have cut them according to advice. They are still very beautiful, and each time I pass under their branches they give me a thrill. The new woods I have helped to plant. During the war, with the help of school boys, we planted thirty-five acres in one day. This is on two hills at the north boundry, north of the Navy road which is the north entrance. Another day that these trees were planted the same year, we planted ten acres. Both these areas were arid hills. It has been a joy to watch them grow.

We have had one terrifying experience. It was an early spring day. Luckily, banks of snow still lay by the big trees. Some one had dropped a burning cigarette butt at the foot of the hill north of us. A strong wind was blowing our way. The phone rang and a neighbour warned us that flames were sweeping up the hill. In fifteen minutes the fire brigades from Aurora and King were here, and everybody in the place and nearby was at work. It was really the banks of snow which our people shovelled on to the flames which checked the fire till the fire brigades arrived and finally put the fire out. If it had not been for this quick action by neighbours, farmers and fire brigades there would have been no Eaton Hall to-day.

It seems terrible that there is no warning, to make smokers careful. If each smoker made sure his match and his cigarette were completely dead before dropping them it would save millions of feet of timbers every year. It would help also if no one dropped anything out of cars on the roads. Surely, all waste papers, cigarette boxes, butts, and match ends could be carried to a stopping place and deposited in the garbage tins.

By this fire eight acres of young trees were destroyed, disfiguring the hill, and losing us at least ten year's growth.

As we no longer put the cattle into the woods, the trilliums have come back, and during May they are like a carpet and a wonderful sight. Dogs tooth and wood violets, too have multiplied. Last fall we were able to purchase wild flowers and have set out quite a few of which have wintered. Already ladies' slippers have bloomed.

We have used several ground covers, but the one which gives the most satisfaction is the periwinkle. It covers the ground under the trees and on banks thickly, and chokes out the weeds, but curiously enough, bulbs grow well in a bank of it. Whenever the snow melts in winter, the leaves are dark green and glossy. In the Spring, it is covered with blue flowers from which we get the colour "Periwinkle Blue".

We have feeding trays for the birds and put out suet. We also hang the carcasses of turkeys and geese on the limbs of trees. The Blue-jays love these. Last winter there were chickadees nut hatches, and sometimes even a blue jay, and snow birds feeding from the tray in front of my window. We have had martin houses these last two years, and the martins have taken over. We

also have cardinals, scarlet tanagers, blue birds, canaries, orioles, gold finch, red winged black birds, chimney swifts, and many varieties of sparrows. Inevitably, we have starlings, crows and pigeons. We would forego their company if possible. There are several varieties of woodpeckers, one the pileated.

There is a varied wild life--foxes, raccoons and skunks. We do not care for these as they are all fond of chickens. There are ground hogs which burrow in the ground and make dangerous holes, and lots of mud turtles. There are pheasants and partridge which we try to encourage to stay. From time to time, wild geese and ducks rest on the lake, when in migration.

Strangely speaking, we do not have much of a garden, but we are planting bulbs--jonquils, narcissi, tulips, hyacinths, scilla, and iris in groups on the hillsides, and amongst the trees, also lily of the valley, trying to have a natural growth of these flowers. The hillside was a blaze of jonquils this spring, and was a wonderful sight. The hyacinths and narcissi did very well too, and we had magnificent tulips.

F O R E W O R D

The following article presents the past and present of "Kingcrafts". It marks a milestone in its growth and influence in the community, and augurs well for continued progress towards an even brighter future.

Lady Flavelle, the author of the "Kingcrafts Story" is also the founder of this flourishing organization. Through her creative interest in handicrafts and her inspired leadership in this community enterprise, "Kingcrafts" is now the concrete embodiment of her vision, courage and faith.

Those of us who have worked closely with her in "Kingcrafts" realize how much time and energy she has unselfishly devoted to enriching the lives and increasing the happiness of the women of King and district through their achievements and handicrafts.

Marion Baxter.

January, 1960.

THE "KINGCRAFTS" STORY

By

Lady Flavelle

1950 - 1960

Many times during the past nine years, I have been asked to write the story of the origin and amazing growth and development of Kingcrafts. It is a simple thing to talk about a subject which is so near to one's heart as Handicrafts are to mine, but it is quite a different matter when one is confronted with writing down cold fact in concrete form.

The most difficult challenge is 'where and how to begin' and 'how to keep it from becoming too personal', especially when the writer is the founder of the organization and its President for the first four years. Therefore I hope the reader will understand if, occasionally, the personal creeps into the narrative.

In the autumn of 1948 my husband and I severed our city contacts, and fulfilled a long-cherished dream by moving to the peace and quiet of the country. We found in King Township our ideal spot, and built our home called "Kingswold". For the first two years, every available moment was filled with such activities as the finishing of our home, built in those post-war days when materials were scarce and substitutes had to be found; learning to cook; landscaping, including flower and vegetable gardens, orchards; wells to be drilled for drinking water; fences repaired; bad road conditions to be improved; and in general adjusting our lives to this new way of life. Eventually living became more organized and to my surprise I found that there were a few leisure hours in the day, and I asked myself "What do I do with leisure time in the country?"

The many functional activities which had filled my days in the city were non-existent in the country. Golf for exercise was no longer an appeal as I had more than adequate exercise working in the garden. Things that had seemed important to me in the city lost their values, and I cast my eyes about for a new and more satisfying type of interest, preferably something creative.

From my mother, an artist in fine needlework, I had unconsciously inherited the love of working with my hands. This inheritance had remained dormant up to this

point, but suddenly the inspiration came to me of using these precious leisure hours in developing the craft of weaving, a hobby I had started a few months previous to moving to the country, while waiting for our house to be completed. It also occurred to me that it would be more interesting, and a friendly gesture, if I could persuade some of my country neighbours to become interested in weaving or some other craft of their choice and work at these interests together.

Knowing very few people in the neighborhood, I sought the help of the owner of a local store, a charming woman who knew everyone in the community. We discussed the idea together, and she was very enthusiastic about it and gave me a list of about twenty women who she thought would be interested in the project. With the addition of my own few friends the list eventually reached thirty. I called the Secretary of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild of Toronto, told her my story and asked if she would come out to our home and tell this group of women about the possibilities of developing Handicrafts in this district. She kindly accepted the invitation and the meeting was arranged for September 26, 1950, at our home 'Kingswold'.

On that day, thirty women, two small children and a baby in a laundry basket, met in our living room and listened to a fascinating story of the increasing development and interest in Handicrafts, and the splendid opportunity that could be ours in this field. Some of these women, no doubt, had come to the meeting out of curiosity, others in doubt, but before the meeting ended such was the enthusiasm that "Kingcrafts" was organized that day. It was amazing to find how many of these women had at some time worked in a simple way at one of the crafts.

Three groups were formed that day - Rug-Hooking, Weaving, and Smocking. The latter was suggested by the mother of eight children who felt there was a need for this type of needlework, and she offered to teach a group of mothers of young children. Convenor-Teachers were found for the other two groups. A school teacher, who had studied weaving in her teachers' course, volunteered to teach weaving, and an elderly woman who had many years previously learned to braid and hook rugs, volunteered to teach this craft.

A simple organization was set up, consisting of a President, First Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, plus the three convenors. The name "Kingcrafts" was suggested and accepted. The fee was set at \$1.00 per year, and now in our tenth year this fee is changed only in that a member now pays \$1.00 for each group to which she belongs.

Every woman at that meeting signed up with one of the three groups.

It was decided that work meetings would be held in the homes of the members every two weeks, and once a month (the fourth Wednesday) a meeting of the entire group would be held in the homes large enough to accommodate the thirty members.

At this monthly meeting, the convenors would give a report on the progress of their group, bring samples of their work to show the other members, discuss problems and receive help and advice. Names of women wishing to join Kingcrafts could be proposed at the monthly meetings.

Only women having their permanent homes in the country were eligible to become active members of Kingcrafts. City people, spending only week-ends in the country, could become associate members.

Arrangements were made to have a guest at these meetings to speak on various subjects of interest, including Interior Decorating, History of Fabrics, Flower and Dried Flower Arrangements, Gardening, Conservation, Bird Lore, Vegetable Dyeing of Wools, Colour and Original Design. These were a few of the principal subjects.

A friendly tea hour followed the business meeting, the food being supplied by each group in turn.

These were very happy and friendly gatherings. Many women who had lived in the same neighborhood anywhere from ten to twenty years met for the first time and became friends. Quickly the membership started to increase as the news of Kingcrafts spread throughout the countryside.

It seems unbelievable that with such a simple beginning, Kingcrafts, now as I write in its tenth year, would have seven active craft groups each with an average of fifteen to twenty members, and each with its own convenor and assistant convenor, one hundred and forty active members and one hundred and seventeen associate members. The latter do not work in the groups but are invited to attend the monthly meetings. A greatly enlarged executive consisting of an Honorary President and two Past Presidents, form an Advisory Board. A President, First and Second Vice Presidents, a Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, and two Convenors are also included in the executive meetings - the House Committee Convenor and the Membership Convenor. Kingcrafts believes in spreading responsibility to as large a number of members as possible, thus increasing the interest in the organization.

We now have an attractive and functional building, called 'Kingcrafts', with a lovely garden, in the heart of King Village, which was built and completely paid for in eighteen months. A substantial Building Maintenance Fund for repairs