



Lee & Gord Martin

BROKER & SALES REPRESENTATIVE

ROYAL LEPAGE ESTATE REALTY, 2301 QUEEN STREET EAST, TORONTO, ON M4E 1G7

(Bus) 416-690-5100 • (Fax) 416-699-3829 • (Res) 416-699-5897

Martins@LeadingTheWayHome.com

Hunt Club / Fallingbrook history

From the amazing estate of Sir Donald Mann to the hunting hounds of the original Toronto Hunt to amusement parks on the beach, this area has a lot of interesting history. Here are a few snippets from writers, neighbours, etc that bring some of that story to life.

We will continue to add to this piece as material and time show themselves. Enjoy.

from "From Queenston to Kingston: The Hidden Heritage of Lake Ontario's Shoreline" by Ron Brown

Near the foot of Fallingbrook Drive sat a number of grand homes. One, built by Sir Henry Pellatt of Casa Loma fame, was demolished in the 1930s to provide parking for a new apartment building. A home of likely equal grandeur is known as the "Chateau des Quatre Vents." The two-storey structure was built in 1891 by Emile Gagnon and boasts a chateau roof, three turrets, and arched windows and doors on the ground floor facing the lake. It stands on Rockway Crescent, which leads off Queen Street at its intersection with Fallingbrook. The laneway that leads to it is private.

On the east side of Fallingbrook stands "Edgemont House." Here, on the side of the bluff, businessman H.P. Eckardt built a large summer home in the Queen Anne style. It offers a lakeside porch and second-floor bay window, although its conical roof was removed early on. Although private, it is visible from Fallingbrook, and reflects the lakeside tranquility that Eckardt must have long enjoyed.

...

Fallingbrook itself was named after the estate of railway builder Sir Donald Mann. ... Mann built his [home] by the bluffs. Although the house is gone, a small Tudor-style cottage on Kingston Road, ... is the century-old gatehouse that once guarded the entrance to Mann's Fallingbrook estate...

Leading the Way...

Lee Martin, Associate Broker

ROYAL LEPAGE

ESTATE REALTY

...Home !

Gord Martin, Sales Representative

Not intended to solicit buyers or sellers currently under contract.

...Located between Kingston Road and the Bluffs, the Toronto Hunt Club was started in 1843 by officers of the Toronto garrison for their equestrian events. In 1898, streetcar service to the area brought with it the demand for cottages and homes, and the garrison moved ... In the 1930's, the Hunt Club became a private golf club, and remains so today.

The next open area is the stunning Rosetta McClain Gardens. This surprising floral display, on Kingston Road east of Birchmount, was the creation of Robert Watson McClain and his brother-in-law, Joseph West. The site was originally part of a sixteen-hectare farm bought in 1904 by the owner of Toronto safe Works, Thomas McDonald West. He divided the land among his four children, including daughter Rosetta, who died in 1940. In 1959 her husband, Robert McClain, deeded the gardens to the City of Toronto in honour of his late wife. With a view from atop the bluffs, the gardens include natural walkways through a wooded area set off by a fountain and formal gardens that include a rose garden and a rock garden...

Most evidence of the heady days of the roller coasters and the hot dogs has gone – with one exception. At the foot of Fallingbrook Avenue [ed: Road] a set of about one hundred steps leads precariously down the bluff to the beach. Here, by the water, was the Fallingbrook Pavilion. The single building contained a dance hall, boat storage, change rooms, and ice-cream stand. The pavilion operated from the early 1900s until the 1950s, when it developed a troubled reputation following confrontations between regular east-enders and troublemakers said to be from the west end. The steps were closed by city bylaw and now lie covered in several decades of leaves and debris. At their base, in the trees, still lie the forgotten concrete ruins of the last of The Beach's amusement parks.

...

From "Knights of Birch Cliff", a copy of a document written by Rob Gordon and edited by Ray Corley

Between Fallingbrook Road, and Woodglen Road on the south side of Kingston Road one house stands out amidst the neat bungalows, number 1253, a two storied, timbered, Tudor style house. Wooden shingles, strong timbers, and limestone foundations mark the house as a home of a different age. The house was once the

gatehouse and entrance, to a tree lined laneway leading to the home of Sir Donald Mann, wealthy railway contractor, who had built his home "Fallingbrook" in 1907 on 125 acres of land between Lakeview Avenue (now renamed Fallingbrook) on the west and the Toronto Hunt Club on the east. Mann chose the name for his house, from the tumbling brook that flows through the property, through thick woods down the hill, until it eventually flows into Lake Ontario. [He was also possibly aware that] 20 years earlier, the previous owner of the site, Reverend Charles Denstanley [?] had a home there named "Falling Brook"

Although few in the Township of Scarborough could boast of electricity in their homes, the reputation of Donald Mann was such that the Township had granted him "the privilege of erecting electric light poles on Lakeview Avenue from Queen Street to the Kingston Road, also along the Kingston Road east to Mr. Mann's gate"

...

Sir Donald Mann was fifty four years old when he built "Fallingbrook". Like the lodge on Kingston Road the structure was in the Tudor style of architecture, a style which characterized many of the Canadian Northern Railway stations across the continent. The grounds were noted for [their] landscaping, and Fallingbrook was furnished with fine antiques, Chippendale furniture, Dutch tapestries and fine paintings. In the midst of winter, January 26, 1930, fire broke out. The discovery was made by a servant Albert Soper, who heard crackling and upon investigation found the attic full of smoke. The Scarborough Fire Brigade was called, and shortly thereafter the telephone line went dead. The fire was described by the Toronto Star as spectacular, raging for eleven hours. Neighbours volunteered to help in rescuing as much as possible. Sir Donald, seventy seven years old, wet and covered in ice, directed the rescue operations. The Scarborough Fire Brigade, support[ed] by the Toronto Brigade from Main Street [station] were handicapped by the distance of the house from the water mains and the eventual breakdown of the pumps. It is believed that the fire ... took hold as the result of the [draft] from a small food elevator shaft fanning the flames.

...

The great limestone foundations of "Fallingbrook" are visible at the rear of properties on Lynndale Road, and the little brook that inspired the name continues to flow toward the lake and can be seen on the north side of Fallingbrook Drive.