

Ross Museum

Background and History

An introduction to the the people behind the museum.



The Ross Memorial Museum was a bequest to St. Andrews by Henry and Juliette Ross, American summer residents of the area since 1902 until both passed away within a few days of each other in 1945. The Rosses were knowledgeable collectors who

were influenced by early 20th century recognition of American decorative arts and by period restoration projects in Williamsburg and Morristown early in the last century.

CHESTNUT HALL

In 1938 Mr and Mrs Ross purchased the historic house which is now home to their collection.

Chestnut Hall was built in 1824, by Loyalist, the Honourable Harris Hatch, who came to St. Andrews as a small child with his family after the American Revolution. Hatch and his wife, Anne, had eleven children and the house stayed in the family for almost 100 years.

Originally, there was an ell attached to the house which housed a summer kitchen and laundry. This was taken down in the 1940s and subsequently replaced in the 70s with a new addition for museum offices and gallery space.

THE ROSSES FIRST CAME TO THE ST. ANDREWS AREA TO VISIT COLLEGE FRIENDS...

Staying in Robbinston, Maine, they travelled by boat and carriage to picnic at Chamcook Mountain, saw that the property was for sale and purchased the house and 87 acres of land for \$4,500.



The house had been designed by architect, H. N. Black, formerly of Boston but practising in the area

after major fires in Saint John and Eastport. In 1909, when Henry retired from the ministry, Rossmont became their permanent home for a few years. In later years the Rosses travelled extensively during the winter or lived in warmer climates. They always returned to Rossmont for many months of the year as they considered it their real home.

HENRY PHIPPS ROSS AND SARAH JULIETTE ROSS AND THEIR DREAM

A friend staying with Henry and Juliette at their estate in Chamcook near St Andrews, described *Rossmont* like this:

“You would love it in this house. No electricity, just beautiful oil (kerosene lamps) and wonderful candle holders all over...”

Fireplaces all over the place. Five on the first floor and on the second many of them, with one also in the bathrooms. Four immense bedrooms on second floor and we have a beautiful private bath. *Downstairs is just grand with rugs and furniture galore....”*
Louis Pons, 1945

The Rosses were influenced as early collectors by Providence (Rhode Island) leaders in the field such as Charles Pendleton, Luke Vincent Lockwood, Wallace Nutting and Gertrude Tucker.

Henry and Juliette lived in Providence from 1905-1907 when Henry was rector of Calvary Church. Charles Pendleton (1846-1904) willed his collection

of 18th century American furniture and decorative arts to the Rhode Island School of Design and Pendleton House opened in 1906—becoming the first museum wing dedicated to American decorative



arts in the United States. Pendleton was obviously an inspiration to the Rosses when they had the idea to buy Chestnut Hall for their museum.

THE ROSSES AS COLLECTORS...

In 1908 the Rosses were recognized as “true rug lovers” by Rosa Belle Holt, author of *Rugs, Oriental and Occidental* and the museum has an extensive collection of fine oriental carpets.

From 1910-1914 the Rosses formed an excellent collection of early 19th century New Brunswick and American furniture. Later, they travelled extensively and many decorative objects were added to their collection from the trips they took all over the world.

While living in California they met and befriended many artists. The work of Mary Curtis



Richardson, William Silva and others grace the walls of the museum. Well-known Canadian artist, George Horne Russell, summered in St Andrews and taught Henry Ross to paint. The paintings of both professional—and talented pupil—are on display!

Although the museum is not a period restoration, the collection is displayed in a house setting. Everything in the collection was used—and loved by Henry and Juliette.



SARAH JULIETTE ROSS (1868-1945) & HENRY PHIPPS ROSS ((1867-1945)

Juliette, as she was known, was born in Detroit to Charles Finney Clark and his wife, Sarah Miranda (née Wilder). Mrs Clark passed away shortly after Juliette’s birth. Mr Clark’s second wife was Ellen M. Fogg of Providence, Rhode Island who was a Mayflower descendant of Richard Warren and Francis Cook. There were two children

HENRY PHIPPS ROSS AND SARAH JULIETTE ROSS AND THEIR DREAM

by this 1870 marriage.

The Clark family resided on Madison Avenue in New York City, and at Fairacres, Morristown.

Juliette's half-brother, Charles Martin Clark, succeeded his father as president of the Bradstreet company (now Dun and Bradstreet). Her half-sister, Ella Mabel Clark was a patron of the arts in New York city and Morristown, New Jersey. A diary in the museum collection written by Juliette during her second Grand Tour of Europe, describes her visits to galleries, theatres and cathedrals and contains her views about the sites she visited as a young woman.

Henry Phipps Ross was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and was the son of Charles Henry Ross and Josephine (née Phipps) Tyler Ross of Cleveland and Norwich, New York. Josephine had been first married to G. B. Tyler who was killed in the Civil War.

Henry was at Harvard for four years and then entered the Episcopal Theological School,

graduating in 1895. He was in the ministry until 1909, serving in Taunton, Massachusetts, Providence, Rhode Island and Palo Alto, California.

Juliette and Henry were married on 2, 1895 in Morristown. You see them here at Rossmont with some of their many friends later in life.



MORE ON THEIR COLLECTION....

The Rosses were early and enthusiastic collectors. Henry's passion seems to have been for furniture while Juliette had a particular interest in smaller *objets d'art*. Henry's diary shows that they are looking for Chippendale, Sheraton and Hepplewhite furniture. They scoured the local area themselves for their 'finds' and also had a man who worked on the estate and travelled as far as Halifax locating pieces for their collection.

New Brunswick furniture of the 19th century was not much

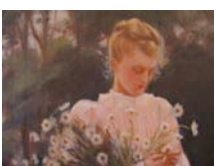
appreciated until well into the mid-20th century but the Rosses could see and appreciate good design when they saw it. Happily, we now have a very good collection of furniture made by



early NB cabinetmaker thanks to them.

None of our pieces are labelled but many have been attributed to makers by comparisons made with known examples in other collections as in the case of the sewing stand (76.28) by Thomas Nisbet shown here. Fine American furniture forms part of their collection, as well.

Oriental carpets, paintings both Canadian and American, interesting objects from around the world all add to the ambiance of this very personal collection.



VISITOR COMMENTS (& WE COULDN'T HAVE SAID IT BETTER OURSELVES!)

"Wonderful history and a testament of love for each other and life" (Ontario)

"We truly loved the beautiful spirit of the Rosses and their generosity!" (Maryland)

"Beautifully displayed furniture in a lovely home. Such generosity!" (England)

HENRY PHIPPS ROSS AND SARAH JULIETTE ROSS AND THEIR DREAM

THINGS TO SEE AND DO...!

The Rosses loved St. Andrews and you will too! There are lots of things for you to enjoy!

Visit the **Sheriff Andrews House** just down the street from us. Another lovely early 19th century house museum but this time it's a period restoration!

Don't miss the fine examples of furniture brought by the Loyalists.

Sunbury Shores Arts and Nature Centre has a gallery featuring artists from the Maritimes. And you can take art or nature courses there too—many geared to children!

The Huntsman Marine Science Centre has lots to see and do—don't miss their 'touch pool' where you can get up close to sea creatures and learn about our wonderful marine environment.

Ministers Island is a fabulous place for a hike or a tour—Sir William Van Horne built the railway across Canada and by doing so helped to make us the nation we are today. Learn more about this incredible man and his life at the estate he created.



Historic Churches abound in St. Andrews—many give tours and you will enjoy the variety of architectural styles.

Kingsbrae Garden is a delight for children and adults alike. Photographers love it especially on a foggy day! 37 acres of plants and flowers with a café...!

The St. Andrews Summer School for the Performing Arts puts on many concerts and events—make sure to keep your eyes open for posters and announcements or check with the **Visitor Information Centre**.

And don't forget that many of our shops carry local crafts of special interest. **Cottage Craft** on Market Square was started right in Chestnut Hall and Grace Helen Mowat sold the house to the Rosses for their museum!

RMM Calendar

July 1

Canada Day Reception

2-4:00 Cake, music & craft for children

First Monday in August

New Brunswick Day Reception

2-4:00 Cake, music & craft for children

Christmas Open House

Late November or early December

Check our website:

rossmemorialmuseum.ca

EVENTS...

