

HENRY NORTHCOTE

By A. Cook

When Sir John Colborne came to Canada in 1826 there were two members of his entourage destined to remain in Canada after the recall of Sir John as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. They were Richard Northcote and Ann Taylor.



Richard Northcote was born near Honiton, in Devonshire on November 4th, 1804, and came to Canada with Sir John Colborne and married Ann Taylor after their arrival in Muddy York. They had four children, three of whom died in infancy, and one son, Henry, the subject of this sketch was born on November 4th, 1833, just in time to be born in Muddy York, as the City of Toronto was incorporated in 1834.

Henry was educated at Upper Canada College and his ability at drawing brought him into contact with the late John C. Howard, who gave the city Howard Park, and who also was drawing master at Upper Canada College, an appointment through the influence of Sir John Colborne in 1833. A year later William Lyon Mackenzie was made first mayor of Toronto and appointed John C. Howard to be the first City Surveyor.

Henry Northcote served his apprenticeship with John C. Howard and on his becoming a Surveyor on the 11th April, 1856, he was presented with a very large volume on "Civil Engineering and Surveying Around the Port of London," on the flyleaf of which was written, "To Henry Northcote from John C. Howard," and dated 1854, and in Henry Northcote's own words, "I was nearly dead lugging that big volume from Mr. Howard's residence in High Park to my home down town."

He married Julia Hocken on the 22nd of August, 1857. She was the daughter of Richard Hocken and a step-sister to H. C. Hocken, the former mayor of Toronto and present representative to the Dominion Parliament for that city.

They had two children, Lucey Ann, born January 25th, 1864, and Richard Henry, born February 25th, 1869. Both children are living. Lucey Ann, a spinster, lives with her brother Richard, who is married and living at 201 Lake Shore Road, Humber Bay, Ont.

Henry Northcote had one great hobby at which he more than excelled, chess. He holds many medals and cups and was considered an authority on the ancient game. In any book on chess there are references to Henry Northcote and many of his plays are quoted.

He never had a private practice, but remained in the service of the city until his retirement, and many of the streets of the growing city were laid out by him. Northcote Avenue will carry on the name of one of our earlier Surveyors in the city's service and of a family well known and respected as pioneers in the establishing of the city.

He was a member of the Church of England and his politics Conservative and died at Toronto on the 3rd May, 1922.

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