

George Coltart



George Coltart retired as the superintendent of Waterloo Park in 1951 after working at the park for twenty-eight years. He was in his late seventies at the time and had spent his entire career making the park beautiful with lily ponds, rock gardens and award-winning flowerbeds.

Coltart, a native of England, took the top post in 1927 after initially working for the Waterloo Park Board between 1917 and 1923. He is remembered for the artistry of his flowerbeds, and his skill in nurturing young seedlings in the park's greenhouses. During his term as superintendent, seventeen maple trees were planted to honour the Waterloo men who had died in the First World War. During the 1920s, there was a toboggan slide, and three ice rinks were made on Silver Lake for hockey and recreational skating.

In 1930, a brochure advertised the park as being a place for picnics, boating, tennis, and dancing and “banqueting” in the park pavilion. A 1945 newspaper article illustrates some of the issues of the day for Coltart. The problem in the mid-40s was the “rowdy young people” who were spoiling the band concerts in the park. Representatives from the Waterloo Musical Society complained about “honking of horns, running motors . . . motorcyclists tearing down the driveway . . . when the band concert is in progress.”

Coltart also served his community as the president of the Waterloo Horticultural Society from 1918 until 1921 and then again for a year in 1930. In the intervening years, 1921 to 1929 he served as director, and then again from 1932 until 1939.

George Coltart immigrated to Canada in 1912 and married Charlotte Jack. The couple had a son named James and a daughter Agnes. Like many of the early park superintendents, the Coltart family lived in the historic Eby house on the park premises. In 1968, the Eby house became a potters' studio. Coltart died a few short months after retiring.

Photo courtesy of the Waterloo Public Library