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The Family Tree Of Cyrus Eaton

By THOMAS DUNBABIN

OTTAWA -- "Canada should take over the economic up-building of the Empire, should make this job go and should stay with it."

These words were spoken by Cyrus Stephen Eaton at a dinner given in Ottawa in 1928 by Gordon Edwards, M.P. and attended by the late Prime Minister Mackenzie King and Sir Robert Borden.

Cyrus Eaton also said: "Canada's role is to give an impetus to the development of the untapped resources of the Empire and to bring profitable employment to the third of the world population which is embraced within the Empire."

Earlier on that eventful day Mr. Eaton had been the guest of honor at a lunch at Rideau Hall, by Lord Willingdon, then Governor-General.

A little later the Hon. Edgar Nelson Rhodes, Premier of Nova Scotia from 1925 to 1930, had written, in a letter to Eaton:—"Apart from your contributions, which have been of tremendous assistance, the example you have set has put in motion currents of thought on the part of many old Nova Scotians that will, I feel sure, be a stimulus and encouragement to those of us who are trying to give a real lead to the affairs of the province."

In those days, 33 years ago, Yuri Gagarin had no thoughts about soaring into space or of dropping in on Nova Scotia, Cuba and Brazil. He had not even begun to exist. The British Empire was very real and the Commonwealth, which had only recently come into existence, was united under the Crown. No one had even dreamed of a Common Market.

The work that tells of the Cyrus Eaton of more than 30 years ago is:—"The Eaton Family of Nova Scotia", by Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, a native of Kentville, graduate of Harvard and an Anglican clergyman in New York State. In 1885 he had published by The Halifax Herald a work of 128 pages entitled:—"Genealogical Sketch of the Nova Scotia Eatons." By 1929 he had given more than 45 years to a study of Eaton history. Of Cyrus S. Eaton he wrote in his 1929 work:—

"The Pugwash Eatons are nobly represented by Cyrus Stephen Eaton of Cleveland, Ohio, one of the most charming personalities in the modern world, one of the most remarkable financiers in the United States, a man organizing and controlling tremendous financial and industrial enterprises and one who yet in all his activities is moved by high motives and a conscientious desire to promote the true welfare of the human world."

The author of this article is an Ottawa historian who has written on many aspects of Nova Scotia's background.

It would be a fine and fitting thing if Cyrus Eaton were entitled to membership of the Mayflower Society. But, according to the researches of A. W. H. Eaton, the Nova Scotia Eatons are not descended from Francis Eaton who came to Plymouth, Mass., in the Mayflower with his wife in 1620. There are, of course, dozens of Mayflower descendants in Nova Scotia and no doubt there is a Mayflower strain in many of today's Eatons.

Four Eatons, all with wives and children, came to New England in the great Puritan emigration of 1630-40. Of these John Eaton was the ancestor of the Nova Scotia Eatons. He appears to have come from near Salisbury, Wiltshire, and settled near Salisbury, Mass. There were Eatons in Wiltshire when the Domesday Book was prepared (A.D. 1085).

In 1761 David Eaton, fifth in descent from John, moved to Nova Scotia. He was a pre-Loyalist, one of the many "New England Planters" who moved to Nova Scotia in the 1760's. Cyrus Eaton is also descended from United Empire Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia after 1783.

David Eaton settled at Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, with his wife, Deborah, and six children. He received an area of 666 2-3 acres. When he died in 1803 at the age of 74, he left seven sons and four daughters.

David Eaton's nephew, Dr. Daniel Eaton, settled at Onslow in 1790. As many other Eatons did later, Dr. Daniel appears to have gone to the U. S. He died in Philadelphia. His grandson

Cyrus, born April 10, 1836, stuck to Nova Scotia. He was twice Mayor of Truro.

The founder of the Pugwash Eatons was Amos, son of Stephen and Eliza Eaton, who moved to Pugwash in early life. Amos, who served as a lieutenant in the militia, married Sarah Harris on January 11, 1810. They had six sons and four daughters. Incidentally, many of the Eaton families had more sons than daughters, a notable aid to the perpetuation and prevalence of the family name.

One son of Amos Eaton, Levi Woodworth Eaton, sailed to New Zealand in his own ship in 1860. This was the last of many ships he had built in Nova Scotia. She was commanded by his son, Captain George Eaton. Levi took his family and Captain George had his wife with him. Levi Eaton settled in Auckland, N. Z., as a merchant.

Alpheus Eaton, brother of Levi, went to California in 1859. A little later he joined his brother in Auckland. New Zealand has many Eatons of Nova Scotia origin. One of the "exiles", Mrs. George Eaton, returned to Pugwash after the death of Captain George. After her return she married George Carter.

Cyrus S. Eaton of Cleveland was the son of Joseph Howe Eaton who was obviously born in the balmy days of the great Joe Howe (1804-73). Joseph Howe Eaton married Mary Adelia MacPherson. Her father, John Wesley MacPherson, was a native of Shelburne, whose father, Evan, had moved to Pugwash. Evan's father, Lauchlin MacPherson of Shelburne, was the son of a Scottish-born United Empire Loyalist.

So on his mother's side, Cyrus S. Eaton comes from Scottish Highland Loyalist stock. His paternal ancestors, as pre-Loyalists, did not have to make the decision that faced the Loyalists. Nothing came of the rather feeble attempts to make Nova Scotia a "14th State" and the pre-Loyalists just stayed put and were loyal to the Empire — except for a few who joined in the rebellion of the Thirteen States and went to the United States in the Revolutionary years. The Eatons were not among these.

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The minister of the church in Pugwash who was Mr. Eaton's great grandfather was Rev. Maynard Parker. Rev. Parker is the son of Major Nathaniel Parker. Nathaniel Parker as a young man joined a group of soldiers and was involved with Wolfe in the siege of Quebec. Major Nathaniel Parker finally settled in Nictaux. Nathaniel had 16 children and Rev. Maynard Parker was the 15th child.

Maynard Parker is descended from famous New Englanders, including John Alden and Priscilla. Maynard Parker is also a relative of Theodore Parker. Theodore Parker was a famous New England preacher and orator who played a conspicuous part in the liberation of the slaves. Theodore Parker was one of the founders of Acadia University.

All of these Parkers were at one time Congregationalists, but when they moved to Nova Scotia they became Baptists.

Henry Steele Commager wrote a book on the life of Theodore Parker which Mr. Eaton thinks may be in the library at Pugwash.

(read by RS to JP 7/10/61)