

London April 26 – The following Canadians received invitations to Westminster Abbey today in connection with the marriage of the Duke of York and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon: Hon. P.C. Larkin, Canadian High Commissioner and Mrs. Larkin; J. Howard, Agent General of Nova Scotia and Mrs. Howard; W.C. Noxon, Agent General of Ontario and Mrs. Noxon; F.C. Wade, Agent General of British Columbia and Mrs. Wade; Sir George Perley, former Canadian High Commissioner and Lady Perley; Sir. Edward Kemp, Senator; Mrs. J.H. Woods; Mrs. and Miss Kennedy; Miss. Montizambert; Mrs. Murton, Mrs. Cassels, F.M. Eastwood, Mrs. Stuart, Sir. Cambell Stuart, Managing Director of the Times Publishing Company; George Badgerow, Miss C. Welland Merritt. (end of article)

As the article heading indicates, one of those in attendance was a female from St. Catharines, and that would be C. Welland Merritt. Considering the few Canadians invited to the Royal Wedding, it appears that she was held in high regard by the Royal Family. So who was she? Her full name is Catharine Welland Merritt and she was the daughter of Jedediah Prendergast Merritt and the granddaughter of William Hamilton Merritt. She inherited Oak Hill, William Hamilton Merritt's Estate. In early 1916 Catharine let the government use the house as a military convalescent home for wounded soldiers. After the First World War the family moved back in. In 1923, the Merritt family donated the land and gardens around the home to the City of St. Catharines as Oak Hill Park. Catherine sold the house in 1928 and it is now used for the local radio station studios.

But from her obituary, as the saying goes, we find the rest of the story. It was during the war that her work was most prominent. In the dark days of 1914 she happened to be in Germany and it

was only after a series of thrilling experiences that she was successful in reaching Great Britain. There she was summoned to Buckingham Palace and was commissioned by Queen Mary to form branches of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild in the Dominion. Her response was immediate and enthusiastic as it was successful. During 1914 and 1915, Catharine twice crossed Canada, at her own expense, organizing branches of the society. She carried out Her Majesty's wishes fully and then surpassed them by personally contributing material for over 1000 garments and giving 2,000 guild badges. It is likely because of her efforts and contributions to the war effort that Catharine was invited to the Royal wedding.

But, there is more to be said about Catharine Welland Merritt. She was very active in the work of the Imperial Order of the daughters of the Empire (now IODE). She was interested in history and also keen on matters pertaining to the United Empire Loyalist cause and in the collection and care of things or places of historical interest. In March of 1927 she married Sir Henry Pellatt at St. George's Church here in St. Catharines. In Toronto she continued her active life up until she passed away at her Crescent Road residence on December 19, 1929. Her remains were brought back to St. George's Church here for the funeral and subsequent burial in Victoria Lawn Cemetery. She was survived by her husband Major-General Sir Henry M. Pellatt, C.V.O. and one sister Mrs. A.D. Gordon of Toronto, two brothers, Prescott and John of St. Catharines.