

Collectors of irons, china and history

Phyllis and Eric Watson are not only collectors of irons and fine china, but are collectors of the history surrounding them. Eric's stories can be heard at the museum during the summer months.

Eric's mother gave Phyllis a hair receiver when she married; now her collection numbers over 200. She also collects crest china from Europe, cups and saucers, shaving mugs, mustash cups and ladies' spittoons. Eric says that with hair receivers, ladies' shaving cups, spittoons and chamber pots, women went to bed well equipped in those days.

Phyllis was born in England of English and Canadian parents and came to Canada when she was seven, where her father had been given a section of land in Saskatoon after serving in World War I.

The family bought a horse and wagon to move them to their new home and a cow in Saskatoon. Her mother had never been outside of a large city before coming to Canada

and was horrified when the cow gave birth enroute to their home, but was overwhelmed at the generosity of their neighbours when they arrived.

Eric was born and raised in the Douglas area. His collection of irons started by accident 18 years ago. He repaired irons for friends and neighbours, some were beyond repair and were left with him. Now he has 250, at least, adds Phyllis. He also collects pleaters, crimpers, trivets and curling irons.

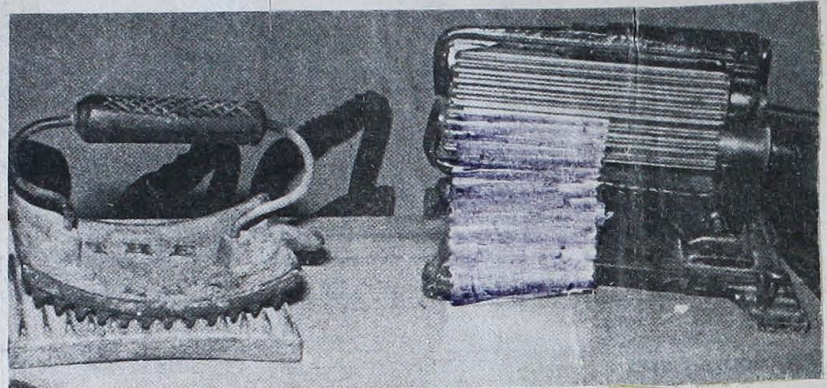
The oldest iron was made by a blacksmith in France in 1800. Although many irons are very old and not dated, his oldest Canadian iron was made 125 years ago.

He still has a train, fire engine and other toys he played with as a small boy.

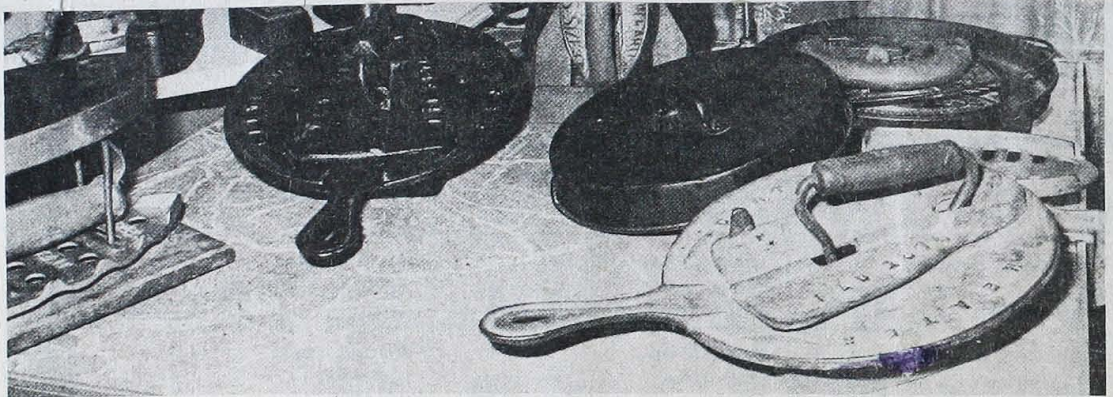
Eric lost his right arm and part of his left hand in a machinery accident five years ago, but is planning on putting in a garden this spring.

Phyllis and Eric have one son, Ron, who is married and lives in Stittsville and grandchildren.

The Watsons keep busy with their hobbies and are looking forward to the volunteer work they do at the museum.



Pleaters and crimpers were used to finish collars and fancy shirts.



Irons were enclosed in lids of wood stoves in the old days.

