



In Veronica's Garden

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In Veronica's Garden is the true story of a garden and the larger than life personality of its creator Veronica Milner.

The book traces the social history of the Milner Garden in Qualicum Beach. A lovely book, full of details about Veronica Milner, the creative force behind the garden; photos of people, gardens, and flowers of the many phases of her wide-ranging and interesting life.

Born into the Edwardian British aristocracy, she was related to Winston Churchill and Diana, Princess of Wales. As a young bride she restored a castle garden in Ireland. When widowed after an unhappy marriage, she remarried Ray Milner, moved to Canada and transformed his "summer retreat" into a beautiful wild garden in the manner of Victorian garden writer William Robinson.

The garden at Qualicum has always had visitors, some of them "the Royals" including Prince Charles and Lady Diana, and Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip.

There are descriptions of many of the plants in the garden, as well as of the forest surrounding it. Once you leave the highway and walk into the forest, you notice the silence - (in Fall. I expect the trees are full of birds in summer). The whole property is so peaceful, even with busy volunteers and students from Malaspina College digging, weeding, and discussing plants with visitors.

Descriptions of Veronica's family give an idea of how some people lived in the Victorian and Edwardian ages. Imagine "Like other aristocratic children in the Edwardian age, Veronica saw little of her parents. They were distant entities and servants were central to her life. As was the custom in upper-class families of the time, uniformed nannies and nursemaids raised her and her siblings, two brothers and a sister, in the top floor of the house".

What a contrast to living in a Vancouver Island forest in the 20th Century!

Malaspina University-College was gifted the garden in 1996.

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BOOK REVIEW *(Submitted by Noni Godfrey)*