



# The Vancouver Historical Society Newsletter

*Preserving and promoting the history of Vancouver since 1936*

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## Golfing on English Bay



By Jan Fialkowski

It's been a good year for golf in Vancouver and all across the country – so was 2020. Statistics from Golf Canada, the Canadian sport governing body, indicate that rounds of golf played are up by almost 22% since 2019. That's a lot of golf. You may ask yourself “why is so much more golf being played over the past 18 months?” The answer is Covid. When most other sports were forbidden for fear of virus transmission, golf proved to be the ‘safe’ sport. Played in the great outdoors with ample room for physical distancing, no touch contact with other players on the course and little to none with one's foursome, golf became the great respite from the constant fear of contracting Covid while still being physically active.

But even before Covid, golf has been looked upon as one of the healthiest physical activities available to all demographics from school kids to the most senior of seniors and all levels of ability. In 2021, the R&A together with the USGA, the world-wide governing bodies of golf, estimated there were 6 million golfers in Canada and something like 31 million world-wide. A 2009 peer-reviewed study in Sweden indicated that golfers on average live five years longer than non-

Two golfers and a Sikh caddy approaching the 4th green of the Jericho Golf Course, with the house of customs officer John MacKenzie Bowell under construction in the distance at 2nd and Sasamat, 1908. PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN. CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES AM59-F03-. CVA 255-09

golfers. Long before the Swedish study, Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), a signer of the American Declaration of Independence, exclaimed “Golf is an exercise which is much used by a gentleman in Scotland.....A man would live 10 years the longer for using this exercise once or twice a week.”



This month's speaker:  
**Michael Riste**

People have been playing golf since the 15<sup>th</sup> century at least. The first mention of golf is in Scotland in 1457 when the parliament of King James II banned the sport; it was seen to be a distraction from military training. Although it seems no one paid much attention to that ban, it wasn't until 1502 that King James IV became the world's first golfing monarch. And golf took off from there. King Charles I brought the game to England, and Mary Queen of Scots introduced it to France. The term ‘caddie’ comes from her military aides, known as ‘cadets’. Using the French pronunciation, say the word ‘cadet’; you can't argue it doesn't sound like ‘caddie’.

The Victorian Industrial Revolution and the birth of the railway allowed people to travel more easily around the British Isles and soon golf courses started popping up all over the countryside. Although the sport was played mostly by the upper classes, the Industrial Revolution allowed the mass manufacture of golf clubs and balls and opened golf up to the middle classes.

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**NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, January 27th, 2022. Details to come in the January newsletter.

## President's Notes

I played golf in my mid-teens and enjoyed it, but am unlikely to take it up again. I don't handle disappointment and failure as well as I used to.

My father joined the slightly down-market Quilchena course when it moved to Richmond in the early 1960s, so I was able to play there as a "junior." As a Kerrisdale kid, I had school friends whose parents were members of the much more toney private clubs in Vancouver: Point Grey, Marine Drive and Shaughnessy. Anecdotes stick in my mind – my father was delighted that Willie Fleming, the star halfback of the BC Lions and my mother's all-time-favourite football player, became a member at Quilchena. Allegedly he had been denied membership at the private Vancouver clubs due to his race – he was Black. Such was the city even into the 1970s. And Rafe Mair was said to throw his clubs in anger. I sympathize.

More significant, perhaps, is the impact that the early golf courses had on the Vancouver landscape. Our lecture this month focuses on the earliest of them: Jericho. McCleery is the public course on District Lot 315 – Fitzgerald McCleery's farm from pre-Vancouver days; Marine Drive occupies DL 316 next door – his brother Sam's pre-emption. Point Grey Golf Course is the farm of Henry Mole (namesake of "Mole Hill" in the West End), sold to the club in 1922.

Shaughnessy Golf Club operated on CPR land from 1912 to 1962 – the site of VanDusen Garden and, on the east side of Oak Street, Eric Hamber Secondary. Shaughnessy's lease of 160 acres of the Musqueam Reserve in 1958 paid the First Nation a minuscule sum, since renegotiated. The Musqueam failed in a recent bid to tax the land as residential; regardless, the club's lease expires in 2033.

Another of the three CPR-land courses, Quilchena (Langara is the third), operated in Consumption Hollow a.k.a. Asthma Flats, north of 33rd bisected by Arbutus, from 1925–55. The Arbutus Club, the Arbutus Gardens buildings, and a fine park occupy much of its 18-hole layout.

I hope you'll be able to join us for Michael Riste's engaging stories about golf in the early days.

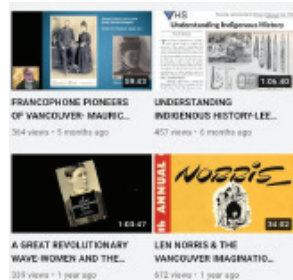
Michael Kluckner, President  
presidentvhs@gmail.com

**Don't miss a lecture!** or ...

**Watch it again, Sam!**

Visit our archive online: search "Vancouver Historical Society on YouTube" to find our lectures going back to 2016

Elwin Xie, videographer



## Upcoming Speakers

There will be no newsletter or lecture in December. January and subsequent meetings will likely be held at the Museum of Vancouver. We are investigating the possibility of hybrid live-Zoom meetings for the future.

January 27, 2022

### Becoming Vancouver: A History

Speaker: Daniel Francis, Author and Historian

Daniel Francis will speak on his new book – the first chronological history of the City written since the 1970s. He has written over 30 books, primarily on Canadian and British Columbia history, and recently won the prestigious Pierre Berton Award.

February 24, 2022

### A Long Way to Paradise

A panel of historians moderated by historian (and VHS program director) John Belshaw will discuss Bob McDonald's just-published political history of B.C.

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### Welcome to new VHS Members

Kristina Hannis  
Marg Huber

Marilyn Johnson  
Ray Ravensbergen

### Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board:

2021 - 2022

(ELECTED MAY 26, 2021)

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The front nine of the Jericho Golf Course in 1937 – the clubhouse is visible at the top-left. The Air Station at Jericho – initially a slipway, two canvas-covered hangars and four Curtis HS-2L flying boats – began operation in 1921. It became Number One Operations Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1925. In 1936, the Jericho base became Western Air Command. Following the war and years of administrative wrangling, the golf course land and air base were turned over to the City of Vancouver in 1973 as parkland. Three years later the park hosted the utopian Habitat Forum, a populist sideshow to the Habitat United Nations Conference on Human Settlements held downtown in June, 1976. The last hangars were demolished in the 1980s and the Jericho Pier in 2011.

PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN. VANCOUVER ARCHIVES AM54-S4-2-: CVA 371-894

## Golfing at Jericho

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So it's no surprise that golf made its way to Canada soon after. The first club, the Royal Montreal, opened in 1873. Then it should really be no surprise that golf was played in Vancouver as early as the 1890s given the number of the early settler population of Vancouver who had ancestral ties with Britain and Scotland.

At our November lecture, we'll learn from Michael Riste, renowned Pacific Coast golf historian, how the first organized golf course in Vancouver came to be. In 1892, the Jericho Golf Club was founded by three Vancouverites – Henry Ogle Bell-Irving, a Vancouver industrialist who was born in Scotland and came to the Granville Townsite in 1885; Campbell Sweeny,

who opened the first Bank of Montreal in 1887; and English-born Francis Miller Chaldecott, a Vancouver lawyer and landowner who helped organize the Municipality of South Vancouver. You might be surprised by what Riste shares

about the origins of golf in Vancouver: the Jericho Golf Club – thought by many to be the first organized golf club west of the Mississippi – and what happened to the club and its various locations over its 50-year lifespan.

## A Remembrance Day Tale of Three Brothers

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Elsie's son, he kept his Canadian citizenship and fought in WWII until he was captured in North Africa and spent the remainder of the war as a P.O.W. Leslie George "Les" Bowie later became a special-effects artist working primarily in England and won a Special Achievement Oscar for the movie "Superman" in 1979.

After George Pigrum Bowie's death, Lumbermen's Arch was renamed

Bowie's Arch in his honour. By this point, it had been moved to Stanley Park from its original location on Pender Street near Hamilton. It is said that Bowie's Arch was made entirely of Douglas Fir and held together only by its own weight since no nails, bolts or fasteners had been used in its construction. In 1947 it was demolished after part of it collapsed. The current Lumbermen's Arch was constructed in 1952 and has none of the grandeur Bowie's had.





# A Remembrance Day Tale of Three Brothers

By Jan Fialkowski

Periodically the Vancouver Historical Society receives an inquiry that piques the interest of the directors. Last spring, we received an email from a gentleman on the Isle of Wight. Attached was a 1913 photograph of his grandfather's house. It's a modest building typical of so many homes of the time. He asked if we might know on what street the house had been located. Written on the back was 'Bowie Residence - New Westminster'. I live in New Westminster, and I was determined to find this house.

It actually wasn't that hard. It's still there but looks nothing like the picture. Those tall trees have long since disappeared, as well as the street name. Searching through city directories, I found one solitary entry for *Bowie, Wm M, Duke Street* in the 1914 Henderson Greater Vancouver Street Directory. The archivist at the New Westminster Museum clued me in to the street name change and, armed with several historic maps to overlay, and two building permits, I'm convinced I found his grandfather William's house.

There were three Bowie brothers who came from England to Vancouver in the early 1900s. The first to arrive in 1906 was George Pigrum ("Pie-grum") Bowie, an architect who worked for the Parr & Fee firm until he opened his own firm in 1910. Very little remains of what George designed in Vancouver, but in 1912 he designed the original Lumbermen's Arch for the visit of Canada's Governor General, the Duke of Connaught. Two of George's brothers immigrated to the Vancouver area around 1911 – Ralph Archibald and William Morland. Ralph was a teller for the Bank of Montreal. William was a lumber salesman and lived in that little house on Duke Street with his wife Elsie Mary Hearn. In November 1913 their son was born in that house. On the baby's baptismal certificate from Vancouver's Christ Church, his uncle George is named as one of his sponsors.

On August 4, 1914, England de-



(Left) The Bowie House on Duke St. (Below) Bowie's Arch, better known as Lumbermen's Arch, as it looked once relocated to Stanley Park and re-erected on Captain Stamp's first-chosen site for the Hastings Mill – the Skw̓wú7mesh village of Xwáy̓xway, which was destroyed for the creation of Stanley Park.

PHOTOGRAPH BELOW BY FRANK GOWEN, CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES AM1052-: AM1052 P-2458



clared war on Germany. Within weeks, George, age 33, engaged to Alice Margaret Scott, enlisted. George had been an active member of the militia in the 31st Regiment, British Columbia Horse. He was sent to Valcartier, Quebec and became a sergeant in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry. As part of the first contingent of Canadian soldiers sent to war, he sailed to Europe on the *SS Lapland*. George was promoted to lieutenant, then captain, but less than six months later he was shot by a sniper in no-man's land on the Western Front and died from his wounds on July 7, 1915. He left his property in West Point Grey to his fiancée and his siblings.

Three months earlier in May, Ralph, aged 24, enlisted and sailed from Montreal to England with the Vancouver 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. His unit arrived

in France in October 1915 and fought through all the horrors of 1916, including the Somme. Battle-hardened, he was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant with the Leicestershire Regiment in January, 1917. Seven months later, on September 26, he was killed at Ypres in Flanders.

What became of William? There is no mention of any Bowies in the city directories after 1915. Sometime during WWI, according to his grandson, William, Elsie and their son Leslie George moved to Texas and then to Mexico to work in the Bowie family's timber business. But not for long, as his grandson recounts: "Sometime late in the war they went to Europe and grandfather fought and was gassed on a battlefield in Northern France; my grandmother became a lumberjack in the Women's Land Army." As for little Leslie George, William and

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