



Walking Tour Seven: Fleming Beach – Buxton Green – Macaulay Point

Fleming Beach is named for Harold and Edgar Fleming, well known photographers, who arrived in Victoria in the 1880s from London, England. They built their house “Viewfield” near the beach. Because the site was so isolated, it was the first house in the area to have a telephone installed.

The house renamed “Libernel” (demolished 1970s) was later home to the Copeland family whose daughter Beryl married Major-General George Randolph Pearkes, VC. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery at Passchendaele in 1918. Wounded five times, he was one of Canada’s most decorated officers. He was Lieutenant Governor of B.C. from 1960-1968.

The Esquimalt Anglers’ Association (established 1952) built a boat-ramp and launching facility and the Anglers’ Clubhouse (The Fish Shack) at Fleming Beach.

The Association worked with the Esquimalt Parks and Recreation Commission to develop Buxton Green. They donated in excess of \$80,000 and countless hours of volunteer labour towards the completion of this project. Buxton Green formally opened in October 1983.

Buxton Green was named to honour Percival (Tich) and Phoebe Buxton and their 14 children. The Buxton family, early residents of Esquimalt, were well



known and respected members of the community. Eight of the Buxton sons followed in Sergeant Tich Buxton’s footsteps and joined the Canadian Army.

Buxton Green was built over one of the first natural salt water swimming pools in the Greater Victoria area. Members of the Canadian Army stationed at Work Point Barracks during the Second World War constructed the pool.

Macaulay Point, named for Donald Macaulay, Bailiff (manager) of Viewfield Farm, was one of four farms established in the 1850s in the Esquimalt District by the Puget Sound Agriculture Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Macaulay, a native of the Hebrides, was bailiff of Viewfield Farm for seven years. He drowned in Esquimalt Harbour in 1868.

In 1878, the Macaulay Earthwork Battery on Macaulay Point was built by civilian labour under the direction of Lt. Col. de la Chevois T. Irwin, Royal Artillery. Between 10 June and 30 August 1878, Finlayson Point, Macaulay Point and Brothers Island Batterys were completed.

The first battery was completed before construction began on the second to insure the coast was defended in case of a Russian attack during the Russo-Turkish War. Thankfully the attack never materialized.

The guns were fired for the first time 29 July 1878 to mark the opening of the 3rd Provincial Assembly when a 13-gun salute was fired by the Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery, antecedent of the present 5th (British Columbia) Field Artillery Regiment, RCA.

In 1887, the old earthworks at Fort Macaulay were dismantled and new six-inch disappearing guns were installed. Under each huge cannon, that could pivot 360 degrees, was a pressure cylinder. The men would pump the cylinder



Buxton family (left) and Fleming Beach (above)



and the cannon would rise from its circular base to peek over the hill. When fired, the 100-pound shell ripped down the 22-footlong barrel and the force would recoil the gun back down into the pit.

In its day, this equipment was considered quite sophisticated!

Construction of Fort Macaulay began in 1894 with the laying out and building of the earth and concrete fort by Sappers of the Royal Engineers from the 18th Company, Halifax, Nova Scotia. As indicated on the face of the tunnel, construction was completed in 1895.

A palisade, a seven-foot picket fence, was built around the fort in the early days to protect the trenches. This was eventually replaced by barbed wire. The star-shape of the fort, similar to the Citadel in Halifax and Quebec City,

is still visible from the air.

In 1906, Canada assumed all responsibility for the defence establishments in Esquimalt. The guns were manned during both World Wars and again, never fired in anger. The Federal government declared Fort Macaulay obsolete in 1957.

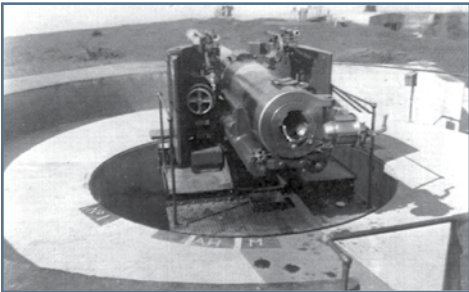
Federal Works Grants were obtained under the auspices of the Esquimalt Anglers' Association in 1985. At the same time, the Township of Esquimalt acquired leave to trespass on the Macaulay Point lands for recreational and historical purposes. Defined trails were developed, benches were installed and the infrastructure was made safer.

A portion of the point is a Garry Oak meadow. Look for the rare Dense Flowered Lupin and Purple Sanicle plants. Both are on the endangered species list.

Chris Clement completed a flora Inventory in the mid-1990s. R.W. Chappell completed a bird study in 1997. Both are available for reading at the Esquimalt Municipal Archives.

There are many memorial benches located along the oceanfront path. The scenery is ever-changing; rest, take in the fabulous views, breath in the salt air! It is easy to forget that from Macaulay Point it is only a twenty-minute walk to Victoria's Inner Harbour.

Macaulay Point is an off-leash area for dogs east of the breakwater.



All photos this page: **Macaulay Point**

Written by Sherri K. Robinson. Photos: Esquimalt Municipal Archives and Josh McCulloch.