

Walking Tour Seven

Fleming Beach - Buxton Green - Macaulay Point

Visiting Fleming Beach, Buxton Green and Macaulay Point.

For a detailed description of Fleming Beach and Macaulay Point, see Tour 2.

According to Grant Keddie, Archaeology Curator, RBCM, "the Macaulay Point area was known by the Songhees as a place where people fished with a reef net before the coming of the Europeans." Fishermen still gather here. The Esquimalt Anglers' Association (established 1952) built the boat-ramp, launching facility and Anglers' clubhouse (called the Fish Shack).

Buxton Green was built over one of the first natural salt water swimming pools in the Greater Victoria area by members of the Canadian Army stationed at Work Point Barracks during the Second World War. The Anglers' Association worked with the Esquimalt Parks and Recreation Commission to develop Buxton Green. Members 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 fourteen children.



The Buxton Family

The Earthwork Battery on Macaulay Point was built in 1878 by civilian labour under the direction of Lt. Col. De la Chevois T. Irwin, Royal Artillery. Between June 10 and August 30, 1878, Finlayson Point, Macaulay Point and Brothers Island Battery were completed. The first battery was completed before construction began on the second to ensure the coast was defended in case of a Russian attack, thought imminent during the Russo-Turkish War. Thankfully the attack never materialized.

The guns were fired for the first time on July 29, 1878 marking the opening of the 3rd Provincial Assembly with a 13-gun salute fired by the Victoria Battery of Garrison Artillery, antecedent of the present 5th (BC) 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. Soldiers would pump the cylinder 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, 18th Company, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The date, 1895, on the face of the tunnel indicates the year of completion.

At one time, a seven-foot picket fence was built around the fort to protect the trenches. It was eventually replaced by barbed wire. The star-shape of Fort Macaulay similar to the Citadel in Halifax and in Quebec City is still visible from the air.



Fort Macaulay

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

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

In 2017, through a Canada 150 Grant, interpretive signage was developed to tell the story of Fort Macaulay. An interpretive event is held annually near the end of May at this historic site.

Heritage Homes near Macaulay Point

1024 Munroe St., "Mountain View," was built in 1894 by contractor George Mesher. The house was designed by architect John Gerhard Tiarks for Hans Olgilvie Price, a clerk in HM Naval Dockyard. Similar in design to 820 Dunsmuir St. (see Tour 1), an addition was added in 1965. Members of the Price family were connected with the house until 1953.

330 Kinver St. was designed by architect Hubert Savage in 1935 for Mabel Ellen Carlos Dring. It was home for many years to Cecy Margaret Baldwin (1913-2009), described in her obituary as "Devoted botanist, intrepid adventurer, and ageless spirit," and her companion, architect Robert Punderson.



Macaulay Point

