

WALTER MOLSON
MONTREAL 1

22nd January, 1947

Dear Mrs. Reford:

I was going to send you a copy of an old diary of Mrs. John McNider, written in 1822, which Herbie Kingstone gave me, and which I sent on to Bessie. She tells me, however, that John Oppe had sent or was going to send you a copy.

However, the more modern enclosure may be of some interest to you and your husband.

It is a poor literary effort, but was done rather hurriedly on request, so that the Cascade Golf and Tennis Club could have something for their records from the beginning, and before the memories of the older golfers and inhabitants were lost through passage of time.

Yours sincerely,



The purchase from the MacNider Estate by the Cascade Golf & Tennis Club Inc., in 1945, of the land under lease has aroused interest in the early days of golf in Metis Beach.

On request for a few notes of these early days, the following was gathered by one of the few surviving original members from available records and memory.

(Note: The Minutes for the years 1903 to 1908 inclusive appear to have been mislaid, and have been unavailable in preparing this memorandum.)

October 1946

CASCADE GOLF & TENNIS CLUB INC.

Reminiscences of its early days and growth

July 4th, 1901, the date of the signing of the original lease, may be considered the birthday of the Club, but golf was played in Little Metis for several summers prior thereto by a few enthusiasts. About 1895 3 short holes were used on a pasture at Turriff Hall by a Presbyterian minister living at that hotel. The game was often interrupted by a bull who took exception to the red coat worn by this lone player. Other red-coated gentlemen were observed carrying a few loose sticks and hitting a little white ball in the hayfield opposite the Cascade House. A strange sight to other summer visitors and local inhabitants, it was viewed with a degree of pity but some understanding sympathy; no doubt they were benefitting healthwise by gentle and harmless exercise in the bracing Lower St. Lawrence air.

A mild but short-lived resentment soon arose among the juvenile set, who played baseball in the same field. But it was the first golf lesson for most of them. They learned to protect themselves instantly if the word "fore" was uttered. Many of them later became top-notch golfers - a few, champions. They learned still more about the game when their ball game was interrupted and they had to await the efforts of the redcoats to pound the little white ball out of the baseball area. It followed that when some boys were invited to the cottage of Dean Henry T. Bovey, for a talk on golf, they went.

They learned that for several years Mr. Sam MacNider, who ran the Cascade House, had encouraged the playing of golf as an attraction for his hotel, and was now in sympathy with a proposal that he turn over the management of his little seven hole course to a group of golfers who knew something about the game, which he did not. Possibly the proposal found mutual favour because, at some expense, he had constructed several ineffective greens, circular in shape, about 15 ft. in diameter, sodded with the aid of a spirit level. Several of those greens may be identified to-day, one of them being about 100 ft. above the present eighteenth green.

The first lease, covering two fields then used as golf links, was for three years, terminable on notice, however, at the end of any one year at 1st of October; rental \$25.00 for the first year and \$30.00 for each of the succeeding years; the proprietor was to pay all taxes and keep fences in repair, have the right to use the fields for agricultural purposes, if, in the opinion of the lessees, that did not interfere with their use as golf links. The proprietor gave, free of charge, the use of a mowing machine at least once a week during the golfing season, to cut the grass, and the use of the hole cups and disks. Boarders at the Cascade House were to be charged one-half of whatever was charged to cottagers, and the links were not to be used or golf played thereon on Sundays.

The Minutes of the First Meeting recite that Mr. John Thomas Molson, Professor B. J. Harrington, Professor H. T. Bovey and Mr. C. J. Fleet, were to be the lessees, and officers for the first season were elected as follows:

President	-	Prof. H. T. Bovey
Treasurer	-	Prof. B. J. Harrington
Joint Secretaries	-	H. W. Molson and W. Molson

Prophetic of the glory to come, "It was decided that the rules of the Club should be the same as those of the Royal Montreal Golf Club (except as regards fees & clubhouse)".

The first clubhouse, which served for some years, was a spruce tree beside the first tee. The stubs of lower branches made excellent coat-hangers, but had the disadvantage that snakes sometimes crept mysteriously into the pockets of the coats during the playing interval. The next clubhouse was a modest shelter, constructed in the woods near the cottage known for many years as "Buttercup Cottage".

The fees ranged from Season Tickets at \$2.00 for gentlemen and \$1.00 for ladies, with downward modifications for families, weekly visitors and visitors Saturday to Monday.

The first Greens' Committee was -

Prof. H. T. Bovey
Mr. C. J. Fleet, K.C.
Mr. C. McCuaig

A man named Arel was engaged to work on the links at \$1.00 per day, and for some time his tools were limited to a lawn mower, axe, pick and rake. A great deal of his work consisted of moving stones from the greens and such stones from the tees as were not moved by members' clubs.

Caddies' fees were fixed at a "uniform rate of five cents per round of nine holes"; no balls could be bought from any caddie but could be from Mr. MacNider.

Minor troubles were faced with a glad heart and not a little amusement. So long as the Club had no clubhouse or known address, the fees were usually collected or arranged for on the links by the joint secretaries during their own games. So-called "tees", which were simply marked with two rough sticks, occasionally underwent changes over night when some member of the committee discovered that their position did not suit his peculiar style of drive. Nevertheless, all went happily. Even the frequent hitting of stones instead of the ball was accepted as part of the normal game.

It is interesting to note that the first season showed -

Total Receipts of	\$ 213.85
" Expenditures of.	...	<u>167.08</u>	
Balance		\$ 46.77

The figures for the second season were approximately the same, though the surplus was steadily eaten into by the acquisition of equipment, especially a water cart at \$27.50.

Playing rules were duly posted. There were six. Simple and brief, to suit the uneducated (in golf) they ended with emphasis on the use of the word "Fore". This sixth rule was quickly mastered, and the links resounded with melodious rendering of the word reminiscent of Alpine climbers or stevedores.

One member was charged \$1.00 for damage to one of the flags, though no record was kept of the details of the offence.

In due course Mr. C. J. Fleet, K.C., was authorized to "draw up a constitution in town for the approval of the committee", and with the enlargement of the links from 7 to 9 holes, increase in rent and other expenses, Cascade House guests were put on the same fee basis as other members.

In 1908 the Club entered a period of expansion; the links were extended by leasing additional fields at frequent intervals, and grew from 9 to 14 and eventually 18 holes; tennis courts were developed by the associated Little Metis Tennis Club.

1909 records	249	members
1914	"	399
1919	"	454

(after a decrease during the war years)

For some years the second hole was a "dog's log", the green on the area now the east tennis court, the tee East of the Station Road. MacNider's large barn and enclosure jutted out to create the "dog's log", which ended through a large opening in a fence.

One or two embryo champions frequently drove over the barn and carried to the green. Most players followed the "dog's log", but many sliced into the manure-ridden enclosure, which was usually tenanted by a bull. This resulted in a new type of outdoor sport - first locate the ball, then swing over the high fence and secure it without interesting the bull in the proceedings. The player was the spearhead, assisted by other players and interested onlookers, who did their best to distract the bull from the target. While the bull's bulls-eyes were distracted the target was frequently reached and the ball recovered without unhealthy results.

Increases in fees reflected much greater facilities enjoyed and the rising cost of labour and materials, particularly after the First Great War.

These/

These were: -

In 1909 - Gents \$5.00; Ladies \$4.00; Junior \$2.00
" 1918 - Gents & Ladies \$8.00; Junior \$3.00; 2 Weeks \$5.00
" 1927 - Senior Golf \$15.00 Tennis \$12.00 Clubhouse \$5.00
 Junior " 6.00 " 4.00
 2 Weeks " 10.00 " 6.00
" 1929 - Golf & Tennis \$27.00
 do. 2 Weeks 14.00
 Junior Season Golf \$6.00 Tennis \$4.00

The year 1909 in general marked the commencement of a period in which many donations of trophies, prizes and other articles were received, and a steady expansion of fields, extension of greens and tees, took place.

In this year also authorization was given to incorporate the Club.

In 1910 the Club joined the Canadian Golf Association; sought to secure a Professional or Caddie Master (O. Brault, 1912, for several years); the tiny clubhouse was moved to "Front Road". Steps were taken to acquire an additional field, longer lease - 5 or 10 years - and revise the holes. Actually an attempt was made to acquire the ground by purchase, but this failed.

In 1911 the Little Metis Tennis Club was affiliated and \$200.00 lent to construct 3 tennis courts on subleased ground, and the patronage of the Golf Club was extended to the Tennis Club "in the coming Fancy Dress Ball"!

In 1912 incorporation was granted and steps taken to build a substantial clubhouse for use by both the Golf and the Tennis Clubs. This was completed in 1913, and included a separate locker room for Tennis members, Golf members having their's in the Professional's house.

The next few years reflected war conditions. Piping of greens and tennis courts - the cost to be shared by both clubs - was deferred for financial reasons; Most Trophy Competitions were eliminated; the clubhouse was used as headquarters for Red Cross work; money from Saturday competitions was given to the Gazette Tobacco Fund for Soldiers, and in August, 1918, an Exhibition Game in aid of the Canadian Red Cross Society was played. The teams were -

Charles R. Murray, Pro of the Royal Montreal Golf Club, and
Mr. E. A. Macnutt

vs

Albert Murray, Pro of the Kanawaki Golf Club, and
Arthur Woodward, Pro of the Country Club

An unfortunate accident to a volunteer caddie on the first tee, although it did not prove serious, somewhat marred the early part of this contest.

1919 was an important year. In pursuance of a suggestion made two years before, a preliminary amalgamation of the Golf and Tennis Clubs was arranged, with a joint Executive Committee. Enlargement of the clubhouse started (kitchen, pantry, men's dressing room) and the existing lease of the grounds was extended for an additional 10 years, that is to 1st October, 1932, to include ground for 3 new holes above the railway track.

The following year provision was made for a new and independent water supply, which was completed for the season of 1922.

In 1921 the library was started, and electric light and a new ice-house provided. The ice-house cost \$600.00.

In 1922 the property rights and obligations of the Cascade Golf Club and of the Little Metis Tennis Club were taken over by the Cascade Golf & Tennis Club and Life Members of each Club became Life Members in the Association. Land for 2 additional tennis courts was arranged for. (These were double courts).

The following year a Memorial Garden around the flag pole was started.

1924 was in some respects symptomatic of difficulties to come. It is recorded that "Too many non-members were coming to the clubhouse to drink tea, etc." More serious, revenues dropped to an alarming extent.

Records show that in 1925 a scheme of "A Quarter Milo of Nickels" raised \$530.00 against clubhouse improvements. In 1927 a Concert and Dance raised approximately \$400.00.

1927 showed a deficit and a Bank Loan of \$1,000.00; in 1929 the Bank indebtedness was \$3,100.00. This situation was mainly due to the cost of extensions and improvements on capital account. There was also a big drop in revenue. However, by the exercise of economies and the continued and traditional generosity of many members, and various efforts to raise funds, already referred to, approximate financial equilibrium was regained by 1935. The terms of the lease were modified to a lower fixed rental plus a percentage on fees.

During this period the question of Sunday golf came to the fore. Eventually, in 1926, it was settled by a plebiscite, which showed 120 ballots for Sunday afternoon golf and 16 against.

In 1930 cattle and horses were excluded (as honorary members?), as their hoofs in spring and autumn were causing great damage.

In 1933 it was suggested that the holes and greens should be names instead of numbered, but the matter was left in abeyance as the opinion was expressed that "no names which could be printed would do justice to the holes themselves".

A somewhat pessimistic attitude appears in the records of 1934. This was the last year of the Club's financial slump, but the darkness of the hour before dawn is recorded in the discussions on the necessity of putting the rental on a percentage basis entirely or else consider turning the land back to the landlord. The club survived.

The events of the years 1936 to 1946 are perhaps recent enough to require only brief mention. Beyond the very important milestone of the reincorporation of the Club in 1945 as the "Cascade Golf and Tennis Club Inc" with share capital and so forth, and the purchase by the Corporation of the land and all the assets and obligations of its predecessor, it is perhaps sufficient to observe that the activities of the war years were comparable in many ways with those of 1914-1918, when war and patriotic efforts were considered one's first duty.

The first year of operations of the new Club as a wholly owned enterprise showed a small surplus. Most wisely a cautious attitude is being taken against the danger of too heavy expenditures on improvements all at once. Naturally, the enthusiasm of ownership of a big, new toy has produced many suggestions. However, the generous gift by members of an old Metis family, of 100 metal chairs for various assemblies in the clubhouse gave satisfaction to the Club, and terminated an inconvenient and invidious borrowing from St. George's Church.

W. M.