

MOODY PARK



IHP1820

Established 1863
Size 23.78 acres
location Sixth Avenue & Eighth Street

Ammenities

- Five baseball/softball fields
- Two soccer/rugby fields
- Adventure playground
- Spraypark
- Washrooms
- Lacrosse box
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Three tennis courts
- Century House Senior Centre
- Picnic tables & benches
- Parks & Recreation Administration
- Outdoor basketball
- Lawn Bowling
- Trails & greenways
- Trees & open grass areas

Moody Park was the first park created following the incorporation of the City of New Westminster in 1860. On April 20, 1863 Councillors A.H. Manson and John Cooper moved and seconded: “That in consequence of the judicious selection of the townsite of New Westminster for the Capital of B.C. by Colonel Moody this Council considers it desirable that a space not less than 20 acres should be reserved in the suburbs, now being surveyed, to be called Moody Square in commemoration of the founder of the city.” This fitting tribute secured a valuable legacy of public space for future citizens and demonstrated the vision of the City’s earliest civic leaders.

However, it was decades before the city had an economy capable of supporting the development of its parks through tax levies. Finally, in 1889, Council proposed a \$10,000 bylaw for the improvement of Moody Park, which was passed by voters. Work got underway and was completed the following year.

The British Columbian newspaper described the park in 1890: “... the eye is arrested by a wide, level expanse of land stretching north and west. Enquiry develops the information that the smiling plateau is the famous and much talked of Moody Square. The last time the Columbian saw it the place was a howling wilderness and looked as savage as the desert of Sinai. The mammoth stumps and roots had just been riven from the earth by supreme force of dynamite, and where the blast had tossed them there they laid piled, chaos exemplified. But today the view that greet the travelers eye, is altogether pleasant; a park as level as a ballroom floor stretches off in broad acres, ample beautiful and admirable Moody Park will be



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the gem in New Westminster's crown in the years to come. As a promenade and pleasure ground it will share honours with the Queen's Park and if we could indulge the imagination a little and look forward into the future, one could see Moody Park, surrounded by elegant residences of our merchant princes, rows of shade trees stretching round and about it; beautiful marble fountain throwing up jets of crystal Coquitlam spray; the city band discoursing Wagner's "Siegfried" with the utmost ease in a magnificent bandstand; and the carriages of the wealthy and fashionable rolling past in Corinthian splendor. These days are coming upon Westminster and she is making noble preparation."

Moody Park's level site naturally made it suitable for a wide range of field sports, including as a gun range to shoot traps, as well as one of British Columbia's first golf courses. The Parks committee report of 1897 recorded that "No expenditure was made on Moody Park during the year. It is used chiefly by the golf players and answers that question very well."

The Daily Columbian reported in 1903 that: "Golf this year did not get the attention it has received in former times, or which it deserves, the splendid facilities we have ...in the Moody Park links are better than most cities of this size possess, and it is to be hoped, as is altogether likely, that next year they will see more of the crooked club and the white ball than they did this."

By 1908 the Moody Park neighbourhood was far too developed to allow for operating gun ranges in the park, while larger and better designed courses in the Lower Mainland replaced its old golf links. That year "Moody Park Square" was formally conveyed by an Act of the Provincial Government for the "recreation and enjoyment of the public upon trust" to the City of New Westminster.



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In 1909 the city's Cricket Club "obtained permission from the Council to convert over 6 acres of the Moody Square into a fine playing field. The Cricket section will be situated on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Eighth Street it will be 500' x 600'. Portions of the cricket section will be allowed for a lawn tennis and bowling green. The plans were prepared by Mr. Thos D. Sherriff." (BC Weekly November 23, 1909 p.37 "Improving Moody Square")

The park's facilities for children and the community were expanded in the 1920s thanks to a fundraising drive by the Gyro Club. The first stage, a new playground, was undertaken in 1922 for an estimated \$6,000. It was described in the British Columbian newspaper: "Within the last year or two the Gyros established and equipped a playground at the lower end of Eighth Street and the swings, bathing pool and other amusements have been much appreciated. The cricket teams have played here since it was first possible to do so and it was the home ground of the old West End lacrosse club. Latterly baseball and softball teams have kept the grass down. This year the commission built three tennis courts and with encouraging results. These courts have been in constant use and have produced about a third of their cost in revenue. The upper section has been cleared of a dense growth of small stuff and next year will likely be graded and leveled, but this can only follow an expensive job of under draining. Huge checker boards will also be laid out. They have not been tried here yet."

In 1935, the Kiwanis Club of New Westminster (formerly named the Gyros), approved an even larger and more ambitious landscaping and development scheme. Under a special meeting of the Underprivileged Child Committee it was resolved that the "objective to beautify Moody Park as a recreational and Sports Centre be proceeded (sic) without delay." After approval from the Parks Commission, the community and local businesses donated over \$20,000 to complete a program to beautify and improve the park into an "unrivalled park and recreation centre." The project was also helpful to unemployed residents during the Great Depression, who could work for small relief cash payments or receive credit for city taxes owing.

A beautiful landscape plan was prepared by landscape architect Robert H. Savary. The design included plans for a band shell, sunken garden, children's playground, football field, baseball diamond, tennis courts, lacrosse box, walks and flower gardens.

Diagonal paths lined with the trees and shrubs crossed the lower portion of the park, forming the mature walks we enjoy today. As many of the surviving tall Douglas Firs as possible were kept intact to incorporate into the scheme. In 1938 the Club managed to complete the football field, lacrosse box and clear and plant five acres of garden in the south west corner of the park.

The largest single project presented to the Parks Board by the Kiwanis Club was the \$8,000 Community Hall building. This 'club house' was dedicated on August 23, 1938. It featured a community room with a brick fireplace, locker rooms and shower for the children using the playground and sports fields, and accommodation for a park caretaker. Today, the building serves as the Parks, Culture and Recreation department's administration office.

Although World War II temporarily limited park development, the post-war investment in the park was substantial. The Kiwanis Club once again contributed its fundraising might, raising \$45,000 to build a children's outdoor swimming pool for the park.

Kiwanis Pool opened on June 30, 1949, and club members paraded downtown in old-fashioned bathing suits to promote the gala pool opening. More than 2,000 spectators watched the performances of clowns, precision squads and Olympic swimmers in an aquacade called the "Water Follies of 1949." The pool served the community admirably until it was slated for replacement in 2007.

The New Westminster Lawn Bowling Club opened their newly-built clubhouse and lawns adjacent to Eighth Street on May 20, 1950, funding their project through the sale of their old lawn on Dublin Street and Tenth Street.

In the 1950s the sports fields of Moody Park were substantially upgraded. The Junior Chamber of Commerce became one many groups advocating for more city-wide recreation programs at this time. Their fundraising efforts enabled the construction of the New Westminster Little League Baseball Stadium, which opened in 1954. Their lobbying efforts met with similar success: city council established an official Civic Recreation Commission in 1956.

The opportunity to celebrate the Centennial of British Columbia was actively pursued by a 1958 committee of Council, which sought to create a lasting legacy in the form of a new facility for the community. In partnership with the new Recreation Commission, the city approved the concept of constructing a senior citizens' centre. So new was this concept that there were no other civic centres in Canada from which to model it. Instead, the committee's staff was sent to California to study similar a centre there to inspire New Westminster's project. Construction of the seniors' centre in Moody Park on a site between the club house and lawn bowling green, was initiated in 1957. The building was completed in 1958, just in time for "Century House" to be formally opened by Princess Margaret on July 23, 1958.

In more modern times, Moody Park has served as an oasis for residents in an increasingly urban environment. In 1984, on the occasion of the city's 125th anniversary, a monument in honour of the city's founder and the park's namesake Colonel Richard Clement Moody was unveiled by Mayor Tom Baker at the park's entrance. The legacy of Moody's civic vision and the park's historic development has left a tremendous asset that continues to benefit New Westminster citizens, young and old.

On September 28, 2008, Parks, Culture & Recreation and the New Westminster Rotary Club celebrated the unveiling of the Rotary Clock located in the new built Moody Park Place located at the corner of Eighth Street and Sixth Avenue. This prominent location created an attractive entrance into Moody Park while providing this key intersection with character.



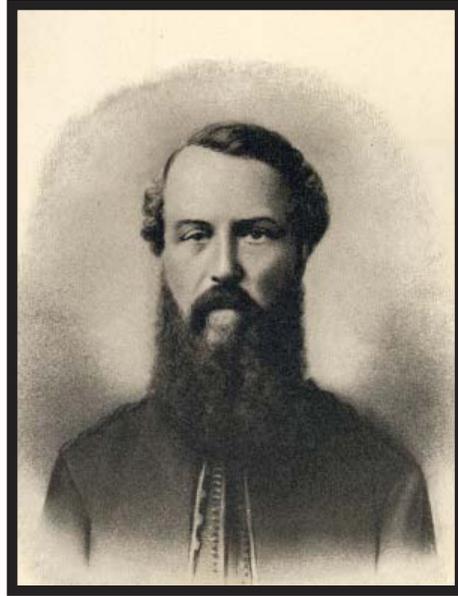
The Moody Park Outdoor Pool, which replaced the wonderful but aging Kiwanis Pool, opened on July 18, 2009 to great excitement. This \$6M state of art outdoor pool represents the first new outdoor pool constructed in Metro Vancouver in recent history. The pool features three full 25m swimming lanes, two 20m lanes, a dive tank for a 1m springboard and a large spacious deck to relax and suntan on a beautiful summer day. During its first season of operation, the pool reached capacity regularly and was a popular destination for residents and visitors.

Moody Park continued to develop with the September 15, 2010 opening of the New Westminster first Youth Centre. Built with shared funding between the three levels of government, this \$2.75M facility and \$215,000 fundraising program resulted in a Youth Centre offering games rooms, lounges, Wii station, kitchen, meeting spaces, computer room, mini-gym, fitness room and open spaces.

The Youth Centre also represents an innovative partnership between youth and seniors to share space. The Youth Centre facility, an addition to the Century House seniors centre, allows seniors to utilize both spaces during school hours with youth making use of the space during non-school hours. This unique youth and senior relationship is cost and space effective while creating exciting intergenerational programs, relationships and understanding. A real win-win situation for youth, seniors and residents alike.



Behind the Name...Moody Park:



Colonel Richard Clement Moody

Born: February 13, 1813

Died: March 31, 1887

Richard Clement Moody was born in 1813 at St Ann's Garrison, Barbados, West Indies, the second son of Thomas Moody. At the age of 14 Moody entered the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (now part of London) and quickly ascended to the rank of 2nd lieutenant in the Corps of Royal Engineers. In 1841 Moody was named lieutenant governor of the Falkland Islands and in 1843 he was appointed the first governor. On his return to England in 1849, Moody was promoted 1st captain.

He married Mary Susannah, daughter of Joseph Hawks, in 1852 at Newcastle upon Tyne.

After being given command of the Royal Engineers at Newcastle upon Tyne, he served in Malta. In 1858 he was promoted brevet colonel. A few months later, Colonel Moody was appointed chief commissioner of lands and works and lieutenant governor of British Columbia.

The War Office also made him commander of the British Columbia Detachment, Royal Engineers, a corps being sent to the new colony. Upon his arrival in British Columbia, he founded the capital city of New Westminster, ensured that the colony was surveyed, that a system of land grants established and that a network of roads were built.

The Colonial Office recalled the Royal Engineers and Colonel Moody

returned to his home in England on November 11, 1863. A huge crowd of New Westminster's citizens converged at the dock to say goodbye.

Moody became a Regimental Colonel and was placed in charge of the Royal Engineers in Chatham, England. He was promoted to Major-General in 1866 and retired on full pay to his home at Lyme Regis in Dorset.

Richard Clement Moody died from apoplexy while on a visit to Bournemouth in 1887, preventing him from fulfilling his dream of returning to British Columbia.