

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UPTOWN & BEACH COURTS

### UPTOWN COURTS

Clay courts and perhaps a club had existed since the early 1920s. By the 1950s, the town had been putting up nets each year and the fence consisted of chicken wire. A few people would turn up and use the courts sporadically. In 1955, George Gruetzner and Joan Robinette met with Fawc and Ruth Warder and decided to get tennis organized again. Fawc Warder attended a Council meeting to obtain permission to rebuild the two courts and got a positive reaction. A group of people were added including Amy Buckley, Jack Todd and Jack Stewart, and the town and summer residents were successfully canvassed for financial support. The Town prepared the land and removed the clay, and asphalt courts were constructed and were ready for play in 1956. On July 8, 1957, Fawc Warder approached Council for four treated cedar posts for floodlights that were donated by the Marsland family. On August 11, 1958 Fawc Warder approached the Town Council to inform them of plans to build a practice wall along with steps. Council agreed to purchase four yards of gravel and 20 bags of cement.

### MORRISON PARK COURTS (the Lake Street courts)

In 1851, the first survey of the town plot was completed by Robert Lynn, Surveyor. The lands on which courts 3-7 are situated were designated on the plan as Military Reserve lands. Presumably this meant that the local militia could use them and if necessary, build on them. This was never done and my early recollection is that a single track road crossed from the northeast corner to the southwest corner and that there was a band shell on the property, about where court 4 is located. This was long after a subdivision plan had been registered in 1908, subdividing the Military Reserve into 13 building lots along the lake and the remaining large lot being where the courts and clubhouse now exist. In April of that year, lot 5 was conveyed by the town to Mary J. Morrison. On June 3, 1946, the Town renamed the portion of land known as the Military Reserve, as Morrison Park and deemed that the Reserve be retained for park purposes. The park was given this name when Mrs. Mary Morrison agreed to landscape the northerly portion of the lot. The Morrison's owned lot 5 until 1953 when it was conveyed to Mary McLeod and it continues to be owned by the McLeod family.

Fawc Warder attended a Council meeting on July 18, 1960 to request the use of Morrison Park for the ever-expanding tennis club. This came about as a friend and Council member named Harvey Mahon, owner of the Walker House, told Fawc that Council was considering various uses for this land. Council agreed to the expansion, provided the club put in a shuffle board court and a horse-shoe pitch. Council also agreed to assist with levelling, gravelling and installing a clay foundation.

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On August 23, 1960 Fawc Warder attended a special meeting of the Town Council and requested a 20-year lease on this site as well as the uptown courts. By August 31, 1960 this motion was successfully approved by Council. In 1961, courts 3-5 were built. Courts 6 and 7 were added in 1962 and the clubhouse in 1966. On February 5, 1962, Fawc sent a letter to Council requesting that a retaining wall be installed at the east side of the Morrison Park courts. At a meeting of Council on May 7, 1962, Council was advised the cost was estimated to be \$500.

On a personal note, I was the President in 1961 having followed George Gruetzner and Fawc Warder. My job that summer was to organize the opening ceremonies for courts 3, 4 and 5. This took place on August 19, 1961. A large parade commenced at the hospital and arrived at the courts after proceeding along High Street, then Huron. Speeches and a ribbon-cutting took place. Mayor Marm Burroughs' twin daughters cut the ribbon on court 5, six-year old Nancy Calder cut the ribbon on court 4 with the aid of her mother Wendy, and Barb Luscombe (née Todd) did the honours on court 3. The Southampton Beacon published a story of the club's Morrison Park expansion in their Wednesday, August 23, 1961 edition.

*G.A. Calder*

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