

Rowland Lacrosse Box  
Mary Hill Road and Wilson Avenue  
Port Coquitlam, BC



Description:

The Rowland Lacrosse Box situated on a corner lot at the intersection of Mary Hill Road and Wilson Avenue in the downtown section of Port Coquitlam. It is an outdoor sporting structure with wooden side panels topped by metal link fencing, and with wooden tiered seating on the north side. The site also contains an historic information marker located behind the tiered seating and a heritage designation marker located at the corner of the site. Part of the site is open and contains a line of mature deciduous trees that run parallel to Wilson Avenue.

Heritage Value:

The Rowland Lacrosse Box is valued for its historic and cultural significance.

Constructed originally in 1934, the Rowland Lacrosse Box has **historic significance** for its connection to the location of the City's first school and for its connection to the sport of lacrosse, and in particular to Douglas Rowland.

The property at the corner of what is now Wilson Avenue and Mary Hill Road, is valued for being the site of the area's first school, on land that was donated by George Black, a Scotsman from Granville (Vancouver) who opened Vancouver's first butcher shop and who was the first to import racehorses. He also donated the land for Port Coquitlam's City Hall. Called "Junction School", the school house was constructed in 1890 and was named after the area's pre-incorporation name "Westminster Junction". The school house began with twelve students and grew to over 100 students in 1911. It was demolished in the 1920s and a new, larger school was constructed at \*\*\*. In addition to being the area's first school, it also served as a temporary Anglican church for local residents until their church opened on Dewdney Trunk Road in 1910.

The sport of box lacrosse was first introduced into British Columbia in about 1931, (<http://bcla.centraldesktop.com/spirit2/doc/1957064/w-BriefHistoryOfLacrosseInBritishColumbia>) and was first officially played at the PNE (in the old Horse Show Building) in Vancouver, and at Queens Park Arena in New Westminster. Box lacrosse is one of three forms of lacrosse played in the province of BC; the others are Field and Inter-lacrosse. Box lacrosse is now the most popular form throughout Canada and is mostly played in indoor boxes. Given the increasing popularity of box lacrosse in Port Coquitlam during the early part of the Nineteenth Century, the location of the former Junction School was chosen as the site of the

City's first and only [?] outdoor lacrosse box. Prior to this, outdoor lacrosse was played on Douglas Rowland's farm as field lacrosse.

The location at Wilson Avenue and Mary Hill Road is important for its continued use as an outdoor lacrosse box since 1934.

The Rowland Lacrosse Box has **cultural significance** for its strong ties to key Port Coquitlam pioneers RD Irvine and his daughter Ada Irvine, to Miss Dixon and to Douglas Rowland. It is also important for its symbolic and sentimental values.

RD Irvine is an important association with the site for being the first Principal of the Junction School. His daughter Ada (1884-1958) followed him as principal at Junction School in 1911 and was later principal of Central School. She is one of Port Coquitlam's most prominent women (C. Davis p. 133). Both were very active with the Presbyterian Church, helping on the building committee in the early Twentieth Century, before incorporation of the City. Miss Dixon is also a valued person associated with Junction School and this site as she was the first teacher at the little school. [Is there more info on Miss Dixon? First name?]

Of particular cultural significance for this site is the connection to Douglas Rowland, after whom the Lacrosse Box was named when it was rebuilt in 1956. Known in Port Coquitlam and in the lacrosse community as the "Father of Lacrosse", Mr. Rowland is significant for his decades of contribution to the sport of lacrosse in Port Coquitlam and for his generosity and encouragement to those who both played and supported lacrosse in the City.

Douglas Rowland is well known for his determination and ingenuity when in 1934 he salvaged grain doors and other box car packing lumber from his job at Canadian Pacific Railway and, with the help of the community, used this material to build the City's first outdoor lacrosse box.

Since the year 1909, Mr. Rowland remained active in lacrosse as player, coach and spectator. He coached numerous players who went on to senior levels of the game and who were inducted into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame. He himself was inducted in 1976 for his outstanding contribution to the evolution of lacrosse in Port Coquitlam.

The Rowland Lacrosse Box is a landmark feature on a site that holds community significance and sentimental value for its strong historic and cultural connections to the area's first school, to the sport of lacrosse, and to the cherished pioneers associated with both.

#### Character-defining Elements:

##### Siting, Context and Landscape Qualities

- location at the corner of Wilson Avenue and Mary Hill Road

- within precinct of the Terry Fox Library and other community-use buildings
- in close proximity to both commercial and residential uses
- siting on one side of the property, with the remainder an open area
- design and size of lacrosse box, in particular its regulation [?] size and its open-topped structure
- tiered benches for spectators
- other uses that are important to the community? Ball hockey? Picnics?

#### Landscape Elements

- heritage marker telling the story of Douglas Rowland's contribution to the sport of lacrosse in Port Coquitlam and that this site was the location of the area's first school
- heritage designation marker that identifies the name of the site and that it has heritage protection
- mature deciduous trees forming a line parallel to Wilson Avenue

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