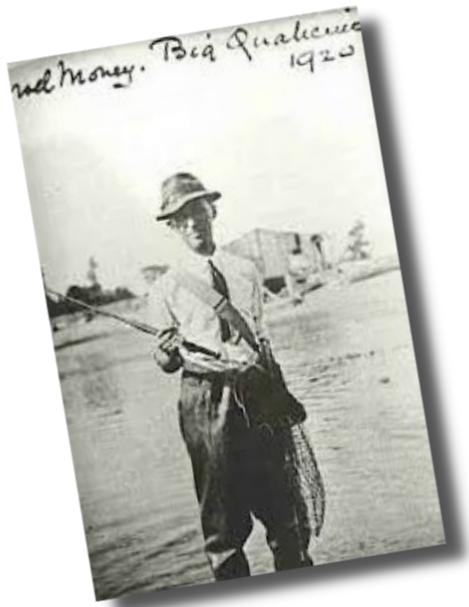


The History of the Crown Mansion



Noel Money at the Big Qualicum River, 1920

No one has had as much of an impact on the early establishment of Qualicum Beach than General Noel Money (1867-1941).

He was born in Montreal and educated in England where he resided. General Money travelled the world both in the pursuit of his passion for hunting and fishing, and as a result of his decorated military career. It was in July of 1913, when General Money first visited Qualicum Beach on a fishing trip. He was so enamored with the area that he purchased six residential lots on August 12th from the Merchants Trust & Trading Company, which was then in the process of building the Qualicum Beach golf course and the (now-defunct) Qualicum Beach Hotel.

In September, he returned to England with the intent of moving to Qualicum Beach and arranged to have his home built in his absence on the land that he had purchased. That home is known today as the historic Crown Mansion Boutique Hotel.

In 1914, after concluding his affairs in England, General Money returned to Qualicum Beach to assume the roles of Managing Director of the Merchants Trust & Trading Company (including managing the newly-built Qualicum Beach Hotel), and the Qualicum Water Company Ltd. No sooner had he assumed his new roles, the First World War broke out in August. In September, he resigned from these positions to return to England with his wife, Maud Boileau Money (nee Wood) and their children, Mary Evelyn and Gordon Noel. He rejoined his old regiment in 1915 at the age of 48. As an interesting coincidence, relative to the “Crown” in Crown Mansion, Maud Money’s father was Keeper of the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London. Maud and the children spent the remainder of the war years there.

When the war was over, now Brigadier-General Money and his family returned to the Crown Mansion, and in 1919 he resumed his role as head of the Qualicum Water Company. By 1923, he also returned to his role as the Manager of the Qualicum Beach Hotel. One of his strengths was his ability to move comfortably in the upper echelons of society both in Canada and in England. Over the next 16 years, he entertained every Governor General of Canada.



... More on the History of Crown Mansion

In addition to dignitaries, General Money attracted many other celebrities to the hotel and his home. His guests included authors such as Edgar Rice Burroughs and Zane Grey, and movie stars such as Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Errol Flynn, Spencer Tracy, Shirley Temple, and Rita Hayworth. Even the King of Siam and his wife were guests here in 1934.

General and Mrs. Money were often described as the Lord and Lady of Qualicum Beach, and they always held a party around New Year's Eve to which everyone in the village was invited. General Money continued to be an expert fisherman throughout his life and often introduced guests to the joys of fishing in this area. He also remained an avid golfer and spent many hours teaching the sport. Happy to say hello to everyone in town, regardless of their station, he was considered a popular and likeable figure. He bought a new Packard every year and always had a license plate with only the number "1" on it. Shortly before he died, this number was reserved for the Lieutenant Governor going forward.



After General Money died on May 30, 1941, the mansion and surrounding 55 acres were sold for just \$5000 to his neighbor, Major James Lowery, who had started the Calgary-based Home Oil Company in 1925. Home Oil was the largest independent oil company of its time.



Major Lowery owned the mansion and property until 1952 when he sold them to R.A. (Bobby) Brown Jr. for \$60,000. Brown, who had just engineered the takeover of Home Oil, purchased it as a summer and weekend home.

The Brown family enjoyed the property for over 40 years, entertaining here extensively. There are reports of actor John Wayne and Brown enjoying a cigar or two over a game of cards in the Library, here at the Crown Mansion. John Wayne would moor his mega yacht Wild Goose just down the Island Highway at the French Creek marina.

As another interesting coincidence, the current owner of the Crown Mansion is in the process of restoring the 136-foot sister yacht to the Wild Goose.

In 1955, after learning of potential plans to convert the golf course to a residential development, Brown purchased the golf course to protect the mansion's ocean views. When Brown died in 1972, the executors of his estate put the golf course up for sale. After considerable negotiation, it was sold to the Town of Qualicum Beach for \$1,000,000. In 1995 the Brown Family Trust put the mansion and five-acre property up for sale and it was sold to John Merrick in 1999.

Crown Mansion Today

*I*n early 2002, the mansion and grounds were sold once again; this time to the owners of Crown Isle Resort and Golf Community. Crown Isle is an 831 acre, master planned golf course and resort community in the heart of the Comox Valley, just north of here.

*I*n 2008, the Crown Mansion Boutique Hotel opened after the mansion was renovated to create six luxury hotel rooms within the original mansion, and sixteen opulent Villas were added. The exterior of the Villas was carefully designed to match and enlarge the historic mansion. Many of the Villas were purchased by owners, wishing to live in elegance and play a part in the ongoing history of the mansion and Qualicum Beach. The award-winning Crown Mansion Boutique Hotel and Villas now features nightly guest accommodations, offering six beautifully decorated Crown Rooms and five luxurious One-Bedroom Villas.



*I*n 2011, Crown Mansion opened a fine dining restaurant on its main floor (originally called Butler's), utilizing the Brown family's elegant music room, dining room, and kitchen. As of 2019, the restaurant has been refitted and upgraded to The Sapphire Room. It's menu is inspired by local ingredients, and a West Coast fare that is unmatched in Qualicum Beach.

JOIN US FOR DINNER IN OUR ELEGANT DINING LOUNGE

*W*e have an array of starters, entrées, desserts, wine, and libations. Dial "0" on your room telephone or call (250) 752-5776 to reserve.



*T*he Crown Mansion continues to host many celebrities and guests from all over the world, looking to experience Vancouver Island's beauty and culture in "time-honored classic" style and elegance.

*T*hank you for choosing to stay with us, and for appreciating our long-standing tradition of hospitality; and for being a part of the Crown Mansion's history!

