

Stewart Park



Tay River Trail

Stewart's Legacy

The citizens of Perth are very fortunate to have such a pristine green space right in the downtown core. This beautiful parkland straddles two islands with the Tay River on one side and the Little Tay on the other. It is animated year-round as children frolic in the water, families picnic on the shores and nature lovers enjoy the quiet and peace found along their stroll.

This distinctive landmark was Jessie Stewart's gift to the Town in 1925 in memory of her husband, The Honourable John Alexander Stewart, a prosperous lawyer, businessman and politician who died suddenly at age 55 leaving a legacy of success in the development of Perth. He attracted and presided over such industries as Wampole Co. Ltd., Andrew Jergens' Company Ltd., and Perth Shoe Company. He was a partner in McLaren Distillery and the local newspaper, The Perth Expositor. Elected into the House of Commons in 1918, he served as Minister of Railways and Canals and he was also Mayor of Perth for two terms.

In 1947, Stewart Park was designed, constructed and for many years maintained by his widow Jessie. Her gift of land included an endowment fund of twenty thousand dollars with the provision that the park "will be used and continue to be used as a place of relaxation and enjoyment....and shall not be used for competitive or organized games or sports, or for any commercial enterprises for profit or otherwise, nor in any manner which would change or alter the present character".

An early shot of Stewart Park's outdoor public swimming pool - a great way for the townsfolk to cool down on a hot summer's day. *Courtesy of Perth Courier*



Jessie Stewart (nee Henderson)
Courtesy of Perth Museum

Perth Manor

Jessie Mabel Henderson was the daughter of J.T. Henderson who ran a very successful mercantile house in Perth from which he sold various products such as dry goods, liquor, and steamer tickets. The Henderson family lived in a castle-like home called Thuresson Place better known today as the Perth Manor. After marrying John A. Stewart, Jessie continued to live there until her death in 1956. The Stewarts never had children of their own but viewed Eric Sabiston (who filled John's role as president of the Perth Shoe Co.) as the son they never had. Sabiston bought the house from their estate and was known to host many lavish parties for the elite of the era. Many locals nicknamed the house "Sabiston Castle" due to its size and surrounding stone wall.

Thuresson Place now known as Perth Manor.
Courtesy of Perth Museum



The Honourable John Alexander Stewart
(1867-1922). *Courtesy of Perth Museum*



OVERLAND, OVER WATER, OVER TIME