



Vancouver Spooks Paranormal Investigations

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Historical Time Line:

Giggle Dam Comedy Club @ 2616 Shaughnessy St, Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 3G6

- **Historical Atlas of Vancouver & Lower Fraser Valley** – native village & hamlets in the area from the Kwikwetlem First Nation (Stó:Lō), a telegraph trail led through the area in the mid-late 1800's
- **First settlers** to the area were the McLean's in 1853, followed by the Atkins family in 1860.
- **Shaughnessy Street** was named after Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, who was the President of Canadian Pacific Railroads 1899 – 1918.
- **March 7, 1913** - Port Coquitlam (*aka "Westminster Junction"*) was incorporated. A real estate bust in 1914 had land owners abandoning their investments, and by 1918 many were owned by the city lost to unpaid taxes.
- **August 1920** - A major fire in Fire Hall destroyed much of the business area of Kingsway, and this disaster was followed by bad flooding in 1921 which destroyed bridges, homes and businesses.
- **1947** – Three men: Joe Pregler (*born in 1905, from Port Arthur, Ont*), Dave Kincaid (*an investor from Lakehead, Ont*) and Bob Miller (*a furniture & woodworker – believed to have owned Paragon Woodworks*), decided to go into a venture together and build a theatre in Port Coquitlam on a lot that was sitting empty on Shaunessy Street near McAllister.

Across the street was the Pacific Stage Line Bus Depot (*a website with information on this bus service: http://members.shaw.ca/jack_brown/pacificstage.html*), which had a café and a U-shaped drive.

At the corner of McAllister and Shaunessy was Hammond's Garage.

- **1948** - Fraser Valley Investments Ltd (*believed to be Joe Pregler*) built Port Theatre. Wood from 3-4 boxcars built to carry ammunitions to the allied effort in the Soviet Union during World War 2 was used in the building of the theatre by the contractor. This wood was purchased from Crown Assets Disposal Corporation. The building was opened in late 1948, called the Port Theatre, and was used as a movie house.
- **1948** - Severe flooding on Fraser River causes huge damage.
- **1949** – Joe Pregler moved his family to Port Coquitlam and purchased a home on Elgin Street. Bernie Pregler, son of Joe, remembers the day they moved into Port Coquitlam and stopped across from the Theatre. The movie playing was "Under the Tonto Rim" (*a*

1947 western) and as Bernie (*coming from the big city*) had a crew cut, young men standing outside of the theatre jeered at him making fun of his hair cut.

- **1949** – Joe, Dave and Bob hired Cam Bastito as Manager of the theatre. In the late 1950's to early 1960's Cam stepped down for an unknown reason, and Mr & Mrs Walter Lilly then took over the position as Manager. Both Mr & Mrs Lilly were of vaudeville background. They were quite a bit older than Joe Pregler, Bernie remembers, and may have been born in the late 1880's.

Walter was known for haggling for movies over a drink or two, believed to have been an alcoholic and not in good health. Therefore, Walter would get one very good movie while purchasing several bad movies.

Maida McCallum Smyth (*her father owned & ran a grocery shop at the corner of Wilson & Shaunessy*) sold tickets for the shows, while Elmer Canning with the projectionist.

Mrs Pregler was the bookkeeper for the theatre.

There were 3 changes of movie shows a week and 2 shows a day @ 7pm & 9pm. Movie tickets sold at approximately \$0.25-\$0.35 a show. There was a room to the left of the lobby, where women could take their babies and watch the show through a window.

The theatre only had one staircase (*now it has 2 in the main area, and 1 off the lobby*), and it was 2 flights up to the projectionist booth, with a business office upstairs in the front of the building. Behind the movie screen it was a huge empty space.

The Port Theatre lost its lustre in mid-1950's due to the arrival of television, and ticket sales began to dwindle.

- **1956**– It is not known who “Roberts Estates” is, as they are listed as purchasing the property from Fraser Valley Investments Ltd – November 23rd news article. (*Is this the sale of Joe & Dave to Bob? Or a later piece of information? – see Early 1960's*)
- **1958** – Bernie Pregler, son of Joe, moves out of Port Coquitlam but comes back in 1969. Bernie stated he had earned extra money after school by drawing the curtains open for the shows. In those days the curtains were handled manually.
- **Early 1960's** – Joe Pregler and Dave Kincaid decided to sell their interests to Bob Miller. This is believed to be in 1963 – as told by Bernie Pregler. The building sat empty for a time.
- **Mid-to late 1960's** – Bob Miller then sold the theatre to someone (*unknown at this time*) who re-opened the building as a soft core porn movie house. This ran into early 1970's, at which time it closed its doors. Once again, the building sits empty. This time for more than a decade.
- **1965** – November 30th, Walter Percival Lilly (born December 12, 1884) passes away at the age of 80, in Vancouver from middle cerebral thrombosis.
- **1966** – Joseph Harold Pregler passes away at the age of 60 in Port Coquitlam.

- **1968** – June 27, Rose Anne Lilly (Walter Lilly's wife – born June 17, 1883) passes away at the age of 85, in Port Coquitlam from heart disease.
- **1978** – Archaeological dig at mouth of the Pitt River unearths thousands of native artefacts | It is reported the Theatre opens as Teen Night Clubs: Gollywog and then later the PoCoCabana.
- **1980's** – Also reported to us at an unknown date, Fred (*unknown last name*) opens Fred's Arcade for teens. It is unknown how long this business remained open.
- **1981 -1988** – Unknown date, the property undergoes renovation and one wall is knocked down with the boxcar wood going to a Maple Ridge theatre.
- **Early 1990's** – Unknown date as to when the Port Coquitlam Cabaret Ltd (*David Lowe & Justin Roberts*) purchased the property. They converted the movie theatre into a night club, which then gained poor reputation over the following years.
- **February 22, 1994** – (*on or about*) David Anthony Lowe hit William Ronald Rudy (*a partner in ownership of the club, due to assisting PoCo Cabaret Ltd in purchasing the property*) in the back of the head with a sledgehammer inside the Rumours Club. David wore protective clothing, used an area in the club that had floor drains, organized the loan of a van, and then dumped the body in the forest of Harrison Mills area (*Agassiz*), where he claimed to have buried Rudy. Rudy had been living in an Aldergrove Motel at the time, and was reported missing around that time.
- **Since 1994** – the club went under numerous name changes: RPM, Confetti's, Poco Cabaret, The Club, Rumours, and Rumours II.
- **December 9, 1995** – a 23 year old man was shot in the leg @ midnight in Confetti's. Believed to be a dispute between 2 men.
- **September 27, 1996** – William Rudy's skeleton was found off Morris Valley Road @ Harrison Mills.
- **November 1996** – The city council revokes Confetti's licence.
- **July 23, 1998** – Cory Hatter was beaten into a coma in the parking lot near Rumours II. Two weeks later his lungs filled with fluid and his heart stopped. He passed away. 2nd degree murder charges were laid on 4 men.
- **October 23, 1998** – The city council pulls the licence of Rumours II. The property is believed to remain vacant.
- **2001** – The property is purchased by a new owner, and Sheila Sharma and her troupe lease the building to create the Giggle Dam Dinner Theatre. Sheila tells us that after they moved in, David Lowe stopped by to let them know as he understood the entire building, if they needed any assistance they could call on him.
- **End of 2001** – David Lowe is arrested. The Giggle Dam is investigated by the police, checking the downstairs basement area as well as other areas in the theatre for evidence of the murder.

- **Week of April 30, 2002** – David Lowe confesses to the murder of Rudy, to an undercover officer.
- **April 2002** – David Lowe is charged with murder.
- **February 2004** – Murder trial resumes. It proves to be a 10 month trial.
- **August 7, 2004** – David Lowe’s defence files an appeal.
- **August 31, 2004** – David Lowe is found guilty of murder and is not eligible for parole for 25 years.

Information: *“Historical Atlas of Vancouver & Lower Fraser Valley”* - Derek Hayes; The Port Coquitlam Heritage and Cultural Society (*Poco Heritage*), the Vancouver Public Library; a book: *“Port Coquitlam, Where Rails Meet Rivers”* – Chuck Davis; & an interview with Bernie Pregler, and Donna (*resident of the area for 20 years*).

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