

Museum offers history of tennis

Local Staff

When world class tennis pros come to Canada today, they often head to Toronto or Montreal for the Canadian Open of the National Bank Open.

But in 1886 the tennis world turned its eyes on Niagara-on-the-Lake, says NOTL Museum's Barbara Worthy, "and for the next 40 years the world had a front row seat at the fabulous Queen's Royal Hotel for some of the most prestigious tennis championships of the time.

The International and the Canadian Open would both be hosted there, with many U.S, Canadian, and Wimbledon champions competing for tennis glory.

When the world came, they saw the beautiful six grass courts belonging to the Queen's Royal Hotel, balconies that overlooked Lake Ontario and gave perfect viewing of the courts, and enough space all around for the hundreds of

spectators. Plus there was the golf course, the bowling greens, and rowing boats for hire on the lake. The nearby military camp housed upwards of 10,000 soldiers and their families, all who loved some entertainment. And four steamships and three trains arrived daily. Niagara-on-the-Lake was a social hub, explains Worthy.

Robert J. Lake's virtual lecture on Wednesday, April 7, will turn the clock back on this period of tennis history, and detail the socio-economic influences and intricate sports dynamics that made it all happen, as well as its demise following the aftermath of the First World War.

Robert J. Lake is in the sport science department at Douglas College, B.C., where his research focuses on the socio-historical aspects of tennis. He is a multi-published author, winning the Lord Aberdare Literary Prize from the British Society of Sports History for *A Social History of Tennis in Britain*. Among other positions he holds is pres-

ident-elect for the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. He brings a wealth of sports history to his lecture, and the museum is indebted to Rosemary Goodwin, director of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club, for facilitating this lecture.

A History of Lawn Tennis in Niagara-on-the-Lake is being held Wednesday, April 7, at 10:30 a.m. Registration is required: www.nhsm.ca/events



Robert Lake will give the last lecture of the museum series, this one on the history of local tennis. (Photo supplied)