

# The “Beaver” of New Brunswick: Why Sport and Leisure?

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Sir William Maxwell Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook (1879-1964), born in Ontario but nurtured on the Miramichi in New Brunswick, was a financier, newspaper publisher, member of the British House of Commons, and British Cabinet Minister during two world wars. Despite his life-long contribution in Britain, Beaverbrook’s roots ran deep in New Brunswick.

He served as the Chancellor of the University of New Brunswick from 1946 until his death. Of more practical significance was his philanthropic support of sport and leisure facilities within the Province of New Brunswick. Beaverbrook’s financial support and generosity permitted the development of gymnasia, four ice arenas, two swimming facilities, two theatres, an art gallery and two libraries in several areas of New Brunswick and on the U.N.B. campus.

Several biographies of Beaverbrook exist and considerable literature has been generated concerning his life and contributions. An investigation of Beaverbrook’s interest and support of sport and leisure has never been previously conducted despite the plethora of literature and folk tales surrounding his life and times. The central theme of this paper is to put forth the foundation of Lord Beaverbrook’s interest in these areas as a major component of his philanthropy.