

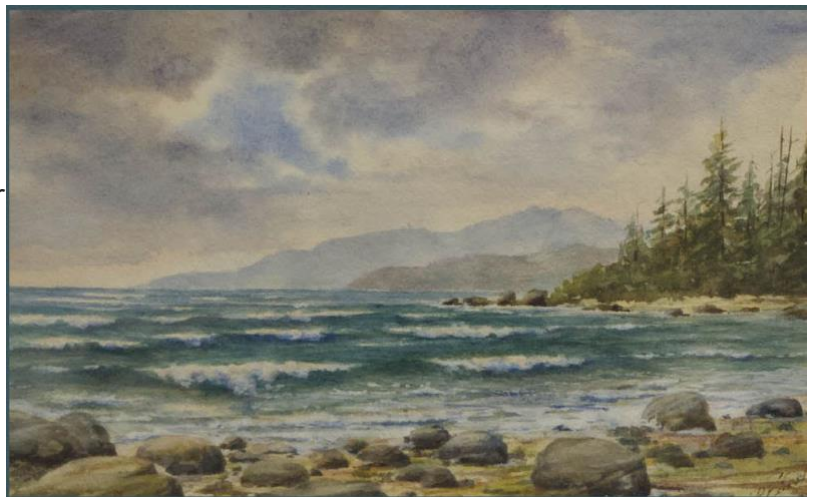
One of the most interesting and unusual artists, fleetingly associated with our Club, was Major Robert Fletcher Leslie. He was born into an artistic family in Woolston, Hampshire, England in 1864. Both his father and his paternal grandfather were artists. Educated at Winchester College, he subsequently served as a civil engineer with the Great Western Railway. In 1885 he moved to India where he was employed by Indian Railways, and acquired the rank of major through his work in voluntary military affairs.

After returning to England, he emigrated to Canada in 1906 and took a post as a Government Inspector of Railways at Hazelton, BC., later becoming a partner in a firm of consulting engineers.

Although there is no record of previous interest or involvement with art, he nevertheless decided to become an art teacher, and set up a studio in Vancouver in 1925. Thus, it can only be assumed that he inherited artistic skills from his forebears and managed to nourish them during his years in railway construction.

This conjecture seems to be backed up by a picture dated 1922 (illustrated here) which was hung at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. It was painted from English Bay and gives a clear view of Bowen Island on a cloudy day.

Leslie became a regular exhibitor with the BC Society of Fine Arts during the 1920s and contributed to the Vancouver Exhibition in 1925. His move to Victoria in 1926 naturally brought him into contact with the Island Arts and Crafts Society and he showed his work in the Society's annual shows between 1925 and 1929. His first showing with the IACS, to which he submitted eight



paintings, reveals a competence in both oil and watercolour. In 1927 he received special mention from the Daily Colonist newspaper art critic for a painting, Grey Day in Uplands, shown in the IACS section of the Willows annual exhibition,

Leslie lived in Victoria until 1930, but his association with our Club proved to be a brief one as he returned to England where he spent his final years. He died there in 1942.

~ John Lover

History Corner #50!!!