

## Real Estate and the Railway Boom 1900-1913

The 1882 boom in Edmonton real estate caused by the anticipated arrival of the CPR gave Edmontonians a glimpse of the future.

During this period Edmontonians switched from protecting their claims to land speculation, as the construction of two transcontinental railways served as the basis for other investments. The excesses of this period, however, would give the real estate industry a reputation for dishonesty that would take years to overcome.

The railway boom of 1903 to 1913 was like the 1882 boom only it lasted longer and brought more permanent benefits to the city.

Organized real estate made a brief appearance in the form of the Edmonton Real Estate Exchange. While it had a minimal impact on the industry, it did introduce the idea of multiple listings and some administrative procedures that would be incorporated into future organizations. It was to

that extent the precursor of the present Edmonton Real Estate Board. Some of the Exchange's members continued to be active in later associations. This personal link with the past would be maintained by individuals such as H. Milton Martin and H. M. E. Evans.

While the evils of land speculation were widely debated, the government was slow in dealing with the problem. The attempts to control land speculation were minimal and were introduced only after the collapse of the boom.



*Jasper Avenue (looking west from 99th Street) in 1903 shows how the streets of Edmonton had not yet been paved. Its commercial buildings were one- and two-storey brick and wood frame structures.*  
(Provincial Archives of Alberta, B 4768)



### **Railway construction**

Before 1900, railways spurred on economic activity in Edmonton even when they did not actually arrive. In October 1902, the Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific Railway became the first railway to come to the incorporated town of Edmonton.

*Jasper Avenue (looking west from 99th Street) in 1914 shows the physical transformation of Edmonton by the railway boom. Paved streets and a street railway system were two of the additions.*  
(Provincial Archives of Alberta, B 4852)

*The Canadian Northern Railway station was located west of 101 Street. The arrival of this railway brought with it a wave of new investment in real estate.*

(Glenbow Archives, NC-6-697)



The Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific Railway built a railway four miles long between Edmonton and Strathcona using the Low Level Bridge, which had been built as a public work by the Federal Government.

The problem of providing Edmonton with a railway that had preoccupied it since the 1880s was finally resolved. No western Canadian community could survive — let alone prosper — if it did not have a railway. This railway connection was only a branch line, however, and being a terminal on the mainline of a railway was the key to substantial economic growth.

In 1903 Edmonton began to emerge as a national city when Canada's second generation of transcontinental railways began. Railway construction was the leading edge of private and public investment that transformed a town of 8,350 people covering an area of 3.4 square miles into a city of 72,516 people covering an area of 40.8 square miles by 1914.

### Canadian Northern Railway

The first railway to begin land negotiations for a terminal with the Town of Edmonton was the Canadian Northern Railway Co. in 1902. By February, the Hudson's Bay Co. agreed to sell 68.88 acres of its Reserve to the City of Edmonton for \$25,000 for use by the Canadian Northern. The Hudson's Bay Co. and the Canadian Northern each agreed to contribute \$5,000 towards the purchase price. On March 5, 1903, Edmonton's businessmen raised the remaining \$15,000. This amount was later repaid to the group with the passage of Bylaw 237. It raised \$30,000 for

the purpose of granting the bonus to the Canadian Northern Railway and exempting it from taxation.

The land acquired by the Canadian Northern Railway in this transaction is now being redeveloped. A portion is occupied by Grant MacEwan Community College.

### Grand Trunk Pacific Railway

The negotiations between the City of Edmonton, the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Pacific were far more complex. In 1903 Charles Melville Hays approached Edmonton City Council for an expression of support for the proposed railway. The resolution passed in response to this request stated that: *"Whereas the Edmonton District is rich in deposits of coal, timber and other natural resources which at the present time remain undeveloped and settlement eastward has already proceeded one hundred miles in anticipation of a throughline of railway, whilst settlement of the equally fertile land to the West is so much spoken of as to confidently warrant the assertion that it will be equally rapid and extensive as soon as railway facilities are in sight."*

After the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was incorporated, it asked the City of Edmonton to



*This photograph of downtown Edmonton in 1915 shows a number of the significant commercial and public structures from the railway boom, including the Hotel Macdonald (far right), the MacLeod Building (centre), and the Post Office (top left).*

(Glenbow Archives, NC-6-798)

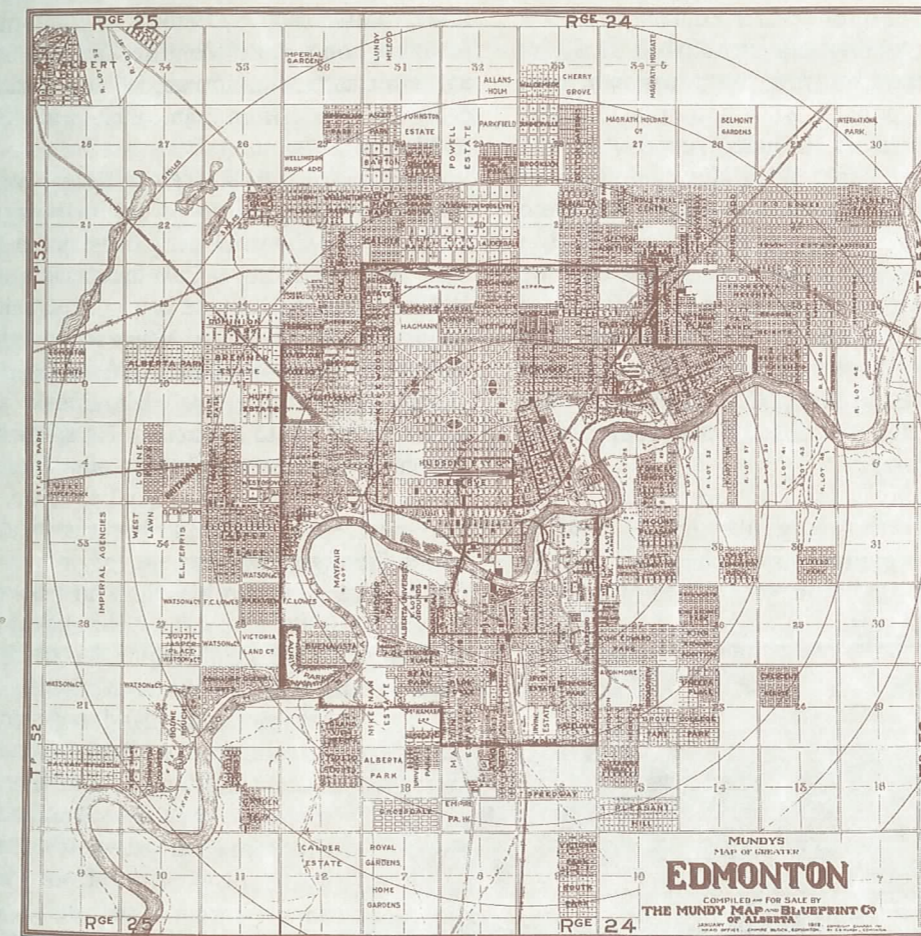
buy land bounded by MacKenzie Avenue (104th) on the north; First Street (101st) on the east; Athabasca Avenue (102nd) on the south and Block sixteen of the Hudson's Bay Co. Reserve to the west.

In November 1904 the city began to obtain options on land for the proposed terminal. This

land acquisition program, however, ran into problems when a number of owners refused to cooperate. As a consequence of the difficulties in acquiring land, the Council gave up on the idea of buying land and decided on a cash grant instead. In 1905, Council agreed to pay the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway \$100,000. It also allowed the company to follow a right-of-way into the city that the Canadian Northern also intended to use. The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was allowed to build tracks south of MacKenzie Avenue and was exempted from municipal taxation for five years. The company then purchased the land where Calder Yards are now located, north of the Hudson's Bay Co. Reserve.

that showed a crossing at 109th Street. By November 14, 1906, a tentative agreement was reached. It suggested turning part of Peace (103rd) and Athabasca (102nd) avenues into the railway yards, building railway bridges over Jasper and Saskatchewan avenues and highway bridges on Victoria (100th), McKay (99th), and Hardisty (98th) avenues. The City of Edmonton agreed to pay for the traffic portion of the High Level Bridge. Unlike the Low Level Bridge, the High Level went from top of the river bank to top of the river bank.

The High Level Bridge was intended to be a multipurpose structure which could be used by the Canadian Pacific, the street railway, pedestrians, and automobiles.



*A map of Edmonton produced in 1912 by the Mundy Company shows the many new speculative subdivisions created during the railway boom.*

(City of Edmonton Archives, EAM 31)

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway also built what was then the most important commercial structure in Edmonton, the Hotel Macdonald.

In 1905, the Canadian Pacific Railway expressed interest in building into the City of Edmonton. In May of that year it filed plans

### Edmonton's second real estate boom

Negotiations with railway companies rekindled the speculative spirit of 1881-1882. Investment in Edmonton real estate increased rapidly, as did the number of land promoters,

real estate brokerage companies, and new subdivisions.

Between 1903 and 1914, 274 new subdivisions were created, which inflated the assessed value of city property to \$191 million. Most of these existed only on paper and would never be developed. This rate represented an 1800 percent increase in the number of subdivisions on the north side alone compared with an 800 percent increase in the total population of Edmonton between 1904 and 1914.

These new subdivisions were located on both sides of the river, with the largest concentration being northeast of the central business district. Mundy's 1912 map of Greater Edmonton shows new subdivisions established as far as seven miles from the downtown area.

The names chosen were common to other Canadian cities, and included Tuxedo Park and Queen Mary Park. With the exception of Windsor Park, Glenora, and Beau Park, these subdivisions did not deviate much from the grid pattern. The cumulative result was the creation of a blueprint for a "Greater Edmonton" that dazzled the imagination of Edmonton's boosters, strongly influenced many aspects of civic policy, and created new opportunities for Edmonton real estate brokerage firms.

The economic opportunities created by this boom led to the reorganization of some of Edmonton's pioneer firms, the best example being McDougall and Secord. On March 16, 1909, they formed McDougall and Secord Ltd. They dealt in a wide variety of investments, including stocks and bonds, and real estate for

speculation and development. The firm also dealt in fire, life, and accident insurance and served as private bankers. They loaned mortgage money, created and administered trust funds, advanced money to other entrepreneurs, dealt in bills of exchange, promissory notes, coupons, drafts, debentures, and scrip, and bought and sold bullion.

### Expansion of the industry

The boom in real estate attracted many new people who joined Edmonton's growing number of real estate and insurance agents, investment dealers, and land company representatives. The members of Edmonton's business community identified as real estate agents or as having any association with land companies went from 3 in 1899 to a peak of 333 in 1914.

Henry Marshall Erskin Evans was a member of this group of recently arrived businessmen who would help develop the city.

Evans was born at Davenport, Ontario, in 1876. He was a graduate of the University of Toronto and the School of Mines in Houghton, Michigan, where he had taken an assaying course. Evans had a varied business career before he moved to Edmonton. He spent some time in Mexico assisting in the administration of his uncle's mining interests. He came west in 1900 where he worked as business manager for the *Winnipeg Tribune*.

In 1905 he began his career in real estate by working for the Manitoba Land and Investment Co. This company was started by a group of American bankers who specialized in buying farming land and bringing in American settlers. Following Evans' departure from the land company, he came to Edmonton as the representative of John E. Burchard of St. Paul in order to test the extent of the coal deposits in what became the Evansburg area. His findings eventually led to the development of the town of Evansburg.

Evans moved permanently to Edmonton in 1907. He opened an office in the old Empire Block to sell real estate and insurance. He also served as a member of the



Henry Marshall Erskin Evans  
(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-10-1532)

Interior of Western Realty Company as it was in 1909. This company was located on Jasper Avenue between 102 and 103 streets.

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-10-2040)



local advisory committee and inspector of loans for the Northern Alberta Royal Trust Co., and was an inspector for the Mortgage Co. of Canada.

In 1910 he was appointed the Canadian agent for the Canadian Agency, an investment company based in London, England. Evans' experience made him an ideal choice, since this company wanted to invest British capital into the expanding economy of western Canada. Evans was proud of his association with the Canadian Agency in representing British capital.

The Canadian Agency was an investment company with various business interests in Canada, particularly in western Canada. Their Alberta companies included the Western Canada Land Co. This company owned 500,000 acres of land west and east of Edmonton, purchased from the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1905. It was a typical land company of the settlement period, having purchased the land in anticipation of rising land values.

Evans was also responsible for the Western Mortgage Co., Pembina Coal Co., Peace River Trading and Land Co., and Western Home Builders. Evans, like other real estate agents of his day, had to be active in other lines of business given the unpredictable market.

H. Milton Martin was another new arrival during this period. He moved to Edmonton in 1907 where he established the Crown Real Estate Co. in partnership with J. Almon Valiquette. In 1908 he established a firm under his own name.

He was born at Clintonville, New York, in 1872 but moved with his family at an early age, receiving his education in Quebec. He arrived in British Columbia in 1888 where he worked as a clerk, bookkeeper, and accountant for various companies. In 1898 he entered government service in the Yukon, rising to the position of Crown Timber and Land Agent for all of the Territory.

Martin's community involvement included serving as vice-president of the Edmonton Board of Trade in 1911 and as president of the Greater Edmonton Board of Trade in 1912. He was also a trustee on the Separate School Board and in charge of the financial affairs of the diocese of Edmonton.

Lou A. Weber arrived in 1911. According to an article in the August 3, 1911, *Daily*

*Capital*, Lou Weber, formerly of Toronto, had spent the past month on an extensive tour through the Canadian west and had decided to make Edmonton his home. By August 1911 he had already leased a suite of offices in the new CPR building for his real estate business. Weber later added an insurance and loans branch. Lou Weber was formerly connected with the old and established real estate and insurance firm known as the ISK Weber Co. Ltd., with its head office at Kitchener, Ontario.

The influx of new businessmen also included Ed Molstad, a native of Rushford, Minnesota, who came to Edmonton in 1911. He was president and manager of the Fort George and Fraser Valley Land Co. His brother, John, who lived in Calgary, was vice-president and secretary-treasurer of the same company.



H. Milton Martin  
(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-362-26)

### New districts

The Highlands was a new district that began during this period. The community was developed by Magrath, Holgate and Co. W. J. Magrath arrived in Edmonton in 1904 from Belleville, Ontario, where he had operated a



cheese business. He soon entered the real estate business after creating Magrath, Hart and Co. This company was reorganized in 1909 when B.A. Holgate bought out Hart's interests. At first the company followed the traditional approach of simply creating subdivisions without proceeding with development.

Edmonton's new Street Railway is shown near residences at the corner of Jasper Avenue and 121 Street.

(Provincial Archives of Alberta, B 5006)

Subdivisions of this type created by this company included Bellevue in river lot twenty-eight, the Bellevue addition in river lot thirty, and Victoria Place and City Park, which were located immediately to the north.



By 1910, 115th Street was a well established residential neighbourhood complete with boulevards and trees. (Provincial Archives of Alberta, B 5004)

They took a different approach with the Highlands subdivision, which was located on lots

thirty-two and thirty-four. A promotional campaign began in September 1910 when Magrath, Holgate and Co. advertised that \$50 in gold would be given to the person who provided the name for the new subdivision. In November 1911, building permits for twenty-eight private residences were taken out by the company. Included in this list were residences for Magrath and Holgate themselves.

Magrath, Holgate and Co. also negotiated with the city to provide various services to the district. In August 1911, the firm requested the extension of the street railway to the Highlands. The company agreed to bear the entire cost of the line from Borden Park, provided that it was constructed that fall and an hourly service was maintained. The company agreed to protect the Street Railway Department against loss for a period of eighteen months from the date the proposed line began operation. The company also negotiated an agreement to have certain streets paved in the subdivision.

The boom did not last long enough for the company to complete the development of the

Highlands. The Holgate and Magrath mansions have survived, however, as reminders of their initial objectives. The construction of more modest homes continued into the post-World War Two period when the development of the district was completed.

Another company organized to develop residential property in Edmonton was Carruthers, Round and Co., which began in 1905. It was concerned with the creation of an exclusive district in the west end. James Carruthers, principal owner of the company, was a Montreal-based grain merchant who had extensive real estate investments in western Canada. Henry Round, who worked as the local agent for the company, was a former employee of the Hudson's Bay Co. He first came to Edmonton in 1884. The development of the Glenora subdivision began in 1906 when Carruthers purchased river lot two from Malcolm Groat. He subdivided the northern portion of the lot into a standard grid pattern. The land closer to the river, however, was surveyed to create curved streets to accommodate the ravines. Carruthers also negotiated an agreement with the City of Edmonton for the construction of a bridge across Groat Ravine and an agreement with the Province of Alberta to provide a site for the lieutenant governor's residence.

Carruthers also placed a restrictive covenant on all property in this area. It controlled the type, size, and number of buildings that could be built on each lot.

Calder was more of a working-class district developed in northwest Edmonton. In July 1910 the village of West Edmonton or Calder was established. West Edmonton was a company town for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. The Village of West Edmonton was annexed to the City of Edmonton in 1917.

The development of Calder is linked to the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the approach taken by the Hudson's Bay Co. to develop its Reserve. The HBC delayed the sale of that portion of its Reserve extending north from 107 Avenue until 1912. This decision forced the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to locate its yards north of 122 Avenue. The result of the HBC's decision was the subdivision of the vacant land located north of the Hudson's Bay Co. Reserve.



The Magrath Mansion was built on Ada Boulevard in the Highlands in 1914. It was built for W. J. Magrath, whose firm was developing this subdivision. (City of Edmonton Archives, EA-267-143)

Cloverdale was one of four river valley communities that was developed before World War One. Settlement began as early as the 1870s. By 1915 the neighbourhood was fully developed with schools, stores, local industries, and churches. Companies manufacturing forest products and bricks tended to locate in the valley.

A flood in 1915 eliminated the industries in these river valley communities.

### Land speculation

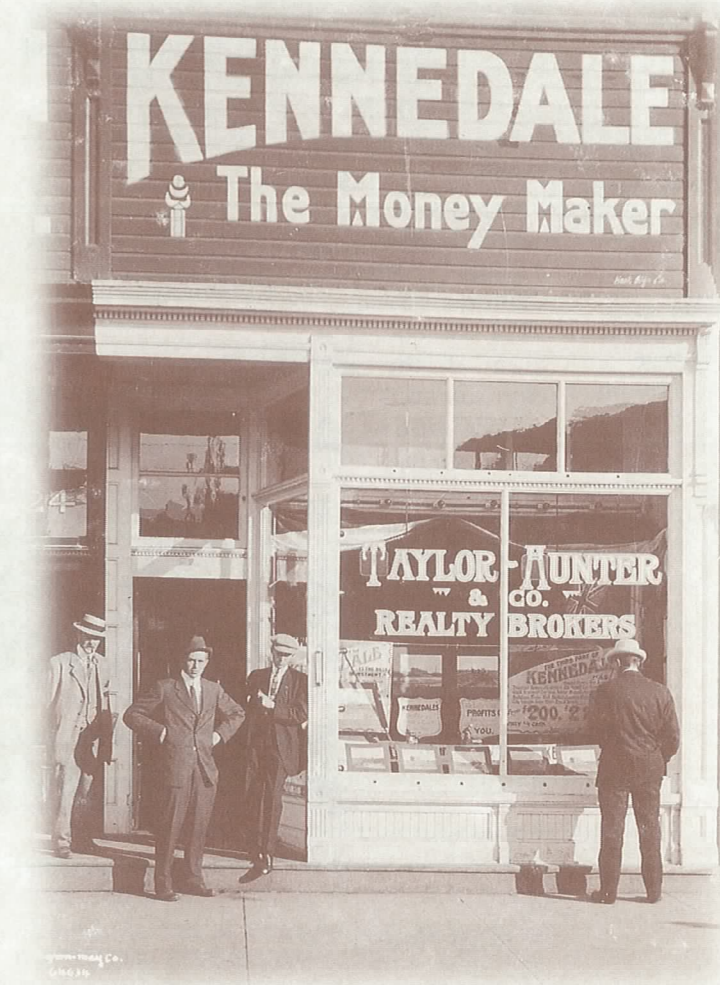
The real estate boom rekindled land speculation, which had declined since 1881 when the first subdivision of land on the Hudson's Bay Co. Reserve occurred. Visitors to the City of Edmonton such as Wilhelm Cohnstaedt, who was in the city in 1909, reported that it was impossible to sit in a hotel lobby for more than five minutes without someone offering to sell land. His experience in the west led him to the conclusion that "a country in the process of settlement is overrun by real estate agents and land speculators." In 1911, J. Burgon Bickersteth, a lay Anglican missionary in Edmonton, also marvelled at everyone's preoccupation with real estate.

Most of the land subdivision promoters were individuals and companies who were solely interested in creating a subdivision for immediate sale without any interest in actual development of the land. They were content to merely print advertisements extolling the beauty and investment potential of their respective subdivisions.

Stories about western Canadian land speculation appeared in newspapers such as *The Economist* of London, England, and the *Toronto Saturday Night*. The latter was particularly aggressive in its efforts to sort out legitimate investments from the frauds promoted by the "land sharks." The December 23, 1911, issue deals specifically with Edmonton in an article entitled "Fleecing the Credulous Land Buyer." It includes a detailed description of one method used. According to the article, real estate firms in Edmonton and in other western cities employed professional "cappers" from New York, to gather in "suckers" to buy their land. The plan involved placing an attractive painting of a subdivision in the window of a real estate office. Passersby

who stopped to admire it were engaged in conversation by the "cappers." The victims were induced to enter the office and invited to see the property offered for sale at the company's expense and in the company's automobile.

If the prospective buyer appeared sceptical about the value of the land, the "capper" would go along on the trip to the subdivision posing



as a buyer. When they arrived at the property, the "capper" assumed the role of an experienced buyer who had seen real estate propositions in every town in the west, but had never seen any to equal this one. He would finally select two or three lots for himself while declaring he had not intended to buy when he left the office. With this example before him, the investor would be convinced that the property must be a safe deal.

The speculators bought lands adjacent to the city limits (and thus evaded city taxes), divided these into subdivisions, and sold as

This picture shows the front of the real estate office of Taylor-Hunter and Company, which was one of many promoting speculative subdivisions on the outskirts of the City of Edmonton.

(Glenbow Archives, NA-1328-64634)

many as they could before the pre-World War One depression. In this way they forced the city to annex these areas. Because the lots were outside the city and were unserved, and because Edmonton refused to extend utilities to them, the residents of these areas began to apply to the Alberta Government for permission to be incorporated as towns. Edmonton disapproved of the incorporation of such municipalities into the city until their population warranted it. The villages of North Edmonton and Calder and the subdivisions of Elm Park and City View were annexed in this way. The result was the rapid extension of Edmonton's boundaries, with the last extension of the era being made in 1917 with the annexation of the Village of Calder. By 1914 the total area of the city was 40.8 square miles (105.7 square km) but the developed area was only 5.5 square miles (14.3 square km), representing 13.4 percent of the area of the city.

1911. Interested delegates were advised that "every one in Edmonton who can possibly do so is investing in lots. It is in this way that those who have made fortunes have won the major portion of their wealth."

People who had already purchased land in the subdivision were encouraged to sell it at a profit and buy more. As the company explained to one owner, "our business is buying and selling real estate, and as this is the way in which people generally make their money on land investment, we are going to ask you to co-operate with us so that we may all make money . . . Thus," the letter concluded, "the pot will be kept a-boiling."



Promotion of the Highlands subdivision by Magrath-Holgate. The cars at the front of the real estate office were used to take prospective purchasers out to the site.

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-160-489)

### Radial Realty Co.

One company that dealt in these premature subdivisions was the Radial Realty Co., Ltd. Its name came from the Edmonton Interurban Railway between St. Albert and Edmonton whose land it controlled. It dealt in a variety of land investments, including city and suburban land, farm lands, coal areas, and timber limits. Its suburban properties included the subdivisions of Summerland, Radial Park, and Queen Mary Park, which were located between St. Albert and Edmonton.

The company's efforts to promote Queen Mary Park included letters to delegates at a teachers' convention in Edmonton in April

### Hudson's Bay Co. land sale

The most celebrated example of land speculation was the Hudson's Bay Co. land sale in May 1912. The Hudson's Bay Co., which began the land boom tradition in Edmonton, had waited until May 13, 1912, to put most of its land on the market. The time for the sale was set at 2:00 p.m., but it did not announce the location. The location was discovered, however, by F.T. Aitken who installed himself at the door of the Little Gospel Mission Hall along with 2,000 other people. During the morning of May 13 numbered slips were given to those people who had waited through the night. This protected their place in the line but

not the order in which they would be allowed to buy land. When the sale began, those with numbered slips were required to draw another ticket to determine the order in which they would be allowed to buy land.

### Edmonton Real Estate Exchange

The Edmonton real estate business community was concerned about the problem of subdivisions outside Edmonton's boundaries since they had the potential to destroy the confidence of outside investors in the Edmonton land market. They reacted to the land speculation by organizing the Edmonton Real Estate Exchange in June of 1909. It was formed, according to reports in the press, to bring the real estate men of Edmonton together to help advance the interests of the city at large and of the real estate business in particular. They decided to implement a uniform rate of commission, create and maintain among Edmonton real estate men a high standard of integrity, and encourage a spirit of fair and honourable competition. The result of this approach would be: "securing to the buyer and seller the services of responsible and trustworthy agents upon a definite and uniform standard of contract and charges, to the end that the interests of the buyer, seller and broker may be alike protected."

The Edmonton Real Estate Exchange also began Edmonton's first multiple listing service. Only twenty-three companies were members of the Exchange and thus it represented only a small percentage of the companies operating in Edmonton at that time. Owners could list their property with one agent who would then share this listing with other members of the Exchange. Such an approach, according to this same article, avoided the trouble and inconvenience of answering many enquiries and notifying many agents of changes in price or terms. Prospective purchasers would benefit because members of the Exchange would have the widest choice of available properties.

The Exchange was run by an executive made up of a president, a vice-president, a secretary-treasurer, and five directors. Standing committees were also formed to help the Exchange. They were called Legislation and Publicity; Finance; Membership and



References; Valuation and Arbitration; and Commission.

### Land shows

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce also tried to deal with the problem of land speculation. They thought that legislation could protect the legitimate investor and stop property advertisements that failed to show the whole of the town or city in or near the property's location. At a council meeting in December 1911, the real estate section agreed to ask for this legislation. *Toronto Saturday Night* enthusiastically endorsed the proposal.

The Chamber of Commerce took more direct action against speculators when a land show and home building exhibit was being planned. At their meeting on March 12, 1912, the Chamber of Commerce passed a motion to disassociate itself from this event. H. Milton Martin, chairman of the meeting, reported that the Board of Trade had obtained information on the show from businessmen in Calgary before taking this position. One of the telegrams received indicated that "it was a money making scheme and did not by any means come up to the standards it was boosted to be."

When a similar show was planned for November 1912, the real estate section of the Board of Trade tried unsuccessfully to prevent it. The show was held on November 16, 1912, at the Thistle Rink. The *Edmonton Bulletin*

People lined up on May 13, 1912, to purchase lots in the Hudson's Bay Company Co. Reserve.

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-157-412)

observed in its November 20, 1912, issue that the show was: "proving to be a great boon to the local real estate men who are numbered among the exhibitors. Their booths are all elaborately fitted up and a staff of salesmen are on hand to cater to prospective buyers."

The *Edmonton Journal* articles on the fair also confirmed public interest

*A few months ago when things seemed rather quiet along the real estate rialto, some dealers predicted that the early winter would witness a remarkable revival in city and district property. The pessimist said it was "hot air" or something to that effect. But the pessimist as is usually the case was entirely wrong. The activity "boom," some people call it has arrived and it promises to be one of the biggest in the history of the city.*

The Edmonton and western Canadian real estate market by 1912 had become a giant selling scheme on the verge of collapse. Its decline began in June 1913.

This pre-World War boom era is important to the history of the Edmonton Real Estate

Board because it shows the first attempt to establish organized real estate. The Edmonton Real Estate Exchange was an early form of multiple listing bureau in which companies cooperated in the sharing of listings. It also endeavoured to promote a high standard of business ethics at a time when land speculation was rampant. The organization of the Exchange would also establish the importance of standing committees. All of these features would be incorporated into the way later organizations would operate through to the present day.

Various real estate schemes left a generally negative public image of the industry. This negative reputation would take years to eliminate.

The railway boom had expanded the city in population and physical size. Edmonton became the capital of the new Province of Alberta and one of the five major urban centres in western Canada. The extra land incorporated into the city because of land speculation would also eliminate the need for further annexations until after World War Two.

## CHAPTER THREE

## War and Depression 1914-1939

The collapse of the western Canadian real estate market in 1913 was unexpected, at least to the boosters, and severe. It did, however, stop large scale land speculation for a while. A vast amount of subdivided land on the fringes of Edmonton remained undeveloped.

The Hudson's Bay Co. Reserve, which had been the cause of such excitement in 1912, also remained undeveloped until Blatchford Field was established, now known as The Edmonton Municipal Airport.

During the recession, the real estate community throughout Alberta came to realize the need for some form of regulation for their members. In 1927, members of the real estate industry of Edmonton established the Edmonton Real Estate Association. This organization struggled for years to survive but it kept alive the idea of organized real estate. It was responsible for the passage of the first act to regulate the industry. Modifications to that act in future years and cooperation between the government and industry as a result of its passage brought substantial benefits to the whole industry and to the general public.

### Recession

From 1900 to 1912, unprecedented levels of public and private investment financed Edmonton's expansion as a transportation, industrial, and commercial centre. Many people moving to Edmonton also contributed to its growth. The recession of 1913 and World War One, however, brought an end to this flow of investment and immigration and thus an end to Edmonton's boom town psychology. Edmonton suffered when financial, human, and material resources were taken from frontier development and put towards the war effort because few war-related industries were developed in Edmonton.

Boosterism was replaced with patriotism as future expansion was deferred in the interest of winning the war.

### Collapse of the land boom

World War One marked a basic and inevitable adjustment in Edmonton's economy unrelated to the events in Europe. This change was noted by H. M. E. Evans, the chairman of the recently established Edmonton Board of Public Welfare, in his first annual report. The economic expansion, he noted: "could not last and (it) showed unmistakable signs of passing even before the out-

break of the War. Therefore, while the sudden collapse in the autumn of 1914 forced the matter urgently on our attention and the operations of the Board for that year were mainly in the nature of emergency relief measures, the problem was inevitable and will be permanent."

The collapse of the urban real estate market left an oversupply of land available for development. This problem was not solved by the war or the postwar recovery during the late 1920s. From 1920 to 1938, the city laid out on paper during the boom was dismantled.

This meant many subdivisions such as Mayfair Park (where Hawrelak Park is now) were cancelled. Plans for the development of a civic centre were also abandoned.



*Downtown Edmonton is shown in 1929. The Hotel Macdonald was the most prominent site on the Edmonton skyline from 1916 to the 1960s.*

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-64-2)