



*A HISTORY OF EDMONTON REAL ESTATE
& THE EDMONTON REAL ESTATE BOARD*

RESPONSIBLE ENTERPRISE

John Gilpin

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**EDMONTON
REALESTATE
BOARD**

CO-OPERATIVE LISTING
BUREAU LIMITED

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER ONE REAL ESTATE AND THE BIRTH OF EDMONTON 1870-1899.....	5
CHAPTER TWO REAL ESTATE AND THE RAILWAY BOOM 1900-1913.....	13
CHAPTER THREE WAR AND DEPRESSION 1914-1939	23
CHAPTER FOUR WAR AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION 1940-1950	35
CHAPTER FIVE A GOLDEN AGE FOR EDMONTON REAL ESTATE 1951-1981.....	43
CHAPTER SIX CONTINUITY AND CHANGE 1982-1995	69
CONCLUSION	87
APPENDICES	
1927 EDMONTON REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS	89
CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION	91
EDMONTON REAL ESTATE BOARD CO-OPERATIVE LISTING BUREAU MISSION STATEMENT	92
1995 CREA CODE OF ETHICS	92
PRESIDENTS OF THE EDMONTON REAL ESTATE BOARD	93
LIFE MEMBERS OF THE EDMONTON REAL ESTATE BOARD.....	97
PRESIDENTS OF THE EDMONTON REALTORS' CHARITABLE FOUNDATION.....	97
REALTOR OF THE YEAR	97
LONG-TERM MEMBER RECOGNITION	98
EDMONTON PRESIDENTS OF THE ALBERTA REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION.....	99
EDMONTON PRESIDENTS OF THE CANADIAN REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION.....	99
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE EDMONTON REAL ESTATE BOARD.....	99
EDMONTON PRESIDENTS OF THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF REALTORS.....	99
EDMONTON CHAPTER PRESIDENTS OF THE REAL ESTATE INSTITUTE OF CANADA	99
PROPERTY PROFILES	101

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Foreword

A decade ago various suggestions were made regarding the desirability of producing a history of the Edmonton Real Estate Board (EREB). During the next several years a number of members, who might have been in the best position to provide details about the formative years of operations and accomplishments, were no longer available due to illness or death. It was understood that there were few written records and photographs of the early years and that we would be largely dependent on a verbal and anecdotal recounting of past events. The realization, that with every passing much of this information was now lost to us, spurred the efforts to formally undertake the project.

In 1993, the Board of Directors authorized the *Ad Hoc History Book Committee* with the task of producing a budget, locating and engaging an author and establishing the parameters of the project. From the beginning, the Committee agreed that the history of the EREB was intertwined with the economic development of the Edmonton area and the real estate activity that responded to it. It was therefore decided that reporting on the earliest real estate development and sales activities would provide the proper foundation for subsequent events. The theme of the book would be developed around the parallel growth of the community and the real estate industry.

Our History Book Committee members were novices to publishing. We had no inkling that this 'temporary' committee with a single task would labor for five years to produce this tome. Early responsibilities included arranging interviews for the author and directing him to likely sources. Part way through the process a treasure trove of early documents and photographs was discovered in the far reaches of the Board basement. This not only provided confirmation of the recollections of the senior and former members, but added documents and detail not available from any other source.

Draft after draft of the manuscript was read. Suggestions were made for additions and revisions. As the document took form, the editing function began. Committee members, from their combined years of active participation in Board affairs, were responsible for fact and sequence of events. The Directors were informed periodically of our progress (or lack of it) and were always supportive and encouraging.

As the years passed it became evident that, in our naive enthusiasm, we had launched a project that had become all consuming and self-perpetuating. Observations and inquiries from members became more pointed as completion dates came and went with disconcerting regularity. This steeled the resolve of all those involved to see it through to fruition. The end product would be, hopefully, not only authoritative but unique, enlightening and, yes, even entertaining.

It is inevitable, in an undertaking of this scope with such a wide variety of sources, that some events and people might be omitted. This we regret and request your indulgence. The book concludes with 1995 activities. This is no reflection on the activities of those that have made outstanding contributions to the function and accomplishments of the Board since then, but rather positions them to be the opening chapters in subsequent volumes.

So many people contributed to this project including members and directors - past and present - the author, editor, Committee members and Board staff. It is hoped that they, and you, will feel this has all been worthwhile; and that knowing where we have come from will provide a guide to where we are going.

R. Harvey Galbraith
September 8, 1997

Introduction

Responsible Enterprise: A History of Edmonton Real Estate and the Edmonton Real Estate Board traces the history of the Edmonton Real Estate Board from its earliest beginnings to its present-day accomplishments. From

1909, people have sought to create an organization that would be helpful for its members and the public. Objectives evolved over time. The present goals of the Edmonton Real Estate Board are to:

- improve the efficiency of the industry through such practices as providing a multiple listing service
- protect the operation of the free market
- promote the self regulation of the industry
- maintain the integrity of the industry by establishing and enforcing a code of ethics
- promote the education of its members
- organize social activities for its members
- benefit the community through various charitable activities
- recognize peers who excel in the profession
- advise governments on the appropriate regulations to protect both members of the real estate industry and the public

Real estate and real estate agents have played an important role in Edmonton's history since the city began its transition in the 1870s from a fur trade post to a modern urban community. Chapter One (1870-1899) looks at the Hudson's Bay

Co. (HBC), which became the first "land seller" in western Canada, when it engaged in the biggest land transaction in Canada's history. After that sale, land became available for people to buy privately. Soon after, encouraged by the Dominion of Canada, settlers slowly began to arrive in the area. Delays in surveying their claims and granting titles led to the creation of a settlers' rights movement. It protected the community from "claim jumpers." Edmonton citizens dealt directly with anyone who tried to develop land whose claim to the land was not recognized by the community. In 1882 buildings under construction were thrown over the edge of cliffs by enraged citizens.

By 1880 local citizens' hopes and expectations regarding the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) led to the first land boom. The community was encouraged by the Hudson's Bay Co. to believe that the Edmonton Settlement was on the mainline of

The transition of Edmonton from a fur trade outpost to a modern urban community is symbolized in the photograph below, which shows the remnants of Fort Edmonton with the new legislature building in the background.

(Glenbow Archives, NC-6-234)

