

= Charles May (Canadian politician) =

Charles May (June 30 , 1858 ? March 1 , 1932) was Canadian contractor and politician . He served on the Edmonton City Council and later as Mayor of Edmonton from 1905 to 1906 .

A native of what would become the province of Ontario , May moved to Manitoba soon after completing education in his hometown . In Manitoba , he would take to briefly farming , before entering into the construction industry , which he would establish prominence in . After doing work for the railway , he would move to Winnipeg where he would join a contracting firm and become involved in the construction of many buildings . After moving west and living briefly in Carberry , Manitoba , May came to Edmonton in 1902 .

In Edmonton he would rise to be one of the city 's most prominent contractors , constructing many of the city 's landmark buildings , as well as houses for its prominent residents . Long interested in municipal affairs , he entered civic politics with his election to the Edmonton Town Council in 1903 . After an aldermanic term that saw the inclusion of Alberta as a province in Canada , in 1905 he was elected as mayor of the newly incorporated city ; during his term he would oversee many improvements and advances to the city . Retiring after one term in office and returning to his contracting firm , he would eventually leave Edmonton in 1922 for Vancouver where he would live for 10 years leading up to his death in 1932 . An active community man , May also founded and oversaw many local organizations . A Liberal in politics , he is remembered as a progressive mayor whose policies helped the accelerate development of city of Edmonton .

= = Early life and career = =

May was born in Wellington County , Canada West in 1858 , to John and Helen (née Esson) May . Both of his parents were immigrants who had come to Canada early in their lives , his father originally from County Londonderry , Ireland , was a veteran of the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion , and his mother a native of Aberdeenshire , Scotland . Charles attended and completed public schooling in Wellington County , and around 1871 the May family relocated to Paisley , Ontario . Upon the death of his father shortly thereafter , May was tasked with the responsibilities of heading and providing for his family , along with a brother , Thomas .

In 1880 , after the closing of his father 's estate and sale his father 's property , he moved west to homestead and farm at Manitoba , in the Little Saskatchewan district , near Minnedosa . A few years later , he had come to the realization that farming was not an efficient means of business for him ; his farm had been situated in an area that was so far removed from a town that travel to deliver his products had been cumbersome . He then gained employment as a carpenter and builder with the Manitoba and North Western Railway , where he was tasked with building rail bridges and stations . He would later move to Winnipeg where he continued working in his field . He would join the contracting firm of Murray & McDermot , serving as foreman on various projects , including the building of the Manitoba Hotel . After some 13 years , he went to Carberry , Manitoba where he continued contracting , this time also entering the furniture business . In 1902 , he would also be involved in the construction of the Union Bank building there .

= = Career in Edmonton = =

Later in 1902 , May once again moved , this time further west to the town of Edmonton , in the North @-@ West Territory . Upon his arrival there , he would purchase several lots of land on which he would construct a series of cottages , houses and terraces that he would later sell . In Edmonton , he would establish himself as a prominent contractor , building many notable early buildings of the town , and later city . He partnered with Charles W. Sharpe and established the May @-@ Sharpe Construction company . With his firm , buildings he was involved in constructing included the town 's first Canadian Northern Railway station , a post office , the Bank of Montreal , Merchants ' Bank and Bank of Commerce buildings , the Hudson 's Bay Company store , the first provincial penitentiary building , and the residences of city notables Richard Secord , Frank Oliver and Edward Ainslie

Braithwaite . He was also involved in the construction of the Clover Bar railway bridge , for which he set the concrete piers and foundation , as well as the Land Titles Building in Regina , Saskatchewan . From 1909 to 1912 , May would also construct the still @-@ standing LeMarchand mansion , atop the North Saskatchewan River Valley as well as assist in the construction of McDougall United Church . The LeMarchand mansion construction however would bankrupt him and force him to move to a cottage on Koney Island on Cooking Lake , beside the present day Edmonton / Cooking Lake Water Aerodrome in Strathcona County , until his debts were settled . In 1921 , he did work at Fort Smith , Northwest Territories , as superintendent of the Windsor Transportation Company .

= = = Civic politics = = =

Keenly interested in the well @-@ being of citizens and affairs related to the development of the growing town , he was nominated for and eventually elected to Edmonton Town Council as an alderman in 1903 , finishing first of nine candidates , with 421 votes . His term was to last two years , but was truncated by a year by Edmonton 's incorporation as a city , which meant that the entire city council was elected afresh in the 1904 election . In that election he was again elected to a two @-@ year term , finishing first of seventeen candidates , but this time resigned one year into his term in order to run for mayor in the 1905 election . May 's time on council included the time in which Alberta was incorporated as a province ; as an alderman he voiced his support for a lavish celebration to be in Edmonton , which was to be the capital city of the new province . While sitting on council , he also voted against a proposed bylaw that would have permitted suffrage for women in civic elections ; he had initially voted in favour of the law , but had later reconsidered and reversed his vote , effectively killing the bill . The vote previously had been in favour of the bill , by a margin of one vote .

As the popular choice leading into the election , he handily defeated fellow councillor Arthur Cushing by a count of 627 votes to 355 , and thus became mayor of Edmonton . He served in this capacity for one term of one year , but did not seek re @-@ election in 1906 and retired from political life thereafter . It was during May 's term as mayor in which the municipal foundations of Edmonton were set ; he oversaw the purchase of the road maintenance equipment , the city 's first telephone system as well as the upgrade of the street car system to steel rails and posts , purchase of land for municipal use , paving of roads , and negotiations for the establishment of a manufacturing plant in the city . He also travelled to Toronto to lobby for a new union railway station in Edmonton to be constructed for use by the Grand Trunk , Canadian Northern and Canadian Pacific Railways . It was also during May 's term which the Alberta Legislature Building would first open its doors , which he would participate in its opening ceremonies . In 1911 , he would be named a returning officer for Edmonton , in charge of overseeing the Canadian federal election , 1911 .

= = Personal life = =

May was active with the Masonic Order , the Presbyterian Church , and the Liberal Party of Alberta . He also was a member of the Edmonton Exhibition Association , Old Timers ' Association as well as a director and manager with the Alberta Lumber Company , founder and president of the Edmonton Kennel Club , and one of the founders of a local contractors ' association . In 1906 , May was involved in the planning of the first provincial fair in Alberta . May married Ann Galbraith at Saugeen , Ontario in 1882 ; they would have two children and remain married until she died suddenly in 1897 . He remarried in 1901 , to Margaret Henderson with whom he had three additional children . One son , Norman was killed in an accident while working on the Grand Trunk Railway in Wolf Creek , Alberta .

Charles May was also the uncle of famed aviator and flying ace Wop May , the latter being a son of his brother , Alexander Esson May . Alexander May was a former mayor of Carberry , Manitoba , postmaster of Edmonton , as well as an unsuccessful Liberal Candidate in the Canadian federal election , 1917 , in the riding of Edmonton East .

= = = Death and legacy = = =

He moved to Vancouver , British Columbia in 1922 , and following a long period of illness , he died of stomach cancer there on March 1 , 1932 , aged 73 . He was survived by his wife , a daughter and four sons . Margeret May later died in 1949 . Regarded as a progressive and energetic mayor , upon his death , the Edmonton Bulletin noted regarding his mayoral term that " his progressive and constructive policies did much to advance the progress of Edmonton " . The 1912 publication , History of the province of Alberta , praised May 's stern and ambitious personality , stating that " in the most adverse circumstances [he] endured with fortitude " .