A Brief History of Edmonton’s City Boundaries

From its humble beginnings as a fort along the North Saskatchewan River to becoming the northernmost metropolitan area on the continent with over one million residents, Edmonton has the rare distinction of being a large city without forgetting its small town roots. With the past oil booms from the 1940’s and the 1970’s Alberta, Edmonton has seen a period of unprecedented growth and development that has changed the way the city has looked even thirty years ago. Throughout the 1900’s, several smaller towns and cities in the area have been absorbed by Edmonton as its boundaries continued to grow, though these areas still retain the character of their past.

<insert boundary map iframe>

Here are a few of the former towns and cities that were distinct from Edmonton, and still survive today as neighbourhoods.

Strathcona

Dating back to the 1870’s, Strathcona was a settlement directly across the river from the old Fort Edmonton, when it was still located where downtown is today. The early settlement mainly housed Native, Metis and British settlers working the fur trade, pioneers from out east, and prospectors looking to make a living in the west. The Calgary and Edmonton Railway line eventually reached the small urban hamlet in 1891, where businesses started to grow and the population began to increase. In 1899, the hamlet was officially incorporated as the Town of Strathcona.

<some early architecture pics>

As the town continued to prosper, the move to incorporate into a city was made in 1907. The University of Alberta made its home in Strathcona’s west side the following year in 1908. While the main campus was being built, the university was temporarily located at the Queen Alexandra Public School on 106 St, now the Old Scona Academic High School. In 1911 a proposal was made to amalgamate Strathcona and Edmonton, as lower taxes, affordable transit and increased city services would be a great benefit to the smaller city. The city of Strathcona was officially annexed by the city of Edmonton on February 1st, 1912.

<strathcona map>

Strathcona’s downtown business core still exists today as the Old Strathcona Provincial Historic Area, and many of the buildings built along Whyte Ave during the city’s heyday continue to serve the community while proudly exhibiting its rich architectural history.

<notable buildings today>

Beverly

In 1882, the first Non-Native residents of the Beverly area were the European settlers from Germany, Scotland, England, Ukraine, and Holland. Plentiful coal seams and cheaper land compared to Edmonton led more settlers to the Beverly area, and the Hamlet of Beverly was incorporated in 1906. With the continued influx of residents, Beverly was incorporated into a Village in 1913 and was incorporated into the Town of Beverly the following year with 1000 residents.

Over fifty mines operated in the Beverly area between 1900 and 1950. Of the many coal mines that operated during this period, the four major employers of the town of Beverly included the Clover Bar Mines (1897-1923), the Humberstone Mine (1900-1934), The Bush Davidson Mine (1917-1944), and the Beverly Coal Mine (1931-1951).

<severly map>

The Town of Beverly was officially declared a mining town in 1932. However, as the Great Depression hit the Prairie Provinces particularly hard, Beverly was in decline and deep in debt. By 1961 the town was amalgamated into Edmonton, where it exists as the neighbourhoods of Beverly Heights, Beacon Heights, Bergman, Abbotsfield, and Rundle Heights.

<prominent landmarks in each neighbourhood>

Calder

The Village of Calder was originally established in 1909 to house the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway's workforce. The area was surveyed in 1882 as two one-quarter sections, with the eastern quarter subdivided and named Elm Park in 1904. Hugh Calder purchased the western quarter in 1907 and sold lots through the Calder Land Company in anticipation of the GTPR housing its roundhouse, repair shops and shunt yards south of the area. West Edmonton was officially incorporated as a village in 1910, but locals continued to refer it as Calder despite the name change.

<calder map>

Facing pressure from the growing Edmonton boundary and in need of basic civic utilities, the village was annexed by the City of Edmonton in 1917. The former town is now part of the Calder neighbourhood, which also includes the eastern quarter section originally surveyed in 1882.

<notable buildings/landmarks in calder>