



## SELF-GUIDED TOURS: *Transportation History*



*Henry Ford's Model T*  
Credit: [www.getonlinecar.com](http://www.getonlinecar.com)

*Fort Edmonton Park is located in Treaty 6 territory, as well as the traditional lands of the Métis people.*

**How to use this guide:** This guide offers some tidbits of information about the history of transportation in the Edmonton area as a starting point for you to learn at your own pace. It also provides suggestions of buildings to visit and questions to ask costumed staff.

### 1846 Fort –

#### *A Fort Built for Furs*

By 1846, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had a monopoly on the northern Fur Trade, which expanded over half of the continent. Transportation depended heavily on water during this time.

**Canoes:** Light, and easy to transport over land, canoes were used by the First Nations in 1846 for transportation, hunting and trapping. For HBC purposes, canoes could not carry as much cargo as other forms of transportation. For this reason, canoes were eventually phased out, and mainly used for mail delivery and personnel transportation.

**York Boats:** Essential to the later Fur Trade, the York Boats were used to transport fur bales to the York Factory from the inland posts. York Boats proved the favourite for the Company due to their ability to transport many goods with relatively few men. Their chief disadvantage is their difficulty in being portaged over land, since they can weigh over a tonne! Which means of river transportation in 1846 would you choose?



**Dogsled:** Fort Edmonton would not have been a quiet place owing to the roughly 200 dogs in the Fort! Dog teams were used often by the HBC employees to transport goods over icy areas and through snow. The dogs at Fort Edmonton played an important part in the HBC's wide shipping network. What difficulties can you imagine would arise from this many dogs within the walls?

**ASK AN INTERPRETER** about Moccasin-making at Fort Edmonton, an industry led by women and why these "tracking shoes" were key to the trade. Ask the Cree interpreters about *travois* (trav-WAH)!

**BE SURE TO VISIT** the [Boat Shed](#) (#15) where you can see an old York boat and a Red River Cart. Visit the [Meat Store](#) (#8) and ask how the Fur Traders were "fuelled".

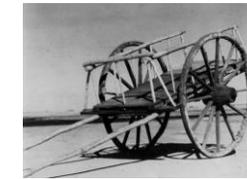
### 1885 Street-

#### *A Blind Faith in the Future*

By 1885, the fur trade was no longer the main reason for Edmonton's continued existence. Transportation improvements helped lessen the city's isolation and it became a settlement of roughly 400 people.

**Will there ever be a train?** In 1870, the government's "National Policy" required a transcontinental railway should be built across the new country. Originally, it was to run through Edmonton, but in 1883, to the great dismay and frustration of its citizens the railway went through Calgary instead! How do you think this affected the relationship between Calgary and Edmonton?

**Cart and Wagon:** Used for over a century by the Métis, Red River Carts were 2 wheeled, made entirely of wood, and drawn by horse or ox. They were more suited to western Canada's terrain and climate than the



Covered Wagons, and were thus more popular. With either cart or wagon, settlers would carry supplies in their wagon or cart and would walk alongside it. What things would you bring to the North-West?

**Stagecoach:** Stagecoaches operated on the Calgary and Edmonton Trail, transporting settlers between the two villages on a 5 day journey. Traveling by stagecoach cost \$25 per person and included lodging, meals, and up to 100 lbs of luggage. Do you think this would be worth the cost?

**ASK AN INTERPRETER** at the Covered Wagon about their journey to Edmonton. Ask at the Métis Camp about their Red River Cart and its uses.

**BE SURE TO VISIT** [Hutchings and Riley](#) (#26) to see supplies for horses, vital to transportation in this era. Check out [McCauley's Livery Stable](#) (#38) which was 1885's equivalent to a car rental agency.



## 1905 Street- Thrill Ride

By 1905, Edmonton was a booming capital city. There was great prosperity and electricity, running water, and central heating are among the amenities available in this era.

**A Train at last!** The train finally arrived in the Edmonton area in 1891, bringing more people and a larger variety of goods. The construction of the *Edmonton, Yukon, and Pacific Railway*, which ran between Edmonton and Strathcona from 1902-1904, was the first step in making Edmonton a key railway centre. How do you think the arrival of the train affected Edmonton?

**Streetcar:** Edmonton was the first prairie city with a public street car system. Electric streetcars began operation in Edmonton in 1908, 5¢ a ride. The line was 12 miles long and “Old Faithful” (Street Car No.1) began service in 1908 and still runs today at FEP thanks to the Edmonton Radial Railway Society, a volunteer group. Be sure to take a ride during your visit!



**Steamships** were an integral feature of the transportation system at this time, thanks in part to John Walter, one of Edmonton’s first millionaires. Walter operated a river ferry. Later, he built a “sternwheeler”, *The City of Edmonton*, and a “side wheeler”, *The City of Strathcona*. Can you find a picture of a steamship on the street?

**ASK AN INTERPRETER** at the Rutherford House about which member of the family drove their car and why? Ask an interpreter ‘downtown’ about the all-too-familiar “Streetcar Debate”.

**BE SURE TO VISIT** [Firkins House](#) (#55), one of Edmonton’s first houses to have a motorcar garage. Stop by the [Fire Hall](#) (#63) to see early fire engines.

## Tough Times, Modern Times

From 1919-1929, Canada experienced rapid changes. Despite a post-war depression, this was a decade of advancement in technology as well as new forms of entertainment.

**More trains!** By the beginning of the 1920s, most of Alberta’s major railways had been established, and Edmonton was the nexus, or centre-point, for a number of lines, especially those leading north. This made Edmonton a distribution and reception point for industry and agriculture. Is this still the case today?

**Motorcar:** Due to mass production and assembly lines, motor vehicles became affordable and thus easily procured. By 1927, Alberta had 70,000 car owners! The first “traffic light” showed up on Jasper Avenue in 1928, but had to be held up and controlled by a police constable. By 1929, all Albertan drivers were required to have a license. What industries do you think prospered thanks to the motorcar?

**Aeroplane:** By the 1920s, aviation was an important industry throughout the world. In Edmonton in 1918, Wilfred “Wop” May (pictured) established the city’s first commercial aviation company, flying goods to isolated northern communities. In 1926, Haggmann Estate was recognized as an official air harbour, and opened in 1927 under the name of Blatchford Field, Canada’s first municipally owned and operated air harbour.



**ASK AN INTERPRETER** about Wop May and Vic Horner’s daring “mercy flight” in extreme conditions. Be sure to ask about the Good Roads Society.

**BE SURE TO VISIT** the [Motordrome](#) (#82) to check out 1920s motorcars, and [McNeil’s Hangar](#) (#74) at Blatchford Field (#75) where you can see a replica of Wop May’s Avro Avian bi-plane.

Fort Edmonton Park’s train, Engine 107, was built in Pennsylvania, USA, in 1919. After a great deal of restoration, it has been used at the Park since April 1978. The train now runs on recycled motor oil.

Engine 107 requires 2 people to operate. The Engineer controls the throttle, the brakes and the whistle, and the Fireman controls the fire, the water level, the air compressor for the brakes and the bell.  
Enjoy your ride!

*Thank you for visiting  
Fort Edmonton Park!*

*Did you find this helpful?  
Please give us feedback by filling out  
a comment card!*

## 1920 Street-