



Naming Committee

Honouring People and Places in Our City

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

7th Floor, 10250 - 101 Street
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Peter Erasmus

(1833-1931)



Peter Erasmus was a buffalo hunter, miner, trapper, farmer, fur trader, explorer, surveyor's assistant, mission worker, and government employee. His skills as an interpreter allowed missionaries, scientists, explorers, and government officials to travel the west.

Born in the Red River Settlement, Peter Erasmus' aptitude for languages enabled him to speak English, French, Danish, Cree, Blackfoot, and Ojibway before he was 21 years old. He quit school at the age of 15 when his father died, spent the next four years teaching school at his uncle's Anglican mission at the Pas, and later entered St. John's College at Red River to study for the Anglican ministry where he also learned Latin and Greek.

In 1857, he came to Edmonton as an interpreter for Thomas Woolsey, a Methodist missionary, and then joined the Palliser Expedition for whom he also guided and interpreted. Later, he attempted farming at Whitefish Lake, acted as a guide for McDougall in 1862, then returned to his teaching profession, and on occasion, he served as storekeeper and fur buyer for the Hudson Bay Company.

In 1876, he was made the official interpreter at the signing of Treaty #6. He later became the interpreter for the Indian Agent at Saddle Lake, and in 1906, he resumed his former position as a government clerk and interpreter at the Crowfoot Reserve at Gleichen.

He retired to Victoria Settlement in 1912, then moved to Whitefish Lake to live out his final years. He died in May of 1931, 13 months short of being 100 years old.

In 1968, the Erasmus house was moved to Fort Edmonton Park.

Information compiled by: Lesley Bannister and Danielle Ferchoff

CITATION ON FILE

"Master Guide," The Third Column by "Old Timer", 15 February 1963. City of Edmonton Archives. Clipping Files.



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“Erasmus House Shipped To Fort Edmonton Park”, Pioneer Alberta, 14 February 1968. City of Edmonton Archives. Clipping Files.

“Old News Is Good News,” The Mountaineer, 20 June 1984. City of Edmonton Archives. Clipping Files.