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## Muscular Christian Edmonton: The Story of the Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association 1898-1920

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Kinesiology

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MUSCULAR CHRISTIAN EDMONTON: THE STORY OF THE EDMONTON  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION 1898-1920

Monograph

by

Courtney van Waas

Graduate Program in Kinesiology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts Sport History

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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## Abstract

From its initial conception as the EYMI in 1898 to its emergence as the Edmonton YMCA through 1920, the institution always had a distinct purpose. The absence of a Muscular Christian agenda in the EYMI, coupled with a purposive refocusing of programming within the YMCA towards what was directed towards the public interest, religion within this institution waned following World War I. Newspapers and executive minute notes demonstrate the EYMI focus on producing the next generation of respectable businessmen. The Edmonton YMCA attempted to fulfill the task of ‘saving’ young men by distracting them from social vices. As a result of the far-reaching social influences of the First World War, the YMCA significantly turned away from its religious practices. Indeed, the YMCA shifted emphasis from its religious-oriented Muscular Christian emphasis towards providing more secular, athletic programs and services to its members.

## Keywords

Edmonton Young Men’s Institute (EYMI), Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Edmonton Bulletin Newspaper, Executives EYMI and YMCA Minutes Books, Muscular Christianity

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The man who showed me true Muscular Christianity

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Muscular Christianity and the Young Men's Christian Association (hereafter YMCA) have been inextricably linked since the creation of the YMCA by George Williams on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1844. Traditionally, the notion of Muscular Christianity was created to encourage men's participation in what were perceived by Muscular Christians to be highly-feminized Protestant Churches<sup>1</sup> of the Victorian era and, as such, has been studied under the lens of male participation and its effects on masculinity within the Church and general society in either North America or Britain. While such studies are insightful and informative, they do not historically examine Muscular Christianity at specific locations in northwestern Canada. This study examines the YMCA in Edmonton, Alberta, where it was considered to be a successful institution, having social influence upon the city and its participants. Utilizing Muscular Christianity to inspire men to participate, the greater YMCA from 1880 through 1920, transformed itself from an evangelical organization to a social service provider. This thesis analyzes the influence of Muscular Christianity to determine the founding principles of the YMCA in Edmonton. To do so, Muscular Christianity will be examined in three different phases of shifting principles.

Historically, three periods can be identified which characterize the changing principles of Muscular Christianity: the 1840s through 1879; the 1880s through 1918; and, lastly, 1919 and 1920. Changes in Muscular Christianity during these three periods had a direct influence on the organizational approach of YMCAs and the programs they offered. Shifts in Muscular Christian ideals and principles during these periods had direct effects on the Edmonton YMCA, between 1898 and 1920. A retrospective look into Muscular Christianity as it shifted in both purpose and effect during the above three time periods will serve to classify the main ethos and principles of

the movement, thereby distinguishing one period of time from another. Meanwhile, comparing such guiding principles to the institution of the Edmonton YMCA will serve to evaluate the influences of Muscular Christianity on YMCA programming in a city during the period of settlement in the prairie west. The historical changes evident in Muscular Christianity provide a focal point through which to analyze the Edmonton YMCA and its shifting role in the community. This thesis endeavours to discover what each of the changes entailed and how they manifested themselves within society at large and in the YMCA. It will also determine why these shifts occurred and what their outcomes eventually entailed.

The first phase of Muscular Christianity focused largely upon theologically-pious religious sanctity for men through Bible study, prayer, and masculine presentation through the image of a 'Christian Gentleman, a man who was honest, self-reliant and ambitious, a man living within a sinful world, although not participating in the sin infesting his social sphere.<sup>2</sup> This phase coincided with the emergence of the Social Gospel movement which brought forth significant societal reforms in Canada. These were broad, sweeping reforms that dealt with health, hygiene, and the overall fitness of citizens and permeated Canada West just as deeply as they did Canada East.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Edmonton YMCA did not exist during the formative years of Muscular Christianity, the early influence of this social movement was prevalent within the fledgling institution prior to 1906 in the form of the Edmonton Young Men's Institute (hereafter referred to as the EYMI), the foremost young men's organization within the small, bustling, city. The EYMI lasted a mere five years before lapsing into non-existence. Eventually, however, the past leadership of the EYMI came together once again with other influential men to form the YMCA just a few years later. The EYMI was an institution that aimed to "educate" the young men of



Edmonton who were to be the future leading businessmen of the rapidly-expanding city.

Although unofficially initiated by John A. McDougall (leading businessman and twice mayor of Edmonton) in 1898, the EYMI followed the greater Muscular Christian ideology of theological piety and prayer. By encouraging young men to join a public institution outside of the family home, Muscular Christianity targeted young, impressionable men, who the elder male generation believed had been overly feminized through the Victorian Church and Victorian mothers to the detriment of society, due to motherly coddling and Church emphasis on disseminating the feminine elements of the Social Gospel.<sup>4</sup> This unofficial Young Men's Institute was formed purposefully to create male role models and promote masculinity through a religious, all-male environment that produced religious programming specifically for men.

The second phase of Muscular Christianity from 1880-1918, in which early theological principles were still present, experienced a transformation towards celebrating masculine sporting prowess, ideals that by the mid-1880s had become a subliminally-generated model of success. Such changes were facilitated in Edmonton by men such as the Reverend Charles William Gordon (also known as popular Canadian novelist Ralph Connor), J.A McDougall, and Mr. G.R Jackson (a recent graduate of Kingston Military College and instructor for the Canadian Military Reserve).<sup>5</sup> This second phase was spurred worldwide by Luther Gulick (leader of the YMCA Springfield College physical training programs).<sup>6</sup> It was Luther Gulick who pushed for the YMCA organizations to focus on a three-point plan of improving body, mind, and spirit; and, although he never intended for sports to supersede the place of religion within men's training, for the Bible class leaders and supporters the unfortunate consequence was that it did just that. Success in sports or feats of athleticism became the Christian ideal to which men should have aspired and many certainly did.<sup>7</sup> At that moment in history, sports were deemed to be the lesser

of pleasure-based evils corrupting society when compared to drink, gambling, and all manner of vice prevalent within cities. Sport, unlike Bible study, was attractive enough to gain mass male participation and, due to a middle class societal belief in hygiene, and an unwavering belief in the benefits of a daily constitutional, male athletics were deemed an appropriate outlet for men's pent up aggressions.<sup>8</sup> The second phase covers the transition of the EYMI into the beginning of the Edmonton YMCA, where it appeared there was nowhere to go but upwards in terms of programs, membership, and even building expansion. In this era, Edmonton experienced rapid growth in middle-class sporting leagues both private and through the YMCA. Intercity rivalries and province-wide competition became consumer sport activities which early Edmonton businessmen promoted. The expansion of sporting grounds occurred in Edmonton at this time as well, with the building of covered ice rinks, baseball diamonds, a racetrack, and exhibition grounds. By 1913, Edmonton boasted of a city wide hockey league of 30 teams.<sup>9</sup> The development of YMCAs in Canada and even in Alberta alone during this phase was considerable, and brought about intercollegiate sporting leagues, private leagues, and YMCA leagues that are still prominent to this day.

The second phase, although a part of Edmonton's 'glory years,' was also the period in which the First World War occurred and, while the war fostered a menu of new programming opportunities for YMCAs, it also led to the decline of some organizational programming, most specifically, religious programming. YMCA Christian programming survived Darwin's revolutionary research expressed in the *Origin of Species* in 1859,<sup>10</sup> soldiering on in spite of harsh public reaction to its promotion of the theory of creation, published in, for instance, *Essays and Reviews* in March 1860.<sup>11</sup> However, the devastation brought on by the First World War, both physically and ideologically, had never to such an extent been experienced by any prior

Canadian military involvement. It is within this second phase that the stirrings of religious discontent became known to the clergy of Protestant Churches as well as the laity; soon a separation of institutionalized Church life from the lives of the majority of the general public began to appear, leading to ramifications within all YMCAs, such as low participation numbers in Bible study classes and a lack of acceptance to openings of athletic events with religious service elements.

The third phase can be best described as a shift within Muscular Christianity that occurred post WWI or, for the purposes of this study, in the years 1919 and 1920. The third Phase was a period in which the first significant loss of religious tenets behind both Muscular Christianity and the Edmonton YMCA occurred. The decline of religion was due to a significantly deteriorated interest in religious activities and the complications between the institutionalized Church bodies and their inability to remain relevant to returning war veterans. Also during this phase, Churches struck out at the emergence of a new theological perspective of sport as religion, or sports as a religious aspiration of higher meaning to be attained by Christian men.<sup>12</sup> The Edmonton YMCA was not immune to these difficulties and, as an organization that worked very closely with the institutionalized Churches within the city of Edmonton, changes needed to be made on both sides in order to meet needs of the returning veterans. The difficulty faced by the Edmonton YMCA quickly became a conflict between providing sport programming or religious programming, or determining if it was still possible to facilitate both.

### **Literature Review**

To better understand the changes that occurred within the Edmonton YMCA and its significance within society, an analysis of the historical development of the YMCA, from its initial inception in Britain, to its genesis in North America, the Canadian West and, lastly,

Edmonton itself is instructive. This review also entails an examination of the significance of sport in society, its relationship with religion, and the relationship of sport to the YMCAs. However, in order to do so, the Muscular Christianity Movement, through its three stages: Theological Piety (1840-1879), Athletic Religiosity (1880-1918), and its Religious Demise (1919-1920) must first be discussed, as it was the Muscular Christian movement that inspired the creation of the YMCAs and their athletic programming.

Muscular Christianity's first stage of theological piety which promoted ideals for Christian manliness began in the early 1840s and lasted roughly into the 1880s. Ideals such as gentlemanliness, respect for biblical authority, becoming a man worthy of such respect within society and the home, a good citizen, and demonstrating earnest dedication to Christian principles of love, honesty, and fidelity were paramount.<sup>13</sup> This phase primarily focused on male theological piety rather than on promoting the need for physically healthy bodies among men. Initially, Muscular Christians rejected athletics and many groups such as the Puritans, Presbyterians, and other reformed denominations Calvinist in nature, opposed sport<sup>14</sup> as it was seen as a waste of time, a pursuit of little value to either one's salvation or the greater good of society.<sup>15</sup> Clifford Putney's *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America 1880-1920* describes how such puritanical ideals permeated America well into the 1880s and underlines the reasoning for such objections to sport in great detail. It wasn't merely that sport did not produce quantifiable good for society, but was part and parcel of the Calvinistic abhorrence of pleasure; pleasure was sinful - therefore anything that was pleasurable must be sinful. The same reasoning behind puritanical objections to sport participation in America was present in Canada as well,<sup>16</sup> for religion had no physical confines or restrictions such as borders or nationalities to prevent it from spreading. In combating North American enthusiasm for sport,

Protestant evangelicals continued the Puritan fight against sport, forming coalitions<sup>17</sup> to prevent sport on Sundays. Such objections were conveyed to the public both within Church institutions and government legislation but, although made into law, there was very little hope of policing such activities. Donald E. Hall's *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*,<sup>18</sup> describes the Victorian evangelist's penchant for a new form of religion. The new religion required that there were no man-made restrictions and followed only the Bible for its societal rules; it was a religion that placed women into subordinate roles to their male counterparts so as not to subvert a man's dominance as the religious head of a family unit. In Canada West, actions of athletic participation for mere pleasure were greatly curtailed under the Lord's Day Act in 1845.<sup>19</sup> The legislation labelled games and sports as noisy disruptions, implying that proper charitable acts were more appropriate activities for Sunday - the underpinning message of the budding Social Gospel movement. Curtailing activities for Sundays did not negate the connections between Muscular Christianity and the Social Gospel movement. Mainstream Churches came to accept a robust form of Muscular Christianity as it embodied what they believed to be the character and manliness of Christ.<sup>20</sup>

Initially, the phase of Theological piety within Muscular Christianity of 1840-1880 was structured deeply within the ideals of the Protestant work ethic. Ideals stemming from Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*,<sup>21</sup> led society to believe that a man's proficiency at his work would be directly determined by his "intellectual, social, and martial values."<sup>22</sup> These new masculine values placed within society standards of hard work, determination, and using gains through hard work to their utmost purpose and became an important foundation of both the Social Gospel and Muscular Christian movements. A period of intense piety both within England and North America<sup>23</sup> was occurring during this period. Known as the Second Great Awakening, this

religious movement transpired approximately between 1790 and 1860. The Second Great Awakening was led by men such as Thomas Arnold (1795-1842, educator and headmaster of Rugby School from 1825-1841),<sup>24</sup> Thomas Hughes (1822-1896, author of *Tom Brown's School Days*, and *The Manliness of Christ*),<sup>25</sup> Charles Kingsley (1819-1875, author of *Westward Ho!* and *The Water-Babies*),<sup>26</sup> Barton W. Stone (1772-1844),<sup>27</sup> Alexander Campbell (1788-1866),<sup>28</sup> Thomas Campbell (1777,-1844),<sup>29</sup> S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834)<sup>30</sup>, and Charles Gandison Finney (1792-1875).<sup>31</sup> These leaders had one task in common- the re-devotion of North America and England to Christ and the piety supposedly lost within the modern Churches of the day. Each man's "ministry" was found to be part of the inspiration leading the authors of *Essays and Reviews* published in 1860, to criticize the Bible.<sup>32</sup> While men such as Hughes and Arnold could be classified as second wave Muscular Christians due to their involvement and relationship to sport programs, it is important to note that Hughes' description of Thomas Arnold as a Muscular Christian in *Tom Brown's School Days* is controversial. In fact, more recent research on Arnold has determined that his system of education designed to develop manliness was intended to be achieved through a "maturity of [the] mind, not [the] body."<sup>33</sup> Hughes himself, within his book *The Manliness of Christ*, while defending the cause of manliness, put to rest "the notion that manliness [had] nothing to do with animal courage, nor [did] it consist in simple moral courage."<sup>34</sup> While he supported the notion of healthy exercise for young men through sports, he also did not believe that this was what made a man a strong Christian; it merely played a role in his becoming one.

Marked revivalism began throughout England in the year 1844 in which George Williams (1821-1905), a young draper's assistant in London, organised the first YMCA. According to Binfield,<sup>35</sup> Williams belonged to the "old Evangelical school of thought"<sup>36</sup> and was

an avid reader of Charles Finney. While under the leadership of Rev. Thomas Binney (1798-1874) Williams attended Church at the historic parish of King's Weigh House Chapel London, largely considered a radical gathering at that time.<sup>37</sup> Very popular with young men, Binney was known to appeal to the unsophisticated and his main point of pride was a simple well-constructed argument within his sermons.<sup>38</sup> Considered a leader of the 1840s, Binney was largely influential on a young George Williams. He had a preaching style that appealed to young men and a vigour that promoted Muscular Christianity severely lacking in the mainstream Victorian Churches, according to Hodder Williams.<sup>39</sup> Importantly, both Binney and George Williams saw the need for missions, not just for the poor but for all people within the rapidly-expanding industrial cities. The fact that Williams did not create the YMCA for athletic purposes, but for entirely pious reasons of Bible-honouring, Sabbath-keeping, and protecting young men within the city from the immoral, is significant as this program rapidly changed.<sup>40</sup> The first phase of Muscular Christianity, like the Second Great Awakening, was more concerned with Soteriology,<sup>41</sup> the reaching of salvation through Christ. The first stage leaders decried popular sport, as did their religious Puritan/Calvinist counterparts, as profane or “offering an alternative path to God for those who could not stomach conventional religion.”<sup>42</sup> For those who couldn't “stomach conventional religion,” the phase Theological piety in Muscular Christianity as previously stated coincided with both the Social Gospel movement, and the trend towards criticizing the Bible. The Social Gospel, Muscular Christianity, and Biblical criticism expanded in the 1840s and well into the 1880s and beyond. With the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*,<sup>43</sup> a new era of Biblical criticism began which influenced a new generation of social reformers such as Americans Josiah Strong (1847-1916)<sup>44</sup> and D.L Moody (1837-1899),<sup>45</sup> each of whom toured England and were active participants in the revivalist movement in which George Williams was

immersed. Englishmen F.D. Maurice (1805-1872),<sup>46</sup> Charles Kingsley (1819-1875),<sup>47</sup> and Prof. B. Jowett (1817-1893)<sup>48</sup> were among the leading reformers and promoters of Muscular Christian attitudes of the time. These men continued the work of the Second Great Awakening, leading the people of Britain and North America into a new form of Christianity, one which quickly steered their ideas of manly health into new realms of physical fitness activities.

It was not until the 1880s that sport as the predominant form of Muscular Christianity became popular in Canada, ushering in a phase of athletic religiosity in Muscular Christian ideals of prescribed manliness. Such prescribed characteristics of physical masculinity were encouraged, along with the Social Gospel by men such as J.S Woodsworth (1874-1942)<sup>49</sup> and Charles William Gordon (otherwise known as the novelist Ralph Connor, 1860-1937),<sup>50</sup> both Canadians, both involved with Muscular Christian associations such as the YMCA, and Church-led athletic events. The first organizations that promoted these ideals were various young men's groups such as the Edmonton Young Men's Institute, and the established YMCAs across Canada (Montreal in 1851, Halifax 1853, Toronto 1853, and Charlottetown 1856).<sup>51</sup> These institutes were a direct reaction to what male religious leadership identified as the feminization of the Protestant Church.<sup>52</sup> At this point in time, the British Empire's rhetoric pertaining to the ideals of imperialism was at its peak; public school headmasters spouted the rhetoric of Social Darwinism, "link[ing] strength of manhood, Christian morals, and fair play to the success of empire" and to survival of those who were the fittest.<sup>53</sup> Active preachers within their denominations, the Church of England and Presbyterian Church, respectively, Kingsley and Connor published popular works of fiction as well. Their novels, targeting young men specifically, consisted of manly adventure stories that were distinctive for their religious overtones. Also popular were the adventure stories of James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)<sup>54</sup> and H. Rider Haggard (1856-1925)<sup>55</sup>



who wrote of settlement and imperialism, hunting and marksmanship, and the attendant masculine traits which wound their way into the Canadian subconscious.<sup>56</sup> It was during this era that Muscular Christianity became the leading movement within established Churches to keep young men off the streets, and men all of all ages away from sinful temptations in cities. The rapid migratory expansion of both the United States and Canada between 1867 and 1890, meant scores of young men left the east, hoping to make something of themselves in the west. With migration of young men to the west, the YMCAs followed suit.<sup>57</sup> Aware of the growing popularity of sport in North America, Churches in concert with the YMCA began to organize young men's groups to promote athletics within their respective organizations. With the gathering of young men to sporting events, the Churches and the YMCA (which had originally organized simply for prayer and Bible study) could use sports and manly athletic contests as opportunities to preach masculine ideals as well as to institute permissible and wholesome events under Christian authority. However, this is not to say that the YMCA's stated mandate was to provide anything other than Christian activities and to promote the ideals of Christian behaviour to men. In no other domestic group did Muscular Christianity become as popular as it did within the middle classes. Like their already athletically-minded, upper-class neighbours they, wished to identify themselves as distinct from the lower classes<sup>58</sup> among whom violence was considered to be a way of life, mostly devoid of Christian morals:

for some middle-class men in the sporting clubs, muscular Christians all, bourgeois notions of the gentleman, domestic provider, and father gave way to the celebration of toughness and empowered physical masculinity on the pitch...even though the idea of fair play remained...men rationalized the aggression practiced through sport as a rite of passage, a character-building enterprise that built stronger, better men and, therefore a stronger nation.<sup>59</sup>

It was strongly believed by Muscular Christians during the 1880s that sports could teach young boys the values of teamwork, physical courage, self-reliance, and loyalty,<sup>60</sup> all manly

characteristics that presumably would not be learned through the toughness of the streets, which could well produce all manner of poor masculine attributes. During the expansion of Muscular Christianity through sport, more was expected from a man. No longer was manhood classified by the singularities of physical ability, chivalry, or morality; manliness became assessed on all three qualities. The goals of the Christian socialist and the Muscular Christian became inextricably linked. While Kingsley extolled “patience, self-mastery, and sobriety,”<sup>61</sup> Maurice believed “a man who has earned a competence, who is able to live without depending on the bounty of others, has given a test of his manhood...manhood is equated with restraining the self.”<sup>62</sup> So, while masculinity was demonstrated through sport, there were still many ideals which Christian manhood demanded. Much of the self-denial preached by the Muscular Christian leaders was, as previously mentioned, an inheritance from Calvinist/Puritan forefathers’ “distrust of the flesh”<sup>63</sup> and the negative inflection associated with pleasure. Interestingly, for many years Calvinism was considered the more masculine form of Christian denominational influences due to its lack of female leadership in the Church hierarchy and harsh stances against things of pleasure or mere recreational enjoyment as non-productive wastes of God-given time. Many Muscular Christians considered the lack of Calvinist structure within the universal Church to be the fault of Victorian feminization.<sup>64</sup> Calvinists believed that feminism would lead to a softer form of preaching within the Church. Fostering universal equality for men and women risked that ideas of equality would lessen the impact of the concept of an exclusive elect, thereby placing the onus of salvation on the active participation of the believer, rather than the active participation of God, a tenet that could not be accepted in the basic theology of Calvinism.<sup>65</sup> However, with negative reactions to harsh Calvinist stances in the Victorian feminized Church,<sup>66</sup> many male religious leaders thought a new method of asserting male masculinity was required. Through sport, men

could pursue athletic pleasure, but under the confines of rules. Rules that were issued and governed by Christian principles, especially rules that were adjudicated by the YMCA and the various sporting leagues organized by YMCAs, put in place to ensure fair sportsmanship and to lessen the levels of violence within sporting matches. As the geographical confines of Canada expanded, so did the popularity of the YMCA. Confederation opened the Canadian west in 1867, rapid settlement began in the 1880s, and amongst the cities expanding was most certainly Edmonton.

The third phase of the religious demise of Muscular Christianity was the shift from dominant sporting aspects of manly Christian morality to the secularization or loss of religion within Muscular Christian institutions. As Norman Vance has pointed out, the trouble associated with the phrase “Muscular Christianity is that it draws attention more to Muscularity than to Christianity.”<sup>67</sup> And he is absolutely correct. Institutions in which Muscular Christianity was the main mode of missionization “became progressively more secular and more a vehicle by which manliness was to reach the aspiring lower middle class.”<sup>68</sup> Soon after the First World War, Muscular Christianity, with its wide-ranging implications for society, came to represent nothing more than a slight emphasis on the all-around spiritual and physical development of young men within such organizations. As Christianity and organized religion became less and less publically popular, so did the organizations that worked within and with the Churches. Many sporting programs thrived, but their religious hallmarks were lost, or simply pushed to the background of what was popular or seemingly more in demand. Although clerical leadership within the YMCA and other religious associations for young men and sport continued to play highly visible roles in leadership well past the early 1900s, there was a distinct de-emphasized role of “prayer meetings, sermons, and demands for individual soul searching.”<sup>69</sup> In response to North American appetites

for sport, Christian organizations became as obliging as possible but, as such, began to lose the religious tenets upon which they were built, with the result that Muscular Christianity being a “forgotten” concept to most, the YMCA became a decidedly secular institution.

### **The Edmonton YMCA position within the Muscular Christian Context**

To understand the Edmonton YMCA, it is important to comprehend the history of the entire YMCA movement with respect to its creation and expansion to North America and the Canadian West. Initially established on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1844, the YMCA was George Williams’ answer to a city he believed to be filled with corrupting influences. When George Williams and a few close friends officially created the YMCA in London, it was a prayer group that met in Williams’ bedroom above the draper’s shop in which he worked. Having met previously on multiple occasions with friends for prayer and Bible study, the men decided to make their gathering permanent and to expand their numbers. Williams’ idea was to create a home away from home for young men, a substitute for character-forming, health-preserving, Sabbath-keeping homes which young men were forced to leave to live within city confines when entering their career fields. Binfield’s *George Williams and the Y.M.C.A: A Study in Victorian Social Attitudes*, aptly describes the life of Williams leading up to his makeshift prayer group. Binfield tells of Williams’ role models such as Rev. Binney, and the early struggles for Williams’ YMCA, and the YMCA’s later struggles during a period of suspicion and denominational rivalry rife within 1890s Britain. Because it was not acceptable for Churches to provide young men with what were classified as amusements, it became the YMCA’s task to encourage the morally-best amusements. Pastimes such as smoking and billiards became popular in cities; many young men became involved in these activities. Many of them felt the need to perform in physical feats to distinguish themselves as more masculine than their lower class male peers, and to prove their

masculinity within a rapidly expanding industrial city being filled with an ever present stream of lower-class factory workers.<sup>70</sup> As such, they were often drawn into activities in which Williams and Church leaders felt Satan laid in wait for them. Many found turning such recreational pursuits into acceptable activities a worthy endeavour. These leaders introduced temperance through coffee meetings and slowly changed the acceptability of games like billiards from amusements to recreational activities, simply by placing them within supervised institutions. Gymnasiums were initially not even on the horizon of the YMCA-planned recreational activities, but a dislike of billiards and smoking led early YMCA leaders to introduce athletics as a lesser of the two evils. As Hodder Williams' *The Life of Sir George Williams* reminds us, Williams was a man who held to his creed fervently and with sincerity, and we should be certain to remember that the foundations of the first YMCA "were laid in prayer in an upper room, in the fervent, effectual prayers of two young men," Williams and Creese. When the YMCA prayer group expanded to 12 young men,<sup>71</sup> a circular was issued to work establishments around London inviting all young work assistants to join. With exponential growth, the YMCA moved multiple times, eventually occupying its own permanent headquarters at Gresham Street. A program aimed at the mental expansion of men's minds beyond mere religion was quickly implemented; thus began the famous Exeter Hall Lectures.<sup>72</sup> What made the YMCA successful was its level of personal contact supported and strengthened through prayer and fervent Bible studies. By December 1845, the YMCA offered its first Bible study. However this was met with suspicion by some Churches, as they worried the YMCA was overstepping its bounds by taking over the job of the Church. The YMCA had no such qualms. Firmly believing in their right to offer Bible-based activities that did not step on the toes of organized religion, they sent representatives to the 1851 Great Exhibition to promote their activities worldwide, much to the annoyance of the

organized Church. Such actions turned the YMCA into a national and eventually an international organization by the end of 1851. The first conference of YMCAs was held in August 1855 in which the following resolution was adopted:

The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the exertion of His Kingdom among young men<sup>73</sup>

By July of 1855, it was necessary for Williams to confirm publically that the YMCA was only an auxiliary arm of the Church. Impressively, by 1878, Hodder Williams reports that there were 8,000 YMCA branches within the YMCA World Alliance. Before the advent of the Edmonton Young Men's Institute, the YMCA had already celebrated its jubilee in 1894 in which the motto adopted became: "They thanked God and took courage."<sup>74</sup>

The development of the YMCA in North America was less rapid but no less interesting. The very first YMCA in North America was established in 1851. This honour belongs to the city of Montreal. According to Hopkins' *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*<sup>75</sup> and Cross' *One Hundred Years of Service with Youth: The Story of the Montreal Y.M.C.A.*,<sup>76</sup> this is interesting for two very different reasons. Firstly, Montreal was a predominantly Catholic city, and YMCAs worldwide were to be operated under the framework of Protestant Evangelization. Secondly, it was organized by a small group of young men of the evangelical persuasion, not rich, not affluent, but determined to see their mission through. Quickly following the Montreal YMCA were YMCAs in Halifax 1853, Toronto 1853, and Charlottetown 1856, each drawing support from local affluent businessmen. Though Montreal experienced sustained success, others floundered and had to reorganize at a later date. Such was the case in Toronto, having to reorganize in 1864. These YMCAs were focused on a program of intellectual, educational

matters; they were to be organizations of practical Christian service. According to Ross' *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, all such organizations were based upon the London England YMCA model aimed at practicing fundamental principles of Evangelical Christianity.<sup>77</sup> While both the Montreal YMCA and Toronto YMCA had constitutions that stated their goals as the religious and mental improvement of men, "in connection with the study of the scriptures,"<sup>78</sup> only Montreal flourished. After the Toronto YMCA's reorganization in 1864, its constitution became more specific, becoming the model to follow for many organizations across Canada, including Edmonton.<sup>79</sup> However, even with goals of improving spiritual and mental conditions of young men through the provision of reading rooms and libraries, accommodations for Bible studies and social prayer events, and lectures and courses on religious and secular subjects, Ross believes that "long prayers, papers [reports], and talks on religious subjects monopolized the time of the meeting[s]."<sup>80</sup> This left very little time for the practicalities required for operating the organization in a businesslike manner, which would have improved its success greatly. Regardless of these early setbacks, many YMCAs expanded to more community-involved programs, teaching classes in writing, arithmetic, reading, spelling, grammar, history, and geography. Some YMCA libraries expanded to hold over 600 volumes of reading materials.<sup>81</sup> Among the difficulties early YMCAs faced was their relationship with the established Churches, many of which were openly hostile to the young organization, so much so that many of them opened their own denominational YMCAs as a counteraction against the nondenominational YMCAs already established. The 1860s formed a period in which many Churches and organizations promoted romantic missionary ideals through which saving souls for the Kingdom of Heaven was the ultimate goal. Yet this promotion was occurring in conjunction

with intense denominational rivalry and, as such, interdenominational co-operation was not always possible.

By 1854, Canadian YMCAs, or rather British provincial YMCAs, were part of a confederation with American YMCAs. However, by 1855, Montreal and Toronto had withdrawn from the confederation due to the contentious issue of Canada willingly accepting Negro men and boys as participants, while American YMCAs would not.<sup>82</sup> Expansion into western Canada was very slow to start. Many young men immigrated to America as it was developing more rapidly and westward immigration was much further advanced. However, western organizations mostly began with a focus on youth, not older working men. Interestingly, they already had the aim of saving young men before they fell under the influence of corruption, and left the saving of those already corrupted to organizations such as the Salvation Army.<sup>83</sup> It was not until the 1880s in Canada that community evangelization shifted to a focus only for men and boys; previous to this, all evangelization meetings and rallies hosted by the YMCA were opened to both genders, but the focus had changed.<sup>84</sup> For early Canadian and, more particularly, western organizations, communication was a serious concern; correspondence was extremely important for executive committees to ensure staying current with the latest developments in education and Christian focus. However, correspondence was slow and may have played a role in Edmonton's sluggish development from the EYMI into the YMCA. Although there were many other factors involved, communications weighed heavily on the first Edmonton YMCA leaders; communication problems continued for many years.

According to research by Ross and Hopkins, the YMCA's development in Canada/North America underwent three basic phases, much like Muscular Christianity did, as discussed above. The first phase focused on evangelization, the hosting of large religious gatherings (mass



meetings), tract distribution to factories and various places of employment, with a few lectures in between. The second phase emphasized group Bible studies as opposed to mass meetings. Young men's meetings were a focus, as were worker-training classes, personal introspection, educational classes, new physical works, and social activities. The third phase, a four-fold program was not prominent in Canada until 1888. It focused on developing a young man into a well-rounded individual involving his development in social, intellectual, spiritual, and physical matters, eventually leading to the demise of Christian principles within the organizations.<sup>85</sup> In the same year the first Canadian official YMCA handbook was published for the benefit of organization leaders. Canada also has a history of government-sponsored mechanics' and agricultural institutes such as the Mechanics' Institute of Edmonton, organized and chartered in 1903. Also having a reading room and library lending program, it filled in the gap for men who did not wish to be a member of a Christian-led organization; however, as was the case in Edmonton, they typically did not have long histories of operation.<sup>86</sup> The YMCA during its early years had slight concerns in educational attendance eclipsing religious event attendance; however, unlike attendance to the physical programs, this did not immediately occur. By 1888, the popularity of the physical programs far outstripped specifically religious events, as short religious events such as prayer and song were conducted before athletics began. These programs addressed issues such as hygiene and, eventually, sex education, subjects quite unlike religious Bible study that proved more attractive and interesting for men.<sup>87</sup> By 1889, there were 21 YMCAs in Canada not counting the sporadic opening and closing of various organizations in under five years. Boy's work (programs in which only boys under the age of 15 were allowed attendance, focused upon the upbringing of Christian boys) in Canada took off in earnest beginning in the 1890s, the same year in which regional development in the prairies led to the

organization of a North-West convention and the establishment of the Calgary YMCA.<sup>88</sup> In 1904, a provisional committee of Canadian delegates was established to focus upon the newly-developing Canadian west.<sup>89</sup> In 1914, all Canadian organizations moved to form their own National Council, separate from the American National Council.<sup>90</sup>

Government focus on the development of the Canadian North West in 1890 came at precisely the opportune moment, as the prairies were soon to experience a huge immigration influx; from 1891 to 1921 the prairies increased in population from 4,883,239 to 8,787,949.<sup>91</sup> By 1904, Alberta hosted council meetings during which it had been decided that the main focus of work was to be on boys and a four-fold program of religion, education, social, and physical development employed in each organization in that order. However YMCA leaders soon found it to be difficult to keep religious work high in variety and popularity above any other department. By WWI, interest had declined in classical education and current events became the main interest to young men, producing large numbers of debate clubs amongst smaller institutions.<sup>92</sup> By the end of WWI, sex education was more predominant, and social activities such as billiards, bowling, and board games (which were previously avoided as poor influences) were popular amongst returning servicemen. Many YMCAs adopted game rooms, much to the consternation of older members.<sup>93</sup> By 1902, YMCA athletic leagues were already affiliated with the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union and, by 1914, a YMCA was not considered complete as an organization unless it had a gymnasium and a pool.<sup>94</sup> By 1912, CSETs (Canadian Standardised Efficiency Tests) were in place to measure development of young men; they stayed in place in western organizations and schools well into the late 1970s. By 1910 there were ten revised editions for the purpose of YMCA testing, both physical and mental.<sup>95</sup> As 1920 came to pass, YMCA leaders were already feeling that they had lost the interest of many young men who had been

involved in War Works, such as Soldiers of the Soil and intercollegiate programs.<sup>96</sup> But the war had spelled the demise of the old programming of Bible study, and small scale athletics were no longer attractive to boys who were taught that they had to fulfill the role of men on the home front. During WWI, young boys had been mobilized, uniformed, and taught to march just as soldiers leaving for the battlefields of Europe were trained to do.

To contextualize the research on the Edmonton YMCA and its variations in programming, a quick look into physical developments as seen through the work of Elmer L. Johnson's *The History of YMCA Physical Education*<sup>97</sup> leading up to 1880 will do much to facilitate the understanding of physical changes for all YMCA institutions. Prior to the 1880s, most physical exercise work was geared towards body building, acrobatics, gymnastics, and boxing taught by volunteer instructors, or paid instructors that came from the circus and professional fields. These men were oftentimes oblivious to the YMCA mandate of physicality for conversion and often times were even opposed to these mandates.<sup>98</sup> By the 1860 convention of North American YMCAs, the ideas behind building gym spaces received huge support. However in the eyes of the more conservative physical activity folks, the concept of Muscular Christianity was not a viable alternative to religious works. After the institution of physical activity programs, accidents led to the need for supervision. As gymnasiums brought in the bulk of men, members, and money for many organizations, such accidents could not be brushed off as merely rare occurrences. The first regimented program appeared in the New York YMCA where it was reported that up to 160 men attended physical exercise classes. Starting a warm up in marching drills, followed by military calisthenics, then eventually breaking into small groups on apparatus, seemed to be a winning formula and many YMCAs and their newly-employed physical directors soon followed suit.<sup>99</sup> With industrialization, less child labour working hours

was required and soon YMCAs found involvement with interscholastic physical education leagues as mandatory school attendance for children was enforced. Sports became a means to combat delinquency in young males. Soon colleges were created to train leaders for school physical programs. Springfield College, founded in 1885, was designed to train YMCA physical secretaries (supervisors for physical activities in the YMCAs across North America), Sunday school superintendents, and pastors' assistants.<sup>100</sup> In 1890, Springfield College was renamed from the School for Christian Workers to the Young Men's Christian Association Training School.<sup>101</sup> An amalgamation of Swedish, German, and English gymnastics programs was cast and recast into systems in which the YMCA could as a whole adopt and teach as regular training activities for YMCA members worldwide. The Canadian alternative to Springfield College was Sir George Williams University. This university alternative was established in 1926. In consequence YMCAs in Canada, when attaining a YMCA educated instructor before 1926, were employing exclusively American trained instructors.<sup>102</sup> While gymnasium work was extremely popular, YMCAs were in the vanguard of rambling programs; these were cheaper options for YMCAs that could not afford a gymnasium or apparatus. Rambling programs involved taking groups of young men on walks or bike rides to scenic places of interest, and these outdoor clubs were the means by which many YMCAs maintained year round membership when the weather or available gym space did not permit. Camping for boys also became very successful for the YMCAs and was considered one of the best imperialistic activities for youth in the British Commonwealth nations. To imperialize a nation, one must first learn to survive in an often inhospitable environment. Therefore, camping and its close counterpart of hunting were closely associated with Imperialistic activities of colonizing, and then taming, the wilderness.<sup>103</sup> Camping and rambling programs also were practical for many organizations (as they were in

Edmonton) in order to free up gym space for senior members and prescribed classes which required the use of specific equipment. While the YMCA was a pioneering member of the American Playground movement<sup>104</sup> it soon realized that supervision of such sites was impossible to fulfil when they had other programming to supervise, such as basketball, volleyball, swimming, lifesaving, and others.<sup>105</sup> When Dr. Gulick joined the International Committee of YMCAs as the head Physical Director in 1887, he introduced the inverted triangle symbol for the YMCA logo and introduced the threefold program intention of Mind, Body, and Spirit as the main focus for physical activity. He was keen to emphasize that the physical programs were merely the initial point of outreach in which to make contact with young men to draw them into the fold, and bring them to Christ. Though it was not until after 1880 that physical education became the dominant form of activity within the YMCA movement, it held much promise and became very popular within a very short time span. Having eclipsed religious education attendance, it ran the risk of being the only YMCA program that attracted large crowds and had a less than stellar Muscular Christian religious connotation behind its purpose.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the demise of religious principles within the YMCA. Such a topic has yet to be directly studied in any depth for the years preceding the Second World War, in the years from its inception in 1844 to 1920. Most particularly, the Edmonton YMCA has never been examined in this historical context.

### **Justification/Rationale**

During Muscular Christianity's first period from 1840 to 1879, theological piety, Bible study, and prayer were the primary goals of Muscular Christians in order to develop 'Christian Gentlemen. The second period covered the years 1880 through 1918 in which athleticism and manly physical prowess became the subliminal ideology and main characteristic of Muscular

Christian manhood. Lastly, the third period, 1919-1920, demonstrated the first instances that Muscular Christianity moved towards becoming a dying movement. While North American and English studies on the YMCA are vast and cover the decreasing influence of religion in the YMCA, the Canadian West, and more specifically, the City of Edmonton, has been ignored. External factors as they relate to the Muscular Christian movement, as well as internal factors relating to the city of Edmonton, itself-- people, culture, and political climate - will aid in discovering why the Edmonton organization, like many of its counterparts, lost its religious principles before the Second World War.

The rationale for using the EYMI and YMCA minute book records is simple. As Durkheim, Bendix, and Weber used the system of contrast conceptions,<sup>106</sup> this study will use contrasting conceptions through the years of EYMI and YMCA operations from 1898-1920 to tell a social history. What is missing from the minute books is just as telling to the researcher as what is present. While this method of research is in danger of being too easily accepting of society's evolution through a sequence of invariable stages, the purpose of juxtaposing the Edmonton YMCA with the three main stages of Muscular Christianity is to ensure that any assumptions of why the movement evolved will be researched to the full regional extent, as well as theologically in its application to Edmonton.

The rationale for using newspaper evidence as a backup to the minute book records is also reasonable, as newspapers can be utilized to compare what was of more interest to the general Edmonton public concerning the YMCA, in contrast to what the general council or executive council of the YMCA decided was of the utmost importance. With this in mind, the local culture in Edmonton in the 1880s through the 1920s was unlike many others. While similarities with the city of Calgary do exist, the fundamental economic differences between

these cities make their reactions and reasoning behind their respective YMCA's loss of religion distinct. Though a plethora of evidence pertaining to the Calgary YMCA exists, most of which are recent assessments of the institution and its training methods for group fitness classes,<sup>107</sup> no in-depth studies exist on the Edmonton institution, except one very short historical synopsis written for its 100 year anniversary.<sup>108</sup> This thesis will avoid any assumptions of similarities between the two associations and make Edmonton its primary focus.

### **Method**

While the YMCA of today is a secular institution, the YMCA of the past was most decidedly a religious institution. As such, two forms of theological research methods will be applied within this study. They are the General/Special method ascribed from Wilhelm Munscher,<sup>109</sup> and the Integral/Synchronic/Organic model from von Harnack and Seeberg.<sup>110</sup> Munscher's theory demands a general outline of thought followed by a discussion of the particular issues applied to the general thoughts mentioned. This is an important method as it implies the breaking down of history into periods in which general surveys of authors, ideas, and influential forces can all be taken into account for the changes perceived within popular doctrine and how they influenced the Edmonton YMCA. To do so a comparison list will be designed in which each year studied within this thesis will have categories listing general Protestant theology, cross comparing the data with the targeted aim of the executive committee. In doing so, glaring conflicts of goals or general thought between society and the organization goals should become apparent. von Harnack and Seeberg suggest that using periodizing and topical grids<sup>111</sup> will aid in analysing the social aspects in particular periods of time that controlled the dissemination of doctrine and how the popular Protestant doctrine affected the Edmonton YMCA, which will also be covered within the above described lists. However, these methods are

used sparingly insofar as they will convey the general theological and or religious majority of Protestant sentiment of the designated periods the history of the Edmonton YMCA

Also applied to this thesis are methods in relation to Fredrick Jackson Turner's theory of local history. Although there is much debate surrounding Fredrick Jackson Turner's *Frontier in American History*,<sup>112</sup> most specifically his lack of attributing agency to the Native Populations, his work was nevertheless ground-breaking. His discussion of westward expansion and the ideals surrounding colonial and westward settlement can still be seen in western provinces to this day. Western settlers were not just expanding civilization; they were creating a new society in a vastly different geographical divide, which exerted influences on economic, social, and political characteristics. When Jackson describes the west as "a form of society, rather than an area," he was describing (albeit unknowingly) the Canadian prairies, a society that carries within it "enduring and distinguishing survivals of its frontier experience."<sup>113</sup> Although Jackson is correct in describing a western settler as a "pioneer [who] had boundless confidence in the future of his own community,"<sup>114</sup> he is lacking in his understanding of first contact and native/settler relations within westward expansion; however, deficiencies aside he is not incorrect in his interpretations of western settlement ideals and hopes of societal expansion within the west. Such a point of view will be taken into consideration when examining the history of Edmonton from first contact fur trading fort to Victorian era city, thereby contextualizing the experiences of men and boys within the EYMI and YMCA and also analyzing their seeming lack of understanding, or non-recognition of the ethnic differences within their city, as a club of exclusively of white Anglo-Saxon descent. These methods will reveal the Edmonton YMCA's unique characteristics and its relation to the total fabric of the Canadian nation.<sup>115</sup> As a city located within the Canadian Prairie West there were many environmental factors that made Edmonton a city quite unlike any other



within Canada as a whole. Also within this thesis are comparative methods as presented by Easthope's *Aspects of Modern Sociology*, which are applied when humanist and theological explanations for social aspects are inadequate.<sup>116</sup> Economic, environmental, and political factors may be taken into account for the Edmonton YMCA in determining the mood of the city itself at any given time, and its relation to Edmonton society as a whole.

As a Calvinist Christian, my position on the Edmonton YMCA's loss of religion is seen as a dire consequence of lack of theology within society and its religious leaders and institutions. While this same conclusion may be reached by non-Calvinist researchers, I tend to believe the loss of YMCA religion was a direct result of a *loss* of theology rather than the viewpoint of a *change* within theology, argued in many studies of Muscular Christianity. A loss of theology differs from a loss in religion as theology is the study of God in relation to mankind; religion is the dogmatic traditions in which such biblical theology is interpreted through different Churches to their adherents. A loss in theology within the YMCA will explain how secularism became prevalent once it was given up in order to foster more athletic participation. This affects the point of view in my thesis as theological shifts in public perception are obvious and may appear more relevant to this study. Yet my intention is to present evidence of the changes in Christian programming in the Edmonton YMCA as it relates to shifts in Muscular Christian characteristics, regardless of my own feelings toward whether they were changes in theology or a loss of theology. The object of this thesis is to present a reasonable explanation to the reader as to why religion was lost to the Edmonton YMCA using the above described methods.

This thesis will also take into account both qualitative and quantitative evidence in its use of executive and general committee minutes, as well as newspaper articles of the same approximate time period. Quantitative methods as explained by Burke in *History and Social*

*Theory*,<sup>117</sup> involve a process of listing things of importance or interest, and using numerical statistics as a form of evidence. By using samples of quantity of prayer, religious reports, and census statistics, within committee minutes, this thesis will use such evidence to achieve a balance, while also listing statistics of non-religious content such as sport programming and educational programming, in comparison to the seemingly lacking religious principles. This evidence can also be represented through yearly comparisons from year to year in quantitative measurements. Qualitative methods are explained by Hesse-Biber, Nagy and Levy<sup>118</sup> in which epistemological theory as the nature of knowledge and its grounding in limitations, that we internalize dominant ideology in society, and these underlying ideas in society are what bind us together. In the Edmonton context it is ideology factors as they apply to Muscular Christianity perspectives and the YMCA's relation to religion that will be investigated. Such evidence will be gleaned from newspaper reports and compared directly with executive committee goals.

Primary source data used in this thesis are the YMCA historical Fonds at the Alberta Provincial Archives, minutes of meetings, reports, various correspondence, and constitutions of organization and founding. Data were chosen because of the meticulous organizational practices which provided different aspects of meetings and the lives of the men that are not available elsewhere. While each of these primary documents (most specifically minute books) must be analyzed with care, as it may be possible for statistics to be exaggerated in attendance numbers, they will be read from the perspective of as much feasible accuracy as possible as the above listed primary sources were intended for the executive committee, and available for the other members of the association at annual meetings. When the EYMI and Edmonton YMCA first began, full names were listed with acceptance or denial of requested membership. Counting the names to match attendance records would not be difficult, especially as the records were often

likely to tell whom membership was denied to and why. It would not appear to be in anyone's best interest to exaggerate the numbers within organization records, as it was the organization's mandate to obtain as many members as possible, as memberships equaled the money needed to operate effectively.

Secondary newspaper sources used for this study were found through the Peel's Prairie Provinces Database of the University of Alberta, accessing the Edmonton *Bulletin* and the *Saturday News*. Dating from 1898-1920 the sections read were the Local News, Sporting News, Church Services, and Around the City. Search terms used for scholarly research through Peel's Prairie Provinces inside parameters of 1896-1920 were: Muscular Christianity, Muscular Christian, and Muscular Christianity in North America, Canada, Muscular Religion, and combinations of the above. Through the articles retrieved, comparisons were drawn from the North American and British context into the overall Canadian context. Search terms for newspaper articles searches were YMCA, Young Men's Christian Association, and Edmonton Young Men's Institute or EYMI.

Newspaper and Scholarly article data collected were analysed qualitatively by placing the newspaper coverage of the YMCA into themes (athletic, educational, religious, etc), and scholarly minutes data in the same manner. I will be able to separate the dominant themes of newspaper coverage of the EYMI and YMCA, and compare them to the concerns of the executive committee, and general scholarly articles.

### **Limitations**

The major limitation to my thesis research deals with the lack of extensive records for the YMCA. While sufficient evidence and records were kept, programming records and other valuable evidence was not as readily available. The inability to track down previous members or families for records pertaining to the YMCA will also limit the extent of research. There are no

records from non-Protestant boys' organizations such as Tuxis or Trail Rangers which limits the denominational contrast research that could have aided in determining the success of religious programming in the YMCA. The lack of interviews from members of the YMCA past or present will also limit this study to interpretation from other academics, journalists, and Victorian society attitudes at large in determining the stages of Muscular Christianity and their application within the city of Edmonton.<sup>119</sup>

### **Delimitations**

This thesis explores the archived public records of the Edmonton YMCA that have been released to the general public through the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Correspondence of certain members, which was kept within the minute's records for posterity reasons, is available due to the prudence of foresight on behalf of the board of directors. Keeping within the limitations of hard copy archive records, this study will not take into account more current media interpretations of the YMCA later than 1920. The thesis also relies on previous academic works on Victorian era societal attitudes and societal norms and their reasoning which will be taken into account while reading the YMCA records as well as the various newspaper sources.

### **Chapter Outline**

Chapter two of this thesis will examine the history of the EYMI from 1898 through 1904, identifying the ethnicities present within the Edmonton region, as well as the developing town itself, shedding light on the obvious ethnic disparity within the EYMI. This will be followed by a brief description of the EYMI perception of Muscular Christianity through examination of the EYMI minute book as well as local newspaper coverage. This will be summed up with a look at what the executive committee promoted and whether or not it was successful in its endeavours. All of the above information will be cross-referenced with the first wave of Muscular Christian thought and practice from 1840-1879.

Chapter three examines the historical transition of the EYMI into the Edmonton YMCA through the changes in leadership and the process in which the change occurred. It will also examine some of the other young men's organizations in operation during the period in which the EYMI and Edmonton YMCA were not active (1903-1906). This will also tell the story of the years 1907 and January through June 1914 and the shift in Muscular Christian perspectives within the Edmonton organizations. By reviewing the executive committee minutes and local newspaper coverage, the changes that occurred will be seen through the eyes of the newspaper reporters as shared with the reading public citizenry of Edmonton. Finally, the above will be contrasted with the second wave of Muscular Christianity of the years 1880-1914.

Chapter four examines the history of the Edmonton YMCA during the years of World War I from July 1914-1918. It will examine what programming became popular and if there was indeed a significant loss of religious tenets in the Edmonton YMCA. This will be completed once again through newspaper and minute examinations cross referenced with the second part of the second wave of Muscular Christianity from 1914-1918.

Chapter five will examine the history of the Edmonton YMCA immediately following the First World War, covering the years 1919 and 1920. This will be mostly examined through the contrast of what the newspapers were reporting versus what the YMCA committees were promoting, showing the effects of the First World War and the beginning of the reign of secularism within the Edmonton YMCA.

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Steven J. Overman, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sport: How Calvinism and Capitalism Shaped America's Games* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2011), pp. 236-266. Feminization of protestant churches occurred during the Victorian era, in which sermons were less condemning in tone, and public charitable works were praised. This led to an increase in social works programs mostly done by women, such as temperance leagues, Sunday schools, and hygiene movements.
- <sup>2</sup> Susan Curtis, "The Son of Man and God the Father: The Social Gospel and Victorian Masculinity," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp.79-84.
- <sup>3</sup> Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (Toronto: A.A. Knopf Canada, 2007), p. 59.
- <sup>4</sup> Don Morrow, and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 187
- <sup>5</sup> Colin K. Hatcher, *Y.M.C.A Edmonton: the first one hundred years* (Edmonton: Y.M.C.A of Edmonton, 2012).
- <sup>6</sup> Clifford Putney. "Luther Gulick: His Contributions to Springfield College, the Y.M.C.A, and 'Muscular Christianity'," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 39 (Summer 2011): pp.144-170.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/873638018/fulltextPDF?accountid=15115>
- <sup>7</sup> Robert J. Higgs, "Muscular Christianity, Holy Play, and Spiritual Exercises: Confusion About Christ in Sports and Religion," in *Sport and Religion*, ed. Shirl J. Hoffman (Champaign: Human Kinetics Books, 1992), p.89 .
- <sup>8</sup> William White, "On Athletics and Gymnastics in use and Abuse," *The Journal of the Royal Society for the promotion of Health*, Vol 10. (1889): pp. 153-165.  
[http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/pdf/14664240/v10i0001/153\\_oagiuaabwwff.xml](http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/pdf/14664240/v10i0001/153_oagiuaabwwff.xml).
- <sup>9</sup> Carl Betke, "Sport Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," *Urban History Review*, 12:2. (October 1, 1983): pp. 47-56.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1300111392/fulltextPDF?accountid=15115>.
- <sup>10</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. A. Facsim, and Ernst Mayr (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).
- <sup>11</sup> *Essays and Reviews*, ed. Victor Shea, William Whitla (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000). A volume of seven essays on Christianity, the topics covered the biblical research of the German critics, the evidence for Christianity, religious thought in England, and the cosmology of Genesis.
- <sup>12</sup> Joan M. Chandler, 'Sport is not a Religion,' in *Sport and Religion*, ed. Shirl J. Hoffman (Champaign: Human Kinetics Books, 1992), pp. 55-61.
- <sup>13</sup> Christopher P. Hosgood, "Negotiating Lower Class Masculinity in Britain: The Leicester Young Men's Christian Association 1870-1914," *Canadian Journal of History*, 37:2. (August 2002): pp. 253-273.p. 255.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/194342845/fulltextPDF?accountid=15115>
- <sup>14</sup> Paul Christesen, *Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 200.

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- <sup>15</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p 24. On Protestant Evangelical Churches (of Puritan ancestry) holding sway long past Antebellum American history, "did not object to physical exertion when it was linked to production. But exercising one's muscles for no particular end except health struck many Protestants in the mid-nineteenth century as an immoral waste of time."
- <sup>16</sup> George A Rawlyk, "New Lights, Baptists and Religious Awakenings in Nova Scotia 1776-1843," in *Prophets, Priests and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History 1608 to Present*, ed. Mark G. McGowan, and David B. Marshall (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1992), pp 82-83.
- <sup>17</sup> Organizations such as Lord's Day Observance Society 1831, the Lord's Day Alliance, and various women's temperance movements, worked towards preserving the Sabbath from popular sport activities, having a view of such activities as desecrating the sabbath.
- <sup>18</sup> Susan L. Roberson, "Degenerate effeminacy and the making of a masculine spirituality in the sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 53.
- <sup>19</sup> K. Wamsley & M. Heine, "Sabbath Legislation and State Formation in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Canada," *Avante*, 1:2. (1995): p. 44-57; Rev. D.D. Peter Strang, *History of Missions in Southern Saskatchewan* (Regina: 1929), p. 191.
- <sup>20</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, p.92. Discussion on relationship of Muscular Christianity within the social gospel movement, and the changing image of a masculine Christ.
- <sup>21</sup> Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London: J.M Dent and Sons, 1957): p. 43.  
<http://books1.scholarsportal.info/viewdoc.html?id=/ebooks/oca3/33/wealthofnations01smituoft>
- <sup>22</sup> Dominic Erdozain, *The Problem With Pleasure: Sport, Recreation and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2010), p. 93.
- <sup>23</sup> *Religion in Victorian England Vol 1*, ed. Gerald Parsons (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988), p. 217.
- <sup>24</sup> See: Terence Copley, *Black Tom Arnold of Rugby: The Myth and the Man* (London: A&C Black Publishing, 2002).
- <sup>25</sup> See: E.E. Brown, *Thomas Hughes: True Manliness* (Boston: D. Lothrop and Company, 1880).
- <sup>26</sup> See: Brendan Alphonso Rapple, *The Rev. Charles Kingsley: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Criticism* (Washington D.C.: Scarecrow Press, 2008). Rev. Charles Kingsley born 1817 first son of Rev Charles Kingsley. In 1844 he became a rector after completion of his studies, 1859 he became chaplain to Queen Victoria, and from 1860-1869 he was a professor at Cambridge. In 1870 he became canon of Chester Cathedral, and in 1873 canon of Westminster Abby. Many of his literary works were written over his ruminating over evolution, and social reform. His descriptions of South American scenery earned him literary acclaim in *Westward Ho!*
- <sup>27</sup> See: Anthony L. Dunnavant, *Cane Ridge In Context: Perspectives on Barton W. Stowe and the Revival* (Bourbon County: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1992). Presbyterian Reverend who resigned over the Kentucky Synod arguments of 1803. Founded new Springfield Presbytery before resigning from Presbyterianism altogether. Formed churches and revivals that relied solely on scripture and no man made creeds.
- <sup>28</sup> See: Eva Jean. Wrather, *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom. A Literary Biography* (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2005). Worked in restoration movement with Rev. Stone, leader of multiple churches who relied solely on scripture. Churches such as The Evangelical Church of Canada are off shoots of his work.

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- <sup>29</sup>See: William Beattie, *Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell*, vol1-3. (London: Edward Moxon, 1849). Thomas Campbell was leader of the Disciples of Christ, a break away from the Presbyterian Church due to argument over Calvinist dispensing of the Eucharist.
- <sup>30</sup> See: H.B. Wilson, "The National Church, and the Politics of Church and State," in *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 text and its reading* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000); John. Pennington, "Muscular spirituality in Goerge MacDonald's Curdie Books," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.133. Coleridge's belief of a broad church theory, also followed by Arnold, Hughes, and Kingsley and F.D. Maurice. A third form of a church 'the Roman Catholic Church' which is neither national, nor Christian, but irreconcilable and subversive to both.
- <sup>31</sup> See: Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdsman Publishing, 1996). Finney was father of modern revivalism, an opponent of old school Presbyterian theology, and promoter of many social reforms
- <sup>32</sup> *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 text and its reading* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000). Topics covering issues of figurative vs. literal text and bible imagery.
- <sup>33</sup> Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 154.
- <sup>34</sup> Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, p. 154.
- <sup>35</sup> Clyde Binfield, *George Williams and the Y.M.C.A: A study in Victorian Social Attitudes* (London: Heinemann, 1973), pp. 11-24.
- <sup>36</sup> J.E. Hodder Williams, *The Life of Sir George Williams* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), p. 41.
- <sup>37</sup> Binfield, *George Williams and the Y.M.C.A*, pp. 25-28.
- <sup>38</sup> Binfield, *George Williams and the Y.M.C.A*, p. 29.
- <sup>39</sup> Hodder Williams, *The Life of Sir George Williams*, p.132.
- <sup>40</sup> Mayer N Zald & Patricia Denton, "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the Y.M.C.A.," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 8:2. (September 1963): pp. 214-234, pp. 216-218.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2390900.pdf?acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>
- <sup>41</sup> Erdozian, *The Problem With Pleasure*, p. 86.
- <sup>42</sup> Erdozian, *The Problem With Pleasure*, p. 86.
- <sup>43</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. A. Facsim, and Ernst Mayr (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).
- <sup>44</sup> See: *Encyclopedia of Religion in American Politics*, ed. Schultz, Jeffery D. & West, John G. & MacLean, Iain S (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999). Josiah Strong published the work *Our Country*, dealing with cities under industrial development, he believed in the expansion of the kingdom of God on earth through social work.
- <sup>45</sup> See: Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: DL Moody and the rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003). D.L Moody was an American who toured extensively in England gave rise to mass meetings and evangelism at organizations such as the YMCA. His urging of hosting mass meetings was adopted by Y.M.C.As.



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- <sup>46</sup> See: Jeremy Morris, *F.D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005). Maurice an Anglican theologian who subscribed to the Broad Church theory and a follower of Coleridge, worked with Benjamin Jowett, and was an education and biblical critic.
- <sup>47</sup> See: Brendan Alphonso Rapple, *The Rev. Charles Kingsley: An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Criticism* (Washington D.C.: Scarecrow Press, 2008). Charles Kingsley was a reverend, poet, novelist historical works writer, parish priest and social reformer, who became an education activist.
- <sup>48</sup> See: *Essays and Reviews: The 1860 text and its reading* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000). Jowett was an essayist who abandoned Biblical commentary, and wrote extensively on atonement, was in conflict with political activist Wilberforce, and supporter of German high criticism of interpretation of scripture.
- <sup>49</sup> See: Kenneth McNaught. *A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J.S. Woodsworth* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001). J.S Woodsworth was a Methodist minister who grew up in a western mission in Portage la Prairie, while father was travelling itinerant preacher. He was raised by his mother, felt the need of those within the Winnipeg immigrant slums and felt disenfranchised by the war. He became a pacifist. He left the church and claimed a disbelief in Jesus Christ, but was saved from excommunication due to his father's influence.
- <sup>50</sup> See: Charles William Gordon, *Postscript to Adventure* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1938). Gordon was a Presbyterian minister and mission field worker in Canadian West, Calgary Presbytery. He was a firm believer in muscular Christian ideals of hard work and male Christianity in which fists were permissible to be used, and sports were to be played.
- <sup>51</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951), pp. 5-22.
- <sup>52</sup> Morrow & Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, p. 172.
- <sup>53</sup> Morrow & Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, p. 172.
- <sup>54</sup> Wayne Franklin, *James Fenimore Cooper* (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2008). Cooper was the first to write American adventure westerns in which the Native plight was traced to economic reasoning.
- <sup>55</sup> Denys Edwin Whatmore, *H. Rider Haggard: a bibliography* (Los Altos: Mansell, 1987). Rider haggard popular for British Commonwealth adventures such as *King Solomons Mines*, and *The Jungle Book*.
- <sup>56</sup> John M. Mackenzie, "The Imperial Pioneer and hunter in the British masculine stereotype in late Victorian and Edwardian times," in *Manliness and Morality: Middleclass Masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 177.
- R. B. Brown, "Every boy ought to learn to shoot and obey orders: Gun's, Boy's, and the law in English Canada from the late Nineteenth Century to the Great War," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 93,2. (June 2012), 196-226.
- <sup>57</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada*, p. 56.
- <sup>58</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, p. 50.
- <sup>59</sup> Morrow & Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, pp. 178-179.
- <sup>60</sup> Morrow & Wamsley, *Sport in Canada*, p. 237.

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- <sup>61</sup> Donald E. Hall, "On the making and unmaking of monsters: Christian Socialism, muscular Christianity, and the metaphorization of class conflict," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 53.
- <sup>62</sup> F.C. Maurice, *The Workman and the Franchise*, as quoted in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 55.
- <sup>63</sup> Susan L. Roberson, "Degenerate Effeminacy and the making of masculine Spirituality in the sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 151.
- <sup>64</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity*, p. 75.
- <sup>65</sup> Sarah Apetrei, "The Universal Principle of Grace: Feminism and Anti-Calvinism in Two Seventeenth-Century Women Writers," *Gender and History*, 21:1. (April 2009): pp. 130-146.  
[http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/pdf/09535233/v21i0001/130\\_tupogfaitsww.xml](http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/pdf/09535233/v21i0001/130_tupogfaitsww.xml) .
- <sup>66</sup> See: Keith A. Mathison, *Postmillennialism: An Eschatology of Hope* (Phillipsburg: P&R Pub, 1999) for discussions on postmillennialism for more detail. During the Victorian era many churches took the stance of promoting feminine Christian characteristics over masculine characteristics. Many Christian priests and reverends began preaching on the Social Gospel and the things in which women were the main participants, as such their sermons were addressed towards their main congregants (women), lacking the harsh Calvinist principles and language of the previous decades.
- <sup>67</sup> Norman, Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 2.
- <sup>68</sup> Mangan, J. A., and James Walvin. 1987. *Manliness and morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. Manchester [Greater Manchester]: Manchester University.
- <sup>69</sup> B. G. Rader, 'The recapitulation theory of play: motor behaviour, moral reflexes and manly attitudes in Urban America, 1880-1920,' in *Manliness and Morality- Middle class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1880-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (New York: St. Martins Press, 1987), p. 128.
- <sup>70</sup> Elmer L. Johnson, *The History of Y.M.C.A Physical Education* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1979) p. 132.
- <sup>71</sup> Hodder Williams, *The Life of Sir George Williams*, p. 110. "G. Williams, C.W. Smith, Norton Smith, Edward Valentine, Edward Beaumont, M. Glasson, William Creese, Francis John Cockett, E. Rogers, John Harvey, John C. Symons, James Smith."
- <sup>72</sup> C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*, (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 5.
- <sup>73</sup> Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*, P. 172.
- <sup>74</sup> Hodder Williams, *The Life of Sir George Williams*, p. 271.
- <sup>75</sup> Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*, 1951.
- <sup>76</sup> Harold C Cross, *One Hundred Years of Service With Youth: The Story of the Montreal Y.M.C.A* (Montreal: Southam Press, 1951).
- <sup>77</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 9.

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<sup>78</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> Hatcher, *Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 22.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 72.

<sup>84</sup> Zald, *From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the Y.M.C.A*, p. 215.

<sup>85</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, pp. 79-62.

<sup>86</sup> Hatcher, *Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 88.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 163.

<sup>89</sup> Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*, p. 427.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 426.

<sup>91</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 168.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 185.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 186.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 87. Note\* Book referred to the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union as the Canadian Amateur Athletic League

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, pp. 199-202.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p. 207.

<sup>97</sup> Johnson, *The History of Y.M.C.A Physical Education*, 1979.

<sup>98</sup> Johnson, *The History of Y.M.C.A Physical Education*, pp. 28-37.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>102</sup> Henry F. Hall, *The Georgian Spirit: the Story of Sir George Williams University* (Montreal: George Mikan & Son, 1967.), p. 75.

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- <sup>103</sup> Brown, "Every boy ought to learn to shoot and obey orders: Gun's, Boy's, and the law in English Canada from the late Nineteenth Century to the Great War," pp. 196-226.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 51.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid, p. 53.
- <sup>106</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory Second Edition* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2005), p. 24.
- <sup>107</sup> See: Alberta children's hospital and the University of Calgary partner with the Y.M.C.A Calgary to help teens with depression. 2014. *Professional Services Close - Up* (Jan 27) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1491656992?accountid=15115> (accessed October 31, 2014); "Glenbow Archives Finding Aids: Yong Men's Christian Association (Calgary) Fonds, Glenbow Archives, last modified 2014, <http://www.glenbow.org/collections/search/findingAids/archhtml/YMCAcfm>; Lawrence H. Bussard, *Early History of Calgary* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1935); *Calgary 100: 100 Year History of Calgary* (Calgary: Provost Promotions and Publications, 1974); Maxwell Foran, *Calgary: an illustrated history* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1978).
- <sup>108</sup> Hatcher, *Y.M.C.A Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, 2012.
- <sup>109</sup> James E. Bradley & Richard A. Muller, *Church History Research Methods*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 33-63.
- <sup>110</sup> Bradley & Muller, *Church History Research Methods*, pp. 33-63.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 37.
- <sup>112</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Digireads, 2010).
- <sup>113</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, p. 115.
- <sup>114</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, p. 117.
- <sup>115</sup> Homer Carey Hockett, *The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), p. 238.
- <sup>116</sup> Gary Easthope, *Aspects of Modern Sociology: Social Research: A History of Social Research Methods*, ed. John Barron Mays and Maurice Craft (London: Longman, 1974), p. 82.
- <sup>117</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory Second Edition*, p. 28.
- <sup>118</sup> Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy and Patricia Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (New York: Sage, 2010), p. 38.
- <sup>119</sup> CURRENT RESEARCH BEING DONE IN CONNECTION WITH TORONTO Y.M.C.A CENTRAL BRANCH

## **Chapter Two: From Fur Trade Fort to Victorian City for Boys' Salvation**

The city of Edmonton has a diverse sporting history. Although not researched in great depth by historians, a significant sporting culture developed in Edmonton. From the city's establishment as a Hudson's Bay trading fort on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1795 by Scotsman William Tomison,<sup>1</sup> to its official establishment as a city in 1904,<sup>2</sup> a sporting culture has been present. The creation of the Edmonton Young Men's Institute (EYMI) in 1898 was evidence that sport was conceptualized as a benefit to society, or at least to young men and their future development into solid citizens. In the late 1890s, Muscular Christianity was a popular social movement that strove to incorporate Christian principles within physical fitness activities for men. Some of the executive members of the EYMI and some men from the main membership body were present during Edmonton's early development from a town to a city. However, while these individuals were definitely interested in developing young men into solid citizens, they were not doing so by stringent Muscular Christian methods.

Sport in the Edmonton region developed out of the conditions of western expansion or colonial conquest. As previously mentioned, Fredrick Jackson Turner stated "The West, at bottom, is a form of society, rather than an area." It is a society that "bears within it enduring and distinguishing survivals of its frontier experience."<sup>3</sup> In the case of Edmonton, he was absolutely correct. Many books documenting the history of Edmonton and the region discuss the social and cultural particularities of the region.<sup>4</sup> Activities related to survival in the colonies, such as camping and hunting,<sup>5</sup> permeated Edmonton's sporting society for many years beyond the Victorian period.

Of course, even before the European settlement, hunting for survival had been practiced for many years in the Edmonton area by the First Nations groups of the Blackfoot Confederacy,

the Plains Cree, the Plains Ojibwa (Saulteaux), and the Sioux (Stoney and Assiniboine).<sup>6</sup> Often following the buffalo migration over the changing seasons, the diverse Plains Nations were never located in one place for extended periods of time. However, it was not until first contact with white Europeans that hunting became somewhat of a competitive sport amongst First Nations and White European Trappers. Although most European men in the Canadian North West Fur Trade established themselves as traders or company hired factors, competition for furs amongst Native hunting groups and between white traders was high; survival in the competitive North West thus became a masculine trait of which a European male could be proud.

With further European settlement, Big Game Hunting became a popular activity for rich European and American hunters.<sup>7</sup> The buffalo migrations around Edmonton attracted much attention from such hunters. While Big Game Hunting was not a Muscular Christian activity, hunting, as such was thought to have a civilizing effect on not only the men who participated in it but also on boys (who supposedly possessed a natural primitiveness) and on the inhabitants of the region in which hunting was practiced.<sup>8</sup> Masculinity through hunting had become a Christian civilizing effort practiced throughout the British Empire, and by 1890 it had made its way into Canada's North West.

Early Edmonton was composed of two distinct societies: First Nations and European Settlers. Both were defined by survival and by a unique but separate frontier experience. As a regional settlement, Edmonton displayed the distinguishing characteristics of a community struggling for survival which left an indelible mark upon those living in and around Edmonton during the late 1800s and early 1900s. As Gerald Friesen has noted, "settlement in the North-West Territories was clustered principally in four areas by the middle of the 1880's." Edmonton

was one of these areas, and was “associated with the rich food resources and potentially fertile soil of the North Saskatchewan River valley and the adjacent parkland belt.”<sup>9</sup>

Edmonton’s society was considered lower-class by Victorian standards, due to its large farming population and small business-class population. It was business-class men who established the Edmonton Young Men’s Institute. Edmonton business-class men felt a social responsibility to their city. Those men felt compelled to groom the young boys of the city into socially acceptable Victorian men who could eventually take the reins of Edmonton’s business legacy.

Most of the young men who initially joined the EYMI were of this business class and, as was traditional, they would have taken over profitable businesses from their fathers regardless of their upbringing. And yet, Edmonton businessmen left nothing to chance and decided to groom these young men through organizations such as the EYMI; being an honest, self-reliant, and ambitious businessman was a form of Muscular Christian ethics.<sup>10</sup> Exposing young men to Christian qualities was essential as, in that period, most young men went directly from adolescence to a career of some kind.<sup>11</sup> One did not typically train for a white collar business career in an academic institution. As such, tasks which future businessmen were required to perform in their future careers could only be taught through youth organizations that could provide an education of the best social ethics, Christian or otherwise. Social ethics did not merely exist for young men in their performance of business duties, but through their entire lives, including athletic endeavours.

The first sports in Edmonton were recorded in 1800. According to Chief Factor Fort records and diary evidence, New Year’s Day 1800 was a sports day. Two Cree men won a three legged snowshoe race, and an Iroquois canoe crew was featured in the night’s entertainment of

singing.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, despite the fact that the Edmonton region was becoming more European in character, due to the later European arrivals, the Native population around Edmonton was still present and very much associated in the day-to-day workings of the fort. This made Fort Edmonton a multicultural society and not simply a homogenous European society.

From the 1880s onward, hunting was practiced by the Natives for survival and by whites for sport (big game hunting). In 1891, the *Bulletin* published an article entitled “Game Protection”<sup>13</sup> in which the author presented some ideas about restricting the HBC trading practices in order to “prevent the slaughter of the [buffalo] from becoming fashionable for sport.”<sup>14</sup> Such early preservation efforts for the lifestyle of the Native population who hunted for survival and respected animal conservation in the region are surprising, for the Canadian government, although advised otherwise by the Palliser Expedition, believed the wealth of the west lay in furs rather than farming. By February of 1892, Edmonton assumed town status as a hamlet of 700.<sup>15</sup> The month of July the following year is an important marker for the present study, as the town of Edmonton held its first official Sports Day. The race track and sporting grounds north of 102 Avenue consisted of a grandstand and various sporting activities took place along with a \$950 dollar fireworks display.<sup>16</sup> However, such activities (if horse racing was included) were not the type of events Muscular Christians supported, as such events typically led to gambling, drinking, and other kinds of vice.

An article from the *Edmonton Bulletin* published in 1896 depicts the still popular buffalo hunting in the Edmonton region. Entitled “Coming our Way,” its author describes news from the Minneapolis area from which a hunting party was soon to arrive in the Edmonton region.<sup>17</sup> The *Bulletin* provided the following synopsis: “The game these hunters are coming after is wood buffalo, and these animals are said to be unusually plentiful in the wild country north of



Edmonton in which the hunting operations will be carried on.”<sup>18</sup> In response to the devastation of natural wildlife populations by over-hunting in the region the Canadian Federal government created Elk Island Park in 1907 as a sanctuary for the almost extinct wood buffalo.<sup>19</sup>

Conservation has often been considered an evolving Christian ethic; however, the EYMI does not appear to have shared this outlook, even though the Edmonton YMCA spoke about conservation in later years and took boys on trips to the park. The creation of the park was a direct result of Muscular Christian conservation ethics infused into hunting as a masculine sport.

Apart from hunting, other sporting developments in nineteenth century Edmonton included thoroughbred horse and harness racing, events that are still a draw at Northlands Park to this day.<sup>20</sup> The racing spectacle draw for audiences was not active participation but rather the spectacle associated with the racing grounds. It was not until the twentieth century that horse racing in Edmonton became formalized. It then became a regular attraction at fairs such as the Edmonton Industrial Exhibition.<sup>21</sup> However, this too was a sport reviled by Muscular Christians, as it inevitably led to gambling. As has been indicated, this was something Muscular Christians were attempting to steer young men from.

When city corporations created projects to promote sport for profit, the development of the EYMI was occurring as well and, in a way, was intrinsically linked with sport promotion, as Betke wrote that “John A. McDougall and Rev. H.A. Gray certainly seemed to think they were.”<sup>22</sup> McDougall, a high ranking merchant who also became Edmonton’s mayor, had a close connection to Reverend Gray with whom he founded the EYMI. Their establishment of the EYMI helped in the promotion of organized recreation amongst young men. These men later became the professional sporting class in Edmonton, a group that fostered a zeal for sport through spectatorship.

Businesses were happy to promote such events in order to garner profits from ticket sales. Since the creation of the YMCA in 1841 in London, England, programming had changed and the EYMI was already in step with the new programming being promoted by the YMCA. Participation in Muscular Christian programming was meant to supply men with upright moral influences<sup>23</sup> and, as such, creating a program in which participation and spectatorship were enjoyable could only be beneficial. Ticket sales were a by-product of sporting events and although the EYMI did not actively promote sporting events with ticket sales in mind, its general promotion of sport practices influenced the Edmonton public nonetheless.

### **Beginnings: The Edmonton Young Men's Institute**

Perhaps the best way to understand the Edmonton Young Men's Institute is to review the history of the EYMI written by J. Archer, A. West, and W. Whitelaw, in the YMCA minute book.<sup>24</sup> The first pages of the official Edmonton YMCA minute book presented a 21-page history entitled *The History of Young Men's Movement in Edmonton*.<sup>25</sup> The entire history of the EYMI is contained in six and a half pages of this account. Indeed, Hatcher argues that "The YMCA in Edmonton owes its existence to a number of dedicated community leaders who saw a need to develop boys and young men as leaders in the community."<sup>26</sup> While Hatcher's statement may seem insufficient for explaining why the EYMI was formed, it is also important to note that the co-founder of the EYMI, J.A. McDougall (local businessman and two time Edmonton Mayor) had two sons old enough to be ready for training to take over the family business. This meant that his sons were within the target demography of the EYMI, which may have been the reason for McDougall's generous donations and support to the group. In fact, the history in the minute book account states that in the fall of 1898, the McDougall House, in which the young men's group nicknamed 'the gang' regularly met for bonding and Bible study, became too small

to remain the group's headquarters. Immediately following their removal from the house, a tent was erected on the McDougall lot and given to the boys as the new headquarter site.<sup>27</sup>

From the organization's own account, under the guidance of Rev H. A. Gray,<sup>28</sup> "a group of interested boys led by [Gray]...and the friendship of one interested man [McDougall] led to the active co-operation of [the gang], proved but a short step" in producing a viable and readily sustainable gathering.<sup>29</sup> In other words, despite what these men had achieved in regard to starting the gatherings and maintaining them, there was still much more for them to achieve.

Also revealed in the minute book is that the first members of this group were John C. McDougall (eldest son of J. A. McDougall), James McDougall (middle son of J. A. McDougall), E. Sibbald, D. Sibbald, Graham Walker, and H. Greenwood,<sup>30</sup> this initial gathering of young men became the main body and leaders of the EYMI.

Further investigation of the first members of the newly formed EYMI reveals that in 1898 John C. McDougall was 15 years of age, E. Sibbald was 16, D. Sibbald was 17, Graham Walker was 13, H. Greenwood was 13, and James McDougall was 13.<sup>31</sup> Soon, these young men and their guests outgrew the tent and a proposal was submitted by the members to John A. McDougall to erect a structure in order to accommodate the enlarged group of boys and to continue their expansion by becoming a properly organized club. Mr. McDougall's generosity continued. He erected a building which he provided rent-free to the club. As previously stated, McDougall's two sons were a part of this group which, perhaps, fostered such generosity.<sup>32</sup> The house was a solid frame building of about 20 feet by 30 feet and was divided into two rooms: the larger room was used as a gymnasium while the other served as a games/reading room.<sup>33</sup> With the completion of the building, the EYMI was municipally legalized as an official organization and charter members were enrolled.<sup>34</sup>

The charter members were: O.K. Morris, D.G. Sibbald, J.C. McDougall, W.R. Grant, Cecil Sutherland, J.G.S. Greenwood, E.W. Sibbald, K. Blatchford, Graham Walker, J.H. Johnson and H. Aldridge.<sup>35</sup> These men met in September 1899 at the Rectory of the All Saints Church to elect officers and adopt a constitution which had been prepared by Gray and Aldridge. The charter members were the same young men mentioned above, their respective ages in 1899 were: Morris 17, D.G. Sibbald 18, J.C. McDougall 16, Grant 16, Sutherland 20, Greenwood 16, E. W. Sibbald 17, Blatchford 18, Walker 14, Johnson 16, and Aldridge 28. Perhaps what is most telling about these men was their listed occupations from the 1901 census. O.K. Morris, D. Sibbald, E.W. Sibbald and Cecil Sutherland were clerks; Graham Walker was a merchant; J.C. McDougall was a general merchant, like his father; W.R. Grant was a student; J.G.S. Greenwood was a law clerk; K. Blatchford was an engineer; J.H. Johnson was a bank teller; and H. Aldridge was a general merchant.<sup>36</sup> Clearly the EYMI like the YMCA, reached the goal of gaining young men new to the city of middle-class occupations, who were desirable for future leadership.<sup>37</sup> The majority of these men were born in Scotland, England, and Ireland. Only J.C. McDougall and K. Blatchford were born in Alberta. Of these men, however, only five were listed as lodgers or boarders, meaning they lived outside their family unit.<sup>38</sup> Using masculine activities to save them from a feminizing society, the EYMI was focused upon the masculine development of the individual. In fact, the YMCA was specifically hoping to counteract feminizing institutions and, by extension, it can be assumed that this was the EYMI's goal as well. Feminizing institutions were what Anne Douglas called the *feminization of American culture* and what Putney described as the "nineteenth-century relegation of women to such cultural responsibilities as the teaching of children, the instilment of religion and the determination of artistic merit."<sup>39</sup> With the ideal of male leadership, many of the above listed young men were placed in official positions within the

EYMI, taking up various leadership roles. Many of them remained in those positions for quite some time.<sup>40</sup>

Newspaper reports from the year 1899 in reference to the EYMI show that the information disseminated to the general public through reporters was practically right on cue with what the executive committee seemed to be promoting within the EYMI recorded minutes. An article from the *Edmonton Bulletin* on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1899 reports on the first meeting of the young men's institute at the All-Saints Church rectory.<sup>41</sup> It mentions who was present and that, once everyone signified a willingness to progress, a draft constitution was drafted and passed. The article also mentions the building they would soon occupy courtesy of the generosity of a private individual (John A. McDougall). The report also states that applications to join must list the applicant's age, two endorsing members, and that applications would be received and decided upon by Aldridge and Gray. Also mentioned is the institute's intention to equip the institution with magazines, a library, chess sets, and physical equipment, of which the public was requested to assist in acquiring. The management committee is additionally listed: Rev. H.A. Gray, H. Aldridge, R. Robertson, E. Sibbald, B. Johnson, and C. Sutherland. In context, this article mentions the important passing of the constitution, attendance issues in reference to who could join, and what educational materials and athletic equipment they hoped to acquire.

The *Bulletin* also printed a letter to the editor written by Rev. Gray asking for donations of cash or materials to outfit the building being erected for the institute.<sup>42</sup> A week later, Rev. Gray once again wrote to request the assistance of Edmonton residents in furnishing the EYMI's headquarters.<sup>43</sup> Gray listed the institute's need to procure a stove, a table, chairs, papers, magazines, and a chess set. Also referred to is an Edmonton resident's instructions to contact Gray or Aldridge for any questions regarding the institute's objectives or needs. These two

articles cover the important business of the committee to obtain public support, and state the EYMI's primary objective of training young men. On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1899, an article discussed the upcoming opening of the new building for the club and invited all '*friends*' of the project, in an attempt at attracting a large number of attendees.<sup>44</sup> In a letter to the editor from November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1899, the institute thanked the following for their assistance and gifts: Dr. Harrison, J.L. Johnson, J. Stovel, Mr. McIntosh and Whitelaw, E. Raymer, W.S. Edmiston, J. H. Morris and Company, the Ross Brothers Co, J.T. Blowey, and the *Edmonton Bulletin* advertiser.<sup>45</sup> The article goes on to request more assistance for the institute's income which covered only the necessities of light and fuel, stating that donations would be gratefully accepted. This clearly demonstrates the institute's position of dependence upon the community during its first year of operation.

The first EYMI General Meeting notes from November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1899<sup>46</sup> reported on the first representation of sport programming for the EYMI and the executive committee's stance upon its importance. It was during this meeting that the committee decided to formulate a set of rules to govern the gymnasium space which had recently been built. A proper code of conduct would have supported Muscular Christian values and society's implied acts of sharing, avoidance of profane language, and respect for both the equipment and those around oneself. The minutes illustrate that with the acceptance of six new members to the institute, the membership of the EYMI (including the executive committee members) stood at 33 members.<sup>47</sup> This is significant, when considering that only a year before there were only 11 members and that, if all the 33 members happened to gather together at any given time, the space they occupied in their headquarters (the gymnasium or reading room) would be filled to capacity. In addition to this, 1899's general meeting<sup>48</sup> sheds light on the democratic process of the EYMI as it was then

decided that all voting for committee members would be done by ballot, rather than a show of hands.

At this meeting, three men were elected to serve on the EYMI committee, John Greenwood and R. Grant were appointed as librarians for the institute. Education was evidently an important consideration for the executive committee of the EYMI. The original importance of education in Muscular Christianity and the Social Gospel movement is evident within the early years of the EYMI. By 1899, the YMCA had long since shifted its main objective to a three-fold program in which the purpose was to win men to Christ, to train men physically, mentally (educationally), socially and spiritually, and, lastly, to place them where they could be of real service.<sup>49</sup> In fact, within the EYMI's reports on education, many of the reports make a mention of the debate club, something that was very popular among small YMCAs.<sup>50</sup> Before the adjournment of this meeting the chairman appointed W. Hencher, D.G.Sibbald, and A.M. Brunelle to a committee in charge of formulating the rules under which the gymnasium room would be governed. This appointment further demonstrated the need for Christian-influenced rules and regulations by which the boys could practice their athletic endeavours.

Once the EYMI constitution was adopted in 1899, Rev. Gray was elected President, and H. Aldridge was made Secretary Treasurer. The constitution declared the official name of the group to be the Edmonton Young Men's Institute and dictated that the entrance/membership fee would be 50 cents, with an additional 25 cents per month required for monthly membership privileges.<sup>51</sup> It was required that all applicants post their names in the reading room, upon which their membership would be voted by a committee appointed to the task. It became a requirement that all members be at least 15 years old and codes of conduct were structured to preclude betting, gambling, and profane or indecent language.<sup>52</sup> The constitution further mandated that the

object of the Institute was the “mental, social and physical improvement of its members.”<sup>53</sup> Also, the committee members determined that the doors of the institute would be open to the members every weekday from 6:30 am to 10 pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 10pm. It goes without saying that the institute was not open on Sundays, as no business or membership clubs were open on Sundays, regardless of religious affiliation. Whether this was a Muscular Christian tenet is up for debate, as most societies across North America at the time embraced Christian principles that restricted having businesses open on the Lord’s day. In Canada, the legislation for such remained in place until the 1985.<sup>54</sup>

During this period, books and carpets were donated by interested citizens, and general subscription made the purchase of equipment/apparatus for the gymnasium possible. Available funds were diverted to the reading room and gymnasium rather than any outside social work the Institute may have wished to implement.<sup>55</sup> Funds were so scarce that Rev. Gray and a band of young men, nicknamed “husky supporters,”<sup>56</sup> leveled the remainder of the institute’s lot and built tennis courts and a fence to keep out all but the elected members. During the summer of 1899, lacrosse and cricket was reported to have flourished as well.<sup>57</sup>

In 1900 there was increased coverage of the EYMI in the *Edmonton Bulletin*. However, the articles were much shorter, mostly consisting of notices for planned meetings. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1900 the *Bulletin* reported that a general meeting was to occur that night and a specific request was made for the attendance of all members.<sup>58</sup> The *Bulletin* was not only advertising for the EYMI, it was also ensuring membership attendance by announcing meetings for the general membership.

In 1900, the EYMI minutes reference sports again. One of these mentions was during the General Meeting of March 19<sup>th</sup> in which a motion was moved to buy a punching bag as well as a



cover to replace the already damaged one, which had been lent to the institute by John McDougall Jr.<sup>59</sup> Later, “after some discussion it was arranged that Wednesday night...be set apart for gymnastic lessons from 8 o’clock to 10 o’clock pm to be conducted by Mr. J.C. Griffiths.”<sup>60</sup> Griffiths’ appointment to the position of instructor, included being made an honorary member of the EYMI. It was also decided that a sports committee of five members should be formed which would arrange and carry out a program for the summer.<sup>61</sup> The fourth reference to sport within the EYMI minutes occurred on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1900 at an executive committee meeting in which the punching bag was again mentioned. The secretary inquired about the price of a cover and sent out an order for a complete new bag.<sup>62</sup>

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1900, the *Bulletin* reported that Rev. Gray and six young men all left that morning for a ten-day camping trip at Sandy Lake.<sup>63</sup> By publishing this article, the *Bulletin* supported a common notion which Muscular Christianity adherents embraced, that is, the manly virtues of challenging the great outdoors through excursions, mountain-climbing, camping, and hunting.<sup>64</sup>

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1900, a new secondary sports committee was formed to look after all winter sporting activities.<sup>65</sup> On October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1900, it was decided that one dozen hockey uniforms were to be ordered by the committee.<sup>66</sup> However, three days later it was reported that sufficient funds for uniforms could not be produced nevertheless the committee decided “that colour of the suits for the Institute Hockey team for the coming season [would] be white sweaters to have fastened on the breast a blue shield with the monogram of the institute in red.”<sup>67</sup> It was expected that the athletes would procure their own uniforms according to institute guidelines.

Hockey was as important to the EYMI as it was to the rest of the community in Edmonton, both in participation, and promotion. The 1913 Edmonton hockey league had 30

teams,<sup>68</sup> some of which would undoubtedly have been organized through the EYMI (later YMCA). Indeed, the General Meeting of the EYMI of November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1900 demonstrates how important hockey was to the general body of membership. It was decided that the institute would form a hockey club. The same night, a three-man committee was appointed to look after the interests of the hockey club to the best of their abilities.<sup>69</sup>

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1900, a full page spread in the *Bulletin* entitled “How the East Sees Us” discussed the uninformed eastern conceptions of the west and its peoples.<sup>70</sup> It also presented the EYMI as one of the many beneficial institutions within Edmonton that Easterners did not know about even though they ought to. The article went on to state that Easterners should be impressed by its success and influence within the growing community.

In the following year (1901), the Edmonton *Bulletin* published six articles about the EYMI. This was certainly not a great deal of coverage, but it was enough to get the word out about the organization and its purposes. These were listed as keeping good middle-class young men out of the snare of the Edmonton lower-class pool halls and ‘dens of debauchery’ by giving them a better place to spend their spare time, a home away from home. In February 1901, the *Bulletin* ran an article on the EYMI junior hockey team.<sup>71</sup> The article issued a challenge from the team to any other junior teams in the city to play for ‘the cup.’ The young men of the EYMI were intentionally fostering Muscular Christian ideals of competition as an activity that could make a Christian gentleman. Christian gentleman ideals also expected a man to be well read. On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1901,<sup>72</sup> the EYMI minutes reported that Murray, Hencher, and W.R Grant were appointed to the library committee, showing the importance of the reading room to the EYMI executive committee, as well as its potential to be well stocked and capable of facilitating such an endeavour.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1901, the *Bulletin* reported on the results of the general annual meeting.<sup>73</sup> The secretary treasurer's report on the EYMI showed it to be flourishing with a balance of \$18.78 in the bank after the payment of all incurred expenses. The organization's officers were once again elected,<sup>74</sup> and the newspaper also reported that the membership roll stood at about 30 members and that the reading room was well stocked with papers, magazines, and a considerable selection of books. Also reported on was the well-arranged and well-used gymnasium. Finally, it was surmised that the coming New Year had every prospect of success. The EYMI would have been glad to see these facts presented in the *Bulletin*, as it was these elements that the executives felt would draw more membership as well as advertise to the readers the physical and educative ideals they possessed, making them more likely to either participate in or support the organization. Public support was what the EYMI needed in order to be able to attract impressionable young men to their organization and events, and if parents of young men coincidentally became interested in such reports, their placement or encouragement to have their sons join the EYMI was doubly beneficial. As the November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1900 *Bulletin* article "How the East Sees Us" stated, Edmonton was in possession of a men's institution that was very beneficial to its population.<sup>75</sup>

On October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1901, the EYMI minute book reported that wool mattresses were ordered by the committee for the gymnasium space.<sup>76</sup> Also during October 1901 the Rev. Gray sent out invitation cards to all the young men after the executive committee agreed to form a debate club.<sup>77</sup> It was decided during the executive meeting of November 5<sup>th</sup> that the debate club meetings be set for every Thursday at 8 o'clock.<sup>78</sup> Debate clubs within YMCA programming had the ability to not only coach young men in the art of rhetoric, but they also followed popular

education methods in which young men would learn valuable information through the process of participating in and listening to a debate.

On November 22,<sup>79</sup> December 2,<sup>80</sup> and December 16,<sup>81</sup> 1901, the *Bulletin* again printed news of the EYMI; this time the focus was on the debate club. The November debate was on whether cremation was the proper form to dispose of the dead. The December debate topic was on the merits of the Monarchy as compared to those of Republicanism. It could be presumed from these small reports that, at the very least, the general membership was interested in either attending or keeping up with the results of this educational endeavour. As such, it can also be assumed that education was not just important to the EYMI, but to the Edmonton public as well, since it furthered its place within a developing society which, due to its Victorian nature, would have supported the ideal of educating young men for their future endeavours. This ideal was also something that social reformers supported. A few months later, the general meeting held a vote by show of hands on whether to continue hosting the debate club.<sup>82</sup> It was decided to retain the club, but the time slot was changed to 9 o'clock. With a favorable vote to continue, E. Sibbald and W. Hencher were appointed to be the first debate presenters.

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1902, the EYMI minute book reported that the executive committee decided to purchase a horizontal bar for the gymnasium, and made a request to Mr. McCauley (a prominent Edmonton businessman) about the possibility of using his privately owned tennis courts.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, according to the EYMI minutes book, the directors decided that the institute would be committed to doing everything in its power to promote the game of lacrosse for the 1902 sports season; a committee comprised of D. Sibbald, H. Greenwood, and W.R. Grant was appointed to arrange practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays for each week of the summer.<sup>84</sup> However, no evidence on who attended or how regularly is available, although this

does not indicate that lacrosse proved unpopular. It also does not support the assumption made in the YMCA history report on the institution that it was popular. Instead it demonstrates the desire of the executives to promote a sport that, at one time, was considered Canada's national sport.<sup>85</sup>

The *Edmonton Bulletin* in 1902 printed a total of eight articles referring to the EYMI. The April 14<sup>th</sup> committee meeting minutes reported that the game chosen by the institute to be promoted over all others, supported by the executive committee, was lacrosse.<sup>86</sup> In order to foster the game, it was to be practiced twice weekly, and anyone interested in spectating or in participating was cordially invited.<sup>87</sup> Next, the article reports that, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Vernon Barford, a competition for a cup as a proficiency award for the parallel and horizontal bars and dumbbells was planned for mid-May. The prominence of sport programming in the article over other programming at the EYMI demonstrates that, although other programs were active and promoted, they were reported on less by the newspaper. They were simply not popular enough to garner as much public interest as sports programming.

At the committee meeting on May 8, 1902, it was decided by the committee that an annual gymnastics competition would be inaugurated at the institute on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1902. The May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1902 committee meeting report of the competition results were detailed. Judges of the competition were E.W Sibald, E.L Race, and H. Aldridge. The competition consisted of dumbbell competitions, and exercises on the parallel and high bars. First prize of a silver cup was awarded to D. Sibbald; second prize of a silver match box was awarded to J. G. Walker.<sup>88</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> prize of a gold pencil went to Russell Johnson, and second prize of a silver pencil was awarded to Victor Mann.<sup>89</sup> Awarding of such prizes for a sport performance was by no means unheard of for the time, but the expense of these gifts provided by a local donor does show the growing interest in athletics within the Edmonton region, and, quite possibly, this cultivated interest for

competitive events in men and boys. This was considered a healthy interest by Muscular Christianity.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1902, a *Bulletin* article, reported on the cup competition and cited good attendance and a successful contest.<sup>90</sup> The EYMI organized dozens of young men in competition classes, but due to limited space, only four could participate in the gymnastics competition. As they were in the minute book, the winners were announced in the article, but the article goes further by indicating to the readers that the man who started it all (J. A. McDougall) was there and that he presented the prizes to the winners, encouraging them to further their participation in the institute. The *Bulletin* also praised W. Hencher, the gymnastics instructor, for attracting so many men to the gymnastic classes and for offering free instruction. The press report concluded by telling of the 58 members the institute comprised and commented on the statistical drop of member interest in gymnastics during the summer months in favour of football and lacrosse. As announced, this was due to the long winters of the region and to the members' needs and wants to participate in outside sports as soon as possible. Considering that the young men's interests were specifically in outdoor activities, it is unlikely that the drop in gymnastics signified an increase in interest for Bible study or educational debates.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1902, the minute notes report that the committee thanked Mr. J.B. Mercer for his donation of a tennis net to the boys' newly constructed tennis court. Thanks were also to be sent to a Mr. J.H. Morris for the wire netting installed around the court.<sup>91</sup> At a committee meeting on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1902 the executive committee decided to grant the request of the young men's petition to allow women to attend and participate at Saturday tennis matches from 2:30 to 6:00pm, provided they cleaned up any mess they made, and kept the courts in good condition, The committee also held the right to revoke this privilege at any time for any reason.<sup>92</sup>

This ensured that participants in this event could not object to their dismissal if the committee felt that it subverted their mandates in any way.

Within the historical record as written by Archer, West and Whitelaw, it was mentioned that the reader should take note of the petition requesting the privilege to have “fair ones” (females) share the use of the tennis courts of the Institute.<sup>93</sup> Among the names of the petitioners were those of John J. Mills, A. Bruce Dowley, and Cecil Sutherland.<sup>94</sup> Archer, West and Whitelaw also mention that by 1907 those listed on the petition were prominent in the affairs of the city.<sup>95</sup> This demonstrates that the members of the institute went on to become prominent members of Edmonton’s elite.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1902, the executive committee came to a decision on the athletic programs to be offered and all members wishing to compete were required to submit their names at once.<sup>96</sup> The immediacy of handing in names guaranteed one’s place within their desired program due to limited space. The first debate to commence that season was on October 9<sup>th</sup> and the topic chosen was “free trade will be more beneficial to the middle-man than a protective tariff.”<sup>97</sup> The leaders chosen were Griesbach and Gilbert. Griesbach was a young boy present during the so-called Native scare in Edmonton. This is significant, as it shows that in the span of only a few years Edmonton went from a small settlement in a perceived conflict zone to a small town capable of hosting the EYMI and a debate club. It also demonstrates the lingering feelings some of the members of the EYMI associated with settlement of the young town and its amalgamation with YMCA Victorian values about education that the EYMI had achieved. Education was clearly important to the leaders of the EYMI and apparently it was just as valued by the young men within the organization. As Muscular Christians became more and more

supportive of the YMCA and their programming,<sup>98</sup> the implicit educational goals of the YMCA came to fruition in Edmonton, almost of their own accord.

The October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1902<sup>99</sup> *Bulletin* reported on the preceding night's debate on free trade.<sup>100</sup> The vote determined the opposing side the winners. The report finished by announcing the next week's debate as "the pen has done more toward civilization than the sword."<sup>101</sup> Neither the *Bulletin* nor the minute book reports on the resolution of this debate, questioning whether it even occurred. The *Bulletin* article on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1902 continued on the educational bent of the institute by reporting on the previous night's debate on advocating public ownership as opposed to private ownership of public franchises. The defenders of private ownership received the winning vote.<sup>102</sup> The also slated-to-be debated topic of municipal reform was deferred until the next meeting even though it was initially planned for that same night. Without a doubt, such interesting contested topics demonstrated the general philosophical attitude of the EYMI members, and their belief that although practical issues of governance were important, so were the philosophical topics on which Victorian social life was based.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1902, the institute debate club apparently disputed the merits of by-laws brought forward by members for municipal reform.<sup>103</sup> On the one hand, it was agreed that more stringent measures for the control of safe milk should be taken. On the other hand, agreements were reached on what construction safety measures companies blocking main street walkways should implement to accommodate pedestrians by erecting screens and awnings. The fact that the young men of the EYMI were taking an interest in civic affairs was a victory for the EYMI; this meant that the young men were taking an active role in their citizenship and providing solutions for problems in their community. The EYMI was in fact producing young



men who had the will to better their city, showing their ability to become future leaders concerned for the public and its safety.

Four days later, a *Bulletin* article once again refers to the debate society.<sup>104</sup> A fair attendance was reported and the discussion on the topic of town by-laws (this time focusing on proper sanitary conditions of streets and alleyways) was continued. Further discussion dates were fixed. Not seen before the year 1902 it seems the young members of the EYMI demonstrated an active interest in city affairs. This is evidence of a real community concern, and, quite possibly, real change, if the men decided to appeal their resolutions to the parties concerned.

The year 1903, however, marks the decline and end of the EYMI's influence in the city for both the young members and for the men who created the institution. The EYMI institute was only reported on three times in the newspaper. On, April 30<sup>th</sup>, an article announced that anyone interested in lacrosse could report to the institute that night.<sup>105</sup> The second article, on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, had a similar purpose although this time football was the focus.<sup>106</sup> This leads one to assume that while lacrosse may have been an attractive activity, the institute also saw the benefit of adding other popular sports to their programming, thereby growing their athletics department. The last *Bulletin* report in 1903, reported an upcoming tennis match between the EYMI and the McDougall tennis club.<sup>107</sup> The match was to be held on the institute's courts and all were welcome to watch; high quality games were expected. These few reports suggest that summer programming was soon supplemented with other activities along with lacrosse. The EYMI executives saw the added benefits of promoting more than one sport per recreation season early on. By doing so, they enabled the EYMI to hold the interest of many young men rather than a handful who only gravitated to a particular sport such as lacrosse.

The October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1903 minutes reported that a committee was formed consisting of Bellamy, Aldridge, Hencher, Gilbert, Greenwood, and Sibbald to determine if the reading room should be retained, as it appeared that attendance in the reading room may have dropped significantly.<sup>108</sup> As popular as the debate club was, it would seem that the reading room was running in third place to the more exciting debate and gymnasium activities. Although brief, the one General Annual meeting in which attendance is mentioned is quite insightful: on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1900, 25 members were present.<sup>109</sup> Judging from this evidence, institution achieved some success as it continued operation.

### **Facing Difficulties: The Demise of the Edmonton Young Men's Institute**

It should be noted that the years 1900-1904 were said to have been difficult ones for the institute. Rev Gray's rapidly growing Anglican Parish made it impossible for him to dedicate the necessary attention required to facilitate the growth of the EYMI, and Aldridge found himself managing a business which demanded most of his time. Consequently, the work of the institute fell behind, and the planned social work within the Edmonton community of the early institute was rarely attempted. In 1904, the institute was abandoned.<sup>110</sup> Also of note within the history of the EYMI is that it concluded its operations with a surplus of funds over 125 dollars, 25 of which were donated to the Dominion bank's athletic club, which were eventually donated to the equipment gymnasium fund of the 1907 YMCA.<sup>111</sup>

Having examined the Edmonton Young Men's Institute minutes, general organization, principles and programming, the influence of first stage Muscular Christianity becomes integral to understanding both the leaders' and members' rationale for a men's institute. As previously described, the first stage of Muscular Christianity focused on theology and pious religious sanctity for men through Bible study, prayer, and being a Christian gentleman navigating the

emerging social gospel movement.<sup>112</sup> Remarkably, at the initial establishment of the EYMI, religion was hardly mentioned; for instance, there were almost no overt religious moments other than instances of prayer at executive meetings or general meetings of the entire membership.<sup>113</sup> Evidence of some simple religious practices such as prayer within meetings can be seen up to October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1903, the last formal EYMI meeting.<sup>114</sup> It is apparent that religious intent of the institute's purpose had simply been omitted from the meeting minutes, as it may have been common and not considered necessary for the records. Or it may be that the head members listed within the first pages of the minutes' book (O.K. Morris, D.G. Sibbald, John McDougall Jr., W.R. Grant, Cecil Sutherland, J.G.S. Greenwood, E.W. Sibbald, K. Blatchford, J.G. Walker, J.H. Johnson, and H. Aldridge) were so formal in their business practices that the initial start-up meetings and continuous gatherings until the EYMI's demise were purely business. However, it should be mentioned once again that J.A. McDougall (the founding member) was a devout Presbyterian and, as such, some religious influence in his life would have guided his actions both in and towards the EYMI.

The EYMI minute book added to the history of the EYMI with evidence such as: the type of meeting being held (executive committee, or annual general), the meeting location, who was present, who was elected into membership, what was discussed, who was appointed to specific tasks (committee positions), resignations, etc. By having taken note of what was discussed at each meeting and what was foremost on the minds of the Institute's governing committee, areas in which the EYMI was striving to obtain success were determined. Compared with the newspaper coverage of the events published for the edification of the general public, the story of the EYMI and its eventual demise is telling.

As previously mentioned, the Christian pious gentleman was expected to be many things, the least of which was an honest, self-reliant, and ambitious man living in a sinful world. He was, naturally, expected to refrain from participating in the sin infesting his social sphere.<sup>115</sup> Ideals such as gentlemanliness, respect for biblical authority, good citizenship, becoming a man worthy of respect within society and the home, and demonstrating earnest dedication to the Christian principles of love, honesty, and fidelity, were paramount.<sup>116</sup> And it would appear that the EYMI was somewhat supporting of this cause, although not to the extent intended by Muscular Christian leaders within the YMCA movement.

In fact, it would appear that, in the early phase of the EYMI, sports were undoubtedly on the minds of the leaders, much more so than theological and pious endeavours. Out of the 47 total committee meetings from 1899-1903, sporting events or programming were mentioned a total of 20 times, education a mere seven, important business to attend to and implementation practices ten, and attendance only once. Religion was not discussed once. The *Edmonton Bulletin* was more consistent in its coverage by mentioning information on anything and everything that had to do with the institute. However, sporting was reported 11 times, education ten times, important business practices and implementation 11 times, attendance 15 times and, mirroring the Institute's meetings, religion was only mentioned once and so casually that it appears unintentional. This begs the question about whether the EYMI ever did possess a religious purpose or whether it lost religious purposes very early on. In any case, closing the EYMI and eventually transforming it into the YMCA either renewed the EYMI's religious purpose, or gave it one for the first time.

At the heart of Muscular Christianity was the "ideal of manliness [as] imitation of Christ."<sup>117</sup> A man in the late 1800s needed to be trained through institutions like the YMCA or

the EYMI to be “stirring, manly, true, good, upright” and willing to help younger men and keep them on the straight and narrow.<sup>118</sup> Only the latter was EYMI’s mandate. The EYMI minute book confirms that sports were of the utmost importance to the institute. As Muscular Christians such as Hughes and Kingsley<sup>119</sup> approved of sports for the development of character, so too did the community leaders of the EYMI. However, unlike the first wave of Muscular Christianity, the EYMI did not practice the theological piety that was the initial ideal of the Muscular Christians. As the Rev. H.A. Gray was the elected president of the EYMI, it is impossible to conclude that Christianity played no role within the association. Perhaps by something as small as a prayer before a sports game, or even the simple dissemination of Muscular Christian ethics, was enough to qualify the EYMI as a Muscular Christian objective organization. Such were disseminated through the institute’s busy schedule of sport, educational programming, and business matters of the executive committee.

Athletics were very important to the EYMI as well as to the Edmonton public. While religious endeavours were not of the utmost importance, education had always been supported through the Churches of the social gospel movement which were intrinsically linked to the Muscular Christian movement through organizations such as the YMCA. It was, therefore, of interest to the EYMI committee, its membership, and Edmonton’s public. Of note is the fact that the educational elements supported by early Muscular Christians were indeed brought to the young men of Edmonton through the EYMI, although not with an overt religious-based agenda. It may also be that many men within the organization had a previous religious affiliation. In that case, the EYMI had no reason to hold a religious mandate within its constitution. The goal of getting young Edmonton men off the streets and out of the ‘sinful’ pool and gambling halls was accomplished, albeit on a small scale, through sport just as later Muscular Christianity mandated.

As the EYMI lapsed into non-existence and eventually re-formed as the Edmonton YMCA, the evidence of such claims as well as a spike in the religiosity of the organization became evident, that is, before its loss of religious purpose once again become clear both within the *Edmonton Bulletin* Newspaper and YMCA minute notes.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> J.G. MacGregor, *Edmonton A History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1967), p. 19. This development prevented a North West Company monopoly on the fur trade in the region.

<sup>2</sup> Macgregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Fredrick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Digireads, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> See Lawrence Herzog & Ken Tingley, *Building a Legacy: Edmonton's Architectural History* (Edmonton: The City of Edmonton, 2012); Bob Hesketh, *The Northern Wartime Projects* (Edmonton: UofA Press, 1996); Kathryn Chase Merrett, *A History of the Edmonton City Market: 1900-2000* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001; Paddy Lamb, *A History of Rugby Football in Edmonton* (Edmonton: Unknown Publisher, 1988). (this is definitely a Master's thesis done at the U of A – was it a book as well? Planning Department City of Edmonton, *A Brief History of Edmonton: an exerpt from Edmonton General Plan* (Edmonton: City Planning Department, 1968);

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and, Walter Everard Edmonds, *Edmonton Past and Present; a brief history* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> R. B. Brown, R. B, "Every boy ought to learn to shoot and obey orders: Gun's, Boy's, and the law in English Canada from the late Nineteenth Century to the Great War," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 93:2 (June 2012), 196-226. [http://journals2.scholarsportal.info/details/00083755/v93i0002/196\\_botltsncttgw.xml](http://journals2.scholarsportal.info/details/00083755/v93i0002/196_botltsncttgw.xml).

<sup>6</sup> "The Plains People." Canada's First Peoples. January 1, 2007. Accessed November 1, 2014. [http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp\\_groups/fp\\_plains1.html](http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_plains1.html).

<sup>7</sup> Greg Gillespie, "I Was Well Pleased with Our Sport among the Buffalo': Big-Game Hunters, Travel Writing, and Cultural Imperialism in the British North American West, 1847-72," *Canadian Historical Review* Vol 83: 4 (December 2002): 555-584.

<sup>8</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Susan Curtis, "The Son of Man and God the Father: The Social Gospel and Victorian Masculinity," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 102.

<sup>12</sup> Brock V. Silversides, *Fort de Prairies* (Surrey: Heritage House, 2005), p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> "Game Protection," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 26 (1891): p. 2, Item Ar00203.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Macgregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 107.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 112.

<sup>17</sup> "Coming Our Way," *Edmonton Bulletin*, August 31 (1896): p. 2 Item Ar00204.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> MacGregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 167.

<sup>20</sup> "Racing," *northlandspark*, February 5<sup>th</sup> 2015, <http://northlandspark.ca/racing/>.

<sup>21</sup> Carl Betke, "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," *Urban History Review*, vol 12:2 (October 1 1983): 47-56.

<sup>22</sup> Betke, "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> Betke, "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," p. 50.

<sup>24</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives.PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5.

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- <sup>25</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5.
- <sup>26</sup> Colin K. Hatcher, *YMCA Edmonton: the first one hundred years* (Edmonton: YMCA of Edmonton, 2012), p. 3.
- <sup>27</sup> Hatcher, *YMCA Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, p. 1.
- <sup>28</sup> Kathryn Ivany Allison Stewart, "In their faithful footsteps: Profiles of nine former Bishops of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton 1914-2007." *Archives of the Diocese Edmonton Alberta*, 2008. **H.A. Gray: The Right Reverend Henry Allen Gray, D.D., LL.D.**: Ordination: 1895 Dioceses of Calgary and Saskatchewan; posted as Curate to Holy Trinity Church, South Edmonton. 1896 Priest Incumbent of Holy Trinity Church, South Edmonton 1897-1914 Rector of All Saints' Church, Edmonton, 1907-1914 Archdeacon of Edmonton. 1914 -1931 Bishop of Edmonton Consecrated 25th March, 1914. Other Appointments: 1908 Honorary Captain and Chaplain of the 19th Alberta Dragoons, 1909 Judge of Provincial Juvenile Court at Edmonton, 1921 Honorary Major of the 19th Alberta Dragoons. Also served: Commissioner in Alberta under the Neglected and Dependant Children's Act, District and Provincial Commissioner of Boy Scouts; awarded Silver Wolf medal by the Governor General, Chief Scout in Canada. Member of the Edmonton Public School Board for 3 terms.
- <sup>29</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 2.
- <sup>30</sup> Hatcher, *YMCA Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, p. 3.
- <sup>31</sup> "Search: Census of Canada 1901," Library and Archives Canada. Ottawa: Government of Canada Online, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1901/Pages/1901.aspx>. These ages are approximate as 1901 census information was used to estimate their ages in 1898.
- <sup>32</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 2.
- <sup>33</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," p. 2.
- <sup>34</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," p. 2.
- <sup>35</sup> Hatcher, *YMCA Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, p. 4.
- <sup>36</sup> "Search: Census of Canada 1901," *Library and Archives Canada*. Ottawa: Government of Canada Online. <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1901/Pages/1901.aspx>.
- <sup>37</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 104.
- <sup>38</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5." These men were Morris, Grant, Sutherland, Greenwood, and Aldridge. That said, it is important to keep in mind that this census information is from 1901, meaning that some of these men may not have been in those listed occupations in 1898, thereby making the organization very much focused on the young men.
- <sup>39</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 4.
- <sup>40</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. pp. 1-32. The following men served strait through from inception of E.Y.M.I through till 1911: Aldridge, Butchart, Chown, Race, Turnbull, Gilbert, Clark, Bulyea, J.A. McDougall, Smith, Hull. The following men remained in 1915: Aldridge, Butchart, Chown, Bulyea, J.A. McDougall, smith. The following served till 1920: Turnbull, J.A. McDougall.



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- <sup>41</sup> "Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. September 14, 1900.
- <sup>42</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 12 (1899): p. 1, Item Ar00104.
- <sup>43</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 19 (1899): p. 2, Item Ar00207.
- <sup>44</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 10 (1899): p. 1, Item Ar00105.
- <sup>45</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 20 (1899): p. 1, Item Ar00107.
- <sup>46</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. November 23, 1899.
- <sup>47</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. November 23, 1899. This number also takes into account the two resignations already tendered by this early date.
- <sup>48</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. November 23, 1899. November 23, 1899.
- <sup>49</sup> Walter T. Diack, "Development In Religious Education In The Young Men's Christian Association," *Periodicals Archive Online*, 4:3. (August 1909): pp. 277-280.
- <sup>50</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The YMCA in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951), p.185.
- <sup>51</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 3.
- <sup>52</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 3.
- <sup>53</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 3.
- <sup>54</sup> "Lord's Day Observance," *Sundays University of Toronto*, accessed February 5 2015, <http://individual.utoronto.ca/hayes/Canada/sundays.htm>.
- <sup>55</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. pp.3-4.
- <sup>56</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 4.
- <sup>57</sup> "Locals," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 22<sup>nd</sup> (1899): p. 1, Item Ar00102.
- "Locals," *Edmonton Bulletin*, July 24<sup>th</sup> (1899): p. 1, Item Ar00103.
- "Locals," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 11<sup>th</sup> (1899): p. 5 Item Ar00513. The popularity of Lacrosse however can be debated as the 1899 Edmonton Bulletin newspaper only had seven articles that year pertaining to lacrosse. And only three of the articles were of reference to Edmonton, June 22<sup>nd</sup> which called for a meeting if there were any interested men, July 24<sup>th</sup> in which an Edmonton team challenged Strathcona to a friendly game, and September 11<sup>th</sup> in which Strathcona challenged back. None of the articles make any reference to who was organizing the games, or make any reference to the EYMI.
- <sup>58</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 9 (1900): p. 1, Item Ar00105.
- <sup>59</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1900.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. This committee consisted of D.G. Sibbald, K. Blatchford, E. Webb, Greenwood, and McDougall Jr.

<sup>62</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. March 26, 1900.

<sup>63</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, August 13 (1900): p. 1, Item Ar00105.

<sup>64</sup> Greg Gillespie, "The Imperial Embrace: British Sportsmen and the appropriation of landscape in nineteenth-century Canada," (Thesis PhD, University of Western Ontario, 2001).

<sup>65</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. September 24, 1900.

<sup>66</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. October 9, 1900.

<sup>67</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. October 12, 1900.

<sup>68</sup> Betke, "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," p. 47-56.

<sup>69</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. November 19, 1900. These men were E.W. Sibbald, A.M. McLeod, and W. Inglis.

<sup>70</sup> "As Others See Us," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 30 (1900): p. 4, Item Ar00404.

<sup>71</sup> "Local News," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 4 (1901): p. 6, Item Ar00605.

<sup>72</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. February 11, 1901.

<sup>73</sup> "Y.M.I. Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 20 (1901): p. 3, Item Ar00308. The night before gymnasium classes were reportedly switched to Monday nights and the teaching was done by Mr. Hencher.

<sup>74</sup> "Y.M.I. Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*. p. 3. Rev. Gray was the director, the committee consisted of Walker, Grant, Hencher, Chinnick, Sibbald, Greenwood, Aldridge was secretary, and Grant was assistant secretary.

<sup>75</sup> "As Others See Us," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 30 (1900): p. 4, Item Ar00404.

<sup>76</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. October 11, 1901.

<sup>77</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1901.

<sup>78</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1901.

<sup>79</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 22 (1901): Pg 6, Item Ar00602.

<sup>80</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 2 (1901): Pg 1, Item Ar00105.

<sup>81</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 16 (1901): Pg 1, Item Ar00104.

<sup>82</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1902.

<sup>83</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. March 24, 1902.

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<sup>84</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. April 19, 1902.

<sup>85</sup> "Locals," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 22 (1899): p. 1, Item Ar00103.

<sup>86</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 14 (1902): p. 5, Item Ar00502.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. May 15, 1902.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "Gymnastics at the Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 16 (1902): p. 8, Item Ar00809.

<sup>91</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. June 10, 1902.

<sup>92</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. July 25, 1902. The minutes read: "advisability of granting the petition attached and the following motion was passed...between the hours of 2:30 o'clock and 6:00 o'clock conditionally that the members interested clean up and the committee retain the right to withdraw this privilege if they see fit."

<sup>93</sup> The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. P.4.

<sup>94</sup> Elizabeth Walker, "Johnstone Walker Limited: Edmonton's Own Store." *Transforming Edmonton: Stories about bringing our City Vision to Life*. Accessed January 12<sup>th</sup> 2015. <http://transformingedmonton.ca/johnstone-walker-limited-edmontons-own-store/>. Worked his way up from clerk to president of the Johnstone Walker department store.

<sup>95</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p.4.

<sup>96</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. September 29, 1902.

<sup>97</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. September 29, 1902.

<sup>98</sup> "Ralph Connor on Athletics," *Edmonton Bulletin*. May 21 (1907): p. 9, Item Ar00904.

<sup>99</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 10 (1902): p. 2, Item Ar00205.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 24 (1902): p. 8, Item Ad00814\_4.

<sup>103</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 3 (1902): p. 8, Item Ar00806.

<sup>104</sup> "Young Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 14 (1902): p. 3, Item Ar00306.

<sup>105</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 30 (1903): p. 1, Item Ar00112.

<sup>106</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 2 (1903): p. 1, Item Ar00129.

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<sup>107</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, July 30 (1903): p.1, Item Ar00107. Current day Highlands community. Initially developed as McDougall Heights in North East Edmonton. The neighbourhood is bordered by Ada Boulevard to the south and 118 Avenue to the north between 50 Street and 67 Street. "McDougall, who was twice Edmonton mayor, bought the land in 1898, and in 1910 he hired William J. Magrath and Bidwell A. Holgate as land brokers. They envisioned the neighbourhood as a wealthy suburb for the city's growing middle and upper classes. Like many developers in the early 1900s, Magrath and Holgate sold lots to buyers, who would then build houses at their own expense. To ensure the area would attract the well-to-do, they mapped out large house lots and slapped a \$2,500 minimum on any building permits." <http://highlandscommunity.ca/highlandshistory.html> .

<sup>108</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. October 16, 1903.

<sup>109</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1. September 14, 1900.

<sup>110</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 4.

<sup>111</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5. p. 5.

<sup>112</sup> Susan Curtis, "The Son of Man and God the Father: The Social Gospel and Victorian Masculinity," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (Toronto: A.A. Knopf Canada, 2007).

<sup>113</sup> 'The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes,' Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR1968.210 Box 1, Folder 1,2.

<sup>114</sup> 'The Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes,' Oct 16, 1903.

<sup>115</sup> Curtis, "The Son of Man and God the Father: The Social Gospel and Victorian Masculinity," pp.79-84.

<sup>116</sup> Christopher P. Hosgood, "Negotiating Lower Class Masculinity in Britain: The Leicester Young Men's Christian Association 1870-1914," *Canadian Journal of History*, 37:2. (August 2002): 253-273. 255. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/194342845/fulltextPDF?accountid=15115>

<sup>117</sup> William Van Reyk, "Christian Ideals and Manliness in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *The Historical Journal* 52:04 (Dec 2009): p. 1053.

<sup>118</sup> Christopher P. Hosgood, "Negotiating Lower-Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain: The Leicester Young Men's Christian Association, 1870-1914," *Canadian Journal of History* 37:2. (Aug 2002) pp. 253-273, Quote from Clyde Binfield, *George Williams and the YMCA: A study in Victorian Social Attitudes* (London: Heinemann, 1973) p. 265.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Belford: Clarke, 1885); Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (Rockville :Wildside press, 2007).

### Chapter Three: Transitions: 1903- June 1914

Between 1903 and 1914, the social mood of Edmonton was in flux as citizens clung to traditions of the past as well as moving rapidly into the future. It was a time of immense change. MacGregor's *Edmonton: A History* tells the story of Edmonton's transition from a small fur trade establishment to a modern metropolitan Victorian city.<sup>1</sup> Helpful in determining the political situation through these years is Day's *Edmonton Civic Politics 1891-1914*.<sup>2</sup> Those authors inform us that from 1903 to 1914 was a period of regularly occurring political upheaval and shifting social dynamics of theological idealism for Edmonton. It was these changes that spurred the development of the Edmonton YMCA

After the demise of the Edmonton Young Men's Institute (EYMI) in 1903, major changes occurred in Edmonton both socially and religiously through the Social Gospel movement, and it is in that shifting context that the Edmonton YMCA emerged. Essentially, the Edmonton YMCA was created to replace the EYMI. The Edmonton YMCA also fulfilled other Christian Socialist goals such as rescuing young men from living sinfully within a rapidly-developing Victorian city. The Edmonton YMCA's intrinsic link to the second phase of Muscular Christianity as partner to the Christian Socialist endeavor occurred due to many of the social and cultural changes that Edmonton experienced between 1903 and 1914. This second phase of Muscular Christianity primarily occurred between 1880 and 1918. While early theological principles were still present, Muscular Christians initiated a change within Muscular Christian ideals by accentuating the celebration of masculine sporting prowess as a religious personal character trait; by 1914, this became the subliminal ideal of success for both Muscular Christians and the Edmonton YMCA membership.

Furthermore, in 1903, Edmonton experienced a large population expansion. The number of settlers passing through or settling in Edmonton led to large scale changes in the city itself, such as the remodeling of the Alberta hotel, the building of 19 new hotels and 12 churches, all of which were completed by 1907.<sup>3</sup> The Canadian Census of 1901 placed the combined (east and west) male population in Edmonton at 1,377 and the female population at 1,249.<sup>4</sup> In the following years, basic population expansion followed the primary trend of western settlement with a sharp population increase of young single men who moved to the west for opportunities otherwise unavailable in the already settled Canadian east.

### **Edmonton's Other Young Men's Organizations**

The EYMI and the Edmonton YMCA were both integral parts of society in a burgeoning city experiencing an influx of young men and, with them, newer and younger attitudes. It should be noted that in the transition years (1903-1906), Edmonton was not without an ethical or Muscular Christian support system for young men simply because of the disappearance of the EYMI. While a fledgling Edmonton YMCA was beginning to organize itself through various meetings and fundraising, there were three other institutions (the Mechanic's Literary Institute of Edmonton, the Grace Methodist Young Men's Institute, and the McDougall Methodist Church Men's Institute) in operation in the city of Edmonton, each of which were also geared towards young men and their needs. Those institutions all attempted to save young men from the lure of vice in their spare time. To a certain extent, church organizations succeeded in this attempt, as did the Edmonton YMCA. Between the dissolution of the EYMI and the development of Edmonton's YMCA, Muscular Christianity flourish in Edmonton in many different forms through organizations developed by the established Churches and organizations that were outside Church governance. While Churches tended to focus on theology and biblical studies with a

small emphasis on physical activity for young men, other organizations used sport as their main attraction and followed up with biblical and theological sessions as an aside. The Mechanic's Literary Institute of Edmonton was an example of a non-Church based organization. Mentioned both within the history record preceding the Edmonton YMCA minute book account,<sup>5</sup> and in the work of Colin Hatcher,<sup>6</sup> the Mechanic's Literary Institute of Edmonton used education as a strategy for male social development. Meanwhile, Church organizations such as The Grace Methodist Young Men's Institute and the McDougall Methodist Church Men's Institute were created to promote religious programming amongst young men in Edmonton.

The Mechanic's Literary Institute of Edmonton obtained a charter from the Territorial government seat in Regina in 1903 which launched the semi-government-run program. The object of the organization was the development of a lending library and reading room for employed men in the city. According to the records of the Edmonton YMCA, the organization held a good collection of literature and magazines as well as comfortable furniture in good condition. Indeed, in the *Locals* section of the Edmonton *Bulletin* newspaper on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1903, a notice about the Mechanic's Literary Institute thanked a Mr. L.J. Vellat for his donation of a set of Napoleon Bonaparte memoirs by Bourrienne, as well as a Mr. S. Grogan for a number of books including a complete set of Thackeray's works.<sup>7</sup> Muscular Christians as well as Christian Socialists supported the idea that a Christian gentleman was also a well-educated man. The availability of a lending library was a social service which Christian socialists promoted and supported financially, and, as Muscular Christians of the YMCA tradition had previously supported education as a salvation service within its programming since the late 1850s, they too would have supported such an organization. Preparing young men for advancement in professional careers was paramount for both Christian Socialists and Muscular Christians, and a

way to achieve that goal was through the development of the mind as well as the body.<sup>8</sup> It was unfortunate for both the members and management that the institute was terminated approximately a year after the city took over the responsibility for its management in 1904. The organization's office space was required by the city and the institute had nowhere to relocate. Subsequently, all of the library contents were stored in a warehouse in Market Square until 1907, when they were given to the new Edmonton YMCA.<sup>9</sup>

As previously mentioned, the Young Men's Institute of Grace Methodist Church was also in operation during the interim years of the halted operations of the EYMI and the establishment of the Edmonton YMCA. The group was especially successful in 1905. Its purpose once established was to keep young men away from immoral activities and by no intention became one of the main competitive groups for young men's attention besides the YMCA.. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1905, as the *Bulletin* introduced its readership to the Methodist Church's Institute,<sup>10</sup> the club's headquarters were situated in the school room at Grace Methodist where one could also find a reading room equipped to make the young men feel at home. The Institute of Grace Methodist Church was following in the example of YMCAs across Canada which were designed and furnished to create a comfortable home away from home, where men could avoid the vices of the city.<sup>11</sup>

A December 4<sup>th</sup> *Bulletin* article introduced the Edmonton public to yet another young men's group, this one originating from the McDougall Church, which was also Methodist in denomination.<sup>12</sup> In fact, McDougall Church was the mother Church of Second Methodist which was later renamed by the membership as Grace Methodist.<sup>13</sup> Like its daughter church (Grace Methodist) McDougall Church was also attempting to save young men from city vices. McDougall Methodists appeared to value education highly as an element of its programming.<sup>14</sup>



About a week after the first article, the *Bulletin* formally introduced Edmontonians to the McDougall Methodist Young Men's Institute. According to the *Bulletin*, the object of the institute was to gather the city's young men to discuss various questions of interest to citizens at large.<sup>15</sup> The management prepared a program of subjects for winter months' debate meetings on the following topic, among others: "the pen has contributed more to the progress of the [human] race than the sword."<sup>16</sup> This topic was not a mere coincidence. As the EYMI did not have a chance to address this topic, it was the first to be discussed by the McDougall young men since the crossover between both the leadership and membership of both groups was inevitable. And so, on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1905,<sup>17</sup> the *Bulletin* reported that a full room was present for the debate. Many had something to say and the debate was a spirited one and the carrying vote was for the sword, not the pen. It may be that, although not constantly ensconced in violence, the young men of Edmonton saw absolutely no wrong in picking up the sword for their beliefs. By all appearances, the McDougall Men's group carried a large membership for quite some time. The success of such church groups confirms that Edmonton's Muscular Christian ethics were present and active within the city. Without a doubt, the Protestant Church-operated men's institutes would have supported principles touted by Muscular Christianity: a sound mind and body, Christian gentleman ethics, and striving for a better class of young men for the future.

Through the years, the McDougall Methodist Men's institute continued to be successful in attracting young men to join. In January 1914, the *Bulletin* reported that the organization was thriving. According to the *Bulletin*, the success of the McDougall Methodist Young Men's Institute was the organization's work for young men and women which was along the lines of the YMCA and YWCA.<sup>18</sup> By 1914, McDougall Institute's had a new building proposed in which would be a spacious auditorium with a moving picture machine to show "pictures of an

educational and religious character” each evening.<sup>19</sup> The auditorium was also rented out for concerts deemed “acceptable to [the standards of] the Church,”<sup>20</sup> and many of the hosted events were most likely arranged by the Church itself. It can be assumed that other churches in Edmonton did the same; however, as it would appear that other Churches’ efforts were not as successful. Despite the competition which the Edmonton YMCA and its creators faced from Protestant and Catholic church-based organizations from 1904 to 1920, the YMCA executives nevertheless carried forward their plans for an institution.

### **The Edmonton Young Men’s Christian Association Begins**

Although not extensive, the evidence pertaining to the Edmonton YMCA between 1903 and 1907 reveals a great deal about the organization’s dedication to progress. The leaders of the EYMI became members of the Edmonton YMCA movement and they were highly active in establishing the organization into working order. The first document pertaining to the transition of the EYMI to the Edmonton YMCA was the first official minute book of the YMCA.<sup>21</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1903, a group of men met at the residence of J.A. McDougall. These men were A.F. Ewing, H. Gilbert, W.J. Henry, Dr. A.A. Nicholl, J.H. Riddell, H.R. Smith, P.E. Butchart and T.M. Turnbull. It was the opinion of those present that Edmonton was in need of a YMCA and that it was both desirable and possible to carry forward such a plan.<sup>22</sup> Their next meeting was held on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1904 at Hurston’s Hall. It was a general meeting attended by approximately 125 men, all prepared to discuss the need of a YMCA and plan for the procurement of a building.<sup>23</sup> Rev. Thomas Roger was called upon to address the men.<sup>24</sup> He told of his experiences as secretary of the association in Hamilton, Ontario and the purpose of such an association to develop a man’s “physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual character.”<sup>25</sup> These characteristics represented four of the main ideals supported by second phase Muscular Christians. The men of

Edmonton, stymied by the shutting down of the EYMI, had no intention of abandoning the city's young men to the urban immoral activities; to pursue their mission, they endeavored to create the Edmonton YMCA

The narrative of the Edmonton minute book describes the December 1903 and January 1904 meetings.<sup>26</sup> The detailed information includes the fact that Riddell (the chairman) and Smith (the secretary) were appointed to form a "Provisional Committee"<sup>27</sup> which would be in charge of establishing the organization and finding a building for the organization. Next, Rev. Rogers discussed the economic value of the work the association could accomplish for the city and the immediate need of the association.<sup>28</sup> The Citizen's Committee<sup>29</sup> determined that, for the organization to be a success, the young men of the city should have a say in how the organization policies were adopted, as well as to partake in the subscription for funding.<sup>30</sup> With this in mind, a meeting was called for young men city wide. At this meeting, a committee of young men was founded and a canvas was immediately launched. Pledge cards were designed, the city was divided into sections, and names of residents to visit listed for the expressed purpose of asking for donations. The newspapers were more than willing to give free advertising space to make the canvas a success.<sup>31</sup> The result of the canvas was \$5,526.75.

The first *Bulletin* article detailing the transition of the EYMI to the Edmonton YMCA was published on January 13, 1904: the mass men's meeting in Hurston Hall was reported in addition to the opening of Edmonton's YMCA.<sup>32</sup> The *Bulletin* also reported on the forming of three committees: a canvassing committee, a site selection committee, and a secretary appointment committee. An extensive report on the meeting followed in the next day's newspaper. As evident in the minute book and the above newspaper article, the Edmonton YMCA was focused on fundraising before the implementation of its programming. However, as

well-intentioned it did not prevent the debt the organization incurred in later years, a debt which would spell disaster for certain programming elements.

A January 22<sup>nd</sup> *Bulletin* article reported that members were appointed to each of these committees.<sup>33</sup> In order for the Edmonton YMCA to be established, organizational efforts were first and foremost the matters at hand. After the land committee was appointed and given the power to select and purchase a site, it selected two lots located at the head of Howard Avenue for the low sum of \$6,200.<sup>34</sup> Most of the purchase money was secured through the generosity of T.M. Turnbull and the Canadian Bank of Commerce, with J.A. McDougall, J.B. Riddell, C.E. Race, J.M. Thom and Dr. H.B. R. Smith backing the note. The property secured had two houses and two barns already, and brought in a monthly rent of \$42.00 from the previous residents. Once the executives had secured the land, they planned the Association's development as well as the new programming elements.

The *Bulletin* released three articles pertaining to the newly established Association in October of 1904. The first article reported on a planned mass meeting at Robertson Hall on the coming Sunday in which Mr. W. Parsons, a field secretary and an eminent YMCA man from Minneapolis, was scheduled as the speaker.<sup>35</sup> Two days later, the *Bulletin* reported on the mass meeting.<sup>36</sup> Field secretary Parsons compared the work done at the Brandon Manitoba YMCA to Edmonton's YMCA, and discussed the Brandon association building and the different departments which made up the Brandon YMCA. Shorter addresses were also given by Rev. D.G. McQueen, Mayor Short, and Dr. Smith. They all spoke in favor of establishing an association similar to Brandon's. It was also reported that a committee meeting was held immediately after for the executives and that Parsons further explained the details of the Association's works. Among other things, mass meetings were among the first activities in

which early YMCAs worldwide participated.<sup>37</sup> Mass meetings not only reached a large audience for whatever message was being given, they also reached an audience who could potentially become full time members once the association was in working order. Mass meetings had originated as Bible study, prayer, and singing sessions when the YMCA was purely a religious institution; once education was implemented in its programming, mass meetings also were used as educational events.

The extended press coverage of the YMCA activities in December 1904's *Bulletins* indicated the steady growth of the association. The arrival of George Irving, the YMCA secretary for all Western Canada, and his plans to address a mass meeting for young men in Robertson Hall at 4:30pm on Sunday was announced on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1904. The hosting of this meeting on Sunday was a novelty as Sunday meetings had not yet occurred for any YMCA and, subsequently, did not occur again, unless the meeting was strictly as a worship service or Bible study.<sup>38</sup> The next day's article reported that the Western Canada Committee of YMCAs had recently installed a supervisor for the western Canadian Territories YMCA development, and Irving's (the appointee) success in establishing and aiding YMCA establishment within the region. It even mentioned all the members of the Western Canada National Committee by name and the Edmonton appointee: Principal J.H. Riddell.<sup>39</sup> With men of the Edmonton executive also being members of the Western Canadian Territory committee, Edmonton's soon-to-be established YMCA would not only receive support from other affiliate associations, but also ensure its presence within the larger scale of the Canadian National YMCA. Support from Edmonton was also strong, as the men that were present at that Sunday's meeting donated \$1,300 towards the new building.<sup>40</sup> Mass meetings were necessary for the Edmonton executives

for the purposes of fundraising, as well as effectively reaching their target audience on a large scale.

In his speech, Irving explained that “the [YMCA] association was first formed for the religious side only, later the social features were added, then came the educational features, and later the gymnasium was added.”<sup>41</sup> Such an address educated the public and all men present about the history of the association. It also described the YMCA’s link to Muscular Christianity and its purpose of mentoring young men. While Muscular Christianity as a physical rather than mental endeavour was a recent development of the association, it fit well with the already stated mandates implicit within all YMCAs: bringing men to Christ, developing better educated men and boys, and developing their bodies along with their minds.<sup>42</sup> The *Bulletin* even reported that “those present agreed to raise \$5,000 from the young men of the city to show the businessmen who [were] being canvassed for subscriptions that the young men [wanted] such an institution and [were] willing to help pay for it.”<sup>43</sup> This corresponds to the Association minute book which extolled the young men’s interest and zeal to participate in the project. As of the morning of December 9<sup>th</sup>, \$4,400 of the \$5,000 that the young men had earned in pledges had been collected.<sup>44</sup> Before the YMCA could officially be established, the requirements of sufficient membership, and community support were necessary to gauge and obtain. Established YMCAs had already developed a sport mandate which followed the late Victorian social mandates that men were not Christians “unless they were healthy and manly.”<sup>45</sup> The Edmonton association also had the desire to perpetuate this constructed truth and, as such, developed a sport program that eventually became its only focus.

A December 10<sup>th</sup> article is the last report on 1904’s activities. Over \$5,000 had been collected since the previous meeting and the new goal was raised to \$8,000. The newspaper also

summarized the committee speaker's questions and conflicting answers on whether or not the Edmonton YMCA would allow card playing and smoking. Irving reported he had never seen it allowed, but others thought the rules should be broadened as they saw men who often participated in such vices as smoking as the men they most wanted to bring into the organization.<sup>46</sup> This question, along with questions about the Christian roots of the organization and the extent of membership control, were deferred to a later date. While deferring the issue did not negate the Christian ethic behind the YMCA, it did show the serious matters with which both the public and the executives were concerned, and the need to have a serious rationale in deciding what type of association the Edmonton YMCA wished to become.

In 1905, members of the Citizens Committee decided that the success of the young men's committee warranted the appointment of a permanent secretary to take care of the work in Edmonton. For that, they placed job postings in many prominent eastern newspapers; Edmonton was soon flooded with applicants.<sup>47</sup> However, none of the applicants proved satisfactory to the executives and the matter was delayed. In October, the *Edmonton Bulletin* reported on a return visit by George Irving. A mass meeting was held at McDougall Methodist Church the following Sunday. The regular Sunday meetings involving Irving may have been due to his limited available time as he travelled from city to city but, also perhaps due to his speaking at local churches while travelling.<sup>48</sup> On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905, a long article commented on that meeting.<sup>49</sup> The appointed directors were listed and the article also focused on the young men's meeting at McDougall Church where the canvas committee reported a collection of \$5,250 dollars for the building fund. The article closed with the following two statements: "Mr. Parson's visit to the city and the soul-stirring addresses delivered by him in the Churches on Sunday have aroused a greater interest in YMCA work," and "Mr. Parsons says that he does not know of any city in

Canada that has a greater field for YMCA work than has Edmonton. The majority of men are away from home.”<sup>50</sup> Although this could have been said for practically any western city at the time, there is no denying that men such as Parsons were able to meld the citizens of a community into a united front designed to make the YMCA a reality. The established Churches of the time also supported the masculinity ethics that the YMCA wished to perpetuate. Churches were undergoing a transformation and Protestant churches began to emphasize “the manliness of ministry...as a good idea...likely to attract young men.”<sup>51</sup> Members of the Protestant clergy were actively seeking to link the ministry to manhood, as a proof that manhood was more palatable than femininity. By supporting the YMCA through its Christianizing programming, they were actively promoting a Muscular Christian form of religious men.

### **Formalization of the Edmonton Young Men’s Christian Association**

A transition year for Edmonton YMCA efforts was the year 1906. In fact, 1906 marks the first instance of the Edmonton YMCA Executive Board meetings, which began on January 28<sup>th</sup>. The yearly minutes for the Executive Board for 1906 are brief, but they contain references to executive attention turned towards education, sport, religion, physical building structures, funding, Boy’s Work, and attendance. Unlike the previously mentioned historical report of the Edmonton YMCA, the minute reports are much more detailed and descriptive when dealing with the events that shaped the Edmonton YMCA. Of the twelve executive meetings in 1906, executive issues were referenced nine times. Education was referenced twice, building reports six times, funding issues twice, and Boy’s Work once. Not once was sport or religion discussed. Comparatively, the newspaper coverage of the YMCA consisted of a total of 28 articles with 18 related to executive matters, three to education, four to sport, six to religion, ten to building issues, and seven to funding. It would appear that religion was the main focus for the YMCA in



Edmonton by public initiative rather than executive prompting, as evident prior to 1906.

Coverage of religion paled in comparison to the interest in executive business matters and building and funding issues. Since the Edmonton YMCA was still attempting to become an official organization in 1906, this is understandable.

The Association minute book indicates that the meeting of January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1906 only dealt with purely executive committee matters, including setting up a meeting to be introduce Mr. Chadwick,<sup>52</sup> the new Edmonton YMCA secretary. The executive meeting of January 21<sup>st</sup> dealt with the finance committee meeting with the bank, and asking Mr. Crafts to become the director of the Boy's Works department.<sup>53</sup> The Christianizing and masculinity training of young Boys had become just as important as it was for men; in order to create Christian and masculine men, the Edmonton YMCA, like all YMCAs, saw the necessity of guiding the Christian boy in the right path to ensure he became such a man.

The first *Bulletin* article pertaining to sport was published on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1906 and it introduced wrestling and the Edmonton YMCA's intention to begin its instruction.<sup>54</sup> While the Edmonton executives were concerned with finances, the construction of their headquarters, and the appointment of a secretary, based on observation of popular news reporting the citizens of Edmonton were already more interested in the programming that the YMCA would offer once opened. The second sport report of interest appeared in the Edmonton *Bulletin* on March 3rd 1906. The Edmonton YMCA's hockey team was visiting the new YMCA building in Brandon Manitoba and, upon the team's return home, it was hoped that they would be able to offer valuable advice on the construction of the newly planned YMCA building.<sup>55</sup> This article demonstrates that the YMCA sporting leagues were active even before the official 1907 inauguration of the YMCA building and programming.

The year 1906 was also important in terms of educational programming for the Edmonton YMCA, even though the programming was still in transition. The first *Bulletin* article pertaining to education discussed the YMCA's intention to convert one of the houses on its property into a reading room and offices for members.<sup>56</sup> Once the Association building was complete, there would be a public reading room in the educational department as well as a "reference library and classes of instruction in various branches of work."<sup>57</sup> This demonstrated the soon-to-be-established YMCA's interest and dedication to educating future members, which mirrored the EYMI's similar efforts in educating its young members. In fact, the Muscular Christians had decided that "the end product of Education should not be knowledge, but rather power [and] vigor."<sup>58</sup> The 1880s ushered in a local industrial revolution which, in turn, led to Edmonton's early 1900s professional-managerial revolution, requiring schooling and a conformity to the workplace. The city of Edmonton had jobs available for particular types of men and the YMCA aimed to provide them.

The first mention of religion in the newspapers in 1906 occurred on April 16<sup>th</sup>. The *Edmonton Bulletin* article discussed YMCA programming and Secretary Chadwick gave a brief history lesson to the newspaper reporters describing how the "YMCA had been a strictly religious institution" before its forays into education and sporting activities.<sup>59</sup> As Secretary Chadwick was a member of the Edmonton Executive Committee, it was his duty to report to the citizens about the mission of YMCA programming and how the Edmonton YMCA would fit within the already instituted scheme of rescuing young men from the perils of the big city.

On July 31<sup>st</sup> 1906, the minute book reveals a discussion by the executives, as seen in secretary Chadwick's report on the \$27,706 subscription money collected to date.<sup>60</sup> The only report on religion during the month of August was in the *Edmonton Bulletin* on August 20<sup>th</sup>; an

article reported on the responsibility of the east towards the west and how “the Christianizing influences of Churches and Young Men’s Christian Association [were] at the present time most urgently needed” in western ‘vice’ ridden cities.<sup>61</sup> While this could apply to any western city as well as eastern cities it does substantiate the idea that, within Victorian society, the West of Canada was somehow morally degraded and that it was up to Christian societies such as the YMCA to correct this flaw.

October 8<sup>th</sup>’s minutes reported that since there was no quorum of members present, there was therefore no business conducted that day. However, those present did suggest, for the first time, discussed building a 16 feet by 30 feet reading room and library, indicating for the first time the executive’s concern over education programming. This was yet another mantra of Muscular Christians: a man must be of sound mind.<sup>62</sup> The executives approved the reading room plans and added an extra \$50 to the budget for library materials and expansion work plans in railroad camps.<sup>63</sup>

For the months of November and December, the executive meeting minutes are limited and discuss nothing of relevance other than the previously discussed financial budgets, and concerns over the new building. Meanwhile, the newspaper continued its discussions and promotion of the Edmonton YMCA. On November 12<sup>th</sup> 1906, the Edmonton *Bulletin* featured an interview with Rev. C.H. Huestis discussing the experimental stage of the YMCA in Canada as a purely Christian, salvation-concerned institution.<sup>64</sup> Another similar article on the topic of religion addressed the YMCA’s promotion by most of the Protestant clergy in Edmonton, promotions that were primarily done through discussions with young men and sermons pertaining to the need of the organization.<sup>65</sup> As the title (*Success of Our YMCA*) suggests,<sup>66</sup> the organization itself would not have been so widely received without the support of the local clergy. This is not to say

that Edmonton YMCA would have failed without their support, but it does confirm that promotion by the local clergy and Churches was beneficial to the YMCA during its fledgling years. In this sense, religion promoted the YMCA rather than the YMCA promoting religion.

The last 1906 *Bulletin* report on sport in relation to the YMCA concerned a speech given by Chadwick in which he assured that a qualified and well-trained physical director would be hired within the YMCA, and would “intelligently direct the play spirit of the boy.”<sup>67</sup> It appears that the YMCA officially determined that it was going to gear itself largely towards sporting interests. No promises were delivered on religious or educational programs. At this time, since Muscular Christianity was not simply comprised of the influences of religion, Christian Socialists believed that sports held many qualities that would help develop morality in young men and bring them into adulthood as Christian gentlemen. One way to achieve this was obviously through special programming and director leadership geared towards sporting programs.

In the last press report on the YMCA in 1906, R. Morthett from the Bristol (England) YMCA was scheduled to preach a sermon at the Third Street Baptist Church especially geared towards young men.<sup>68</sup> Once again a local church’s promotion of the YMCA and its leaders played a role in fostering the acceptance of the institution by Edmonton society. Previous studies on the YMCA worldwide indicate that this occurred many times.<sup>69</sup> Guest preachers were always of interest to those who read the religion section of the Edmonton *Bulletin* and so, by announcing Morhett’s sermon topic, the *Bulletin* was promoting the Edmonton YMCA’s mission towards young men, whether purposefully, or not.

For all its focus on religion and support from local religious institutions, the early Edmonton YMCA was not without opposition. Perhaps the most interesting dissenting article in relation to the YMCA came on April 28<sup>th</sup> in the comments section:

Puritanical notions have no place in the west. In a big, broad country like this we want men who are men in every sense of the word... at most YMCA rooms, the members are supposed to take their amusements reverently or not at all. Get away from these ideas Mr. Churchworker and be natural, otherwise you make a laughingstock of yourself among all level headed persons.[sic]<sup>70</sup>

If the YMCA officials and supporters were offended by this comment, there was no subsequent official statement in defense of the YMCA and its purpose in Edmonton.

A second article of opposition appeared on May 12<sup>th</sup> in the column entitled *Here and There*. It criticized the banning of poor language within the YMCA building, urging that “latitude be allowed the young men who frequent the rooms.”<sup>71</sup> Although the author explained that he did not support the use of sulphurous language, as described earlier in his article, he did not believe that the occasional use of poor language, especially in billiards, should be banned entirely or should be grounds for dismissal from the YMCA building. Whether or not his article made any difference on the planned Edmonton YMCA policies is highly unlikely, as the constitution clearly stated in article 6 section 1 under misconduct of members, “if any case of immorality or misconduct in a member of the Association be communicated...to the Board of Directors...[they may] take such action as it may deem expedient.”<sup>72</sup> As profanity was deemed publically inappropriate, it is not a stretch to believe that the executive of the Edmonton YMCA would not have accepted such behaviour. Although the constitution had not been adopted yet, its policies were in the making and it is very likely they were similar to those of other YMCAs across North America and would have looked disapprovingly on profane language.

### **YMCA Edmonton: A Secure Organization**

The Edmonton YMCA minute notes and newspaper articles of 1907 tell of a slightly more settled and popular institution. What the executives wanted to support is evident within the association minute book and how their endeavors were perceived by the general public and the YMCA membership is clear within newspaper evidence of the same time. The Edmonton *Bulletin* for the year 1907 was just as informative as the Edmonton YMCA minute notes. In 1907 there were 56 press articles relating to the Edmonton YMCA. Yet only five of these articles reported on sports-related issues. Even more surprising, there were also five articles addressing religious issues. With a religiously-geared executive committee and programming from the religious works committee, one would have expected more on those topics. Also, only four of the articles reported on educational matters, while 14 focused on executive committee business and 13 pertained specifically to the new YMCA building which was completed on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1908.<sup>73</sup>

The first articles addressing programming of the Edmonton YMCA appeared in the month of January, while the minute's notes were essentially without detail. An Edmonton *Bulletin* article suggested that the Edmonton YMCA needed to do more to promote itself among those not familiar to the downtown area.<sup>74</sup> Physical activities that would be possible in the new YMCA building were also detailed. Facilities included a bowling alley, a billiards room, a gymnasium, a wrestling room, and a plunge bath (swimming pool). While criticism of location and lack of easy access was present, the positive reviews of the association were far more abundant.

The Edmonton *Bulletin* also published information about the Edmonton YMCA's planned educational programming. The article's author addressed male boredom, which he believed had to do with the loss of reading, and proceeded to tell bored males to go to the YMCA

reading rooms.<sup>75</sup> This furthered the promotion of a Muscular Christian sound mind along with a sound body, something the previous article failed to address, as its focus was merely to disguise the institution's inadequate dissemination of information concerning sport promotion, rather than to promote all Muscular Christian values.

The Edmonton YMCA's minute book was less detailed during the month of February. The *Bulletin* was more forthcoming. A commentary entitled *Useful Hints on Training* advised coaches to protect their athletes against "evil companions," even going so far as to say that "the friendship entered into by a would-be-top-notcher should be of the cleanest order. One of the reasons why YMCA athletes are gradually forging to the head is in the power of their clean associates."<sup>76</sup> If joining the YMCA held the potential to make one a top-notch athlete in 1907, then it is easy to see why so many young men with athletic aspirations who read the article may have been interested in joining. At the time, Muscular Christians believed that "battling heroes, [and] muscular combatants" were metaphors applicable to Muscular Christian men.<sup>77</sup> As such, becoming a good clean athlete of the YMCA elevated a man to this position, one which all Christians could admire, and to which men could aspire.

The minute notes became more detailed and, on March 21<sup>st</sup> a plan was put into place for an application to the Canadian Bank of Commerce for a line of credit to the amount of \$50,000 with each member of the board listed as supporting the note. This meant that if the YMCA failed to repay the line of credit, each board member would contribute his own money to pay off the entirety of the loan.

The next *Bulletin* article<sup>78</sup> concerning executive management matters identifies the adoption of the Edmonton YMCA constitution of which Section 2 of Article 1 stated: "this Association adopts as its basis those fundamental principles of Christianity on which all

Protestant Evangelical Churches are agreed and will never admit any discussion of those matters of faith and polity wherein such Churches differ.”<sup>79</sup> It was therefore implied to the members that they would be expected to fall in line with basic main-stream Protestant theological reasoning and governance. The constitution was read aloud by Mr. Ewing at the first annual meeting of the Edmonton YMCA on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1907. Such an overt Christian message would not have gone unnoticed by those both within and outside the organization. When the Edmonton YMCA was created, it had every intention of carrying out a Christian mission. Its focus on sport programming led to the eventual demise of this Christian mission.

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, a board meeting confirmed the election of officers.<sup>80</sup> For the very first time, a report from the religious works committee<sup>81</sup> was presented. The report focused on the plans for the following months. However, the board members were adamant to record that all committees were to focus their efforts in any area of programming (athletic or social) through the lines of religious works. This meeting also brings to light that the building’s construction was stymied until June of that year due to a lack of materials. This, in turn, produced the idea of a special canvas campaign in which the Edmonton Opera House was booked, hymn sheets ordered, and pulpit announcements sent out announcing a mass men’s meeting. A businessmen’s meeting was also scheduled to raise the funds for the necessary building materials. It is important to note that the mass men’s meetings were to start with hymn singing and prayer; such meetings typically had a definitive religious meaning and purpose. In closing, the meeting was adjourned with a prayer by Dr. Riddell.

In another *Bulletin* article on religion and the YMCA, Mr. Southam (International Secretary of the Y.M.C.A), was in town preaching for the benefit of the Edmonton YMCA, at the All Saints Church to a very large crowd on the previous Sunday morning. Anyone of



notoriety in the YMCA field was an attraction to various congregations throughout the city.<sup>82</sup> Another article on religion reported on a previously held mass meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in which men were told to use their faith in the truth to better themselves.<sup>83</sup> The men were instructed that it was “their personal responsibility in the formation and consequence of [their] character...[that] every man should not have an intellectual conception of truth but a living faith in it.”<sup>84</sup> This was a potent life lesson for a public men’s lecture. While such instances of religious messaging illustrate the nature of the YMCA programming, the occurrence does prove the executives’ agenda of promoting a Christian mandate within its instruction for men.

At the second board of directors, a nomination and election of officers for the following year was made.<sup>85</sup> Chown, newly promoted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> vice presidency, reported through the religious committee that work needed to be continued in the YMCA image as an interdenominational men’s organization especially in leadership as other churches not of the mainstream Protestant Church groups were either less interested in YMCA activities, or already hosted their own gatherings for young men. As such, Chown asked to be relieved of his duties as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president as he believed the posting should be filled by a non-Methodist member in order for a more inclusive upper executive group to be formed. As such, Aldridge was re-elected as 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president. Next, the finance committee reported hearing from the bank that the financial market in Edmonton was so unfavourable that year that the YMCA executive committee could only secure a loan for \$25,000. Such constrained finances while building as well as implementing programming such as the hockey team and Bible studies was difficult for the executive committee. It is at this meeting that the importance of the Edmonton YMCA secretary (Dr. Smith) becomes evident. He reported the following: 53 letters of introduction from young men to the YMCA were received that month and ten of those men were placed into

reputable boarding houses through the efforts of the YMCA. At the previous mass men's meeting, there had been a total of 425 men and, at that instance, upwards of 300 letters from businessmen were received by the YMCA about young men arriving in Edmonton requesting temporary housing or looking for reputable housing through the YMCA placement efforts, facilitated by Dr. Smith. The YMCA was an affirmed social service provider for young men; the YMCA would not only serve their spiritual needs, but would also assist with housing and job hunting needs as well, despite the less than ideal economy that year. Such activities define the second wave Muscular Christianity movement and Christian Socialism mission of locating and facilitating good reputable lodging establishments for young men.

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1907, the minutes reported a visit by a Mr. Sayer (Calgary YMCA) who gave valuable instruction on how to organize a special canvas and how to consider an appropriate loan.<sup>86</sup> After Sayer took his leave, the committees opened their meetings in prayer. It was agreed that the Citizens' Committee previously formed would aid the finance committee and Executive Board in the canvas, both in planning and execution. Additionally, the young men's committee, of which J.M. Thomas, Archie West, Jack Archer, Roy Chown, Dell Wilson, E.J. Caisley and Gordon Reid formed the nucleus of its 100 plus membership body, assigned duties for the next canvas. With over 100 male members under the age of twenty in a city of 14,000<sup>87</sup> it is evident that the young men of Edmonton were eager to have the YMCA building completed, and programming permanently in place for their enjoyment and, presumably, their social betterment.

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, renowned Canadian author Ralph Connor promoted the idea that it was the duty of the church to exert its influence in the realm of sport and to prevent the commercial spirit in athletics. He used the YMCA of Canada as an example of such success.<sup>88</sup> Essentially, Connor

was urging for the churches to support athletics through organizations such as the YMCA.<sup>89</sup> The churches were quick to respond by helping to implement both sport programs as well as outdoor programs, believing that “being in the city boys needed fresh air in order to avoid moral deterioration.”<sup>90</sup> Although none of these articles are overt attempts for the YMCA to promote its Christian mission, they give the reader the impression of the YMCA’s religious goals, which were supported by the established Church.

As with previous meetings, the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting opened in prayer. Also occurring at the meeting was the Y.M.C.A approval for a loan for \$35,000 over a ten year term, in which \$3,500 would be paid back annually.<sup>91</sup> Following this, the finance committee reported pledges of \$6,310, while a collection of \$1,520 thus far. The finance committee also reported a profit after expenses of \$2,006.75. The religious committee had exciting news to report as they had successfully worked out details in which they held meetings, and arranged times for future meetings at local factories for prayer and worship activities.

The meeting of the Executive Board on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1907<sup>92</sup> is important for many reasons, least of which being that it too opened in prayer. First, the committee received a letter from the Narragansett Machine Company regarding prices of gymnasium apparatus. Aldridge, Dr. Wittaker, Sid Ash, and Dr. Jamieson were appointed to a committee to recommend which apparatus to purchase as well as which style of gym athletics to support (German or Swedish Gymnastic programs). Second, the secretary’s report was once again an important part of the YMCA’s mission and meeting. Smith stated that 86 letters of introduction of young men to the Edmonton YMCA were received in the past month. Letters of introduction were given to other organizations in the city. Approximately 20 men were aided in that way while 16 men were placed with employment with the YMCA’s help. Most interesting in this meeting is that, through

the religious committee, Chown brought forward a request from young men in the city for the formation of a Bible class. This is important, as it shows the community participation in the religious life of the institution at the public's behest, rather than due to YMCA incentives. The community of young men were looking for religious edification and the YMCA was the place they chose to find it. The religious committee recounted the success of its most recent factory meetings. The committee also planned a meeting with the ministers of the city in which the YMCA reported on its religious works department and what the relationship with the established Churches should be. Edmonton's YMCA, unlike the first YMCAs in cities such as London (England), attempted to be proactive in its relationship with the already established Churches, as opposed to responding to expected allegations of assuming the role of the Church, and not being capable of handling such matters. The move was bold but undoubtedly justified in order to prevent stepping on some toes and bruising relationships in the years to follow. Such had happened before in England to the original YMCA, so Edmonton YMCA executives attempted to avoid another incident of that nature. Finally, the religious committee requested and was granted permission to immediately begin its planned morning Bible classes in the theater. Religion and the religious works department were relevant to both the executive committee and the citizenry of Edmonton at this point in time, while sports appeared on the periphery. This, however, did not remain the case in the subsequent years. The meeting closed in prayer.

A late July meeting proved important for all those involved in the sporting life of the Edmonton YMCA. The gymnasium committee was formed and its first request was for the secretary to order the apparatus for the gymnasium from the Narragansett Company in Rhode Island, a request which was immediately granted by the board. The report held the following list of ordered materials:

1 Jump Stand Cord @ \$2.00  
 1 Hitch and Kick @ \$12.00  
 4 Travelling Rings @ \$24.00  
 1 Flying Rings @ \$25.00  
 1 Parallel Bars @ \$80.00  
 1 Wrist Roll @ \$16.00  
 1 Horizontal Bar @ \$50.00  
 1 Climbing Rope @ \$6.00  
 1 German Horse @ \$120.00  
 1 Swedish Buck @ \$90.00  
 1 set Basketball Goals @ \$4.00  
 1 Moline Striking Bag and Platform @ \$15.00  
 1 Int. Chest Weight @ \$26.00  
 2 #10 Chest Weights @ \$32.00  
 2 #17 Medicine Balls @ \$12.00  
 1 Set Boxing Gloves @ \$6.00  
 1 No. 693 10 ft. Vault Pole @ \$4.00  
 1 No 695 12 ft. Vault Pole @ \$5.00  
 1 Horizontal Ladder 16' @ \$36.00  
 4 Mats 3x5' @ \$36.00  
 4 Mats 5x10' @ \$120.00  
 2 Mats 3x7' @ \$25.20  
 1 Mat 5x20 @ \$60.00  
 1 Horizontal Wand Rack @ \$2.00  
 Total Cost \$848.20<sup>93</sup>

Clearly, the Edmonton YMCA was well on its way to becoming a Muscular Christian association where a sound body was the stepping stone to a sound mind. Such expenses on behalf of the physical department continued for many years to come, as sports progressed in both public importance, and men's and boys' programming increased in organized physical activities. The finance committee scheduled a meeting to decide on obtaining a loan to cover immediate building estimates. The secretary reported receiving 84 letters of introduction and giving letters of introduction to businesses who were seeking employees for 23 men. Ten men had also been placed into work positions, 220 men had been placed into boarding houses, and 1500 pieces of mail received by the office. The religious committee reported that Sunday morning classes where

well underway. They had a membership of 30 and they were hopeful of doubling that number soon. The reading room brought forward a concern about expiring magazine subscriptions the next month and hoped to replace those with newer editions of more Canadian-specific magazines. Letters were sent out on the reading room's behalf requesting prices for the material. The financial and religious concerns did not dampen the enthusiasm for future athletic endeavours of the association.

The board of directors meeting held on September 25<sup>th</sup> was a new milestone for the Edmonton YMCA. It was marked by the acceptance of G.J. Jackson's application for the position of Edmonton's new Physical Director.<sup>94</sup> He was to be interviewed with the executive agreement of a salary of \$1,000 per annum and a furnished dorm room until June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1908. The meeting facilitated the formation of a provisional physical committee to cover things until Jackson arrived. The religious works committee reported that the ministers' meeting was a success, and they were moving forward with winter work plans in collaboration with the local Church clergy. The secretary had received 117 letters of introduction, 26 letters of introduction were sent out, seven men were placed in jobs, 145 men placed in boarding houses, and the average number of men at Sunday morning classes was 12 (all of this for August and September). On November 4<sup>th</sup>, the secretary reported that 116 letters of introduction were received, 25 had been sent out, 12 men were placed into jobs, 175 men had been placed in boarding houses, and average Sunday morning class attendance was still only 12.<sup>95</sup> As hopeful as the religion committee members were, they appeared to have difficulty increasing membership in proportion to the athletic membership. The physical committee received advice from the Toronto YMCA on operating the physical programming. By enlisting outside help, the

Edmonton YMCA executives hoped that, once implemented, their sport programming would be fully functional as well as effective in attracting their target audience.

November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1907's executive meeting opened in prayer and the minutes reported the following: the gymnasium apparatus had arrived and had been placed in storage until it could be installed,<sup>96</sup> a sum of \$40.00 was agreed upon for new magazine subscriptions for the reading room, and the new Physical Director had arrived and had been officially installed in his position.<sup>97</sup> Two days after that meeting, a third article pertaining to sport and the YMCA appeared that year in the *Bulletin* in reference to the city hockey league.<sup>98</sup> With the arrival of Jackson as the new YMCA Physical Director, it is of little surprise that the YMCA became intimately involved with the new city hockey league. Minute notes dated November 13<sup>th</sup> reported the Association debate that representatives should be sent to the YMCA conference in Washington D.C., but the decision was put on hold until the executives felt the Edmonton organization was officially in top shape. On November 16<sup>th</sup> the *Bulletin* printed that the new YMCA building neared completion, and the gymnasium apparatus had already arrived. Clearly the article served to increase the excitement of citizens for membership and the eventual completion of the YMCA's new home.<sup>99</sup>

Evidence for 1907 did not lack opposition to the work of the YMCA. One article in particular pertained to all YMCAs worldwide. The organisation was criticized for accepting money for operations from businessmen who had gained their wealth through 'nefarious' business dealings. The *Bulletin's* reported in 1907 that tainted money would not lose its blemish simply because it was funneled towards the good deeds of Christian associations. This would have left some members of the public in doubt as to whether the Edmonton YMCA was itself without taint or soil.<sup>100</sup> For those who believed that the YMCA was not a good option for either

participation or donation, the Protestant Church organizations revealed themselves to be viable alternatives and were, once again, in direct competition with the Edmonton YMCA

At the present juncture, it is important to note that the Minute book of the Edmonton YMCA for the year 1908 reported the opening and closing of every meeting either in prayer or a devotional study of some kind. The same was true for 1909 and 1910. Also significant is that the 1909 annual general meeting reported the attendance of 30 members,<sup>101</sup> while the 1910 minutes neglected to report on attendance. For 1911's annual meeting, 125 members were reported present,<sup>102</sup> and in 1912, 135 members were present.<sup>103</sup> The general annual meeting in 1913 reported that 1908's membership was at 101 members, while it counted 1463 members in 1913.<sup>104</sup> This shows the great increase of the Edmonton YMCA popularity, and yet this does not provide an explanation as to why the Association encountered a drop in religious principle programming in 1914 directly before the First World War.

### **Edmonton YMCA Jumping forward: 1914 and Changing Ideals**

The changing religious tone is observable in the 1914 Edmonton YMCA Executive Board minute notes. By 1914, weakening religious practices in both programming and the mission of the Board of Directors becomes evident. Newspaper articles pertaining to the Edmonton YMCA from January to June 1914 demonstrate a domination of sport over religious purposes. Out of the 80 articles from January to July, there were 47 pertaining to sports programming, only 17 pertained to education, and a mere eight to religion. The contrast is glaringly obvious. Such evidence shows that the *Bulletin* was more interested in reporting about athletics than religion. In other words, fervor for sports in Edmonton was something that education and religion simply could not match, and the *Bulletin's* reporting was a reflection of the societal general interests.



Taking only into account the minute book entries before the British Declaration of War on Germany on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914, we see major changes in the YMCA priorities: support for sport trumped religion. The executive committee meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914 did not open in prayer or devotion and business was conducted as usual.<sup>105</sup> The reading room contract to provide the next year's reading materials was awarded to the Douglas Company at a cost of \$98.20 (a development of the reading program that most Muscular Christian associations would undoubtedly have approved), and the executives' attempt to fundraise \$100 for the National YMCA budget which had apparently fallen short. At this time, the YMCA was applying for a municipal grant in the amount of \$1,500 to cover the cost of light and water which they had originally been granted free of charge previously. There was public objection to the YMCA receiving such a grant, however, as many considered them not to be a non-profit organization. As a religious institution similar to the Protestant Church, many believed they deserved the tax breaks which those types of institutions were typically granted. A January 10<sup>th</sup> *Bulletin* article discussed a men's mass meeting in which the University of Alberta delegates who attended the Missionary Convention at Kansas City addressed the gathering of young men.<sup>106</sup> The University of Alberta, as an educational institution, had a YMCA branch that held closer to religious purpose than did the main YMCA branch. Also, by encouraging education as symbiotic to athletic endeavor, they prescribed to the Muscular Christian idea that "it was a young man's need to be heroic and change the world that would make him a missionary."<sup>107</sup> As important as such a topic may have been, the rest of the articles for January predominantly applied to sport and health-related events.

A mid-January *Bulletin* article announced the organization of a swimming meet for junior boys at the plunge bath (YMCA pool).<sup>108</sup> Competition was reported to have been fierce. The

results of these contests were also listed in the paper. January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1914's *Bulletin* also reports on a series of lectures to be held at the YMCA. Interestingly, this article also reported on the change in social opinions concerning personal hygiene and society's views on sex.<sup>109</sup> In the early 1900s, many healthcare professionals concerned for the health of the human body criticized the traditional Church for being too prudish and repressive in sexual matters.<sup>110</sup> The YMCA had decided to change this within the organization. As a result, sex was openly discussed and sexual education was provided for men. In the latter case, abstinence was emphasized.<sup>111</sup>

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the *Bulletin* produced an article that introduced the Edmonton citizens to the concept of Gym Bible Classes. Whether these were short Bible lessons before physical activities for both the men's and boy's classes or simply a mass Bible study that took place in the gymnasium, is cause for debate. The evidence is not entirely conclusive. On one hand, the hour-long time slot strongly suggests that Gym Bible Classes were a mass Bible study group. At this type of gathering hymnals such as Tuller and Meredith's *Manly Songs for Christian Men* were used frequently, leading the YMCA of North America to publish its own hymnals. This work was published for the expressed purpose of "use in adult Bible Classes, YMCA Meetings, and all gatherings of men for religious work and worship."<sup>112</sup> Also, Tuller and Meredith's assertions were supported by the Edmonton institution's requirement of a piano for every floor of the building.<sup>113</sup> On the other hand, Ross states that Gym Bible Classes were simply Bible study lessons given before a gymnasium class due to the YMCA shift from evangelism to Bible-based lessons in the 1890s.<sup>114</sup> Regardless, the Gymnasium Bible classes prove the Edmonton YMCA's apparent adherence to its biblically-based religious purpose of bringing men to Jesus Christ the saviour.

According to the Association's minute book, the meeting of January 30<sup>th</sup> was a special Executive Board meeting. The Canada Permanent Mortgage Company was approached by the board to revisit its loan interest to the rate of 8%, as the YMCA had yet to pay off the money borrowed for the construction of the new YMCA building.<sup>115</sup> Also financially-related, a line of credit of \$7,000 was secured from the Northern Brown Bank to pay off the \$3,600 mortgage still owed to the Canada Mortgage Company. These debts were incurred by the YMCA's attempt to consolidate the Edmonton South Side YMCA,<sup>116</sup> which was heavily in debt to the main Edmonton YMCA. The effort to pay down these debts was to be attempted with a fundraising campaign in October. But soon, financial news spelled trouble for the Edmonton YMCA executives.

According to the minute book, the annual general meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914 was attended by 100 men. Excellent reports of the past year's works and accomplishments were delivered to the audience. Visitors from the new Varsity YMCA located at the University of Alberta were also present, as was J.S. Woodsworth of Winnipeg Presbyterian Church, speaking on behalf of the Canadian Welfare league.<sup>117</sup> It would appear that the YMCA was well aware of the plight of inner city immigrant slums and the need for social justice. If such things were discussed with the boys and men of the Edmonton YMCA, Edmonton could look forward to a better social atmosphere in which immigrants became valuable members of society. Creating a society in which strong Christian ethical values such as equality amongst men, and social justice, could only benefit Muscular Christian advocates and Christian Socialists alike.

Another article raised a religious issue, this time by the missionary field for an overseas YMCA, and, more specifically, YMCA mission in Yokohama (Japan).<sup>118</sup> At this time, YMCA mission work in Asia was extremely popular. Men from the Edmonton area (under the auspices

of the University of Alberta YMCA) had earlier left to help establish the Yokohama YMCA and were wholeheartedly supported by the local chapter. The Christian venture and Protestant theology within the YMCA movement was comprised of young men willing to travel to foreign lands to start YMCA chapters and spread the Protestant message. In 1914 boy's and men's work was divided: the YMCA no longer merely focused on a generic group of young men aged between 15 and 18. Instead, the Association was bringing in boys aged 12 and older, and this divided the efforts of the organisation and created much more work for the YMCA management in the process. Administrators struggled to schedule activities for the various groups according to their needs and, as each group wished for the athletic experience, athletics was destined to expand beyond the reach of religious efforts. Each man and boy within the YMCA wanted an athletic experience, but not all desired a religious experience.

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, a lecture about "heroes and heroic events in the life of western Canada" was announced in the *Bulletin*.<sup>119</sup> This particular event illustrates that no matter how modern and cosmopolitan Edmonton society may have become, the facts of the past and the settlement mentality and their relevance for life in that society had yet to be eclipsed from local consciousness.

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, a *Bulletin* sports article was dedicated to the fact that the Edmonton Eskimo Baseball Club's winter training was taking place the YMCA gym so as not to lose its edge before the outdoor season commenced.<sup>120</sup> Soon after, short term course openings for 12 to 18 year olds with the following lessons were introduced though the *Bulletin*:<sup>121</sup> *First Aid to the Injured*, a ten lesson format taught by Dr. Dunn; *Signalling*, a ten lesson format taught by E.H. Shewell, the signalling sergeant of the 19<sup>th</sup> Alberta Dragoons; *Life Saving*, a ten lesson format taught by J. Crockett of the Royal Life Saving Society; and, lastly, *Swimming for Beginners and*

*Advanced Swimming*, taught by members of the Edmonton YMCA Swimming Club. Athletic-related classes were expanding in topics and length, which emphasized the need for clear organization and an increased executive focus on the needs and programming plans of the physical department.

During the March 5<sup>th</sup> executive meeting, the estimated receipts for the next month were presented as follows:

Billiards	\$1,100
Physical Department	\$610.00
Boys Works	\$600.00
Religious Works	\$2,100.00
Education Programs	\$100.00

The anticipated expenditure for programs were:

Salaries	\$7,155.00
Religious Works	\$2,200.00
Education Programs	\$300.00
Physical Programming	\$3,235.00
Boy's Work	\$3,100.00
Social Work	\$1,600.00 <sup>122</sup>

Such reports show that the Edmonton YMCA was at the very least a well-functioning social service provider or, it was well on its way to becoming one. While the YMCA's original goal was to bring men to Jesus Christ the Saviour, by becoming a Muscular Christian organization, steeped in the Social Gospel endeavours, the change into a social service provider was gradual and never challenged. As such, it would have been expected that the YMCA would run at a deficit, and be a non-profit organization like others dependent on the generosity of the citizens of Edmonton. This was too early for such social support developments, when considering that the Canadian government did not develop social services until well into the period of the Great War. The YMCA was in the middle: it was a social organization as well as a religious institution and,

as such, it provided social services under a religious mandate. However, the Edmonton YMCA deficits only became larger following the First World War, since not every Edmonton citizen was willing to donate towards the support of war, creating an even greater financial deficit that required funds to be allotted to programs of social support rather than religion and education

The March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1914 meeting's minutes noted that not only was the Edmonton YMCA operating with a deficit, so too was the national council of Canadian YMCAs. In fact, the council had written to Edmonton with a request for \$750.00 to meet its operational needs. Since the Edmonton institution had its own bills to pay in the amount of \$717.89, the topic was tabled for another time when it was hoped that the money could be found and passed along.

*Health Talks* continued to cover topics like the past March subject on polishing and personal hygiene presented by Dr. Smith as well as April's talk on flaws and sexual diseases. If the young men of Edmonton were going to have sex, the YMCA was going to stop them from catching, and, if necessary, prevent them from transmitting sexual diseases, by teaching them safety practices associated with venereal disease. This is a very enlightened view of sex for 1914, as one may have expected discussions on abstinence rather than preventing the transmission of sexual-transmitted diseases. Even more, although abstinence probably did feature highly in such lectures, the emphasis on sexual relations was still present. This went against the grain of what counterpart churches would have been lecturing on at that time. Perhaps this can be seen as a direct result of masculinity of the YMCA and its arguments against the femininity of the Victorian era churches. The churches said 'do not' and the YMCA said 'be careful.' In hindsight, such lectures were probably lifesaving once many of these young men joined the military to serve in the First World War.

In 1914, A *Bulletin* article reported on an athletic meet that was planned by the YMCA for public school boys. There was a trophy at stake (the Ash Brothers Trophy) for which the athletic requirements ranging from track and field to weight lifting were quite steep.<sup>123</sup> After listing all the requirements,<sup>124</sup> the article wrapped up: “It will be seen by this that a boy does not have to beat another boy but simply come up to a standard in order to win a bar.<sup>125</sup> The school taking the greatest number of bars in proportion to enrollment will be awarded the Ash Brothers Trophy.”<sup>126</sup> This was a very enlightened athletic ideal of competition for the time period and it was telling; the purpose of such endeavours was not to find a winner but to bring all boys up to a winning level, making all competitors more fit and, consequently, making them better young men.

A variety of sporting activities continued to be instilled into the Edmonton YMCA. The *Edmonton Bulletin* on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1914<sup>127</sup> reported, for example, on the introduction of an indoor baseball league. The article introduced the teams by name as well as all players and the schedule. Notably, the article offered an important reminder about the boys in this league: this was the Employed Boys’ baseball league, and as such, their game schedule was much more restricted than any of the other boys’ leagues. This demonstrates that not every family could afford to keep their children in elementary school and middle school and, even with Alberta Government legislation on who attended school and to what level, there was a distinct possibility that many young men were forced to drop out and obtain jobs for one reason or another. Many may have done so to help support a family and, if so, whatever money they could scrape together outside helping their family may have been their entry fee into the Edmonton YMCA. For boys forced to live a life of employment before their adulthood, the YMCA and its athletic programming may

have been a form of escapism where they could forge bonds with like individuals. Such conditions made Edmonton a distinctly blue collar city.

The *Bulletin*, in an article on June 24<sup>th</sup>, introduced a swimming campaign in which all parents were told to send their boys to the YMCA to register for a lesson time and to come prepared with a towel and water wings, if necessary, for free swimming lessons.<sup>128</sup> When operating at a financial deficit, was offering free swimming lessons a wise decision? If this helped gain more members for the Edmonton YMCA in any way, then benefits of such benevolence were obvious. The YMCA had a popular program through which all public school male students could learn how to swim through a quick series of lessons, free of charge. The program taught swimming to school children. The Edmonton YMCA soon attempted to spread the program across the entire city as the YMCA executives were sure school-owned swimming pools were soon to be built. This did not happen in Edmonton until the 1950s at schools such as Eastglen Composite High School; however, it in part explains the strong swimming tradition that is found today within a prairie land-locked city. The article concludes with the attendance numbers of the previous year (over 100); 44 boys achieved a passing swimming grade.

At the July 2<sup>nd</sup> executive meeting, \$100.00 was to be allocated to Mr. Whiteland for expenses for hosting the YMCA curriculum summer school at his property on Lake Couching. With various programming occurring in which the Edmonton YMCA owed money, running at a permanent deficit was a dangerous decision and a risky one to continue. To default on the various loans, would have spelled disaster for the institution and the members who had come to rely on its programming. June 28<sup>th</sup>'s 1914 meeting was specifically called for the Executive Board to review the application of C. Janstellar for the position of Physical Director. The board decided



he was not qualified and instead approached the previous director, offering him \$1,800 in yearly salary for resumption of his previous duties, to which he agreed.<sup>129</sup>

As previously noted, the second phase of the Muscular Christian Movement was a shift for the YMCA; from religious and educational endeavors, the Association turned to the world of sporting prowess as the new Christian character trait to cultivate as a Christian man. From 1903 up to 1914, the YMCA of Edmonton is a prime example of this shift in perspective. While this could be seen as a worldwide movement, the citizenry of Edmonton were on board with this shifting perspective of achievement for men. Edmonton citizens were catered to by their local newspapers, and what Edmontonians wanted to read about was undoubtedly sports news. While the local newspapers published what they found most interesting, it goes without saying that what the public wanted to hear about was important enough to dictate newspaper sales and, as such, certain decisions by editors as to what buyers wanted to read about were necessary. The Edmonton *Bulletin* Newspaper editor chose to report sports above many other events pertaining to YMCA activities. Edmontonians, therefore, appear to have been fully engrossed in athletics both as participants and consumers. Since a transition from religious study to sport-related programming was difficult to avoid, the Edmonton YMCA executives may not have had the power to stop such programming changes, but they did have the ability to foster and further the changes, which they did. However, they would undoubtedly not have wanted to compromise the association's popularity in order to advance a religious agenda. The YMCA of Edmonton was not present from 1906 through 1914 to simply promote the Christian message, but neither to mold the future generation of Christian gentleman through second phase Muscular Christian programming. The Christian gentleman motif required education, as well as athletics, which the men of Edmonton took to with vigor, more so than they did to religious programming.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> J.G. MacGregor, *Edmonton A History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1967).

<sup>2</sup> John P. Day, "Edmonton Civic Politics 1891-1914," *Urban Historical Review* 6:3 (February 1978): p. 42-68.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1300090433/fulltextPDF?accountid=15115>.

<sup>3</sup> MacGregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> *Report on the Fourth Census of Canada 1901* (Ottawa: Ministry of Agriculture, 1902.) Table 1 and 3, p. 5, pp. 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives.PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5.

<sup>6</sup> Colin K. Hatcher, *Y.M.C.A Edmonton: the first one hundred years* (Edmonton: Y.M.C.A of Edmonton, 2012), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*. March 26 (1903): p. 3, Item Ar00104.

<sup>8</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5, p. 7; Hatcher, *Y.M.C.A Edmonton the first one hundred years*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 13 (1905): p. 8, Item Ar00809.

<sup>11</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951), 24.

<sup>12</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 4 (1905): p. 8, Item Ar00803.

<sup>13</sup> "Grace Methodist Church (Edmonton, Alberta)." Archives Society of Alberta, 2015.  
<http://www.albertaonrecord.ca/grace-methodist-church-edmonton-alberta>

<sup>14</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 4 (1905): p. 8, Item Ar00803. In fact, the December 4<sup>th</sup> article explains that the young men of McDougall Church were to listen to an address by ex-Mayor Short as he discussed the complexity of the city charter

<sup>15</sup> "Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 12 (1905): p. 6, Item Ar00603.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> "The Men's Institute," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 21 (1905): p. 8, Item Ar00811.

<sup>18</sup> "Men's Building for McDougall Church," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 17 (1914): p. 1, Item Ar00110.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>21</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3.

<sup>22</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> "Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> "Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, pp. 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> "Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp. 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. The committee consisted of Chairman Mr. T.M. Turnbull, Secretary Dr. H.R. Smith, Mr. A.F. Ewing, Mr. Pardee, H. Aldridge, Prof J.H. Riddell, G.B. McLeod, H.C. Taylor, E. Butchart, E. Entwistle, H.W.B Douglas and Thomas Bellamy.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 13 (1904): p 4, Item Ar00407.

<sup>33</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 22 (1904): p. 1, Item Ar00111.

<sup>34</sup> "Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 22 (1904): p. 4, Item Ar00403.

<sup>36</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Mass Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 24 (1904): p. 5, Item Ar00506.

<sup>37</sup> C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*, (New York: Association Press, 1951), p. 508.

<sup>38</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 2 (1904): p. 8, Item Ar00803.

<sup>39</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Work," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 3 (1904): p. 7, Item Ar00703.

<sup>40</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 5 (1904): p. 8, Item Ar00803.

<sup>41</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 6 (1904): p. 6, Item Ar00603.

<sup>42</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951), p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 6 (1904): p. 6, Item Ar00603.

<sup>44</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Building Fund," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 9 (1904): p. 4, Item Ar00404.

<sup>45</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 11.

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- <sup>46</sup> "Y.M.C.A. For Edmonton," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 10 (1904): p. 7, Item Ar0703.
- <sup>47</sup> "Edmonton Young Men's Institute Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 1, p. 11.
- <sup>48</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 25 (1905): p. 8, Item Ar00802.
- <sup>49</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Organized," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 1 (1905): p. 1, Item Ar00106.
- <sup>50</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Organized," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 1 (1905): p. 1, Item Ar00106.
- <sup>51</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 81.
- <sup>52</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, January 28 1906.
- <sup>53</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, June 21, 1906. The meeting also addressed a change in the new building architectural plans to place the boys' department on the second floor.
- <sup>54</sup> "The Game of Wrestling" *Edmonton Bulletin*. January 4 (1906): p. 7, Item Ar00705.
- <sup>55</sup> "Local," *Saturday News*, March 3 (1906): p. 3, Item Ar00302.
- <sup>56</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Notes," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 12 (1906): p. 8, Item Ar00805.
- <sup>57</sup> "The Y.M.C.A. in Edmonton," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 16 (1906): p.1, Item Ar00106.
- <sup>58</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 39.
- <sup>59</sup> "The Y.M.C.A. in Edmonton," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 16 (1906): p. 1, Item Ar00106.
- <sup>60</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, July 31, 1906; Paula Lupkin, *Manhood Factories: YMCA Architecture and the Making of Modern Urban Culture* (Duluth: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 107. This was an effective concept that many YMCAs employed. Also the board's decision not to accept the architect's building schematics unless the reception area was central in the building and the offices were off to the side so that the various areas on the main floor could be supervised by minimal staff working at the reception desk.
- <sup>61</sup> "A Call For the Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, August 20 (1906): p. 5, Item Ar00507.
- <sup>62</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, October 8, 1906.
- <sup>63</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, October 25, 1906.
- <sup>64</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Work," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 12 (1906): p. 1, Item Ar00124.
- <sup>65</sup> "Success of our Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 24 (1906): p. 7, Item Ar00711.
- <sup>66</sup> "Success of our Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 24 (1906): p. 7, Item Ar00711.
- <sup>67</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Work," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 12 (1906): p. 1, Item Ar00124.
- <sup>68</sup> "Churches Tomorrow," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 15 (1906): p. 3, Item Ar00308.

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<sup>69</sup> Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*, pp. 484, 506, 528; Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 57; Elmer L. Johnson, *The History of Y.M.C.A Physical Education* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1979), p. 408.

<sup>70</sup> "Local comments," *Saturday News*, April 28 (1906): p. 5, Item Ar00503.

<sup>71</sup> "Here and There," *Saturday News*, May 12 (1906): p. 5, Item Ar00503.

<sup>72</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of the Young Mens Christian Association of Edmonton Alberta," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 4, p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> Hatcher, *YMCA Edmonton: the first one hundred years*, p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> "Y.M.C.A. on May Street," *Edmonton Bulletin*. January 21 (1907): p. 2, Item Ar00205.

<sup>75</sup> "Y.M.C.A. on May Street," *Edmonton Bulletin*. January 21 (1907): p. 2, Item Ar00205.

<sup>76</sup> "Useful Hints on Training," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 5 (1907): p. 10, Item Ar01006.

<sup>77</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 47.

<sup>78</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Has a Balance of \$759," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 12 (1907): p. 1, Item Ar00125.

<sup>79</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of the Young Mens Christian Association of Edmonton Alberta," PR 19068.210 Box 1 File 4, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, April 17, 1906. Elected were J.A. McDougall was president, Dr. J.H. Riddell and Mr. Aldridge vice presidents, Mr. H.H. Hull as treasurer, and Dr. Smith as secretary.

<sup>81</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3. Elected were Mr. Chown Chairman, and C.E Race, W.H. Reed, and George McLeod general members.

<sup>82</sup> "Church News," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 22 (1907): p. 4, Item Ar00408.

<sup>83</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Mass Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 22 (1907): p. 4, Item Ar00410.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3. April 24, 1907. Chown took the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president; all other postings stayed the same.

<sup>86</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3. May 16, 1907.

<sup>87</sup> "In the Archives Research" *culture.alberta.ca*, accessed February 27, 2015.  
<http://webdocs.edmonton.ca/infraplan/demographic/edmonton%20population%20historical>.

<sup>88</sup> "Ralph Connor On Athletics," *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 21 (1907): p. 9, Item Ar00904.

<sup>89</sup> "Ralph Connor On Athletics," *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 21 (1907): p. 9, Item Ar00904.

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- <sup>90</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 36.
- <sup>91</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, June 6, 1907.
- <sup>92</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3 July 27, 1907.
- <sup>93</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3 July 25, 1907.
- <sup>94</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3 September 25, 1907.
- <sup>95</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3 November 4, 1907.
- <sup>96</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3 November 5, 1907.
- <sup>97</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3 Nov 11, 1907.
- <sup>98</sup> "Sporting News: City Hockey League," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 7 (1907): p. 9, Item Ar00902.
- <sup>99</sup> "Locals," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 16 (1907): p. 10, Item Ar01002.
- <sup>100</sup> "Bryan Roasts Rockefeller," *Edmonton Bulletin* April 15 (1907): p. 1, Item Ar00123.
- <sup>101</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5, May 20, 1909.
- <sup>102</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, January 31, 1911.
- <sup>103</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, February 8, 1912.
- <sup>104</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, February 7, 1913.
- <sup>105</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 3, January 5, 1914.
- <sup>106</sup> "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, January 10 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00808.
- <sup>107</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, 130.
- <sup>108</sup> "Boys' Swimming Meet," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 12 (1914): p. 9, Item Ar00936.
- <sup>109</sup> "Lectures in the Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, January 12 (1914): p. 9, Item Ar00930.
- <sup>110</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 55.
- <sup>111</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 110.
- <sup>112</sup> Grant Colfax Tullar and I.H. Meredith, *Manly Songs for Christian Men: A collection of Sacred Songs adapted to the needs of Male Singers* (New York: Tullar and Meredith Co, 1910): p. 1.
- <sup>113</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5, July 15 (1906).
- <sup>114</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 89.
- <sup>115</sup> January 30, 1914.

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<sup>116</sup> Edmonton South Side YMCA also known as the Strathcona YMCA was created approximately in 1903. Having their own building of residence they were to facilitate all YMCA needs for Edmonton South (which had not yet amalgamated with Edmonton North to form one city). They were not as popular as their YMCA north counterpart partly due to lower population numbers as well as being located in a building that lacked physical activity space.

<sup>117</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5, February 5, 1914.

<sup>118</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Work Shows Steady Increase," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 6 (1914): p. 9, Item Ar00917.

<sup>119</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Notes," *Edmonton Bulletin 5 O'Clock Edition*, February 18 (1914): p. 10, Item Ar01010.

<sup>120</sup> "Edmonton Men Start Work at Y.M.C.A. Gym," *Edmonton Bulletin 5 O'Clock Edition*, February 18 (1914): p. 9, Item Ar00920.

<sup>121</sup> "Short Term Course," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, March 4 (1914): p. 6, Item Ar00609.

<sup>122</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5, March 5, 1914.

<sup>123</sup> "Athletic Meet at the Y.M.C.A. on Wednesday," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, April 10 (1914): p. 11, Item Ar01107.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. Boys Under 80 Lbs: run 50 yards in under 9.3 seconds, 100 yards in 17.2 seconds, jump 6feet 2inches in standing broad jump, 13 feet in 3 standing broad jumps, and 12feet in the triple jump. Boys 81-95 Lbs: run 50 yards in 8.4 seconds, 100 yards in 16.2 seconds, jump 6 feet 8inches in standing broad jump, 15 feet in three standing broad, 15feet in triple jump. Boys 96-110Lbs: run 50 yards in 8.2 seconds, 100 yards in 15.3 seconds, 220 yards in 36 seconds, and 410 yards in 1minute 30seconds. Jump 7 feet 2 inches in standing broad jump, 3feet ten inches in running high jump, 19feet 4inches in 3 broad jumps, and 18feet 4inches in triple jump. Boys 111-125 Lbs: run 50 yards in 8 seconds, 100 yards in 14.4 seconds, 220 yards in 34 seconds, and 410 yards in 1 minute 24 seconds. Jump 8feet 2inches in 3 broad jumps, 4feet in running high jump, and 22.4 feet in triple jump.

<sup>125</sup> Rectangular bar shaped patch awarded to athletes. Typically listing the athletic event won at and sewn onto lettermen sweaters or jackets left breast, beneath the Letter or patch of organization.

<sup>126</sup> "Athletic Meet at the Y.M.C.A. on Wednesday," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, April 10 (1914): p. 11, Item Ar01107.

<sup>127</sup> "At the Y.M.C.A.: Indoor Baseball League," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, May 6 (1914): p. 9, Item Ar00911.

<sup>128</sup> "Swimming Campaign," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, June 24<sup>th</sup> (1914): p. 3, Item Ar00313.

<sup>129</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 5, June 28, 1914.

#### **Chapter Four: The War Years: July 1914- November 1918**

During the First World War, Edmonton experienced an economic downturn. When the Great War broke out, the majority of Albertans were second or third generation inhabitants who had little, if any, connection to Great Britain or the cause of the war. However, this is not to say that men from Edmonton and the rest of the province did not enlist in the service; quite the contrary, out of Alberta's entire population of men, 25,000 enlisted, 222 of which were students at the University of Alberta.<sup>1</sup> The University of Alberta had an affiliated branch of the greater Edmonton YMCA. In fact, in terms of preserving religious-instituted mandates, the University of Alberta branch did a much better job than its mother institute.<sup>2</sup> Also, the University of Alberta had many sports teams and students who competed within the YMCA leagues. The members were men of athletics, the military, and religion. The Edmonton YMCA of 1914-1918 experienced financial difficulties due to low membership, the direct result of WWI enlistment. As such, the purpose of the YMCA in Edmonton during the war years became the organisation of activities for young boys instead of young men, and military camp work. These changes became a struggle for the Edmonton YMCA as mere survival due to poor finances became increasingly urgent. Since a large amount of the Albertan population was American or of American descent<sup>3</sup>, many did not consider a European war<sup>4</sup> to be their concern until the casualty lists began arriving in Edmonton and until the United States officially declared war. The First World War not only changed society in Edmonton, it also changed the Edmonton YMCA as its attention was redirected to War Work and Boy's Work. This, coupled with the popularity of sport as well as the ineffectiveness of religion in attracting war veterans to the ranks of the



YMCA, religious works and programing fell to the wayside. The Edmonton YMCA thus embarked on its second step in becoming a purely social service association.

Within three weeks of Britain's declaration of war, the 19<sup>th</sup> Alberta Dragoons stationed in Edmonton were deployed to Valcartier camp in Eastern Canada under the command of Major W.A. Griesbach, former member of the EYMI.<sup>5</sup> Two months later, the 19<sup>th</sup> Alberta Dragoons and the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of Alberta formed of men from across Alberta and also stationed in Edmonton, were transported to England for advanced training before being dispatched to the front lines.<sup>6</sup> Almost immediately following transport to England, Griesbach returned to Edmonton as a Lieutenant Colonel and had the sole responsibility to recruit Edmonton area men for the newly formed 49<sup>th</sup> battalion.<sup>7</sup> His association with the YMCA provided him with a pool of enlistees eager to perform their Muscular Christian duty in a war declared *just* by religious leaders. Before World War I began, the soldier hero was the "most durable and powerful form of idealized masculinity within western cultural tradition."<sup>8</sup> There was a feeling of pride, stoicism, and masculinity associated with the war that captured the imagination of Edmonton citizens, most particularly the imagination of young men.

Certain aspects of the war were beneficial to Edmonton: natural resources (mainly coal and wheat) were transported to and through Edmonton, providing railway jobs, if only temporarily. However, Edmonton's war involvement started during an economic depression. In 1912 and 1913, the city had pushed its expansion too far and, when previous land speculation furthered the economic downturn, Edmonton's economy went bust.<sup>9</sup> Edmonton's population declined from 72,516 residents in 1914 to 53,846 residents by 1916. While the numbers were greatly affected by war enlistment, many residents moved because there was little to no economic livelihood to be had in Edmonton. On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Edmonton's city council

approved a motion for the city to continue paying half of the wages of enlisted municipal workers when they were sent overseas.<sup>10</sup> Council paid more if the man's family could no longer afford to pay utilities. They were given those services gratis. The city could not afford such generous subsidies and, due to the land bust, Edmonton civic leaders soon found the city in enormous debt. Property owners with considerable tracts of undeveloped land within the city limits found them to be completely worthless.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, 1915 was devastating for the city: a flood caused over \$750,000 dollars of damage and left 800 families homeless.<sup>12</sup> In the meantime, many of the YMCA's sponsored war endeavours often went ahead without capital or funding in the spirit of a hopeful future and a quick end to war. It did not take long for the Edmonton YMCA to feel the effects of the cost of the war, both in membership and economics. The YMCA of North America had fallen in line with mainstream Protestantism in support of the war and, afterwards, found itself to have been "guilty of shallow naivety and hopelessly unrealistic optimism,"<sup>13</sup> that war would be quick and the loss of life minimal.

The 1916 elections established prohibition in Alberta, a turn of events that was extremely important to the leaders of the YMCA for particular reasons. With prohibition, many brothels sprung up around Edmonton. In particular this was a temptation for young enlisted men based within Edmonton's newly established military camp. Thus, the YMCA provided services to the camps in order to curb illicit behaviour that the military either had trouble policing or with which it was not concerned. The YMCA leadership's intent to supply local garrisoned troops with free access to the YMCA facilities drained the association's budget; the Edmonton YMCA had many to serve and little money to perform such services. This was in addition to the fact that enlistment also meant that the YMCA lost many of its members to war-time service and therefore received far less revenue in membership dues.

Apart from the YMCA's war-specific military activities, Edmonton was still very much a sporting city. A new public hockey arena was opened on Christmas day 1914. The first hockey game to be played in the new arena "started an era in sport... the center of civic interest for half a century."<sup>14</sup> Apart from men's sporting leagues success, it was during this period (1915-1916) that the Edmonton Grads female basketball team began a record winning streak.<sup>15</sup>

Within the YMCA minute book of 1914, from the month of July through December, important sports news was mentioned a mere four times, religion and education twice. Executive matters such as fundraising to increase programming took precedence over all other executive planning. Within the *Edmonton Bulletin* there were 34 sport-related articles from July to December, thirteen in relation to education, and only six pertaining to any religious programming. Remarkably, War Work was mentioned only once, and Boy's Work twice. However, since it was only the beginning of Canadian war involvement, full programming for War Work as well as a focus on Boy's Work was not yet implemented in the Edmonton YMCA programming.

September's meeting of the Board of Directors reported that a letter was received from the city of Edmonton's finance committee regarding a warning of cancelling the electricity and water annual grant provided to the YMCA.<sup>16</sup> The executive committee decided to impress the need for the grant upon the mayor by pointing to the burdens of the organization and the diminution of incoming finance due to the decreased membership numbers since the declaration of war. A letter was also received from the Canadian National Council of YMCAs asking for \$750 dollars to be raised by the Edmonton organization to help meet the national budget. Needless to say, the Edmonton YMCA was in no position to guarantee such a sum. If the organization was able to fundraise \$100 dollars by the end of September, the money would be

sent. To fulfil their financial obligations to the National Council, the Edmonton executives clearly needed to establish programming that would increase revenue. Thus they turned to sports.

It was also in the month of September in which the first sport article from this period was published.<sup>17</sup> Physical director G.R. Jackson had reportedly introduced a daily businessmen's physical class at 12:15 pm. The article reported that "it [would] be possible for the businessman to leave his office at noon, take a short period of exercise...short period of games, a showerbath and a swim, and still have time for his lunch and return to the office by 1:30." This course was also offered at 5:30 pm every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The class was a prime example of how the Edmonton YMCA expanded its sphere of influence into the working world. With a faltering economy and the ever increasing loss of young men to the military, the YMCA was seeking ways to make up for its loss of funding through membership by creating new classes and attempting a new focus on men's athletic programming. With increased membership revenues and non-membership classes, the executives hoped to recoup the money required for other expenses.

During this time, education was still important to the Edmonton YMCA. On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1914, the *Bulletin* reported on a mock city council hosted by the Boy's Work program.<sup>18</sup> An increased interest in boys' programming occurred during the war when the young male population of Edmonton was constantly compared to the depleting older male membership. The Edmonton YMCA executives were aware of this and focused their attention on boys on the home front of war time activities.

Of the four religious articles that shed light on the YMCA activities of 1914, two directly related to the Edmonton Intercollegiate branch of the YMCA. The University YMCA did not hesitate to report that the intent of its mission was to "promote a Christian atmosphere in college

circles.”<sup>19</sup> Since mainline Protestants and Church leaders saw the war as an “opportunity to redeem the world by force,”<sup>20</sup> the image of ‘true’ masculinity became that of a soldier. This image fit the masculine ideal of a strong body hardened by training from Muscular Christian institutions such as the YMCA. The Protestant Church as well as the YMCA later admitted a shallow optimism in regards to the war before its effects were felt. As previously mentioned, the University of Alberta had a high number of students enlisted in the Canadian military forces during the war. If the young men who enlisted were the same young men running the religious YMCA programming, their enlistment was most likely based upon Muscular Christian ideals.

The first Board of Directors meeting in October pertained to both athletic and educational issues.<sup>21</sup> The board reported receiving the monthly allotment cheque for power and water from the city; in turn a cheque for 100 dollars was sent to the national council. After a revision of the budget was announced, the general secretary was tasked with approaching the bank to discuss late payment possibilities of the YMCA’s overdue loan. The Board of Directors also discussed a request from the local YWCA branch to use the swimming pool once a week. However, as the YMCA swimming schedule was completely full, the request could not be granted. Extension of work outside the main YMCA branch to mining centres, lumber camps, and the newly established military camps at the Edmonton exhibition grounds was approved unanimously by the council. It was also decided to re-line the cracked swimming pool at the cost of \$125 and a discussion on the urgent replacement of gymnasium lights was discussed. As the Edmonton YMCA building aged, it required more and more cosmetic fixes, further depleting the accounts of the executive committee; but, as these fixes were necessary to operations, there was little chance they would be ignored. A letter was received from Valcartier camp which was also greatly appreciated. The Edmonton YMCA’s involvement in military camp business was only

beginning, similar to American YMCA counterparts. The YMCA's religious contribution regarding military camps was not discussed with the Edmonton Protestant Churches. Over time, the lack of communication led to divisionary mission work issues between the Edmonton YMCA and the Protestant Churches.<sup>22</sup>

Also during October, the *Bulletin* reported on the Edmonton YMCA's efforts to curb the illicit use of their facilities by requiring every member to carry their membership card with them at all times, especially to be presented when entering the pool and locker room spaces.<sup>23</sup> Considering the association's strained finances, this new approach to keeping the facilities better regulated was hardly surprising. The article also introduced the Edmonton public to the new swimming instructor, Mr. J. Crocket. The public learned that Crocket held several Alberta records in swimming, and that the promise of the recently promoted slogan, "every member able to swim," would now be fulfilled as Crocket would be on hand for instruction during all pool operation hours. The Edmonton YMCA promoted boys' swimming classes, and, as such, their focus grew more youth oriented throughout the war years. For boys of all ages, including those under the age of 12, swimming was just one of the many new activities taught through the organization. Young men's enlistment forced the Edmonton YMCA to refocus its athletic programming on those remaining, meaning boys programs and on businessmen's classes.

The month of October's *Bulletin* also announced the new YMCA lecture course organized by the education committee. Five lecturers were scheduled to speak about the following topics: The War Situation in England, the War situation in France, Belgium, Germany, and India's relation to the War.<sup>24</sup> The war was a pertinent topic for both the YMCA executives, ordinary members, and the Edmonton public. With many young men enlisting in the armed forces, younger men were more significantly affected and, as such, the topic of war

remained a prevalent theme at the YMCA until the end of the conflict. The selected topics were more than relevant current events; they were also a form of educational programming.

In late October, the *Bulletin* reported specifically on the religious and social work done among the colleges under the auspices of the University YMCA.<sup>25</sup> The University YMCA was aiming for an enrollment of 200 men in its Bible study groups. Twenty young men had been trained and were ready to lead them. Many of these leaders targeted young boys' athletic groups and men residing in boarding houses. This shows the diversity in which Bible studies could be dispersed; the Intercollegiate YMCA ventured into arenas where it was unsure of the reception it would receive, as the groups targeted were neither YMCA operated or non-religiously affiliated. It was reported by the board that it had even set about starting a Bible study group within a Hebrew boarding house.

During the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914's executive meeting, a letter from the Imperial Bank informed the committee that the YMCA was granted a loan of up to \$7,000 to continue its present operations, provided it paid 1% (\$15) down on a past due principal loan of \$3,000 from the Canadian Permanent Mortgage Association which was set to expire on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1915.<sup>26</sup> Another letter, this time from the secretary of the Canadian National Council (Mr. Ballentyne), requested a payment of \$20 per month for the YMCA war soldiers' work overseas. This request was granted. With the hiring of Mr. Crockett, Edmonton was beginning to not only build up its physical department, but also hire staff to supervise elements of it, as it was expanding too much to be handled by only one or two individuals. Athletics were popular in Edmonton and their popularity was not dampened by the progression of the war. In fact, since Muscular Christians were supporters of the war effort, offering sporting activities or otherwise for soldiers was

considered by many to be essential; it was also evidence of the ‘good and clean’ elements of masculinity set against the carnage of war in which there was no loss of life.

A committee working on the YMCA constitution the week of November 5th reported that it was necessary to have the directors meet with the staff members for prayer on the subsequent Friday morning. Apparently the committee, or at least some members of the committee, felt that the Board of Directors was forgetting its religious purpose. As the constitution demanded that the order of each board meeting begin with a “devotional exercise,” and conclude in “prayer,”<sup>27</sup> it was apparent that, in not observing this direction, the board had in some manner lost its religious way. The prayer meeting was not only necessary; it was a requirement to return to the conservative dimensions of the YMCA’s religious purpose.

An article entitled *YMCA Notes* published in the November 5<sup>th</sup> morning edition of the *Bulletin* reported that the Edmonton YMCA was one of the largest service providers among foreign-speaking (non-English speaking) men.<sup>28</sup> The association was proud of its immigration work and more than willing to expand upon this service as soon money was available. Also mentioned was that the boys’ gymnasium classes on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays were crowded to capacity, and that the businessmen’s classes were crowded as well. Most notably, there were, in total, 25 different gym classes held each week for men and boys. The Edmonton YMCA had found great success within its physical education programming, and was on the cusp of making it the main focus. The war made the transition less likely and, yet, sports remained the most popular of all the YMCA activities. As a matter of fact, during the month of November, the *Bulletin* also described how Edmonton “[was the] Mecca... of Alberta’s Leading Amateur Sport Magnates.”<sup>29</sup> Both the Amateur Athletic Union and the Alberta Amateur Hockey Association (AAHA) were meeting at the YMCA. However, of more interest perhaps was the Edmonton



YMCA member who was involved in one of these organizations. Mr. Chown, the vice president of the AAHA, was also Edmonton YMCA's Chairman of the Religious Committee. Chown was committed to both religious and athletic importance, demonstrating that the two dimensions did not need to be separate or have to cancel each other. Chown's ability to serve both organizations is proof that both sport and religion could have been equal in value to a few members of the Edmonton YMCA Executive Committee. Such an idea would have melded harmoniously in the mind of a Muscular Christian of the time, for what better outlets for young men existed than good, honest sport?

It became apparent to those living in the YMCA dorms that Bible study was attractive and an increasingly important function when one was away from home.<sup>30</sup> It has been shown that during times of stress and conflict, the Christian community experienced an increase in numbers. The First World War was no exception.<sup>31</sup>

In early December, the Board of Directors signalled a temporary return to religion as their meeting was opened in prayer by Chown, chairman of the religious works committee.<sup>32</sup> It was agreed that a board member was going to consult the constitution's position on whether or not the executives had the power to borrow money for the institution while offering the association's property as security. To date, the only security the bank held on the loan was the personal endorsement of the Executive Committee men. The month of November was also reported to have been a considerable success for subscriptions; however no new numbers were presented within the minutes.<sup>33</sup> While money was a pressing concern, the importance of sport to the executives was not forgotten and was still featured in the meeting's minutes.

Following this meeting, the *YMCA Notes* mid-December press report provides a very special piece of information: the Edmonton YMCA's commitment to the Canadian Standard

Efficiency Test (CSET) program.<sup>34</sup> The CSET program was designed to provide young men physical, intellectual, social, and religious/spiritual training. This commitment is important for two specific reasons. Firstly, the popularity of the CSET within the YMCA led to the adoption of the program within schools by 1918. Secondly, these programs were practiced in Alberta schools well into the 1980s.<sup>35</sup> However, once adopted into school programming in 1918, the CSET was conducted without much of the religious focus stressed by the YMCA. Edmonton YMCA directors were not pleased.<sup>36</sup> Regardless of the conflict between the schools and the YMCA over how to run the CSET program, it was officially adopted in 1914 by the Edmonton YMCA and became the newly formed basis for the remainder of the institution's physical training regimens. The fact that sport and religion were entwined proved that, in 1914, the YMCA maintained the religious focus of its work, regardless of the less than supportive reporting it received in the most prominent Edmonton newspaper of the time. The CSET program was the epitome of the Muscular Christian movement; its endorsement, combined with the fact that members were Christians, made it a potent combination. This was the pinnacle of true Muscular Christianity before its eventual demise: developing a well-rounded young man who excelled at athletics as well as educational and religious moral living.

### **1915: The Greater the War the Greater the shift from Religion to Athletics**

The *Bulletin* also reported that a new French conversation class would be starting for men in the New Year.<sup>37</sup> While educational events like mock parliaments and debates were still popular, the focus upon the current war was unmistakable, and at the very least a response to the justification for the war. However, of the six articles relating to the debate society, the main preoccupation with the war may be observed through the debate topics presented every Tuesday night of the year.<sup>38</sup> According to a report that was given in late October, the debate filled the

room to capacity.<sup>39</sup> Enthusiasm for it was evident, and a junior debate club for beginners was organized.<sup>40</sup> The first debate topic covered was about whether or not “participation of Orientals in a European war [was] likely to be gravely detrimental to the progress of Christian civilization.”<sup>41</sup> The second debate topic was “Resolved that England should adopt a form of compulsory military training,”<sup>42</sup> and the next topic was “Resolved, that the principal of the Monroe Doctrine should be adopted and developed by Canada as part of her permanent foreign policy.”<sup>43</sup> The last reported topic of that year was “Resolved, that an Imperial Federation be formed within the British Empire.”<sup>44</sup> At the end of the year 1914, it is clear the YMCA was still very dedicated to the task of education, as were many early Muscular Christians. The benefits derived from educational tasks were believed to be beneficial beyond anything else that had been provided for young men until then. Benefits for the military recruiters in Edmonton was the constant topic of war and the duty of participation associated to young men through the YMCA debates

However, there are two miscellaneous articles from 1914 in reference to billiards. The first appeared on October 28<sup>th</sup> when the YMCA billiards players hosted a meal featuring speeches. P.E. Butchart of the Executive Board stressed that billiards was indeed a “gentleman’s game.”<sup>45</sup> On November 26<sup>th</sup>, it was reported that the YMCA of Edmonton hosted an English billiards tournament which followed a snooker tournament the previous day.<sup>46</sup> It would appear that the game deemed sinful only a few years previous had overcome such connotations. In fact, it seemed to be a great crowd pleaser, since the association was capable of hosting two tournaments. The YMCA’s mainstream belief that if men were going to play billiards they should be able to play it in the best of environments in order to keep the game wholesome and acceptable was also present in Edmonton. However, Muscular Christians’ position on pool or

billiards is hard to assess. While many may have supported the cleaning up of such activities, it could be assumed that many would have supported physical sports over recreations that could still prove hazardous to a Muscular Christian's male development into a Christian gentleman.

Considering the financial troubles encountered in 1914, the minutes for the year 1915 are full of reports, programming procedures, and attempts by the Executive Board to scrape up as much money as possible to pay off debts, to balance the budget and to turn a profit. By the end of the year neither of these goals were reached and the Edmonton YMCA incurred a debt.<sup>47</sup> Of the fifteen meetings that comprised the Executive Board's concerns for 1915, there is only one mention of anything educational, two mentions of religious matters, and only six sport events listed. Boy's Work was more frequently mentioned (11 times), as was War Work (15 times). During this period, money concerns were not simply about raising funds for activities, but about getting the Edmonton YMCA out of the vast debt that had been incurred over eight years. Of the 126 newspaper reports relating to the Edmonton YMCA in 1915, there were eight of significance in relation to sport, three important articles related to religion, and four to education.

January's executive meeting records show the physical department's special concerns for the implementation of the CSET program's regulations that were to be delivered to the school board, stressing the concerns over the possibility of relegating religious instruction to a less than prominent place in the programming structure.<sup>48</sup> A special executive meeting in January reported two very important matters, first, the undertaking of establishing a YMCA camp at the military barracks, and second, the selection of the one individual to operate it, to be chosen by the secretary and the president. Also organized was a canvas to be held immediately due to the state of the association finances, which were deemed to be very bad.

January 19<sup>th</sup>'s *Bulletin* reported a series of evangelistic services spanning two weeks which were held at the Metropolitan Methodist Church. The subject of these services was "The Boy Problem: An Appeal to Parents and Teachers."<sup>49</sup> The lectures stressed that the school, the Church, and the home had the responsibility to work with boy's agencies such as the Edmonton YMCA. Also discussed was the topic: "The Boy Problem: An Appeal for Leadership." It would appear that for all the good the YMCA was doing within the city it was not doing enough to satisfy the evangelical sectors of Edmonton Society. It may have been such worries that led to calling young men "manly boys," the promotion of boys doing their "bit" for Canada, and the promotion of the soldier hero, and to boy's programming such as Soldiers of the Soil.<sup>50</sup>

Meeting notes from the month of January were brief, but conveyed a very important report.<sup>51</sup> Mr. Tait was appointed the camp secretary of the military barracks program. Increasing concerns over military or War Work programming made it necessary for the executives to appoint a secretary to oversee all of the implemented and planned programming that took place at the Edmonton exhibition grounds temporary barracks.

February's board of executives meeting noted Commander Griesbach's speech to the board. Griesbach addressed the situation of the military camp at the exhibition grounds and the needs of the men stationed there.<sup>52</sup> With the military leaders requesting help, the Executive Board was hardly going to oppose a military leader's request in person. The board also acknowledged that the loan of \$7,000 from the Imperial bank was past due. Apart from money difficulties, the boy's committee recommendation to grant membership to boys at the cost of \$7.00 as opposed to the \$5.00 previous membership fee, by putting the boys on weekly payment schedules of 75 cents a week until the fee was paid in full, was accepted.

The general annual meeting of February 1915 covered detailed reports on business as well as military involvement and even an amendment to the constitution.<sup>53</sup> This meeting was opened in prayer, so it could be assumed that the board was once again taking its religious intentions seriously and demonstrating as much to the membership. Due to the loss of board members to different branches of war service it was recommended and voted upon that the words “or until their successors be elected” would be added to Section One of Article Four referring to the election of directors.<sup>54</sup> This followed a section discussing the resignation of board members. The members were allowed to resign by letter to the secretary at any point in time. It was hoped that this addition would prevent hasty withdrawals from the board. It was carried by the membership without question. The Edmonton YMCA was quickly losing members of the board to the War just as quickly as it was losing the membership of young men. With a diminished executive governing structure, newer replacements would have been admitted, men who may have unwittingly focused on promotion of the YMCA in ways that did not fall in accordance with the stipulation of the Christian mission of the YMCA.

The first sport article of significance in 1915 was a report about the YMCA’s annual meeting which took place in February.<sup>55</sup> The board announced to the general public that 1,620 men and boys were attending the gymnasium classes at the YMCA. In addition to that, 4,500 men and boys were using the physical department privileges each month; this was the largest number to be recorded in the pre-1920 history of the organization. It was also reported that two companies from the 49<sup>th</sup> battalion took physical training at the YMCA and used the baths every day. This article confirmed the popularity of the YMCA physical department in comparison to the other departments, simply for its amenities which did not produce new members every month of the year, although each department within the YMCA undoubtedly experienced cross over.

However, while cross-over was common, it was also obvious that sport was the main attraction for the YMCA membership.

Educational program statistics of the YMCA are also revealing.<sup>56</sup> Nineteen educational classes were held in the previous year with a total regular attendance of 519. Education programming numbers surpassed the numbers for religious programs. Indeed, the YMCA did its best to encourage educational pursuits even if they were simple endeavours, like self-guided reading. For example, the *Bulletin* later covered the YMCA's education committee efforts to collect books for the soldiers stationed at the exhibition grounds and at the military grounds in Sarcce Calgary.<sup>57</sup> The YMCA of Edmonton was making sure to re-emphasize its educational programming while other programs such as military camp work became a larger focus of the organization.

In April, the *Bulletin* reported on the approaching Alberta Wrestling and Boxing Championships.<sup>58</sup> Secretary Chown reported that 42 entrants were going to represent both the YMCA and the Alberta Amateur Athletic Union. The Boxing referee was G.R Jackson (Edmonton YMCA physical director), one of the boxing judges was R.B. Chadwick (also of the Edmonton YMCA board of directors), and the wrestling judge was Kenneth Blatchford (of the Edmonton Y.M.C.A as well). The article reported that even in non-YMCA-sponsored organizations and events, the Edmonton YMCA directors were present and active within the greater community and extremely interested in perpetuating sport amongst men.

In May, the board of executives formed a committee to meet with the chief of police regarding the immoral conditions existing in the barracks of the 49<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> regiments stationed at the Edmonton exhibition grounds.<sup>59</sup> It is not stated exactly how the Edmonton YMCA was going to curb the illicit behaviour; however, it is obvious that the YMCA presence at the camps

was considered a stopgap measure to thwart illegal activities. The finance report showed a deficit of \$365 for the month. The carried over interest due on the South Side YMCA, with whom the North Side (main) Edmonton YMCA had incorporated, stood at \$842 and was to be paid immediately.

The *Bulletin* edition of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915 announced some sad news for the sporting record of the YMCA.<sup>60</sup> An article relates an accident at the YMCA on the morning of Empire Day in which Private Darragh dove into the water at the shallow end of the swimming bath, struck his head on the cement at the bottom, and broke his neck, causing paralysis. He died shortly after being rushed to the general hospital. He was a member of the 51<sup>st</sup> battalion stationed in Edmonton, twenty five years of age, and hailed from Montreal. His sister and father managed to arrive to be with him, and his body was shipped home. While such accidents undoubtedly occurred across North America, such an event probably struck a chord with all members of the association, as well as the parents who had sons within the organization.

In June, the main trouble for the YMCA concerned a loan it had received from the bank, of which \$15,000 was still available in the YMCA accounts. However, some had been slated towards other projects already in progress.<sup>61</sup> The YMCA of Edmonton was deeply in debt and considering all the services it provided to members and non-members (military men) in the region, it is of little wonder. Non-profit status within the Edmonton society services sector had previously granted the YMCA leeway with many of the financial institutions for reasons unknown, or perhaps simple benevolence. However, with a nationwide recession occurring, such generosity did not last, especially when the Edmonton YMCA, along with other small branches, was responsible for keeping the National Association of YMCAs out of debt. This meeting also reported on the executive's battle to cut expenses.<sup>62</sup> The financial report recommended that the



extension work department of the association be immediately terminated, and that the two men employed within should be given a two months leave of absence without pay until new positions could be found for them. The second recommendation was to make the University YMCA branch financially responsible for its own funding. These measures were considered but a decision was carried forward to the next meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup> at which time they were carried once again.<sup>63</sup> Military service work with the 63<sup>rd</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> battalions recently stationed in Edmonton was discussed and arrangements were to be made by a committee comprised of Professor Sheldon, Dr. H.R. Smith, Mr. G.H. MacDonald as well as Turnbull and Chown, as to how to curb derogatory behaviour if possible, and to determine what services the Edmonton YMCA was capable of offering to the men.

September's executive meeting opened in prayer, and reported the permanent employment of Mr. Gerrie for all the military association work.<sup>64</sup> At this meeting it was agreed to continue the relationship already established with the University YMCA branch: the main municipal YMCA branch took care of the University of Alberta YMCA's financial needs. At this point in time, a permanent campsite had been transferred to the YMCA from Mr. Dickson. Blocks 20 and 21, on Oban Beach at Cooking Lake, were to become the permanent location of a boys' camp. Camping had long been a favoured activity for Muscular Christians and sending a young boy to a religiously-based YMCA camp was considered a stepping stone to becoming a Muscular Christian gentleman. Also developed within the Edmonton YMCA at this time was a Militia Service Committee which decided the resolutions on all military work within the YMCA.

Of interest is the fact that it was not only the military men who wished to use the YMCA's athletic facilities: the Edmonton police force also requested the use of the gym, and received specialized physical classes during this period. In fact, Edmonton's YMCA physical

department appeared to be reaching more and more towards community groups in an effort to garner more income. That, however, was not the outcome. This led to the decision that military men would have to start paying fees to use the facilities as paying members were receiving less and less gymnasium and swimming time. It was left in the hands of the Militia Committee to decide the membership fee costs and to report back to the board as soon as possible.

The *Bulletin* next reported that the Y.M.C.A gymnasium was to reopen and classes were to begin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. The gym had been closed for two months for repairs, as had the swimming pool. The YMCA had great hopes for its programming to be more popular than ever before and it was announced all physical classes would begin with military drill.<sup>65</sup> By including military drill into all sport activity classes, the Edmonton YMCA was developing men into ready soldiers, who would most likely step into the ranks of the Canadian military when necessary. Even religious Christian Boy's Brigades had instituted drill as a bolstering tool for a religious spirit and discipline. Discipline taught a boy how to follow orders and following orders was a way to tame the spirit into a religious character.. Drill was by no means a new concept within institutionalized programming for boys. The YMCA had previously replaced drill to make way for more playful interests.<sup>66</sup>

By October, the Edmonton YMCA programming embraced the influx of soldiers and police officers who were looking to use the facilities. The programming had been influenced by the military, as drills were now in order at the start of each sports class. However, due to the financial cost of providing those services, especially the free use by the soldiers at the expense of paying members, the executive committee decided to introduce a membership fee for soldiers and to increase the police fees, as well as accepting a request from the local YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) to pay for periods of swimming pool usage.<sup>67</sup> The fees that

soldiers paid to use the YMCA facilities was \$1.00 for a one month membership, \$2.50 for a three month membership, and \$5.00 for a six month membership. The charges for police use were increased to \$5.00 per year on the condition that fifty members of the force would take advantage of this privilege. The membership report at this meeting concluded in a tone of hope. Thirty-one new members had joined and a gain of over \$100 was collected in fees. The financial report for the month showed a much reduced deficit of only \$37.48, which was to be paid by the proceeds of a large community concert.

The *Bulletin* in early October introduced a new kind of scheme carried out by the Edmonton YMCA. In an effort to increase enrollment, the association hosted an Automotive Endurance Race<sup>68</sup> in which nine teams entered. It should be noted that the YMCA did not state that this was a plan to increase the membership roll in any way. The press report took it upon itself to declare in a subtitle that this was a “Novel Plan For Increasing Membership Roll at This Popular Institution.”<sup>69</sup> Without a doubt, the event would have attracted the attention of auto enthusiasts and earn new members. In a way, the Edmonton YMCA was coming to the conclusion that recreation activities that were not specifically athletic could be an attraction for membership. As such, the YMCA was branching out in search of activities that went beyond what it normally offered. This required more funding and personnel, two things that were not easy to come by for the association.

In mid-October, an article reported that the YMCA Debate Club was listed in a YMCA advertisement as the 4<sup>th</sup> good reason out of 6 to join the YMCA.<sup>70</sup> According to the article, the first good reason to join was access to the only swimming pool in the city and the availability of an expert swimming coach; the second was the well-equipped and well lit gymnasium; and the third was the games room. As attractive as education may have been in Edmonton, it paled in

comparison to the available physical activities at the YMCA. Listed as the last reason to join was the altruistic service on behalf of men and boys.

It was not until late October of 1915 that an article of religious significance was published.<sup>71</sup> Among the coming events for the city, a business and professional men's weekly service of prayer was being held by the YMCA once a week for a half hour at noon.<sup>72</sup>

Considering that, according to their minute reports, the YMCA executives were attempting to address their own prayer habits, they were apparently also interested in helping the businessmen and professional men of Edmonton do so as well. However, regardless of how many hosted prayer sessions the YMCA may have held, they would in no way garner the same amount of interest as the sport classes.

Case in point, November's board meeting had to address a number of issues related to the physical department. Apart from the executives beginning a canvas for \$2,500, the physical department came forward with four recommendations for the board to consider.<sup>73</sup> First, an offer was to be made to the 51<sup>st</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup>, and 66<sup>th</sup> battalions to teach every man in the regiments to swim, under the following conditions: each regiment would select fifty men at a time to come to the YMCA once a week until they passed a test. This event was to be hosted every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoon. This proposition was immediately voted upon and approved. This was made possible as the YMCA property was accepted as collateral on its previous loan, the money for this programming would be taken from the loan. Third, a swimming period for young girls was suggested at a fee of \$1.00 for three months of instruction; this is of great interest as, apart from allowing the YWCA swimming privileges, this is the first instance that the Edmonton YMCA offered programming for females. However, with limited resources and a crippling deficit, this is hardly surprising. The fourth recommendation was to

organize a swimming schedule for boys under 12 for a fee of \$2.00 for six months. Lastly, it was suggested that the large lockers be granted to members for \$4.00 a year, or \$2.00 for six months. The smaller lockers did not allow for proper drying of towels and the YMCA lacked any laundry facilities. All of these recommendations were adopted immediately. The board arranged for the military committee to secure a suitable building on the exhibition grounds as their permanent base of camp operations, in which to host off-duty soldiers. The Edmonton YMCA was dedicated to helping the men that were going to war and, as the YMCA was interested in promoting its sport programs, the two initiatives meshed together in a way that made it possible for both war time benevolence to be practiced and sport to be popularized throughout the city.

In mid-December, Willas W. Chown, Chairman of the Religion Committee of the Edmonton Y.M.C.A and president of the Alberta Amateur Hockey Association, hosted a meeting at the YMCA to form a junior hockey group in which he hoped to enroll at least six teams in the league.<sup>74</sup> As observed before, members of the Executive Board of the Edmonton YMCA were not involved with the Christian association only; they were involved in sport endeavours throughout the city and across the province. In late December *News of Y.M.C.A.*<sup>75</sup> a regularly occurring column reported 58 physical classes held the previous month with a total attendance of 150 men and boys. In addition, 132 people (excluding soldiers) were reported to have used the facilities. A total of 3,020 boys in (military) khaki were said to have used the facilities over the previous month. The physical department was wildly popular and, once again, all of the other areas of YMCA endeavours paled in comparison. Of course, men were heeding the call to war and a physically healthy body was considered an asset, so it is of little wonder that they used the physical department of the YMCA to their utmost advantage.

Of note, however, is the fact that the YMCA report for 1915 declared that religion had been “maintained.”<sup>76</sup> And, yet, no numbers were produced for the various events listed within the religious works department, unlike others. Religion at the YMCA was not as popular as physical activities and while the claim that maintaining religion may be true, one has to wonder why no statistical data was reported. The numbers may have pointed out the impracticality of keeping such religious programs and especially whether or not the programs were worth the money. Maintaining religion may have a completely different connotation than hosting religious programming.

As previously mentioned, the Edmonton YMCA was solely responsible for setting up a tent on the exhibition grounds to host off-duty soldiers. One hundred and thirty-two books were available for the soldiers and well over 1000 sheets of YMCA correspondence letterhead paper were distributed among the soldiers. Education was a serious endeavour for the Edmonton YMCA and the Edmonton newspaper was supportive. In 1915, more military articles and sporting articles rather than education and religion were published; it was easier for the public to lose sight of the original religious purpose behind the institution that was well on its way to becoming a social service provider rather than spiritual guide or a Muscular Christian institution.

### **1916: Deepening War, Deepening Debt**

In 1916, there was even more evidence of the Edmonton YMCA’s dire distress due to poor finances and a running deficit. Within the association minute book, sport was discussed four times, religion six times, and education twice, with War Work a mere five times and Boy’s Work fifteen. Apart from the constant money issues, improvements in committees occurred with religion being separated from social work, and the military/militia committee came under the purview of the Edmonton YMCA rather than the Western Territorial council by which it had

previously been supervised. 1916 was also marked by the departure of a number of board members for the War, increasing pressures for supplying funds to the intercollegiate branch, as well as the struggle to provide services for women in an attempt to earn enough money to avoid operating at a deficit. A total of 135 newspaper articles within the Edmonton *Bulletin* pertained to the YMCA; 37 of them were in relation to sports programming. Seven of those illustrate how sport was eclipsing religion in the Edmonton YMCA and why.

The first Board of Directors meeting in 1916 occurred on January 13<sup>th</sup> and opened in a prayer by Mr. Chown (chairman of the Religious Committee).<sup>77</sup> The YWCA was granted another quarterly term to offer its swimming classes, and Mr. Ballantyne of the Western Division National Council embarked on a canvas in Edmonton, with the director's support, to raise money for the YMCA National Council which was also operating at a deficit. Money issues did not heavily feature at this particular meeting, but that was soon to change.

In March, the *Bulletin* introduced YMCA educational programming.<sup>78</sup> It was revealed that 400 foreign born immigrant men were taught civics and English by 35 voluntary instructors chiefly composed of university students of the University of Alberta YMCA. First aid courses were taught in connection with the St. John's Ambulance service, and the debate club and orchestra were still active. Conversational French classes were also being held. Educational practices within the YMCA appeared to be functioning well and as such were not further reported on until September of 1916.

In 1916, religion accounted for a total of seven articles. More often than not, these articles referred to the University branch of the Edmonton YMCA. An early March article reports on the religious programming of the previous year and the current year's upcoming plans.<sup>79</sup> The religious report was given by C.E. Race, secretary of the YMCA, and stated that the

religious department had shown more progress than any of the other departments, with 13 theater meetings on Sunday afternoons and a total attendance of 6,500. Bible classes were conducted for dormitory men, personnel, and gymnasium instructors, as were weekly noonday laymen's prayer services and meetings at the Canadian National Railway (CNR) shops. The religious works department appeared to be growing, but for some reason it was not heavily featured in the newspapers; it would appear that what the public was interested in reading was not religious works but, rather, exciting sporting and military news, even though they apparently attended religious events quite frequently. Or perhaps since the religious works department was experiencing success it did not require constant reporting on its activities.

A *Bulletin* article published in March reported on the annual meeting held the previous night.<sup>80</sup> In the physical department there were 20 weekly classes, 10,000 men and boys used the facilities during February and registered for class attendance. Also accounted for was that 300 to 600 men used the bathing facilities daily. Interestingly, this article made sure to mention that "athletics [were] not emphasized because of the war," but "members [were] encouraged to recruit" additional members into the ranks of the YMCA,<sup>81</sup> since 200 of the Edmonton YMCA members had enlisted and were no longer members paying the dues which the YMCA required to remain in operation. However, the argument that athletics were not emphasized due to the war is not only false, but misleading. Without athletic programming, many men would not have made the military athletic standards and the Edmonton YMCA had purposely set up training classes for such men. Therefore, to say that the two were not directly connected is a fallacy. The Edmonton YMCA physical department was churning out soldiers as fast as it was producing athletes.

Another article in the early March *Bulletin* that is key to the history of the Edmonton YMCA demonstrates the competitive streak between Edmonton and Calgary; clearly, athletics



was a very important part of the competition between the two cities.<sup>82</sup> The Calgarian YMCA basketball team members that were to play against Edmonton's YMCA league champion team were called "tossers." It was not polite, but it was an apt description of what Edmonton sport reporters sensationalized in order to foster rivalry, something to which the YMCA was no stranger. Such sensationalism led to a general excitement underlying sporting in the Edmonton YMCA. Competitive excitement popularized sport, while religion did not. In late March, the *Bulletin* published a much more detailed description of the Edmonton Calgary rivalry.<sup>83</sup> A dispute about the scoring occurred in a competitive basketball game between the Edmonton YMCA and the Calgary YMCA. As the article described, it was not until the game was over and it was discovered that the Calgary YMCA scorer had "neglected to credit two baskets-four points- to the Edmonton team when everyone else in the room had counted them that the excitement started."<sup>84</sup> Edmonton fans were livid. At the next game, the scorers were to be unaffiliated to either organization and two scorers would be keeping track to prevent such an oversight from occurring again. Edmonton tried to appeal to the league, but in such disputes the lower scores were determined final. Animosity was not something a Muscular Christian ought to have supported, however rivalry was. Ideally, Muscular Christians would have encouraged a healthy form of competition. From this perspective, the Edmonton YMCA fell short in its promotion of Muscular Christian ideals and gentlemanly conduct. The board meeting for March recorded that the Edmonton YMCA had once again received a grant from the city for water and light. It was decided to delay the financial canvas as many members had indicated that money was scarce among the citizens of Edmonton at that time, and securing pledges would have been difficult. No free physical nights were granted to the battalions. Considering the amount of war support the Edmonton YMCA was providing, it could no longer maintain a strictly benevolent

role for the military battalions stationed in Edmonton. While this appeared to have little effect on the military's use of the YMCA facilities, it did little to reduce the institution's deficit.

In April 1916, the Boy's Work department came forward to the executives with four new recommendations, which were all accepted by the board.<sup>85</sup> And, the financial canvas of the city was resumed in order to earn the unsubscribed balance of \$7,000 from the previous fundraiser. It was also requested that the commanders of the local battalions be asked for their assistance in this endeavour. If previous canvasses had failed to reach projected sums, it is evident that the Edmonton YMCA was receiving less financial support from the Edmonton citizenry.

That month, the *Bulletin* reported on the first instance that Edmonton was connected to the Khaki Sport Organization.<sup>86</sup> Edmonton organized the Khaki Sport Organization to plan the spring and summer sporting activities that it would sponsor for the Edmonton-stationed soldiers. The Khaki Sport Organization was to have planned out schedules, leagues and rules for football, baseball, harrier runs, and lacrosse. This was the first time that the YMCA assumed control over inter-battalion sport regulation in Edmonton and, needless to say, this demanded many man-hours and, as such, physical director Jackson would have been extremely busy. The Edmonton YMCA was not just caring for soldiers' home-away-from-home needs at the exhibition grounds; it was also caring for their athletic endeavours as well. With such extended responsibilities it is easy to assume that the excitement of such programming could have eclipsed other programming such as religion.

In late May, the *Bulletin* reported on the Y.M.C.A's efforts to have specific youth services hosted around the city. W.J. Green, secretary of the Edmonton YMCA, often spoke at these young people's activities addressing the work of the YMCA with the military and the war movement.<sup>87</sup> Next, a planned athletic meet in Edmonton for Amalgamation Day<sup>88</sup> was described

as a novel event it was “part Moral and [part] Physical.”<sup>89</sup> In order for young men to compete, they had to carry a card from their Sunday school or other religious club superintendent stating that they were religious members fit to participate. However, the competition was not open to boys who were members of institutions that administered the CSET program, thus eliminating many Edmonton Church club boys. The YMCA was obviously unaware of how many institutions had already implemented the program into their everyday activities, as a late June article tells us that the entire boys’ competition was called off due to lack of sufficient participants who met the stringent criteria.<sup>90</sup> At July’s only executive meeting it was reported that, in the past month, 41 boys and 17 men had joined in membership and that the Boy’s Department and Militia Department were in heavy use. Once again a monthly deficit was reported even with an increase in membership fees.<sup>91</sup> Lastly, a mid-September article reported that while YMCA classes were set to restart indoors on September 25<sup>th</sup>, and 50% of the Edmonton YMCA was “in Khaki.”<sup>92</sup> As such, the article states that particular special attention would be paid to boys’ swimming and gymnasium classes. Also announced was that a new program for the YMCA would include a new class for boys aged 8-12 years (before this, all YMCA boys had to be at least 12 years of age). The YMCA was equally set on continuing women’s and girls’ instruction beginning October 1<sup>st</sup>. And, physical training was provided for the 101<sup>st</sup> regiment stationed in Edmonton. Through these announcements, it appears physical education was important to many sectors of Edmonton society, and the YMCA executive agenda expanded its programming to suit the situation. More and more attention was being paid to sports and Boy’s Work, leaving religion and education far behind.

In November, two *Bulletin* articles were published asking Edmonton citizens to donate old books, magazines, and board games in order to supply the YMCA library on the military

exhibition grounds.<sup>93</sup> This indicated that the Edmonton YMCA was still doing its best to provide military men with educational materials. However, it largely depended on the citizens of Edmonton more than on funding from the board of directors. The November executive meeting opened with a prayer by President Brown. News was delivered by the Rooms' Committee that a reduction in the dormitory rent was no longer necessary as there had been a revival in the demand for rooms.<sup>94</sup> The physical department requested that the salary of Mr. Crockett be increased by \$60.00 per month, which was approved. The motion for the renewal of December magazine subscriptions for the library was also approved by the finance committee. As the association was trying to balance its budget, most means for doing so were permitted. Therefore, the board decided to look into fees for gym usage by boys who were members of Church Clubs or for Church Clubs as a whole, who used the YMCA meeting spaces frequently, and who often joined in the physical classes. It would appear that while the established Churches often supported the YMCA both financially and spiritually, by 1917 their own boys' clubs were growing in both size and popularity and were using YMCA facilities to their advantage. The Churches often had meeting report sections in the Edmonton *Bulletin*<sup>95</sup> and, furthermore, they used the YMCA both as a meeting place and for physical activity purposes. The YMCA executive committee was well aware of this and it was attempting to glean some revenue from these services if at all possible. The final decision on the fees was left to the Boy's Work Committee.

### **1917: Consequence of War and Programming Shifts to Boys at the Expense of Religion**

In 1917, the Edmonton YMCA minute notes mention sport only four times, religion ten times, education only three, War Work seven, and Boy's Work nine. This, however, is at odds with what the newspapers reported. With adjustments in committee term appointments, the

changing of the end of the financial fiscal year, and the usual yearly appointments to the board and committees, 1917 was relatively quiet even though the financial situation faced by the association did not improve. For that year, the *Bulletin* newspaper reported a total of 216 articles related to the Edmonton YMCA, and of these articles 29 pertained to sport, 42 related to Boy's Work, 5 to religion, and 4 to education.

The press coverage of the Boy's Department work during 1917 described the myriad activities for boys that may have in some ways contributed to a situation in which religion was rendered less attractive for boys at the YMCA. In January, the *Bulletin* reported the Edmonton YMCA planned Boy's Work.<sup>96</sup> In a meeting of various Church Boy's groups with the YMCA, it was decided to allow each group a half hour of gym time and 15 to 30 minutes in the swimming pool, if so desired. For the YMCA, working with the Church boy groups was intended as a means to facilitate the idea of providing "a vocation" for each and every boy in the city.<sup>97</sup> The Edmonton YMCA gradually had become deeply involved with religious institutions for Boy's Work, even though disagreements arose over what was most necessary for the boys to learn; Muscular Christian values of proving one's maleness through sport contrasted sharply from old values of proving ones Christian maleness through religious instruction.

In 1917, it is through *Edmonton Bulletin* articles that religion can be discerned within the YMCA. An early February article entitled "Athletics and Bible Study Well Mixed: J.M. Sharpe, Boy's Work Director of Calgary YMCA Tells How it is Done"<sup>98</sup> must have rankled a few overly competitive members of the Edmonton association considering the competitive nature of the Edmonton and Calgary teams. To be sure, religious togetherness was promoted when each organization shared its success. Sharpe, the Calgary director, was apparently as deeply involved in Boy's Work as Edmonton's executives were. He "[did] the impossible thing by mixing up

athletics with Bible Study to such an extent that the youngsters in Calgary had carried on the National Boys' Bible Study Championship of Canada for several years, with the same enthusiasm that they put into their games."<sup>99</sup> If an Edmonton newspaper columnist could identify the fact that the Calgary YMCA Bible Study program was superior, then it is impossible for the Edmonton YMCA leaders to have missed it. How exactly Sharpe accomplished this Muscular Christian feat was not related by the newspaper; but by all appearances, it was not shared with the Edmonton YMCA leadership either. However, one thing is for certain. Edmonton slipped further and further away from its religious programming over the next three years.

An article published in early February 1917 discussed the meaning of sport within the Edmonton YMCA.<sup>100</sup> An honor roll of YMCA veterans from the Edmonton YMCA membership was suggested. It was to list 444 names. The list was to be printed in all Edmonton newspapers at a later date. The article also mentioned that the ranks of the Edmonton YMCA were severely depleted, and revenue was decreased. The article reminded readers that there were 22 sports classes for men and boys which were held weekly. Sport was still a significant part of the YMCA, regardless of the importance of the war-focused services. In any case, given that many war-focused services were athletic in nature, the two programming elements fit well together.

A late April article referred to this Edmonton-planned military member honor roll.<sup>101</sup> The list was supposed to include all athletes in active service from Northern Alberta and was initiated by the secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union. Initially, the list was to be limited to those individuals in competitive athletic sports: football, cricket, baseball, rugby, lacrosse, track and field, tennis, hockey, and boxing. It was expanded to accept anyone in sport with a professional standing as well as non-members of the YMCA. Sport was obviously inextricably linked to soldiering in Canada during WWI. Affirming that these particular soldiers were also athletes

perpetuated the Muscular Christian ideal that the athletic participation of these men made them both physically and morally strong soldiers.

The Board of Directors meeting in February 1917 opened in prayer. At this meeting the majority of discussion was about a communication from the Edmonton Public Works Department inquiring in the availability of the YMCA building for the purpose of a hospital and convalescent home for soldiers.<sup>102</sup> The committee agreed that in the interest of the work of the YMCA and the soldiers themselves, the request was deemed unfavourable. However, this request did spur the conversation to the point where the board appointed a committee to consider the relationship of the association to the returning soldiers. The YMCA was no longer only focused on the current war, but also on its foreseen aftermath and on the men who needed support at that moment.

A late February 1917 article described a meeting at the YMCA between the YMCA boys and the Church Club boys in which Judge Taylor, a prominent Edmonton icon of the time,<sup>103</sup> relayed his experience on the bench where he learned the harmful effects of evil books first hand. He “exhorted the boys not to waste time in reading worthless books” when good ones were so readily obtainable.<sup>104</sup> Such talks may or may not have had a lasting impact, but may have boosted the popularity of the YMCA’s lending library for those who had not yet used it to their advantage. Prominent Edmonton figures supporting educational endeavours undoubtedly would have been pleased with the Muscular Christian ideals of producing a well-rounded young man. March’s Board of Directors meeting was opened in prayer.<sup>105</sup> A decision was also made to hold a canvas in the city for three days in April, and to hopefully obtain support from the National Boy’s Work Secretary in helping to fund further endeavours for Boy’s Work in the city.

April's Edmonton *Bulletin* reported on some of the activities participated in by Church-based Boy's Clubs not members of the YMCA.<sup>106</sup> This particular article described the lecture comparing the Muslim faith and Christianity. The article also announced the group's intention to run its CSET program assessments the following day. So, is it accurate to conclude that the Church's disapproval of the YMCA led them to form their own CSET programs in order to keep the boys in the Church by fulfilling their need for athletic activities? This is certainly a possibility. This also leads one to ask whether the YMCA was glossing over the Christian mandate of not just the entire organization (by being more concerned with Boys and War Works), but of the CSET as well. Publications from September further these assumptions by advertising the Church Clubs' CSET programming without any mention of the YMCA.<sup>107</sup>

The June and July *Bulletin* articles, of which there were many, conveyed the YMCA's dedication to sport outside of the institution. The first June edition that mentioned sport printed the story of A.M. Dallas, Boy's Department Secretary appearing before a city committee to gain their approval to build a swimming pool at Rutherford Park by draining Mill Creek that ran through the park.<sup>108</sup> The pool was built and the swimming director of the YMCA was providing free swimming lessons at the new Mill Creek pool on Friday afternoons from 2 to 4 o'clock; all Edmonton boys, not just the association's own paying members, were welcome.<sup>109</sup> Such acts of generosity from the YMCA not only show its dedication to Christian generosity or athletically minded generosity from a not so religious administrator, but also its dedication to sports throughout the community. Fostering athletics to all young men of Edmonton, and furthering the influence of athletic programming for all, became one of the many ways the Edmonton YMCA continued its transformation into a social service provider.



In mid-June, the *Bulletin* related the temporary return to the ideal in which the established Churches of Edmonton cooperated with the YMCA.<sup>110</sup> F.M. Black, a member of the YMCA since the age of sixteen, gave a testimony describing how, upon his arrival in London (England), he noticed that the churches were closed during the week and only open for a few hours each Sunday. He did not feel welcome until he encountered the YMCA. It was through the YMCA that he realized that “the thing well worthwhile was service in a religious Christian life.”<sup>111</sup> While in London, Black met with the creator of the YMCA, Sir George Williams, who was also described as believing that the only substantial basis of life was a religious life. Black encouraged young YMCA leaders to “realize that the religious welfare of men comes first, it must not be forgotten, [and] that if it is not built on this foundation [...] a crash will come.”<sup>112</sup> While the Edmonton YMCA may have lost its religious basis, it did not crash into obscurity. Nonetheless, the Edmonton YMCA’s lack of religious tenets can be seen as a crash of its theological purpose, at least to those who were concerned with the Christian mandate of the Institution, and its main goal of bringing men to the saviour. Black went on to say that the role of the YMCA was to be the handyman of the Christian Church. It was the job of the YMCA to band with the church by sending its men and boys to the churches, and to take the boy from the Sunday School and send him to the YMCA to develop his moral manhood and physical makeup and, in this way, help him to stay with the church. Black may have been motivated by something of great importance. If Sunday School was the feminized element of the church that was resulting in young men not wanting to attend, then sending them to the YMCA for religious instruction away from sermonizing was a safety measure many did not consider in the Victorian era. Black added that he had nothing against the church, as it was supposed to be the true home of families, but it failed to bring men to Christ as it should. He also believed that in western

Canada, in particular, the struggle was for men to understand one another: the Church man came to be at loggerheads with the YMCA man over the understanding of the true mission of their identical cause of saving young men. Such a well-articulated speech came too late for the Edmonton YMCA. While the leadership may have agreed with Black's message, any action they may have taken to return the YMCA to its original religious mandate was too little, too late, as a clear separation between the YMCA- and Church-organized boy's groups was apparent.

The War Work conducted by the YMCA in Military camps is also relevant. While the YMCA established itself in military camps both at home and abroad, it did not only attempt to address men's religious needs, but their recreational and social needs as well. While the churches attempted to offer many different social services, they allocated the recreational pursuits of the ministry to the YMCAs.<sup>113</sup> In fact, the only non-military buildings in camps were the ones established by social agencies such as the YMCA; the government and the churches did not build chapels or churches and all religious work was therefore conducted within the YMCA and in other social service buildings, an arrangement that was often inadequate for the needs of the chaplains. The conflict (or, rather, the confusion) between the Churches and the YMCA as to whom was responsible for providing social, recreational, or sacramental services further contributed to the YMCA's important position in the sporting, recreational, and religious life of men in camps.

At this point in time, the Board of Directors meeting in September 1917 is of special interest concerning religious matters within the YMCA nationwide.<sup>114</sup> Mr. Ballantyne of the National Council was in attendance and he provided information regarding the expanded programming of the National Council, along with a request for more funding. He also expounded on his and the Council's emphasis towards increasing attention to religious work nationwide. So

it would appear that the Edmonton YMCA's attention to rekindling a religious influence was occurring at a national level as well. This may have had something to do with a nation-wide influx of wounded men, a feeling of desperation over a war that was dragging on, and the high a cost in human suffering. However, Edmonton's athletic scene was expanding ever more regularly, so much so that, at the time, the YMCA had to appoint an assistant physical director. His name was Walter Steadman, his compensation was \$30.00 a month and a room in the dormitory. Also, Mr. Gowan was appointed Chairman of a magazine selection committee, in an effort to downsize the number of subscriptions in order to conserve funds. Education had become the chief culprit in funding deficiencies.

A late September 1917 article showed one of the many instances in Edmonton YMCA history in which the athletic endeavour of "*rambling*" was used for boys when gymnasium time could not be secured for their athletic endeavours.<sup>115</sup> The boys met at the YMCA building, travelled by streetcar to 24<sup>th</sup> street station (end of the line), and hiked on foot to St. Albert. Once in St. Albert, a light lunch (each boy provided his own) was eaten and the hikers returned from whence they came; those who were not too tired skipped the streetcar ride back and hiked the remainder of the way home. Afterwards, each boy was invited to take a swim. This rambling adventure counted for CSET points (towards each boy's personal total), and, as such, it was believed that many of the boys would make a showing, even if the weather took a turn for the worse.

Sure enough the October Board of Directors meeting, after being opened in prayer, reported that the magazine committee so as to keep the total cost under \$100.00 for the year, was ordered to further reduce its request list to enable the purchase of "priority" magazines.<sup>116</sup> The magazine budget had only increased by approximately \$10.00 since the organization's inception,

a conservative increase compared to the expansive budgets for physical work every year. A late October *Bulletin* reported on a very important mandate for all the church-based boy's clubs and their impact on the YMCA.<sup>117</sup> This article described a dinner hosted by a Church club for boys and their fathers to encourage the father-son relationship that the Protestant Church was committed towards advocating during what they described as a troubling time. Muscular Christians were just as committed to their support of father-son relationships; they saw them as necessary for the proper development of a young man.<sup>118</sup> At this meeting, there were two YMCA representatives who spoke to the matter: the Reverend A.M. Dallas, and Mr. Taylor. The YMCA, in sending speakers on the topic, was fostering such father-son bonding opportunities and, as such, were fulfilling its Muscular Christian purpose for the development of young men. By the end of November, although late in the year and often a time of decreased sport enrolment due to the weather, participation numbers in all physical classes were encouragingly high.<sup>119</sup>

A mid-December article focused on, the most important information describing the YMCA's relation to education during the war.<sup>120</sup> This article pertained to the YMCA of Canada's establishment of what became known as Khaki University. This was an impetus of the chaplain services and the YMCA in France. The program was composed of three elements. First were lectures to large groups of soldiers dealing with civic issues and imperial topics; second were smaller classes taught by experienced teachers from the ranks; and, third was private instruction for advanced students and credit correspondence classes offered those returning from the war.<sup>121</sup> This "university" provided topics in agriculture, business, literature, language, history, economics, applied science, theology and philosophy, vocational training, and elementary instruction. While only first year studies could be provided by Khaki University, the YMCA convinced British universities to accept students who finished their first year studies, as

second year students.<sup>122</sup> Khaki university was not merely a diversion from the war for the men who attended; it was vocational training that could one day ease them back into society upon their return from the war, something that every man hoped for but that few achieved smoothly. In a way, the YMCA development of Khaki University showed the impetus of public programming that would further its passage into becoming a social service provider.

December's executive meeting recorded encouraging news from religious extension work: the dormitory Bible classes would be continued with increased attendance numbers. Four new extension classes held in the St. Elmo boarding house and a Hebrew boarding house were also ready to start.<sup>123</sup> All of these classes were taught by student members of the University of Alberta YMCA. The impetus of almost all religious endeavours came from the University of Alberta branch of the Edmonton YMCA, and although it was provided for financially by the main Executive Board, it was no match for the sport promotion priority implemented by the main Executive.

The end of 1917 was a turning point for the Edmonton YMCA and its dedication to CSET testing.<sup>124</sup> A conference was planned for school officials, ministers of churches, teachers, the YMCA, and other interested organizations to discuss the implementation of CSET into schools. The objective was to first solve the religious question within public schools as to whether or not religion should be taught and from what denominational perspective it should be delivered. The YMCA CSET program was interdenominational, and at the same time taught sexual hygiene for both boys and girls. Female hygiene education had been outpaced by the boy's hygiene movement since the outset of the war and the intent was to find a way to restore a balance. Objections to this movement were prevalent, even though principally it was a program that focused on providing physical activity for school children from all ethnic and religious

backgrounds. However, the tension caused by the religious component eventually resulted in its removal from the program. Religion had no chance of remaining in the program due to increased public secularization following the war, much to the chagrin of many Muscular Christians. The YMCA continued its method of teaching the CSET program with a Christian message, but once the programming was established as a secular basis by other organizations (other than church-run), the YMCA had little reason to either implement or continue the CSET program. Eventually the program was dropped.

The YMCA continued its effort to bring all the boys from church groups together with their own members.<sup>125</sup> Such endeavours were more frequent in the subsequent years but did not lead to the abandonment of church groups by young men since, after all, they provided the same activities as the YMCA. For any boy seeking more spiritual edification, the Church Clubs were the best option especially because, unlike the YMCA, church clubs were often free to join.

### **1918: The Last of the War and Religious Compromise**

In 1918 many of the same patterns followed from previous years. A mid-January *Bulletin* article began with a statement issued from the Amateur Athletic Union.<sup>126</sup> No longer were physical directors from the YMCA allowed to be classified as amateur athletes. As such they could no longer participate in amateur competitions. While this affected all YMCAs, it showed a movement within all of Canada that in some way may had led to the professionalization of sports and, thereby, diminishing the importance of the YMCA in matters other than social service provisions. The YMCA had operated many amateur sporting leagues, often participated in and run by athletic directors. If these men were forced to form their own leagues, the YMCA would lose a group of men who were their fundamental assets to continued programming. This was an issue for the YMCA as the Edmonton By-laws stated clearly in section seven: “Professional

pugilists and kindred occupations are regarded as inimical to the work of the Young Men's Christian Association and no person engaged therein shall be eligible for membership, unless the board of directors shall otherwise determine."<sup>127</sup> What the Edmonton YMCA did about this predicament is not evident, although it can be asserted that the directors would have determined otherwise, and allowed these men to remain members of the YMCA; they were after all the instructors of the most popular form of programming. The implication of such events would have leveled an even greater focus on athletics within the YMCA regulation of athletic events and eligibility. As such, undoubtedly, new leagues in which only YMCA (professional) physical instructors could participate would have been considered and possibly organized.

On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1918, CSET was implemented within the Edmonton school system.<sup>128</sup> There was opposition against the CSET program for having an element of religious instruction, which was ironic as the YMCA would later object to what it saw as the lack of religious instruction in the version implemented in the schools. A two thirds majority voted for the CSET program, and only one objector is mentioned by name: H.A. Friedman. The fact that there was objection to the CSET program is hardly surprising as the earlier articles cited arguments against CSET implementation due to its religious programming. And, as previously mentioned, Muscular Christians were eventually disappointed when religion was dropped from the CSET programming.

The first instances of religious concerns for the Board of Directors in 1918 were recorded by mid-January at the first meeting of the year.<sup>129</sup> The religion report told of a visit to the CNR shops. A large portion of the men employed there had expressed their pleasure at the prospect of the resumption of YMCA shop meetings. The Boy's Work report was of a religious nature that week as well, informing of the need to introduce religious instruction into the schools.

It would appear that the emphasis on religion and its promotion by the YMCA of Edmonton and the National Council was transpiring according to plan. However, religion reports were not given again after that. The only sign that religion was still present in the organisation, up to November 1918 (the armistice), were prayers at the opening, and occasionally at the closing, of the Board of Directors meetings.

Important articles pertaining to education and its remaining importance for the Edmonton YMCA were published in 1918. Yet conditions of sub-standard finances for education and religion in the YMCA budget continued to cause difficulties. January 31<sup>st</sup>'s *Bulletin* printed an article in which a Mr. McKee voiced his opinion that the Edmonton YMCA Board of Directors had been devoting too much money to matters of administration and had not been spending enough on books.<sup>130</sup> While certain members of the public did not recognize where the YMCA funds were really directed, or the mere fact that there was very little operating money, this article proves that some citizens did see the lack of funding in some areas of the YMCA's supposed important programs. The budget had been cut year by year to smaller amount, and the board members were constantly looking for ways to reduce the cost of subscriptions for the library, so it is hardly surprising that citizens took notice and, therefore, complained.

Early in March 1918, an important executive meeting regarding sport and physical work at the YMCA and, more specifically, the Soldiers of the Soil Campaign of the National Council of the YMCA, was held. This movement was initially a project of the Ontario government to increase war production. The Department of Agriculture was convinced that the best form of unskilled farm labour was high school boys and, thus,, the department asked the National Council of YMCA to help recruit students for summer farm work.<sup>131</sup> The National Council contributed \$6,250 dollars towards this purpose and ten boy's secretaries held a conference and



assigned duties to each secretary for the district recruitment purposes. By 1917, the Canadian Soldiers of the Soil movement embraced the slogan, "Every Canadian Boy a Producer." Badges could be earned while uniforms were provided.<sup>132</sup> This program had a threefold purpose: first, to enlist and encourage boys to participate in food production; second, to provide attractive incentives for keeping them interested in their work; and third, to relate this service to their religious growth and development.<sup>133</sup> In this manner, the program appeared perfect for the Edmonton region. With the two developed branches of the regular farm service corps and the garden service corps, both farm-located and city-based boys could contribute to this effort. As historian Murray Ross writes, the movement was widely publicized and, by 1918, Alberta reported 3,018 boys involved in the movement of which 2,204 were in the farm service corps.<sup>134</sup> Ross is correct in his claim of widespread advertising, as the Edmonton *Bulletin* alone, from January 1918 to March 1918, printed eleven large advertisement spreads that mentioned, advertised, or introduced the program to the Edmonton population.<sup>135</sup> Such advertising would most likely have had an encouraging participatory effect on young men of the Edmonton YMCA. And, it would have increased the numbers within the program. By making the program serve a religious purpose, the Edmonton YMCA was promoting not only War Work by religious work, but also a service undoubtedly supported by Muscular Christians in the region. The physical department report in this meeting mentioned physical examinations required for all boys to participate in programs to be upheld for the foreseeable future. It was also recommended that Walter Steadman's salary be increased to \$35 dollars a month, and that he be transferred from the physical department to the boy's department as his program activities focused only on boy's activities. This was approved, along with the YWCA's swimming privileges renewed for 1918.

A *Bulletin* article from May 8<sup>th</sup> depicted the YMCA being highly involved in sports, and not just sports through the physical department, but through the military War Work as well.<sup>136</sup> In the article the public was informed that all athletic requirements of the troops were furnished free of charge by the YMCA. In fact, one recent shipment of baseball equipment to the war camps totaled \$23,000. This alone was a great accomplishment of the Canadian YMCA and, as the association's minutes demonstrate, the Canadian National YMCA was constantly functioning at a deficit, prompting solicitation of funds from the smaller YMCA branches, of which Edmonton was one. In this roundabout way, Edmonton was apprised of where some of their donated funds were being spent.

Reports of Boy's Work in 1918 through the Edmonton YMCA, apart from the Soldiers of the Soil (SOS), became extensive in the war years. Eleven articles and advertisements were used to promote the SOS program to the boys of Edmonton. National YMCA goals of rallying 25,000 boys to the cause,<sup>137</sup> with the lure of uniforms and honour badges,<sup>138</sup> and the cultivation of seven million bushels of wheat for the war cause, were implemented.<sup>139</sup> The Canadian YMCA with its SOS department supervision freed the Edmonton boy's department supervisors to focus on its other programming. A late March *Bulletin* was the first instance in which the readers of the Edmonton *Bulletin* learned of the HY-WY Club.<sup>140</sup> The HY-WY was YMCA-operated within Edmonton high schools. They held regular meetings at the YMCA and, similar to the intercollegiate YMCA, had their own governing system. The YMCA's direct expansion into the high schools was a program designed by the Boy's Work department that proved highly successful for quite some time.

While the Boy's Work department expanded into Edmonton high schools it also participated in an effort with the Edmonton churches, again in the promotion of father-son

relationships, which appears in the *Edmonton Bulletin* on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1918.<sup>141</sup> In this co-operation for Boy's Work, the first step was for each boy to attend church with his father on Sunday morning (the 7<sup>th</sup> of April). Next, each boy and his father attended a father and son banquet. This is the first instance of the YMCA of Edmonton being directly involved in the father-son movement, as a host rather than a participant. The success of this venture, however, is not reported.

An early April article introduced the *Bulletin* readership to "Intercession [Services]" hosted at the YMCA.<sup>142</sup> A half hour men's service was to be held every Thursday from 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm at the YMCA and all men interested in such a service were invited to attend. This promotes the notion that in the harshest times of war, religion took on a more pressing urgency and involved a return to the pews. Early the next month, the first Red Triangle Day, which took place at all Edmonton churches, was announced.<sup>143</sup> This was a Sunday in which returned veterans addressed church congregations by describing the work of the YMCA behind the lines at the Western Front in France. There was seeming interest in the work and in the exciting upcoming community drive for the Military YMCA fund. Once again, the Edmonton churches were working for the greater good of the soldiers and the YMCA, no matter if churches may have perceived a loss of religious practice within the YMCA. The Church was a necessary and influential support for the Edmonton YMCA and its subsequent programming funding campaigns. In *The Christian in Wartime*, written by Frederick Lynch between 1914 and 1918 for all Christians (even pacifists), the author tells Christians what they could do for the war effort.<sup>144</sup> Number eight on the list was to register into YMCA work at military training camps. With the Protestant Church encouraging its own members to enter YMCA work, not only were strictly

religious church efforts neglected, but the efforts of church workers were shifted to the recreational endeavours of YMCA camp work.

Early in May, the *Bulletin* reported the success of the Khaki University, suggesting that the readership consider the thousands who turned in their scholar suits for a suit of Khaki.<sup>145</sup> The article detailed that 4,000 men were enrolled, the training staff were Canadian soldiers, and that five men who completed an eighteen month telegraphy course in three months had passed the British Admiralty exams. The article concluded with a quote from an anonymous soldier who said that “the YMCA is a God-sent institution for the soldiers!”[sic]<sup>146</sup> It could be said that the early YMCA dedication to education preceding the war led to the insatiable zeal for education at the front during the war. Increased zeal for education often led to the relegation of religion.

A special meeting of the board in May verified that the physical director’s salary would be increased to \$1,800 a year and that during the general secretary’s absence it would be at a rate of \$2,000 a year, since the physical director would be taking over secretarial duties not specified for his job.<sup>147</sup> And in June’s executive meeting, it was announced that Mr. Crocket was to be employed permanently by the Edmonton YMCA at \$1,000 per year as a full time swimming instructor.<sup>148</sup> As athletics became an increasing focus of the YMCA, the demand for capable instructors was high. In order to retain the talent it had recruited to Edmonton, salaries had to increase. The Edmonton YMCA was also looking after its employees, and, yet again, it was incurring an even larger deficit in the process.

In a shift from previous years, in 1918, the YMCA summer camp did not proceed because most young boys were using their summer months for the purpose of the SOS campaign and were temporarily lodging at farms and assisting in the harvest.<sup>149</sup> However, the YMCA did plan three weekend camps for the boys to attend if they each brought along their own food and

camping supplies. How popular these weekends were is not reported. Nevertheless, with the boys focusing their efforts in the SOS campaign, it is easy to gage the popularity of the summer camps when even a chance at attending was not attractive enough to lure the boys away from the perceived duty of the war efforts. They earned badges, something young boys were taught by the YMCA to be a true Muscular Christian value. This diminished the hope the executive committee held for the summer camps of 1919.

In mid-July, the *Bulletin* reported on the first non-member swimming lessons to be officially conducted at the YMCA pool.<sup>150</sup> While the YMCA had previously operated school programs and public pool classes on occasion, this was the first attempt by the organization to earn more funds by teaching swimming directly to non-members. And, if the finance reports from the 1918 minutes of the YMCA are accurate, this was definitely a step in the right direction. With continued gymnastic and baseball exhibitions, and the formation of football clubs, along with a veteran's league that competed within the YMCA leagues (and typically won according to the Edmonton papers), the YMCA was continuing its physical mission with great success. In providing the public with sports separate from religious instruction, the Edmonton YMCA was becoming a social service provider rather than a religious institution. Realistically speaking, there was no other conceivable way other than sport and exercise through which the Edmonton Executive Board members could have earned enough money to stay afloat financially.

Early August depicted the last *Bulletin* article of interest pertaining to the 1918 Edmonton YMCA's religious participation. The article described the upcoming YMCA-led prayer service to be held the coming Sunday afternoon.<sup>151</sup> Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup> was the fourth anniversary of the outbreak of the war and YMCAs across the Dominion of Canada were hosting special prayer meetings for men to mark the somber occasion. All friends and family members were invited to

hear recently arrived Capt. Reverend Comyn-Ching, new Edmonton YMCA Secretary, deliver a short talk on the religious aspects of war. Such an article shows that no matter how much focus was on athletics, War Work, or Boy's Work, as long as there were religious figures on the Board of Directors of the YMCA there would remain some elements of religion within the organization itself. However, religious programming soon illustrated that even with such men as these, the failure of religion to attract men above and beyond the other exciting programs of the YMCA proved limited. Important to note is the Protestant Church's non-issue and disseminating view of Christ as a warrior, in the trenches. While the YMCA supported this image, men in warfare were skeptical of the association's efforts to reconcile warfare with religion.<sup>152</sup> After these men had witnessed the church's urges for peace, then glorious warfare, skepticism would have been rife. As Muscular Christian as the YMCA physical ideals may have become, war was not acceptable or discussed previous to its outbreak. The men raised in the Victorian social context would have seen these church and YMCA ideals shift and, as such, be doubtful in their truth. They would only be further jaded at the war's end.

At the August executive meeting, the minutes noted that an extra \$16.50 was added to the reserve accounts for magazine subscriptions for boys within the educational department.<sup>153</sup> Of all the executive committee/Board of Directors minutes reports, not much was discussed for the remainder of the year other than business and financial matters. It is no wonder considering the hurdle of debt that the Edmonton YMCA had to overcome during the national economic downturn during the war. This hurdle was not cleared for many years to come. The debt had a devastating effect on the time that the Board of Directors could contribute to the programming matters they deemed important.

An introduction to an interesting Boy's Work activity occurred in the Edmonton *Bulletin* on September 17, 1918 in which it was reported that the YMCA was hosting the Boy's Department 'Sham Fight'.<sup>154</sup> The boys were to be organized into small companies that would leave the YMCA at 9:00 the following Saturday morning, take the street car to the West End and participate in a pre-arranged mock battle. It would appear that the YMCA was not just preparing men for the battlefield, but boys as well. Precisely why this was arranged by the YMCA is never stated, but it is interesting when looked at through the scope of preparing men for war, and by shifting a focus to boys as it would become necessary for boys to take the place of men in the home.

October 4<sup>th</sup>'s *Bulletin* published the final article of importance on the Edmonton YMCA boy's programming for 1918.<sup>155</sup> This article described the YMCA boys and their diligence in harvesting the fall potato crops around the city. The article defined how the boys had already harvested 100 bushels from their own garden plot just east of the YMCA building. Contracts were taken by the YMCA to harvest the YWCA-planted potato plot and a farmer's planting just outside the city. The farmer's plot was planted by the YMCA Boy's Department so they had a vested interest in the harvesting of their own handiwork. The YMCA Boy's Department, aside from the SOS movement, was heavily involved in the Edmonton agriculture movement and, as such, it is little wonder why initiatives such as summer camp and other activities were placed on the backburners of what was important for the boys to accomplish that summer.

Apart from the YMCA Boy's Work there are six articles describing in great detail the Edmonton Boy's Movement of the churches.<sup>156</sup> What such articles demonstrate is that there were a minimum of seven other Boy's clubs within the city of Edmonton that hosted almost identical programming as the Edmonton YMCA and often hosted such programming in the YMCA

building, but with a more strenuous religious and educational focus. Such groups represented Muscular Christianity on a level at which the YMCA would never have been able to achieve had it even done so to begin with. Any Muscular Christian who valued religious instruction over sport would have supported such programming over the YMCA.

Did sport nullify religion within the Edmonton YMCA? Or did sport, Boy's Work and War Work combined do the trick? It must be considered that possibly religion was not misplaced, but merely shifted from the YMCA back into the institutionalized churches, with their desire for the reclamation of young men back into the religious fold. Just as second phase Muscular Christianity supported the ideals of athletics making the man, or at the very least giving him the desired manly attributes of a Christian gentleman, so too did the Edmonton YMCA. Before the First World War, churches claimed to have tried their best to avoid promoting war but when war was upon them Protestants decided to support what they called a *just* war. They encouraged young men to join the military, thereby proving that the new Protestant Victorian Churches were not emasculated or as highly feminized as many had said.<sup>157</sup> Perhaps such ideals and their conveyance could be placed upon the impetus of the Great War and the religious sense of a just war, as well as the correctness of men needing to fight such battles. Needless to say, the Edmonton YMCA was grooming the generation that would be determined as the right men for this role. Over 400 Edmonton men from the YMCA organization of both lay-members and executive officers joined the military overseas. Clifford Putney described the YMCA's attempt overseas to have been less than stellar (such opinions did not make the newspapers during the war years in Edmonton and many other cities). Many men were said to be unhappy with the YMCA's war efforts, and Putney argued that this put the YMCA workers in the field at a disadvantage. By 1918, the YMCA overseas had to come to accept a tougher,



grittier form of men, as well as sinful items such as cigarettes, and even condoms for the sake of preventing the spread of venereal disease.<sup>158</sup> In works such as the YMCA War Workers Manuals the YMCA tried to depict Christ as a warrior so as to not condemn soldiers as murderers.<sup>159</sup> Soldiers became skeptical of the YMCA's change in religious tolerance for violence and as such found it hard to reconcile religion with modern warfare.<sup>160</sup> After the war, the Protestant Church made attempts to return to a pacifist state, but the damage had been done. No longer could Church-associated organizations such as the YMCA maintain male membership unless they were willing to become grittier in their own Christian restrictions on good masculine behaviour. The Edmonton YMCA post-WWI was no different than any other religiously affiliated men's group; it too came under the third stage of Muscular Christianity in which a loss of both religious instruction and theology came to pass.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> J.G. MacGregor, *Edmonton A History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1967), pp. 209, 213.

<sup>2</sup> "Student Conference Held at the Y," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 28 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00819; "University Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 27(1914): p. 8, Item Ar00815.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> MacGregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 209, 213.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, p. 211.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Susan R. Fisher, *Boys and Girls in No Man's Land: English Canadian Children and the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 218.

<sup>9</sup> MacGregor, MacGregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 213, 216.

<sup>10</sup> MacGregor, *Ibid*, p. 211.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> MacGregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 216.

<sup>13</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> Macgregor, MacGregor, *Edmonton A History*, p. 213.

<sup>15</sup> Many histories have covered this topic in extensive detail for those interested in Albertan female sporting history see: M. Ann Hall, *Grads Are Playing Tonight! (The): The Story of the Edmonton Commercial Graduates Basketball Club* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7. September 3, 1914.

<sup>17</sup> "At The Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, September 4 (1914): p. 7, Item Ar00720.

<sup>18</sup> "A Mimic City Council," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, September 19 (1914): p. 10, Item Ar01007.

<sup>19</sup> "Student Conference Held at the Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 28 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00819.

<sup>20</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 162.

<sup>21</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, October 1, 1914.

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- <sup>22</sup> John F. Piper Jr, *The American Churches in World War I* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 13.
- <sup>23</sup> "At The Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 15 (1914): p. 10, Item Ar01011.
- <sup>24</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Lecture Course," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 13 (1914): p. 1, Item Ar00119.
- <sup>25</sup> "University Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 27(1914): p. 8, Item Ar00815.
- <sup>26</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 5, 1914.
- <sup>27</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of the Young Mens Christian Association of Edmonton Alberta," Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box PR 19068.210 Box 1 File 4, p. 8.
- <sup>28</sup> "YMCA Notes," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, November 5 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00808.
- <sup>29</sup> "Edmonton Will be Mecca Today of Alberta's Leading Amateur Sport Magnates," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, November 7 (1914): p. 11, Item Ar01106.
- <sup>30</sup> "YMCA Notes," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 21 (1914): p. 12, Item Ar01214.
- <sup>31</sup> See: Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War: How World War I Became a Religious Crusade* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2014.)
- <sup>32</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, December 3, 1914.
- <sup>33</sup> "Around the City," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, January 7 (1915): p. 8, Item Ar00803. A letter from J.S. Woodsworth renowned social reformer of the Welfare League for the University extension branch was received and delivered promptly. The letter most likely mentioned his upcoming speaking engagement in Edmonton at the University on preserving the resources of the immigrant on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1915.
- <sup>34</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Notes," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, December 19 (1914): p. 9, Item Ar00912. For more info see: Patricia Dirks, "Religious Origins and Objectives: Canadian Standard Efficiency Tests for Boys and Canadian Girls in Training," <https://churchhistcan.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/1997-6-dirks-article.pdf>.
- <sup>35</sup> "Efficiency Test Conference," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 9 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00315.
- <sup>36</sup> "Standard Efficiency Tests," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 5 (1914): p. 5, Item Ar00504.
- <sup>37</sup> "French Conversation Class," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, December 19 (1914): p. 14, Item Ar01408.
- <sup>38</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Debating Society," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 15 (1914): p. 10, Item Ar01024.
- <sup>39</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Debate," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 21 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00808.
- <sup>40</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Notes," *Edmonton bulletin Morning Edition*, November 5 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00808.
- <sup>41</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Debate," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 21 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00808.
- <sup>42</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Debate on Live Topic," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 28 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00812.
- <sup>43</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Debate," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, November 11 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00808.

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<sup>44</sup> "Imperial Federation is Question for Debate at Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 18 (1914): p. 8, Item Ar00807.

<sup>45</sup> "Billiardists Eat Supper Together at the Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 28 (1914): p. 7, Item Ar00714.

<sup>46</sup> "At the Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, November 26 (1914): p. 11, Item Ar001108.

<sup>47</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, (1915).

<sup>48</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 14<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>49</sup> "A Series of Evangelistic Services," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 19<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 12, Item Ar01203.

<sup>50</sup> Fisher, *Boys and Girls in No Man's Land: English-Canadian Children and the First World War*, pp. 42, 100.

<sup>51</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 25<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>52</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, February 4<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>53</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, February 11<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>54</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of the Young Mens Christian Association of Edmonton Alberta," PR 19068.210 Box 1 File 4, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup> "Annual Meeting of Y.M.C.A. Held," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 12 (1915): p. 8, Item Ar00803.

<sup>56</sup> "Annual Meeting of Y.M.C.A. Held," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 12 (1915): p. 8, Item Ar00803.

<sup>57</sup> "Let Soldiers at Sarcee Have Some of Your Old Books," *Edmonton Bulletin*, July 29<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 1, Item Ar00112.

<sup>58</sup> "Nearly Fifty Enteres in the Championships," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 27<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 9, Item Ar00921.

<sup>59</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, May 13<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>60</sup> "Private Darragh Dies of Injuries," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 1<sup>st</sup> (1915): p. 3, Item Ar00308.

<sup>61</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1915.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>64</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, September 9<sup>th</sup> 1915.

<sup>65</sup> "YMCA Gym Will Be Opened Monday, Classes Resumed," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, September 18<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 6, Item Ar00608.

<sup>66</sup> Dominic Erdozain, *The Problem With Pleasure: Sport, Recreation, and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010), p. 215.

<sup>67</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1915.

<sup>68</sup> "Big Auto Race at the Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 16<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 7, Item Ar00716.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> "The Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 16<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 7, Item Ad00711\_1.

<sup>71</sup> "Coming Events," *Edmonton Bulletin Morning Edition*, October 27<sup>th</sup> (1915): Pg 8, Item Ar00811.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 11th, 1915.

<sup>74</sup> "Junior Hockey," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 18<sup>th</sup> (1915): p. 11, Item Ar01111.

<sup>75</sup> "News of Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin* December 21<sup>st</sup> (1915): p. 13, Item Ar01303.

<sup>76</sup> "News of Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin* December 21<sup>st</sup> (1915): p. 13, Item Ar01303.

<sup>77</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes", Edmonton: Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Fonds, The Alberta Provincial Archives. PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 13<sup>th</sup> 1916.

<sup>78</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Holds Its Annual Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 1 (1916): p. 5, Item Ar01508.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> "Basket Tossers at Varsity Tonight," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 4 (1916): p. 7, Item Ar00712.

<sup>83</sup> "No Chance to Win Contest," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 28 (1916): p. 9, Item Ad00904\_1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, April 16<sup>th</sup> 1916. First, an intermediate membership class was authorized for boys between 18 and 20 at an annual fee of \$7.50. Second, relocation of the Boy's Secretary Office was to be relocated for no more than \$10.00. Third, for a boy's membership campaign to be conducted in which each boy who would bring in a new member would be allowed an extension on his own membership equal to 10% of the amount paid by the new member.

<sup>86</sup> "Khaki Sport Organization," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 24 (1916): p. 6, Item Ar00618.

<sup>87</sup> "In the City Churches," *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 27 (1916): p. 13, Item Ar01303.

<sup>88</sup> Day in which the annexation of South Edmonton into North Edmonton becoming Greater Edmonton.

<sup>89</sup> "Arrangements completed for Athletic Meet," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 17 (1916): p. 11, Item Ar01106.

<sup>90</sup> "Program for July 1<sup>st</sup> Meet is Completed," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 20 (1916): p. 7, Item Ar00714.

<sup>91</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, July 20<sup>th</sup> 1916.

<sup>92</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Classes Open Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 16 (1916): p. 4, Item Ar00410.

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<sup>93</sup> "Snapshots," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 4 (1916): p. 3, Item Ar00308.

"Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin*, November 13 (1916): p. 1, Item Ar00107.

<sup>94</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 16, 1916.

<sup>95</sup> "Church Boy's Club," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 14 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00316.

<sup>96</sup> "Boy's Work Meeting," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 23 (1917): p. 5, Item Ar00506.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> "Athletics and Bible Study Well Mixed," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 5 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00313.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Applies," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 6 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00328.

<sup>101</sup> "Plans are Discussed For Compilation Honor Roll of Athletes in Active Service," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 19 (1917): p. 7, Item Ar00703.

<sup>102</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917.

<sup>103</sup> "Judge Taylor Speaks to Boys," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 28 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00308.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1917.

<sup>106</sup> "Final Meeting Junior Church Clubs is Held," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 5 (1917): p. 8, Item Ar00808.

<sup>107</sup> "First Meetings of Church Clubs," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 29 (1917): p. 25, Item Ar02507.

<sup>108</sup> "Park Swimming Pool For Boys Of Edmonton," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 1 (1917): p. 7, Item Ar00703.

<sup>109</sup> "Lessons in Swimming," *Edmonton Bulletin*, July 27 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00324.

<sup>110</sup> "Church Must Cooperate With Y.M.C.A. Says F.M. Black at Annual Meeting of local Y," *Edmonton Bulletin*, June 15 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00317.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Pieper, *The American Churches in World War I*, p. 107.

<sup>114</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1917.

<sup>115</sup> "Hike for all Y.M.C.A. Boys Over Twelve," *Edmonton Bulletin*, September 21 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00304.

<sup>116</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, October 18th, 1917.

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<sup>117</sup> "Fathers and Sons Dine at Highlands," *Edmonton Bulletin*, October 27 (1917): p. 5, Item Ar00509.

<sup>118</sup> Marshall, David B. "I Thank God...that I am proud of my boy." In *Essays in Honour of Michael Bliss: Figuring the Social*, edited by. E.A Heaman, Alison Li, and Shelley McKellar (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 177-210.

<sup>119</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 22nd 1917.

<sup>120</sup> "Canadian Division Has Established University Behind the Firing Line," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 17 (1917): p. 4, Item Ar00415.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Charles W. Bishop, *Canadian YMCA in the Great War: The Official Record of the Activities of the Canadian YMCA in connection with the Great War of 1914-1918* (Ottawa: National Council of Canada, 1924).

<sup>123</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1917.

<sup>124</sup> "Efficiency Tests in the City Schools," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 24 (1917): p. 3, Item Ar00312.

<sup>125</sup> "Coming Events," *Edmonton Bulletin*, December 29 (1917): p. 9, Item Ar00910.

<sup>126</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Physical Directors Barred," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 14, 1918): p. 9, Item Ar00914.

<sup>127</sup> "Constitution and By-Laws of the Young Mens Christian Association of Edmonton Alberta," PR 19068.210 Box 1 File 4, p. 2.

<sup>128</sup> "Approves Incorporation Of Standard Efficiency Tests in Work of Public Schools," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 15 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00302.

<sup>129</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

<sup>130</sup> "Estimated Expenditure of Library Board \$4000 Less Than Actual Expenses 1917," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 31 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00316.

<sup>131</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951): p. 207-08.

<sup>132</sup> Ross, *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, p. 209.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 210

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> "Soldiers of Soil," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 12, 1918, p.8, Ar00816, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 16, 1918, p.15, Ar01506, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 16, 1918, p.19, Ad01925 "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 18, 1918, p.4, Ad00417\_1, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 19, 1918, p.7, Ad00706\_1, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 20, 1918, p.1, Ar00112, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 22, 1918, p.9, Ad00910\_2, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 23, 1918, p.12, Ar01203, "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 25, 1918, p.9, Ad00920\_1,

<sup>136</sup> "Little Lumps," *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 8 (1918): p. 9, Item Ar00915.

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- <sup>137</sup> "SOS," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 22 (1918): p. 9, Item Ad00910\_2.
- <sup>138</sup> "SOS," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 18 (1918): p. 4, Item Ad00417\_1.
- <sup>139</sup> "SOS," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 25 (1918): p. 9, Item Ad00920\_1.
- <sup>140</sup> "H-WY Club," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 26 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00327.
- <sup>141</sup> "Boys Take Hold of Father and Son Movement," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, April 3 (1918): p. 2, Item Ar00208.
- <sup>142</sup> "Intercession Service At The Y.M.C.A.," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, April 4 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00320.
- <sup>143</sup> "Red Triangle Day at the City Churches," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, May 6 (1918): p. 2, Item Ar00210.
- <sup>144</sup> Frederick Lynch, *The Christian in Wartime* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1972): p. 24.
- <sup>145</sup> "A University at the Front," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, May 3 (1918): p. 6, Item Ad00602\_1.
- <sup>146</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>147</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918. Two months later, his salary received yet another boost to \$2,400 a year; it was split as \$1,800 for running the physical department, and \$600 for his duties as general secretary.
- <sup>148</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, June 17<sup>th</sup> 1918.
- <sup>149</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Boys Not to Hold Regular Camp This Year," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, June 20 (1918): p. 9, Item Ar00907.
- <sup>150</sup> "Can You Swim?" *Edmonton bulletin*, July 16 (1918): p. 3, Item Ad00305\_4.
- <sup>151</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Will Hold Prayer Service Sunday Afternoon," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, August 3 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00318.
- <sup>152</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 192.
- <sup>153</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, August 8<sup>th</sup>
- <sup>154</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Boys Will Have Sham Fight," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, September 17 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00315.
- <sup>155</sup> "Y.M.C.A. Boys Are Helping To Gather In Potato Crop," *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, October 4 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00307.
- <sup>156</sup> "News of the Boys' Clubs In Our City Churches," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 5 (1918): p. 17, Item Ar01707; "News of the Boys' Clubs In Our City Churches," *Edmonton Bulletin*, January 12 (1918): p. 9, Item Ar00913; "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, February 16 (1918): Pg 19, Item Ar01906; "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, March 16 (1918): Pg 15, Item Ar01506; "Ibid," *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 6 (1918): Pg 12, Item Ar01204.
- <sup>157</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 164.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibid, p. 191.



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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p. 162.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 185.

### **Chapter Five: The Fallout: December 1918 -1920**

The end of the First World War did not immediately bring about change to the Edmonton YMCA. Rather, the fallout from the war and its subsequent effects on societal conditions contributed to a gradual change in YMCA religious practices. Edmonton's post-war society was one in which organized religion, both through the church and the YMCA, came under scrutiny, and, became less appealing to men. The masculine values under which YMCA men had been trained created within them the very traits that led to their rejection of post-war Christianity. This rejection led to large scale YMCA and church attempts to re-establish Christian programming. Unfortunately, for those who desired this return to Christian-based programming, this effort came too late.

The city of Edmonton was struck by Spanish influenza before the armistice was signed. All schools, churches, theaters were closed, and public meetings were banned. The Edmonton YMCA was but one of the many groups in Edmonton affected by this ban.<sup>1</sup> By October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1918, there were 2,000 cases reported in Edmonton and, by the end November, Edmonton had lost a total of 445 lives to the epidemic. By the end of the war, Edmonton had contributed eleven battalions and 20,000 men, most of whom returned to the city for decommission.<sup>2</sup> Upon the Edmonton soldiers' return, there was civil unrest throughout the city.

During the war, organized sports (most notably football) languished in Edmonton; more pressing matters were attended to by the YMCA. The number of men available to play in the various sporting leagues had plummeted. At the end of the war, a re-established Edmonton Eskimos football team was organized by Deacon White. By 1921, Edmonton had played and defeated both Calgary and Winnipeg for conference supremacy, but subsequently suffered a

crushing defeat by Toronto.<sup>3</sup> By 1922, the club had momentarily changed its name to the Edmonton Elks, and was a contender for the Grey Cup. However, once again they lost the final. The Club resumed its original team name in 1923. In hockey, the Edmonton Eskimos Hockey Club advanced to the 1922 Stanley Cup finals where they were defeated.<sup>4</sup> These professional league teams were not run by the YMCA but were part and parcel of the Edmonton sport atmosphere during the years 1919 and 1920.<sup>5</sup> While professional commercial sports teams and events such as the above appeared to have a permanent place in Edmonton society following WWI, it was within the YMCA where amateur athletics thrived, especially with the return of service men and the influx of participants into multiple sports leagues. By the end of 1920, Edmonton had amateur leagues for basketball, baseball, swimming, hockey, lacrosse, football, soccer, tennis, track and field, cycling, volleyball, and even rambling, as well as hustle ball and freak ball.<sup>6</sup>

In the Edmonton YMCA minute book from November 1918 to December 1920, there is abundant information as to executive efforts in sports promotion. The war had ended. Hundreds of veterans were returning home. They required assistance in finding lodging, employment, and spiritual guidance. For the November and December 1918 executive meetings, there were only two religious records: in late November, the executives opened the meeting in prayer and, in mid-December, a meeting was closed in prayer.<sup>7</sup> Other executive concerns are much more discernible. For instance by November 1918, YMCA property taxes were in arrears, including property taxes for Oban Beach (YMCA Boy's Camp lots), as well as the North and South YMCA city lots. The executive's plan was to pay off the North Campus property taxes by November 30<sup>th</sup> and the remainder by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The tax situation for the other properties was to be dealt with after the North Side taxes were paid. The executive realized that not paying

the taxes could lead to permanent loss of the properties and, as the YMCA building was on the North Side lot, it was, without a doubt, the most important property to retain.

The newspaper reports from November 1918 through December 1918, closely follow the information provided in the YMCA minute notes. The initiative to build a Red Triangle Hut<sup>8</sup> in Edmonton to serve veterans was reported by the Edmonton *Bulletin* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1918.<sup>9</sup> The YMCA territorial secretary announced the services to be delivered to veterans through the hut, its proposed location, as well as the extensive potential social aspects of YMCA military secretary programming through the building of such a facility. Sporting news reports in November and December 1918 introduced boxing at the YMCA,<sup>10</sup> as well as a hockey league and a basketball league news daily within the Edmonton *Bulletin* sporting pages.<sup>11</sup>

December's meeting showed executive commitment to its boy's sports programming. In the meeting, the boy's committee was guaranteed \$200 towards the building of a hockey rink on the YMCA property. The executive would have supported the building of a rink no matter who was to build it; the fact that the boys themselves wanted to build the facility made the project cost effective. The University of Alberta's YMCA also held a committee meeting in December.<sup>12</sup> A motion was carried for a proposal to be presented to the main branch YMCA for boxing to be taught under proper supervision. Boxing was popular at the University, and the YMCA soon embraced the trend. Although the introduction of boxing into programming led to the expulsion of members in 1920 due to their professional status, such expulsions showed executive commitment to the association's constitution in which amateurism was the Muscular Christian ideal.

Other war-connected YMCA issues are discussed in the *Bulletin*, including one published in December 1918. In it veterans complained that the YMCA could "spend money better aiding

[the] demobilized army than in building huts.”<sup>13</sup> Apparently, many YMCA men believed that a large amount of the money invested in building huts should be put into the already established YMCA tents, which help soldiers immediately upon demobilization. Many soldiers experienced difficulties immediately, well before they had returned home. When men were demobilized overseas, finding their way home had become increasingly difficult. Adjustment to civilian life before returning home was difficult. However, these recriminations fell upon deaf ears, which may partly explain why military work in the Red Triangle Huts across Canada, under the supervision of the National YMCA, only lasted for a total of one year.

Apart from sporting news, there were a few articles which addressed both education and lapsing religious programming. For instance, it is reported that the men occupying the dormitories had assembled together and prepared an address for the upcoming dorm banquet at which members would air their views on Bolshevism.<sup>14</sup> These men were obviously concerned with recent world events, and took the initiative to discuss them. The educational legacy of the YMCA of Edmonton had endured. However, the report also tells of Sunday morning services that were turned into Sunday morning “open meetings, for the discussion of social problems,”<sup>15</sup> foregoing spiritual worship. Taking away Sunday morning worship services at the YMCA for the dormitory men was clear evidence of a decline in religious programming. Social issues were important and often spiritually infused. The removal of the convenience of Sunday services at the YMCA indicated a lapse in religious programming.

Evidence of boy’s programming appears in December. The *Bulletin* published an article describing social work performed by the YMCA boys through hosting a New Year’s social for children orphaned by the Spanish Flu epidemic; there were refreshments, presents, and free transportation to and from the festivities.<sup>16</sup> Such activities by the Boy’s Department evidence of

the importance of social programming to all departments of the Edmonton YMCA and marks the beginning of the YMCA as a social service provider rather than a religious institution.

### **1919: Peacetime and Continuing Change**

The meetings of the Edmonton YMCA executive in 1919 provide further evidence of the promotion of sports as well as of financial woes. The first meeting of the year was especially called by the executive in order to issue a request to the National Council of YMCAs,<sup>17</sup> in which they put forward a Request for Edmonton to become the location of the provincial YMCA hut for returning veterans. The council also requested \$2,500 for the project if it were endorsed. The first meeting of January, although especially called to address the proposed Red Triangle Hut, also reported good news for those with religious outreach utmost in their minds. The general secretary was empowered by the board to expend money on advertising for Sunday afternoon meetings and newcomer's tea meetings (socials in which newly arrived Edmontonian men could make friends and facilitate their transition into the city). During the second meeting in January,<sup>18</sup> after opening in prayer, a standing committee was appointed to conduct all future educational work of the YMCA. No previous mention of disbandment of the previous educational committee was made, so it is difficult to pinpoint exactly why a new committee needed to be appointed. It may have been related to the loss in executive leadership encountered during the war. The boy's department gave a report on the progress of the hockey rink construction. It also requested permission to develop a small farm with the assistance of agriculture students from Alberta College. The general secretary announced that due to overcrowding the gymnasium and swimming classes, request from the YWCA for programming time in the upcoming winter would be denied. The executive attempted to accommodate The YWCA in the summer, once

indoor programming slowed down. And, lastly, the board voted for the approval of the temporary hiring of Sergeant Clifton as assistant physical director; no salary was listed.

The executive committee held another special meeting in mid-January 1919.<sup>19</sup> Edmonton had at last been officially designated as the location for the new Red Triangle Hut for veterans. A request was sent to the National Council for extra supplies to furnish the hut. At this point in time, the executive also decided to remove the billiards table from the parlor. It was not due to any moral objection, but simply a lack of space when hosting newcomer's teas and veterans meetings, furthering social service endeavours.

In another special meeting in February, it was reported that Edmonton wrote a request to the Calgary YMCA for a loan of blankets which would be used in the Red Triangle Hut for housing returned veterans.<sup>20</sup> The fact that Edmonton did not have the funds to supply returning veterans with blankets shows the dire state of the Edmonton YMCA's budget, and further questions the placement of the Red Triangle Hut in Edmonton, considering the branch's financial crisis. In addition to that, Edmonton's leadership concerns continued: Mr. Green (the secretary) had decided to extend his absence from the board in order to further his work for the Khaki University.

The *Bulletin's* YMCA reports in 1919 were especially curious; sports were reported 90 times (the highest YMCA sport reporting to this point) and religion was reported three times (the lowest). Out of the 90 sport articles published in 1919, five related to the Edmonton YMCA story in regards to promotion and increases of physical programming. Education was addressed only five times, the second lowest number of education reports to date. Education articles for the YMCA in Edmonton dealt mostly with the YMCA debate club. In late January, the Edmonton YMCA debate club was featured in the *Bulletin* for having elected its executive officers and for

holding a debate on whether “city life [was] better than country life.” The *Bulletin* reported that “the number in attendance gave ample assurance of the popularity and success of the club.”<sup>21</sup>

This assessment was not wrong.

At the second February executive meeting, it was noted that the building of the Red Triangle Hut was on schedule: it was to open Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month.<sup>22</sup> In the next meeting, it was mentioned that the Edmonton YMCA executive council had offered to purchase the Red Triangle Hut from the National Council once it was decommissioned from its war programming. Future plans were to use the building to house veterans as well as expand their gymnasium space.<sup>23</sup> The Edmonton YMCA directors saw the practicality of keeping the Red Triangle Hut for a few reasons: first, there was no possibility that they could simply evict the returned veterans; and, second, once the men were employed, the hut could be further put to use as a physical department space. It was at this time also that the board decided to take the liability associated with a bond of \$3,900 that had recently been incurred by the acting secretary. The money had been sought to cover operating expenses over the last year. The executive offered no recorded plans for the repayment of the loan.

Of the three reported articles about religion and its practices as well as implications for the Edmonton YMCA, in early February it was announced that clergymen of the city’s churches participated in a series of lectures at the YMCA.<sup>24</sup> The first speaker was Reverend A.S. Tuttle from McDougall Methodist. He spoke about Christianity and Socialism, and about how the two movements were not as antagonistic to each other as one might believe. The *Bulletin* followed up on the debate club in early February. It was reported that the debate topic was: “Should Canada adopt a policy of compulsory military training.” The side in favour of the move won the debate and the article wound down with an announcement of the next topic: “Immigration into Canada



[should] be restricted by prohibiting the entrance of the subjects of those countries opposed to Great Britain and her allies in the recent European war.”<sup>25</sup> Such topics display the feeling of ‘King and Country’ still very much present in Edmonton, as well as the animosity still present and directed against those who had been on the opposing side in the war.

The next executive meeting occurred early in March.<sup>26</sup> In this meeting, it was proposed that the south side YMCA lot be turned into gardening plots for the Boy’s Department. The operating costs for the Red Triangle Hut for a year of operations were estimated at \$13,650.00. Following this, a special meeting for the Edmonton executive was called on March 10<sup>th</sup>, where it was approved that all returning soldiers who attended the YMCA were to be hired at once for night time office work. The sheer volume of returned veterans made employment of all men highly unlikely.<sup>27</sup> YMCA finances became bleaker as the year progressed. A late March executive meeting forecast a deficit of \$1,000 by the end of the fiscal year. A decision to once again reach out to the bank (Canadian Mortgage Company) to increase the YMCA loan was approved.<sup>28</sup>

That same month, the *Bulletin* reported on a University of Alberta Sunday meeting in which church and leadership, Bolshevism, and church inability to prevent civil unrest worldwide<sup>29</sup> were the subjects of debate. The article’s author called for the YMCA to become an arm of the church in order to function properly to the benefit of both institutions. It is obvious that such a move was not going to happen, for as much as there was agreement between the YMCA and the churches to combine events and undertakings, the church was not about to accept into its organizational structure an institution it saw as failing its constitutional gospel mission.<sup>30</sup>

Not much later, on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. Crockett approached the board of directors to request a salary increase. As Jackson was the acting secretary, Crockett had taken up the extra work within

the physical department in addition to his teaching of all swimming classes. The board approved a pay increase to \$100.00 monthly making his salary \$12,000 yearly. With the YMCA finances in such disarray it was anyone's guess as to how such a pay increase would be covered.<sup>31</sup>

An article in the sports comment section of the *Bulletin* that month describes how the results of the YMCA Boy's Department work efforts would be felt within the city in the years to come.<sup>32</sup> The boys were acquiring a higher standard of fitness, and their sport training developed a sense of fair play and sportsmanship hailed as the "finest tradition of amateur athletics."<sup>33</sup> The ethics behind sports and what they could do for young men was still a pervading thought in the social conscience of Edmontonians.

Following the development of the safety bicycle, one of the many recreational activities popular amongst young men of the YMCA was cycling. By May 1919, the popularity of bicycles was so evident in Edmonton society that the YMCA was eager to capitalize on the new sporting craze. Bike clubs began in the high schools of North America; they were eagerly developed within the Boys Scouts also.<sup>34</sup> That progress was followed by the YMCA directors across Canada and, soon, they began forming their own bicycle clubs, not for the purposes of being outdone by other boy's groups, but in an effort to remain relevant with the new generation of young men who were growing up in post-war Edmonton.

Another debate club report was on the topic "is it essential that labor should have equal representation with capital in the management of industry?"<sup>35</sup> The supporting side was represented by the Dominion Labour Party. But the side against, which won the debate, was represented by the YMCA debate club.<sup>36</sup> Apparently labour unrest was not highly valued in a city in which returning soldiers were quickly consuming work possibilities. Nonetheless, the

continuing tenure of the Edmonton debate club is evidence of the popularity of YMCA education programs among the city's young men.

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, the YMCA held the annual general meeting for all of its members. In the meeting, the closures experienced by the YMCA due to the Spanish Flu outbreak and the difficulties experienced in its aftermath were reported to the audience by the executive. The work being done to house veterans and the progress made by the boy's department over the past year were deemed a success. This was followed by a report on the physical (sport) department and the large strides made in the past year.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to the physical department, the *Bulletin* published an important article for the interest of everyone involved with the athletic programming of the YMCA.<sup>38</sup> As of May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1919, all men in Alberta (physical instructors of YMCAs included) were reinstated to amateur status in athletics, by the Alberta Amateur Athletic Union. The Edmonton YMCA's physical director approved the decision, especially as it included all discharged military men. The reinstatement of all men to amateur status was a positive thing for the YMCA. It increased numbers in YMCA leagues, as well as decreasing the number of leagues for men throughout Edmonton. Fewer leagues required less supervision and organization by YMCA athletic departments. This, however, was not without consequences for the Edmonton YMCA. Two professional pugilists were reported to have gained membership in the Edmonton YMCA; as well they had membership in the YMCA boxing league. The Edmonton YMCA's constitution made provisions against such men gaining membership. Yet, with the carte blanche amateur certification of all athletes, it is easy to see how such a circumstance occurred. The ensuing circumstances of this case were not recorded, but if all YMCA physical instructors were reinstated to amateur status, then the two pugilists in danger of expulsion had a much stronger

case for arguing against their expulsion. This flagrant violation of membership rules did not come to the Executive Board's attention until December 1920.

The executive meeting held in June reported further financial problems; not only for the Edmonton YMCA, but also for the National Council of YMCAs. The National Council guaranteed Edmonton \$3,500 for the operation costs of the Red Triangle Hut. However, the National Council was facing an overdraft on its accounts and so it promised to send only \$1,750.00, and the remainder when and if possible.<sup>39</sup> The Edmonton association's finance committee was charged to respond to this information in a less than cordial manner. On August 12<sup>th</sup> it was reported that the finance department had outstanding bills in the amount of \$2,400.<sup>40</sup> Budget deficiencies could not allow payment.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1919, the Edmonton *Bulletin* reported that the YMCA executive had decided to put special winter programming in place.<sup>41</sup> A model of the Chautauqua educational program in the United States was introduced to the Edmonton YMCA. The Edmonton program was to be organized in month-long correspondence course modules in which one would complete instruction in university level liberal arts categories. Programmes hosted specialized guest lectures, concerts, entertainers, and artists at the YMCA. While the movement was in no way anti-religious, it did make its focus educational for the YMCA men.

Religion was also still somewhat popular with the executive members of the association. Only on four occasions were executive meetings opened in prayer and devotional exercises. This may have been a direct response to financial woes. Having progressed from almost no opening prayers to a re-institution of devotional studies demonstrates a modest return to the constitution's stated order of executive meetings.<sup>42</sup> In early October, the physical activity committee reported its plans for an indoor track meet and requested that the interim physical director be appointed to

the board of directors in order to ensure that the physical department's needs were met. Both were approved and implemented.<sup>43</sup> A few months later, the department also requested new lockers and the hiring of an assistant physical director.<sup>44</sup> Decisions on these requests were postponed until the board could find the necessary funding. What had happened to the previous assistant physical director was not mentioned. The association continued to lose leaders even after the war, reflecting the unsettled nature of Edmonton society.

Of course religion had not been entirely abandoned in the organization. A November *Bulletin* article reported on a turnaround in religious policy within the YMCA.<sup>45</sup> In conjunction with YMCAs worldwide, the Edmonton YMCA planned to place a special emphasis on prayer in a young man's life and each department of the association was to participate. The YMCA was also going to host noon day prayer services all week for anyone who wished to attend. Such events show the YMCAs clinging to religion in a way which could be seen as retaining their religious foundation. However, given the coordination of the initiative within all YMCAs, it is unclear how much Edmonton featured in the conceptual planning. How well the execution was carried off is unknown as the executive minute notes make no reference to this event. Lack of reporting suggests that it either did not occur or occurred with minimal response or interest.

On New Year's Eve, an article announced that the Edmonton city council had granted \$5,000 to the YMCA boy's club for the purpose of establishing a skating rink.<sup>46</sup> Such grants undoubtedly relieved the executive of the Edmonton YMCA, as they would no longer have to delegate finances to the boy's plans. The money from city council was provided on the condition that the rink would exist for more than one year, and remain under the care of the boy's department. Not all of city council was in full support of this project, so the YMCA boys had had to prove the need for and the benefits of such a rink.

### **1920: Continued Peace and the Edmonton YMCA's demise of Religious Programming**

In 1920, the YMCA's financial experience was no better. As an example, by mid-March, the Edmonton executives reported that the beds they had on loan from the Calgary YMCA for the Red Triangle Hut were due to be returned; they requested an extension on the cots, mattresses and blankets, until they could find funds enough to pay for the equipment.<sup>47</sup> The Calgary YMCA obliged despite the fact that the Edmonton branch's executive expected no immediate revenue. It was at this time that the physical department requested the procurement of permanent athletic grounds rather than using the city park system for league games. City parks were being used more frequently by both the public and other sports leagues, becoming overcrowded. They were requesting immediate attention to the matter along with a guaranteed five-year tenancy plan on whichever grounds were created. Also, the territorial committee came forward with its budgetary needs for the year at \$4,000, of which the city of Edmonton was to contribute \$2,000. But as the National Council owed \$2,000 to the city, the meetings notes reported Edmonton executive was not about to grant the loan.

Newspaper reports from 1920 were not very different from those published in 1919. Sports were once again the most published stories dealing with the Edmonton YMCA and, while education was reported relatively often, religion was reported only in passing and was not the focus. However, dealings of the Executive Board and financial issues were published in the *Bulletin* a total of twenty-nine times. For the first time the executives were sharing with the general public their dire financial circumstances, perhaps to garner much needed financial support.

At the executive meeting of late April it was decided by the Edmonton executive to approach the Hudson's Bay Company for a grant of some of their undeveloped land in

Edmonton's downtown sector.<sup>48</sup> It was not until July 22<sup>nd</sup> that the HBC responded to the request for land for sport grounds development with the following offer:<sup>49</sup>

The Hudson's Bay Company offered the lease of a block of land for \$1 per year plus the taxes for a period of five years. The [YMCA] Executive asked for an extension in subsequent years, one year at a time, until the land was sold. The City was to be asked to rebate the taxes on the land while it was being used by the YMCA. Little is documented about the program or the lease but it illustrated the Y's wish to extend its activities outside the building.<sup>50</sup>

Clear evidence of the Edmonton YMCA's dedication to sport programming had yet to be so obvious. In approaching the HBC for land for specific YMCA sport league playing fields, the direction in which the YMCA intended to steer programming was undoubtedly sport. It is possible that if the finance situation had not been so dire at this point in time, sport programming for the YMCA would have expanded even more rapidly than it did in 1920. By taking advantage of a free plot of land to develop the YMCA sporting interests, the Edmonton branch was making it clear that its interests lay in sports, as such efforts were not put forward for any other section of Edmonton YMCA programming.

According to the YMCA minutes, the physical department had more recommendations for the executive by September 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>51</sup> The recommendations were as follows: employ another physical instructor to teach all junior employed boy's physical classes, implement swimming classes to junior and senior men and boys for the cost of \$20.00 per season regardless of membership status, and to provide music for all gym classes at the cost of \$50.00 per month. All recommendations were passed. The swimming instructions were intended to cover the implementation costs of the other projects, hopefully to generate a profit.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1920, the Canadian national council of YMCAs announced the closure of all YMCA-sponsored huts across Canada. This was the time for Edmonton to purchase the hut if they could afford to.<sup>52</sup> Although the Edmonton YMCA was facing a deficit, it

was adamant in its plans to purchase the building to house the ever expanding physical programs. Funding applied to its already established loans, only furthering the association's debt.

The executive meeting on the evening of September 27 was a landmark occasion, as it was recorded that all 21 members of the now expansive board of directors were present.<sup>53</sup> The Education committee raised the issues of educational work for veterans. It was stated that the National Council had already made special financial provisions for such. However, as all War Work in the Edmonton region was assumed by the local YMCA starting October 1<sup>st</sup> following the National Councils' withdrawal and the closing decommissioning of the Khaki University, such provisions were not guaranteed. While Edmonton welcomed the ability to take charge of its educational programming, the funding provided by the National Council had stipulations attached and was simply not enough to solve the Edmonton YMCA's debt problems. Adding to the financial blow, the police department, which had been a money-earning enterprise for the YMCA, withdrew its participation. At the same time, the newly acquired Red Triangle Hut was to hold two employed boys gym classes per week.<sup>54</sup> The overexpansion of programs was always a problem for the Edmonton YMCA. However, expansion in physical programming was something that could not be ignored as they were the activities desired by most members.

Most important was the "Edmonton YMCA Annual Financial & Membership Canvass"

*Bulletin* article in which the following statistics are released to the public:

1,071 Men and Boys as Members  
 11,793 Gymnasium Class Attendance  
 3,000 Attendance at Sunday Men's Meetings  
 17 Industrial Groups entertained at YMCA Building  
 1,600 Strangers Welcomed at Stangers' Tea  
 15 Church Boys' Groups, not Members of the YMCA has used 'Y' Gym and Baths  
 4 Boys' Baseball leagues, comprising 42 teams; 3 Boys' Football leagues, comprising 20 teams; 2 Boys' Basketball leagues, comprising 13 teams. 2 Boys' Hockey leagues, comprising 25 teams, were conducted.[sic]<sup>55</sup>



The YMCA also planned to raise \$16,000 in subscriptions through attracting 400 new members, in addition to securing the additional athletic field and rinks, carrying industrial programs into shops and factories, expanding association accommodation and the use of school gymnasiums in the region, and increasing “attention to a larger religious works program.”<sup>56</sup> It is obvious that, at this point, sport and other programs ranked higher in the priorities of the Edmonton YMCA, simply based upon the actions of the board in endeavouring to secure valuable property for its athletic programs. It was not a question of money spent, but more of efforts and energy placed within the enterprise of obtaining such benevolent donations of money, land, and support. However, since memberships resulted in most of the operations money, was it logical to support one department over another? For YMCA executives this was a pressing issue and one that, although never explicitly addressed, was ever lingering in the background of association dealings. Inevitably sport proved the most popular activity as demonstrated by enrollment in the many sport clubs and leagues offered by the YMCA. Obviously the executive needed to focus on what interested the members.

Much of the membership profits on which the Edmonton YMCA had counted were soon swallowed up by the financial needs of the territorial committee (Western YMCA governance board). The YMCA territorial committee budgetary plans for 1921 came to the attention of the executives in November 1920. A sum of \$15,000 had been budgeted; the city of Edmonton was expected to pay \$2,000 of that amount. This led to a major uproar by the money-strapped Edmonton executive. On December 30<sup>th</sup> a special board meeting was called demanding that the budget be reduced by abolishing the military work supervision in the Alberta region. As military work was being taken over by individual institutions, whatever work still required by the abolished position could therefore be given to the director of industrial works. This petition was

finalized, with the Edmonton executive demanding that these changes be made and if not they would not contribute its share of funding, nor would it send representatives to the upcoming territorial convention.<sup>57</sup> Such financial issues plagued the Edmonton YMCA which was attempting to funnel the majority of funding into its ever popular sporting programs. Paying into the coffers of oversight committees would have left the Edmonton YMCA in more dire straits than ever before.

The focus of the Edmonton YMCA education work rested within the military lecture series and the boy's parliament. The lecture series was introduced by the *Bulletin* on April 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>58</sup> Organized under the Executive Board's military committee, and hosted in the Red Triangle Hut, these lectures were reported to be well attended; in fact, the hut reportedly filled to capacity. Educational topics were still a draw for the men of Edmonton. Education after the First World War was more popular to YMCA men than religion. Education paved the way back into regular post-war society and led to better employment opportunities for most men. Religion, on the other hand, did no such thing. The boy's parliament was reported on often by the *Bulletin* as well.<sup>59</sup> An article for the boy's parliament appeared on October 16<sup>th</sup> when elections were to be held within the group.<sup>60</sup> Every member of the club aged 14 to 20 could vote for either the progressives or the moderates. The moderate party's platform proposed to manage all football, baseball, basketball, and hockey leagues among the church clubs. The progressives planned to increase the number of playgrounds and pools for girls and boys through taxation of all members. The latter platform would undoubtedly have been appreciated by the executive committee, and showed the younger membership of the Edmonton YMCA to be fiscally-minded, if not aware of the association's dire financial troubles.

Regarding the popularity of religion in Edmonton in 1920, the *Bulletin* published six articles associating the YMCA to a religious purpose. In April, it was announced that there would be discussions on civic issues, or the occasional lecture at the Sunday morning services, as opposed to religious sermons.<sup>61</sup> As these Sunday morning sermons were now operated by the military committee rather than the religious committee, this was not surprising. The men that the committee were trying to attract at that time were not necessarily of the religious mindset. Canada encountered a movement distinctly religiously-divergent in the immediate years following WWI.<sup>62</sup> Transitioning into civilian life was difficult for many men, and the pacifism which the churches embraced puzzled the men who had fought in the war under the church support and encouragement.<sup>63</sup>

On May 29<sup>th</sup>, when the *Bulletin* published the results of the YMCA annual meeting, religion was discussed only in the context of the CSET programming. The article described how each gymnasium group was partitioned up into Bible studies.<sup>64</sup> The 350 boys in that program were split into ten groups for religious instruction. The annual meeting mentioned religion only briefly, and divulged very little on the matter of Bible study groups. Meanwhile a plethora of information pertaining to the physical department was available within the text. No longer did religion feature as regularly in the newspapers. Bible studies had previously been a precursor held before gymnasium classes, along with hymnal singing. Bible studies also were required for the executive committee, as well as general members. With the executive committee encountering difficulties in sustaining Bible studies, the membership requirements became increasingly lax.

An article published by the *Bulletin* on November 27<sup>th</sup> held meaning for YMCA religious programming in conjunction with its relationship to the established churches in Edmonton.<sup>65</sup> The

YMCA had attempted a project in conjunction with the city churches in which after-church meetings were held from 9am to 10am at the Allen Theater. Held for both men and women, these meetings hosted special music and brief addresses from reverends throughout the city. The most recent meetings proved so popular that it was decided to continue them each Sunday evening. But it appeared that, under their own scheme, the churches and the YMCA could not attract an audience of young people solely for religious practice. An update was required to make religious meetings more attractive, to achieve such the YMCA and the churches had to operate in conjunction with one another. This shows the interdependence of the YMCA and the city churches; if one were to lose one's religious mandate and drop out of such activities, it is anyone's guess as to whether these meetings would continue, yet alone continue to be attractive.

In the sport world of the Edmonton YMCA, the Edmonton *Bulletin* reported on the upcoming banquet to be hosted and organized by the physical department.<sup>66</sup> The baseball, basketball, and track teams were expected to attend in full strength. A musical presentation was to be presented, along with medals and an address by Tom Best (a veteran YMCA officer). The *Bulletin* reported that the physical department banquet had not taken place since the 1914. It was attended by over 100 members and their friends.<sup>67</sup> Dr. Dunn, temporary physical director and member of the board, delivered a speech on the importance of a good physique, and that education is only of use when built on the foundations of a healthy body. This was a bold statement from the physical YMCA program as it placed the importance of its physical program stature over that of both religious and educational matters. The event wrapped up with a basketball exhibition game between the University of Alberta and the YMCA, further entrenching sport within all YMCA-hosted events.

In mid-May, the *Edmonton Bulletin* reported that a meeting was held by the Edmonton YMCA in order to form both a rugby club and league if possible.<sup>68</sup> In conjunction with Calgary rugby players, it was hoped that the sport would be picked up by many more young men to produce a new competitive provincial league. Later that month, readers of the *Bulletin* heard about a relatively new game called Freak Ball.<sup>69</sup> A league developed around it. The game was originally conceived in the format of indoor baseball, but moved outside. Six teams had already been registered and it was hoped that six more would join. This is remarkable for a couple of reasons: firstly, it could be assumed that indoor baseball players would simply switch to regular baseball when forced or desiring to play outdoors; secondly, it was one more sport and league that the Edmonton YMCA physical committee would need to organize and facilitate, making the number of sports programs offered by the Edmonton YMCA far higher than the number of religious program options available.

The summary of the annual meeting of the Edmonton YMCA reported that both boy's and businessmen's physical classes had doubled in number, although no actual statistics were given. Also, the meeting reported on the desire for light forms of amusement, which the board had provided and led to the increase in membership numbers. This is important for understanding the religious committee's struggle to attract members as, although not completely bleak in tone, religious events were not meant to be amusing, and it was amusement the men wanted.

In the month of July, the Edmonton Military Athletic Commission established an association sports meet. The events were to be exclusively military competitions but they were run in conjunction with the Edmonton YMCA. This was yet another athletic association with

which the YMCA interfaced, underscored by the temptation to focus solely on athletics which supported returned veterans and garnered large crowds. Economic benefits were envisioned.

In mid-August, the *Bulletin* once again reminded its readers of the importance of rambling clubs for boys.<sup>70</sup> Organized for boys who were unable to go camping or participate in summer activities that year, the YMCA decided to conduct a series of weekend hikes so long as the weather permitted. These rambling outings included camping over the weekend. Each boy was expected to bring his own blankets and food. Led by the boy's department, the trips concluded with a treasure hunt in the woods. While rambling trips could be considered an amusement rather than a sport, the event was undoubtedly a physical one. As these events were provided for those who could not participate in the day-to-day sports at the Edmonton YMCA, it was a form of athletic program outreach, again proving that sport had the capacity to gather young men more than any religious program yet to be introduced to the YMCA.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1920, the Edmonton city council provided \$1,200 to the YMCA for the provision of skating and hockey rinks on the south side of the city. As well as dispensing \$700 for rink maintenance.<sup>71</sup> The rinks, although under the auspice of the YMCA, were to be used by all community boy's hockey leagues throughout the city. The very fact that the YMCA received money from other organizations specifically for sport-related purposes cannot be ignored. Monies allotted for sporting purposes were used to the best advantage of the Edmonton Y.M.C.As. As far as can be determined, such external funding was never channelled to the department of religious programming.

In late December, the physical department had disturbing news to report to the executive. As previously mentioned, the YMCA minute book reported that two professional-level boxers had previously secured memberships without the knowledge of the board.<sup>72</sup> It was recommended

that their fees be remitted forthwith in accordance with the constitution, which maintained that no professional pugilists were accepted as members. The results of this meeting and what happened to the men were never recorded.

## **Conclusion**

During 1919 and 1920 the YMCA was not without opposition. As in years past opposition was typically leveled the YMCA organization as a whole, and not specifically the Edmonton YMCA. However such opposition was publicised in Edmonton and had effects on the Edmonton organization. On Christmas Eve, the Vatican issued a worldwide proclamation of exception to the world wide YMCA's teachings.<sup>73</sup> According to the Vatican, while the YMCA professed absolute free thought in matters of religious adherence, it instilled apostasy in all Catholic members who adhered to the organization. The Vatican believed that too many Catholics were YMCA members and that these members didn't realize the true nature of the organization, which corrupted the faith of Catholic youths. The impact of this statement on the Edmonton YMCA is unclear. What is clear is that all YMCA constitutions (which were made available to all members) detailed the association's adherence to Protestantism. It is not clear whether Catholic members were aware of these circumstances. However, the Holy See's public censure could have had the effect of causing Catholics to withdraw from the organization. In any case, this could have led to the formation of other Catholic boy's groups, meaning that more potential religious programming attendance was again being drawn away from the YMCAs making Edmonton's loss of religious programming in later years hardly surprising.

The third phase of the life cycle of the Edmonton YMCA was clearly reflective of a shift within Muscular Christianity post-WWI. This third phase was a period in which the first significant loss of religious tenets behind both Muscular Christianity and the Edmonton YMCA

occurred. The decline of religion was due to many significant factors including deteriorated interest in religious activities, and the complications caused by the institutionalized Church bodies' inability to remain relevant for veterans. This was in addition to a deteriorating financial solvency for the Edmonton YMCA and the ability of sport to draw crowds and money to hopefully repair the financial difficulties within the organization. As an organization that worked very closely with the institutionalized Edmonton Churches, changes had been made on both sides in order to meet needs of the returning veterans, as well as to accommodate the events most popular with the public. The Edmonton YMCA had to choose between providing sport programming above religious programming, while determining that, without the aid of the established Churches, the latter would have been impossible to sustain. As such, religious programming was not sustainable in the future. Even before the Second World War, religious programming was already in a drastic decline in the Edmonton YMCA. It had encountered a significant loss of interest and a gradual decrease of available programming monies both of which resulted in the eventual loss of religious practice in the institution all together.



## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> J.G. MacGregor, *Edmonton A History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1967), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 230.

<sup>5</sup> Carl Betke, "Sport Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," *Urban History Review*, 12:2. (October 1, 1983): p. 47-56.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1300111392/fulltextPDF?accountid=15115>

<sup>6</sup> See: *Edmonton Bulletin*, cross section of articles, Appendix A Table 1.

<sup>7</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 28<sup>th</sup> 1918, December 12, 1918.

<sup>8</sup> "The Ubiquitous Red Triangle," *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* (1848-1921) 92.3594 (Oct 20, 1917): pp. 132.

<sup>9</sup> "Red Triangle Hut Probably in Edmonton," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. November 23 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar0030

<sup>10</sup> "YMCA To Have Boxing Lessons," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 14 (1918): p. 1, Item Ar00109.

<sup>11</sup> "Four Evenly Matched Teams Will Play In Hockey League," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 18 (1918): p. 2, Item Ar00213; "Good Season Ahead of 'Y' Basketball Champions of Alta," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 18 (1918): p. 2, Item Ar00207.

<sup>12</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1918.

<sup>13</sup> "War Veterans Give Hint to Military 'Y'," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 4 (1918): p. 1, Item Ar00112.

<sup>14</sup> "Y Dormitory Men Hold Their Banquet," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 14 (1918): p. 2, Item Ar00207.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> "Y To Entertain Children Orphaned by Flu Epidemic," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, December 27 (1918): p. 3, Item Ar00316.

<sup>17</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 8<sup>th</sup> 1919. A specially called Executives meeting.

<sup>18</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 14<sup>th</sup> 1919.

<sup>19</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, January 15<sup>th</sup> 1919. Another specifically called emergency meeting.

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- <sup>20</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, February 6<sup>th</sup> 1919. Special called meeting.
- <sup>21</sup> "YMCA Debating Club Has Meeting Officers Elected," The *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. January 25 (1919): p. 3, Item Ar00313.
- <sup>22</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, February 10<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>23</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, February 26<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>24</sup> "Rev. A.S.Tuttle At the YMCA," The *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. February 24 (1919): p. 3, Item Ar00316.
- <sup>25</sup> "YMCA Debating Club," The *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. February 8 (1919): p. 3, Item Ar00309.
- <sup>26</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, March 5<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>27</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, March 10<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>28</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, March 26<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>29</sup> "The Church and Leadership," The *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. March 25<sup>th</sup> (1919): p. 3, Item Ar00320.
- <sup>30</sup> Mayer N. Zald & Patricia Denton, "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the Y.M.C.A," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 8:2. (September 1963): p. 218-224.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2390900.pdf?acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>
- <sup>31</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1919.
- <sup>32</sup> "Sport Comment," The *Edmonton Bulletin*, April 25 (1919): p. 5, Item Ar00506.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> "Get School Boys Riding," The *Edmonton Bulletin*, May 3 (1919): p. 6, Item Ar00604.
- <sup>35</sup> "Coming Events," The *Edmonton Bulletin*. April 3 (1919): p. 8, Item Ar00804.
- <sup>36</sup> "Labour Leaders Are Losers in YMCA Debate," The *Edmonton Bulletin*. April 4 (1919): p. 1, Item Ar00119.
- <sup>37</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, May 30<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>38</sup> "Whitewash is Given to All Men in ALTA," The *Edmonton Bulletin*. May 19 (1919): p. 5, Item Ar00514.
- <sup>39</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>40</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, August 12<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>41</sup> "YMCA to Follow Chautauqua Idea During Winter," The *Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, August 2 (1919): p. 3, Item Ar00312.
- <sup>42</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 21<sup>st</sup>, November 13<sup>th</sup> and December 19<sup>th</sup> 1919.

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- <sup>43</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1919.
- <sup>44</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 13<sup>th</sup> 1919.
- <sup>45</sup> "YMCA To Hold Week Of Prayer For Young Men," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. November 10 (1919): p. 2, Item Ar00207.
- <sup>46</sup> "YMCA Skating Rink," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 31 (1919): p. 1, Item Ar00122.
- <sup>47</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1920.
- <sup>48</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1920.
- <sup>49</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1920.
- <sup>50</sup> Colin K. Hatcher, *Y.M.C.A Edmonton: the first one hundred years* (Edmonton: Y.M.C.A of Edmonton, 2012), p. 29.
- <sup>51</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, September 10<sup>th</sup> 1920.
- <sup>52</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, September 20<sup>th</sup> 1920.
- <sup>53</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7 September 27<sup>th</sup> 1920.
- <sup>54</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7 October 29<sup>th</sup> 1920.
- <sup>55</sup> "Edmonton YMCA Annual Financial & Membership Canvass," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, October 9 (1920): p. 5, Item Ad00503\_6.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid
- <sup>57</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, November 15, December 30<sup>th</sup> 1920.
- <sup>58</sup> "O.C. Rugby Men To Meet At YMCA On Monday Night," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, May 15 (1920): p. 6, Item Ar00617.
- <sup>59</sup> "Boys' Parliament at YMCA Will Open on Friday Night," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, April 27 (1920): p. 3, Item Ar00312.
- <sup>60</sup> "Parliamentary Elections Will Be Held Oct 17," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, October 16 (1920): p. 3, Item Ar00306.
- <sup>61</sup> "YMCA Military Committee Shows Busy Months's Work," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, April 10 (1920): p. 7, Item Ar00717.
- <sup>62</sup> David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 136.
- <sup>63</sup> Seth Dowland, "War, Sports, and the Construction of Masculinity in American Christianity," *Religion Compass* 5/7 (2011): p. 356. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=1140b82a-bf84-4da5-8b4d-d131e9a510f4%40sessionmgr114&vid=0&hid=101&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=66589334>.

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<sup>64</sup> "Work of Past Year of the YMCA Under Review at Annual Meeting," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, May 29 (1920): p. 16, Item Ar01613.

<sup>65</sup> "YMCA Unites With Churches Sunday Night Next," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, November 27 (1920): p. 7, Item Ar00703.

<sup>66</sup> "Many Expected at 'Y' Physical Dept Banquet," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, April 16 (1920): p. 6, Item Ar00621.

<sup>67</sup> "Physical Dept of YMCA Held Good Banquet," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, April 19 (1920): p. 3, Item Ar00308.

<sup>68</sup> "O.C. Rugby Men To Meet at YMCA on Monday Night," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, May 15 (1920): p. 6, Item Ar00617.

<sup>69</sup> "New League Will Play Freak Ball," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, May 22 (1920): p. 10, Item Ar01022.

<sup>70</sup> "Week-end Hikes to be Held this fall by YMCA," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, August 13 (1920): p. 6, Item Ar00608.

<sup>71</sup> "Ald. East Interposes In Mayor Whitelaw Incident, Corroborating Statement Made in Clarke's Letter," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*, December 1 (1920): p. 3, Item Ar00302.

<sup>72</sup> "The Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association Minutes," PR 1968.210 Box 1 Folder 7, December 23 1920.

<sup>73</sup> "Decree From Rome Takes Exception to Y.M.C. Teaching," *The Edmonton Bulletin City Edition*. December 24 (1920): p. 6, Item Ar00607.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Every incarnation of the Edmonton YMCA, from its initial conception as the EYMI in 1898 through 1904, had an expressed purpose and goal. From the creation of the EYMI and its transition into the YMCA to 1920 there was always an underlying strategy for success. The loss of religion with the Edmonton institution was one of both unfortunate financial and ill-planned program circumstances and of purposeful refocusing of programming to areas of better public interest. Businessmen of Edmonton strove to groom a specific type of young man from the boys of Edmonton, from settlement through the Victorian era. They accomplished this through the creation of clubs for both boys and men. In the education of these young men, groomed through male organizations, businessmen were designing what they believed to be the leaders of Edmonton's future. Examination of the EYMI minutes, the YMCA minute books, as well as local newspaper coverage, displayed the regard in which religious instruction was programmed. But the rise in athletic content inversely related to the decline in religious content.

The EYMI focused on producing the next generation of respectable businessmen. The executive committee promoted the development of "boys and young men as leaders in the community."<sup>1</sup> In this way, the leaders of the first official Edmonton young men's group, through education (via reading room) and physical activity (via gymnasium) instructed that "manliness had to be earned, by mastering the circumstances of life."<sup>2</sup> Such manliness gave to a man leadership qualities representing the early first wave Muscular Christian version of the Christian gentleman. The first wave of Muscular Christian thought was introduced to male groups and associations such as the YMCA of Canada from 1840-1880. It focused heavily upon Christian

practices of piety, prayer, Bible study, and education. Such skills were considered by YMCA and other Muscular Christian leaders to be necessary in the modern industrialized world. Their effort was made in order to “rescue” newly-arrived young men from vice and, thus, prevent their downfall.

Athletics, already prevalent and popular in Edmonton public circles, became important to the EYMI. While the EYMI did not focus heavily upon religious piety, education supported through the churches of the social gospel movement and intrinsically linked to Muscular Christianity was important to the EYMI committee and its membership. Education and athletic instruction supported by early Muscular Christians was delivered through EYMI instruction. Without an overt EYMI religious agenda, such programming proved to be attractive to Edmonton’s middle class and well-to-do young men. Although possible, it is highly unlikely that the EYMI held a specifically religious mandate within its constitution, as its goal was to produce future businessmen who were Christian gentlemen.

During the era when the EYMI and YMCA operated in Edmonton from 1907 to 1920, the city was quintessentially Victorian; citizens dealt with rapid developments in the economy as well as population growth, especially White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. The Victorian era engendered a culture of men greatly concerned with health and the benefits derived of physical activity. The goal of grooming young Edmonton gentlemen through sport and educational programming offered by the EYMI was accomplished to a small extent. As the EYMI lapsed into non-existence and eventually re-formed as the Edmonton YMCA, there was a distinct spike in the religiosity of the organization. The EYMI, although not religious in origin, did foster the first stage Muscular Christian principle of education and healthy practices to keep young men “safe”

from immoral activities. These principles were established and furthered through the religious and sporting endeavours of the Edmonton YMCA.

The transition of the EYMI into the Edmonton YMCA was a four-year process (1903-1906) in which financial fundraising goals were achieved and invested in the financing of property and the building of a YMCA headquarters. Officially established in 1907, the Edmonton YMCA attempted to fulfill the task of saving young men by principally keeping them away from vice. During this early period (1907-1914), Muscular Christian perspectives shifted within the Edmonton men's organization: no longer was a Muscular Christian gentleman only pious and devoted to prayer and education. Rather, the gentleman was expected to be a well-rounded individual capable of participating in a range of physical activities. Second phase Muscular Christian men were taught to "live for sport until marriage."<sup>3</sup> Once married, he was expected to fulfill his masculine duties by becoming both the provider and the religious head of the household. By 1900, many of the British and American YMCAs had begun "to reduce their religious services because of the low public response to [those] programs."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Edmonton was in its infancy and, through the YMCA, young men were soon receiving instruction which predominantly occurred between the years 1880 and 1914 throughout Great Britain, the United States and Canada. The changes that occurred demonstrated the Edmonton YMCA's dedication to what may be referred to as second phase muscular Christianity, that is, developing well-rounded individuals of Christian-influenced values. Unlike America and Britain Edmonton had not yet delved into the third phase of Muscular Christianity.

As previously noted, the second phase of the Muscular Christian Movement was a shift from first-phase Muscular Christian pure-piety for men into the YMCA-programmed religious and educational and athletic/physical endeavors. The Edmonton YMCA encouraged men to

become men for whom sporting prowess was the new Christian character trait to achieve above all others. This occurred in Edmonton from 1903 onwards. Edmonton leaders followed the worldwide shift in Muscular Christianity determining what sorts of masculinity were important. In other words, in second phase Muscular Christianity, Christian values were cultivated through sporting prowess.

With the genesis of the Edmonton YMCA, the Edmonton *Bulletin* news editors were quick to realize the attraction of sport (both commercial and amateur) to their readership. With that, they also realized the YMCA's role within the social atmosphere of the rapidly growing city. By the end of 1914, Edmontonians had become fully engrossed in athletics both as participants and as consumers.<sup>5</sup>

Given that a transition from religious study to education and sport-related programming seemed difficult to avoid, it was the Edmonton executives who fostered and furthered these changes. The association's popularity through the second phase of Muscular Christianity focused little on a religious agenda. From 1906 through 1914, the YMCA of Edmonton did not exist to simply promote a Muscular Christian message and provide physical activity services; it also molded the future generation of Christian gentlemen through sport programming. Edmonton's young men were more receptive to Christian ideals through athletics and the celebration of active, sporting masculinities as opposed to specifically religious programs.

The Edmonton YMCA during the First World War, from July 1914 through November 1918, did not alter its Muscular Christian physical and educational programming. It was, however, a period of drastic change for the YMCA and for Edmonton citizens. Programming changes at the YMCA focused on Boy's Work athletics as well as war time camp services, both of which became immensely popular, prompting a shift in the programming priorities of the



YMCA. While the significant loss of religious tenets in the Edmonton YMCA programming became evident during the war years, the underlying ideals of Muscular Christianity to produce a well-rounded sporting male remained. The war's demand for able-bodied men showcased the YMCA's capacity to produce such healthy and muscular males for war service.

Sport, Boy's Work, and War Work marginalized religious programming at the YMCA. The Protestant Church experienced difficulties with male secularization, as too did the YMCA also have trouble re-introducing religious programming towards the end of the war and in the post-war period. Men who had witnessed the devastation of war had difficulty reconciling the wartime version of Jesus as warrior, with the meek and mild Jesus of post-war church teaching. After the war, it is possible that the religious agenda of the YMCA was not simply misplaced or forgotten but shifted back into the hands of the Protestant Church, and its denominationally based boys' groups. The Protestant Church's attempts at reclaiming men into the pews rather than simply into Christian organizations was a goal that was in direct competition with YMCA post-war efforts to reclaim war-weary members.

Just as second phase Muscular Christianity had supported athletics to construct masculinity, so too did the Edmonton YMCA during the First World War. Churches claimed to have attempted to avoid war. However, once war was upon them, they supported it and they called it a just war. In that perspective, Canadian churches viewed it as a war for democracy and for the good of humanity. Indeed, both the Protestant Churches and the YMCA encouraged young men to join the military. The YMCA participated in its own demise, as enlistment nearly bankrupted the institution. Over 400 Edmonton men from the YMCA organizational structure, both lay-members and executive officers, joined the military overseas.

Norman Vance writes, “as respect for theology declines it has become less necessary to argue for the theological respectability of ordinary human passions and enthusiasms.”<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, it follows that as men returned from the war, having been unable to reconcile Christ with warfare, they no longer strove to understand the theology that informed their actions during or even after the war. Theology or even simple religious instruction for non-believers within the organization was no longer an attraction, especially for the veterans, who could hardly reconcile the two opposing images of Christ (the warrior and pacifist) to which they had been exposed. While theology without question influenced society, after the First World War, it was society that had a greater lasting impact on theology. Many men, both within and outside the YMCA, were unhappy with the YMCA’s war efforts. YMCAs overseas and at home came to accept a tougher, grittier form of men.<sup>7</sup> To maintain membership levels, the YMCA relaxed its moral code and opened its doors to rougher men.

The new focus during the war was placed upon businessmen’s programming, as well as boy’s programming. Additional military camp work shifted YMCA focus away from religious instruction, for more immediate deeds. Fundraising and attracting larger non-war-displaced membership groups became a priority. The YMCA military camp work focused on recreational activities, while the churches focused on theological activities which fell short of the mark of converting and retaining Protestant membership. While second phase Muscular Christianity worked on developing men into soldiers, it could not address the psychological devastation of war or help returning veterans return to a more sedate form of Christianity.

The Muscular Christian notion of manliness that had previously rebranded old norms of chivalry into Christian virtues had turned back into secular notions of masculinity that the YMCA could no longer claim if it was to substantiate its Muscular Christian mandate.<sup>8</sup> Each

time the Edmonton YMCA adjusted its focus due to societal demands, its grasp on soteriology and its mission to save young men's souls slipped further and further away. Such drastic changes to the sporting and athletically-influenced theological beliefs within the second stage of Muscular Christianity aided the YMCA's development as a social service provider. The Edmonton YMCA made the transition into a purely social service organization by the end of the third phase of Muscular Christianity in a relatively quick fashion. The third stage of Muscular Christianity, emerging after the war, meant a decline of both religious instruction and theology.

In the two years (1919-1920) immediately following the First World War, the YMCA significantly turned away from its religious practices. Significant changes in male attitudes towards Christianity also occurred. The effects of the First War and the beginning of secularism within the Edmonton YMCA were readily apparent in Edmonton. The Edmonton YMCA shifted as a direct result of the new post-WWI Muscular Christianity.

The third phase of Muscular Christianity was characterized by a significant loss of religious tenets within the Edmonton YMCA's governing structure and its programming. The decline in religion was due to factors such as a deteriorating interest in religious activities, theology, and the difficulty of institutionalized church bodies to remain relevant to men. The deteriorating financial solvency of the Edmonton YMCA and the ability of sport to draw crowds and money also aided in the loss of religion as a mandate within the organization. As an organization that worked very closely with the institutionalized city churches, changes were made by the YMCA and Protestant Churches in order to meet the needs of not only the returning veterans, but the public as well. The Edmonton YMCA faced conflict between providing sport programming above religious programming, and theological methods of teaching. It eventually

determined that, without the aid of the established churches the latter would be difficult to sustain, even if there was a will to do so.

According to Putney, returning veterans had “demonstrated their manhood on the battlefield... they had scant need to demonstrate it again on the playing field,”<sup>9</sup> yet, Edmonton YMCA veteran members continued to seek out athletic fields for enjoyment and to celebrate masculine values and competition through sport. Religious programming in the Edmonton YMCA encountered a significant loss in both interest and available programming monies. As such, it was already in a drastic decline before the Second World War. This resulted in the association’s eventual loss of religious practice all together.

While evidence abounds with regard to the YMCA organization worldwide and its eventual depletion of religious programming and transformation into a social service provider, more research in the regional variations of organizations is required. Regional organizations like the Edmonton YMCA all have individual histories demonstrating the loss in religious practices. Where Muscular Christian organizations such as the YMCA discontinued religious programming, others continued in their stead, albeit on a much smaller scale and predominantly through the churches. In 1938, James Taylor, a former member of the YMCA, wrote an article entitled “What’s Wrong with the YMCA?” He concluded that, “it has become palpably evident that despite the name the average association is neither a young men’s organization not particularly Christian in character.”<sup>10</sup> By 1920, the Edmonton YMCA was no exception.

Other YMCA organizations throughout the world should be examined at the local level to determine how such a distinct reversal in mandates occurred. The loss in religious mandate may not have occurred as rapidly within other organizations. As such, more research must be completed in order to fully understand the decline in Muscular Christian ethics and religious

instruction within the YMCA organization worldwide. The YMCA had a significant impact on social life in cities like Edmonton and the organization was forced to adapt in order to survive. Edmonton's Young Men's Institute and Young Men's Christian Association were designed for the purpose of rescuing young men from the vice of the city's rapid expansion. While differences in programming and what was determined to be the number one priority in each existed, certain stages of the Edmonton YMCA's evolution coincided with the developments of Muscular Christianity within a Victorian society. Newspapers and executive programming records prove the eventual shift from a religious-orientated men's association to a social service provider with scant religious vestiges. The Edmonton YMCA by the year 1920 had endured the three stages of Muscular Christianity and successfully emerged as a social service provider. It remains an extremely popular institution within the city. While religious programming became less and less of a focus for the association, evidence is clear that society and religion's place within it had changed. As a social institution the Edmonton YMCA was destined to follow that change.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Colin K. Hatcher, *YMCA Edmonton: the first one hundred years* (Edmonton: YMCA of Edmonton, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> John Tosh, "Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth series*, vol 12 (2002) pp. 455-472. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3679357>.

<sup>3</sup> Dominic Erdozain, *The Problem With Pleasure: Sport, Recreation, and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010), p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Mayer N. Zald and Patricia Denton, "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the YMCA," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol 8 no 2 (September 1963) pp. 214-234. [http://www.jstor.org/stable/2390900?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2390900?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).

<sup>5</sup> Carl Betke, "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton," *Urban History Review*, vol 12:2. (October 1 1983) pp. 47-56.

<sup>6</sup> Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 167.

<sup>7</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> Erdozain, *The Problem With Pleasure: Sport, Recreation, and the Crisis of Victorian Religion*, p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> Putney, *Muscular Christianity: manhood and sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> James Taylor, "What's Wrong with the YMCA?" *Forum and Century* (1930-1940), vol C: 4 (October 1938) p.147. Accessed August 2014. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/90859209?pq-origsite=summon>.

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## Appendix A

**Table 1: Newspaper Reports by Year and Topic (1899-1920)**

	18 - 99	19 - 00	19 - 01	19 - 02	19 - 03	19 - 04	19 - 05	19 - 06	19 - 07	19 - 14	19 - 15	19 - 16	19 - 17	19 - 18	19 - 19	19 - 20
Sport	1	1	2	3	3			4	5	34	48	37	29	40	90	77
Religion						1		6	5	8	11	7	5	7	3	6
Education	2		4	6				3	4	17	15	4	4	4	5	7
War Work										1	25	31	37	33	39	5
Boy's Work									0	20	8	12	42	24	14	31
Personal								1	3		2	2	8	11		
Edmonton/ Executive Matters	4					4	2	18	14	3	5	1	1	3	22	29
Outreach													1	1	18	22
Misc	1	4	1	1		6	2	4	7	13	18	22	14	19		
SOS														10		
Men's Work						4				4					16	13

**Table 2: Minute Reports by Year and Topic (1899-1920)**

	18 - 99	19 - 00	19 - 01	19 - 02	19 - 06	19 - 07	19 - 14	19 - 15	19 - 16	19 - 17	19 - 18	19 - 19	19 - 20
Sport	1	8	2	9		9	3	6	4	4	7	11	8
Religion						19	1	2	6	10	7	10	3
Education	1	0	3	3	2	7	2	1	2	3	1	2	2
Misc	1	2	4	2			1	19				7	8
Important Executive Business	5	2	4		10	9	8						
Boys Work					1	5	4	11	15	9	12	8	2
War Work								15	5	7	4	13	4
Funding					2	15	16	19					
Attendance	8	1				6	1						
Building					6	5							

## Appendix B

**Table 3: Thematic Associations**

Years Covered	General Protestant Thought	Edmonton Executive Thought and Promotion	Popular Literature
Chapter 2: EYMI 1898-1904	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protestant Doctrine of Faith as legitimately derived from word of God</li> <li>• Protestant scholasticism seen as substitute for bibliolatry</li> <li>• 1850s development of Protestant welfare institutions (chapels, schools, baths, etc.</li> <li>• Protestant expectations of moral development created</li> <li>• The 'forward' movement of Protestant missionaries</li> <li>• Protestant groups struggle to reach consensus of common mission</li> <li>• Evangelicals and second coming at any moment (pre-millennial) theology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of Gymnasium space and Christian gentleman rules by which to govern it</li> <li>• The institution of lacrosse as a wholesome Canadian specific game</li> <li>• Allowance of Women as spectators</li> <li>• Prayer to open both committee meetings and general assembly meetings</li> <li>• Muscular Christian ethics applied to sport, education and matters of business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898- Ralph Connor: Black Rock</li> <li>• 1898- H.G. Wells: The War of the Worlds</li> <li>• 1899- Ralph Connor: Sky Pilot</li> <li>• 1899- Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness</li> <li>• 1901- Conrad/Mattox Ford: The Inheritors</li> <li>• 1902- Wister: The Virginian</li> <li>• 1903- Jack London: The Call of the Wild</li> <li>• 1904- Winston Churchill: The Crossing</li> </ul>
Chapter 3: YMCA 1906-1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of non-denominational journals of protestant theology</li> <li>• Approaching crisis in established missionary methods of Protestant Churches</li> <li>• Christian message needing to be changed for a new consumerist culture</li> <li>• Competition of leisure activities offered through the Protestant churches</li> <li>• Espousing of muscular fitness as a part of piety</li> <li>• Decline in Sabbath observance in Protestant Churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition faced by church based organizations</li> <li>• Explicit explanations of associations past and purpose to the future</li> <li>• Executive focus on fundraising through multiplication of programming</li> <li>• Christian ethic tied in with public concerns to develop programming</li> <li>• Executive focus on sport, education, religion, and building matters</li> <li>• Executives concerned with funds and governance while</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1906- Upton Sinclair: The Jungle</li> <li>• 1907- Robert W. Chambers: The Younger Set</li> <li>• 1908- John Fox Jr: The Trail of the Lonesome Pine</li> <li>• 1909- Emerson Hough: 54-40 or Fight</li> <li>• 1910- C.N. &amp; A.M Williamson: Lord Loveland Discovers America</li> <li>• 1911- Jeffrey Farnol: The Broad Highway</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban society set aside Sunday for leisure: Churches fall in-line with new agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public interested in programs</li> <li>• Powerful executive religion comity sub-group</li> <li>• Importance of religious constitution adoption</li> <li>• Increased focus on Physical department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1912- Gene Stratton Porter: The Harvester</li> <li>• 1913- Winston Churchill: The Inside of the Cup</li> <li>• 1914- Harold Bell Wright: The Eyes of the World</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 4:</p> <p>The War Years</p> <p>1914-1918</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope of military theology work and aid activity increases drastically</li> <li>• World Alliance for International Friendship develops in Protestant Churches</li> <li>• Pacifist groups serve in auxiliary manner of humanitarian aid, nursing, ambulance, etc.</li> <li>• Knights of Columbus (Catholic) work in conjunction with Protestant military service groups</li> <li>• Protestant Christian rationale developed for: preparedness, mobilization, espionage, and justified killing</li> <li>• Theological campuses fertile ground for recruitment</li> <li>• Battle as divine crusade, and war as redemptive for moral reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to create programs of a nature to increase funds</li> <li>• Non-membership classes to increase revenue</li> <li>• Boy's work as the main home front focus of programming</li> <li>• Executives lead both YMCA and other sport organization groups</li> <li>• Increase in war work and further depletion of funds</li> <li>• Amusements shifted into gentlemanly sports (billiards)</li> <li>• CSET programming and executive concerns over school implementation</li> <li>• Forced to have fees for military memberships</li> <li>• Attempt at fixing prayer habits</li> <li>• Religious extension work implemented but missed mark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1915- Zane Grey: The Lone Ranger</li> <li>• 1916- Booth Tarkington: Seventeen</li> <li>• 1917- H.G. Wells: Mr. Brithling Sees it Through</li> <li>• 1918- Zane Grey: The U.P. Trail</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 5:</p> <p>Post War</p> <p>1918-1920</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissolution of WWI lead to social attitudes changes and religious response</li> <li>• Pacifism movements take lead in Protestant Churches</li> <li>• Associate theology with theistic philosophy: rational explanations of faith (post-millennial)</li> <li>• Ramp-up of localized Christian Endeavour Societies to reach young people and give them voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport promotion main focus</li> <li>• Concern with overdue taxes</li> <li>• Increase in boy's sport programming</li> <li>• Increase in muscular Christian facilities for community and leagues</li> <li>• National organization requests for funding upsets executive board</li> <li>• Previous loss of leadership to war participation still felt</li> <li>• Development and purchase of Red Triangle Hut</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1919- Vincente Blasco Ibanez: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse</li> <li>• 1920- Zane Grey: The Man of the Forest</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revitalization of the Sunday School movement</li> <li>• Fellowship of Reconciliation developed amongst Protestant societies</li> <li>• No longer had salvation been reserved for middle to upper-class. (Woodsworth) Mission work in slums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borrowed furnishings with no repayment plan</li> <li>• Continuous forecast of deficits</li> <li>• Meetings back to devotional exercises</li> <li>• Development of specific YMCA sport grounds</li> </ul>	
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For Table 3 Info See: David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.); Henry Warner Bowden, *Dictionary of American Religious Biography* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993.); "Bestsellers," *Publishers Weekly*, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/bestsellers/>.

## Curriculum Vitae

**Name:** Courtney van Waas

**Education** Marvel College, Fashion Design/Apparel Production Graduate August 2009.

University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
May 2013. B.A.

The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
September 2015 M.A.

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

University of Western Ontario, Fall 2013

TA KIN 3370 Special Topics in Kinesiology

- Responsible for Site updates, Grading of bi-weekly reports, midterm, and final papers.

University of Western Ontario, Fall 2014

RA KIN Research Assistant

University of Western Ontario, Winter 2014, 2015

TA KIN 2032 Research Design in Human Movement Science

- Responsible for teaching Labs, and grading of lab reports, also responsible for monthly research papers.

### AWARDS

Recipient of Funding Package University of Western Ontario 2013-2014

Recipient of 2011 G. E. Bussieres Scholarship

Recipient of 2006 G E. Bussieres Scholarship

Two time recipient of Jason Lang Scholarship

Recipient of Alexander Rutherford Scholarship grades 10-12

### PUBLICATIONS

2012 Alberta Museum Association December Magazine, Featured Apprenticeship Article

### Conferences

Mackintosh Conference Presenter 2015

NASSH Conference Presenter 2015