

Highlands homes:

# THE HUMPHREYS RESIDENCE

**T**he property at 11142 - 62 Street was home to the Leonard Humphreys family for 20 years, from 1916 to 1936. Mr. Humphreys, a teacher and later the principal at McCauley School, rented the house from owner Herbert Baker for five years, and then bought it in 1922.

Mr. Humphreys, who had been a schoolmaster in England, came to Canada with dreams of farming but soon learned that he was better suited to his original vocation.

The Humphreys had three daughters and one son: Connie, Marjorie, Erica and Jack. Each of the Humphreys' offspring married people from the Highlands, and they all lived in the Highlands for at least part of their adult lives.

Connie married Fred Dear who, according to the 1941 Henderson's directory, was an employee of the City of Edmonton. They lived in a house they built on 63 Street until they retired.

Marjorie married Doug Cobbleddick, son of the Reverend George Cobbleddick, who served as Minister at Highlands United Church from 1917 to 1921.

Marjorie and Doug (a lawyer at Lymburn, Reid and Cobbleddick) also lived in the Highlands for many years.

In the mid-1940s, Erica married Adrian Magrath, son of William and Ada Magrath, founders of the Highlands.

Before her marriage, for about 20 years, Erica had worked as a secretary for the provincial government, and for part of that time she was secretary to the Minister of Education.

After living downtown for a couple of years, Erica and Adrian moved to 11136 - 62 Street, the house next door to Erica's childhood home.

Jack married Brownie Joburn, and they lived in the Highlands until Jack was transferred to Toronto by his employer, the Swift's packing plant.

The "Humphreys Residence" was the first property in the Highlands to receive a building permit from the City of Edmonton. The Magrath Holgate Company received the permit on March 26, 1912, just three months after the new subdivision had been approved. The contractor was L.A. Webb.

Technically, this house is the "Baker Residence," since Herbert Baker was its first owner.



However, Mr. Baker lived at this address for only two or three years. He subsequently lived in two other houses in the Highlands, one of which (6274 Ada Boulevard) is now known as the Baker Residence.

Harry L. Wells, salesman for Revillon Wholesale, rented the house in 1915. He also moved on to another address in the Highlands for two or three more years before moving to the Groat Estates area and then leaving the city in the late 1920s.

When Leonard Humphreys died in 1936, the house was sold to William Winkelaar, who rented it to Nathan E. Tanner, Alberta's Minister of Lands and Mines. After the Honourable Mr. Tanner moved out in 1939, Mr. Winkelaar converted the house into two apartments.

At this time, new construction had been halted because of the war effort, and there was a serious housing shortage in Edmonton. The Canadian government therefore encouraged the owners of large homes to convert them into multi-family dwellings.

In 1940-41, the tenants of Mr. Winkelaar included none other than Mrs. Leonard Humphreys and daughter Erica.

Mr. Winkelaar sold the house in 1950 to Violet and Charles Curtis, and Bessie McNabb was the owner from 1959 to 1978. In 1978, Wilda and Doug Noyce bought the house. They converted it back to a single family home and lived there until 1990.

Although it served as a home for two families for approximately 40 years, the Humphreys house is essentially the same as when it was originally constructed.

The bellcast and bracketed eaves and the diamond-shaped window panes are still there. So is the caragana hedge.

The current owners, Val Cummings and John Bandur, have rebuilt the front porch, which had been removed in the 1970s. The sunroom they have added at the back, facing west, provides the light and brightness people look for in a modern home.

But, this addition also retains the traditional American Foursquare style of the rest of the house. For their excellent efforts in restoration and renovation, Val and John received an award from the Society for the Preservation of Architectural Resources in Edmonton (SPARE).

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