

MANITOBA
MEMORIES

BY GLEN MACKENZIE

Crescentwood: Former home of the city's elite

Most Winnipeggers consider Tuxedo and River Heights to be home to the city's most prominent and wealthy families.

But, many decades before that (and to some extent right through to this day), Winnipeg's wealthiest of the wealthy lived east of there, in mansions facing tree-lined streets in the always-attractive neighbourhood called Crescentwood.

Bounded roughly by the Assiniboine River, Cambridge Street, Grosvenor Avenue and Wellington Crescent, the community saw its first development thanks to the efforts of an American, Charles Henry Enderton.

According to *Crescentwood: A History* by Randy Rostecki, Enderton was born in Lafayette, Ind. He practised law in St. Paul, Minn., before heading north to Winnipeg in the spring of 1890.

Enderton used his U.S. business connections to undertake the first major development in Winnipeg since the 1882 flood shafted land values that had soared when the city began to develop after the Canadian Pacific Railway made Winnipeg one of its major centres.

(The good ol' CPR bought land here cheaply after prices became inflated in Selkirk, when many unfortunate land speculators thought that city would become our railway centre.)

The C.H. Enderton Company started selling homes in Crescentwood in September 1902. The dwellings were subject to building rules that demanded the houses be well back from the streets and also restricted how the land could be used. The rules even set forth the value of the residences that would be sold.

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But Enderton did more than just build houses. He gave the city Crescentwood Park and supported the Crescentwood Horticultural Association's efforts at area beautification — to the extent he allowed a greenhouse to be built on one of his unsold lots.

Enderton died suddenly in 1920 at age 56 while driving his car along Academy Road near Montrose Street.

Ironically, he was one of the few really prominent Winnipeggers who didn't live in Crescentwood. A lifelong bachelor, Enderton made his home at the Fort Garry Court Apartments.

(The once-posh

apartment block, on Broadway across from the Manitoba Club, became home to some of Winnipeg's least affluent residents before it was destroyed by fire in early 1976.)

One of the most stately Crescentwood homes belonged to Winnipeg's most prominent and affluent resident: James A. Richardson. He and his wife, Muriel, shared the 475 Wellington Cres. home from the time they bought it (about 1918) until James' death in 1939.

After Muriel died in 1973, the family donated the land to the city and it became Munson Park, a walking park named for John Munson, the man from whom the Richardsons bought their home. Munson was a Winnipeg barrister who first built a home on that site in 1888.

The neighbourhood has gone through changes in the character of its residences over the years. One house on Dorchester Avenue near Stafford Street (just one street outside Enderton's original Crescentwood development), a long-time family home, became a cooperative in about 1970 and housed several young students for more than two decades.

But, during a 1992 provincial by-election, a sign appeared on the lawn for the Progressive Conservative candidate! The house was later acquired by a University of Manitoba education professor.