

Surveying the future

From the
ARCHIVES

Two key elements spurred increased economic development in this region very early on — the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company's Trading Post and later the planning and construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad.

Land speculators, developers and surveyors arrived anticipating the development of a future town site. Uncertainty over exactly where the railroad station and other support features would be located led to the creation of three competing town sites: South Fort George, Central Fort George and Fort George.

The task of surveying and subdividing began. Frederick P. Burden, the namesake of Burden Street in the Central Subdivision, was one of the first surveyors to arrive.

Mr. Burden was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick in 1874 and received his primary education in a one-room country schoolhouse. He completed his high school education in the capital city and then attended normal school completing courses and qualifying as a teacher.

He taught for a year in his old schoolhouse before enrolling at the University of New Brunswick. He took courses in both arts and engineering and graduated in arts in 1900. Mr. Burden took a one-year post-graduate course in Engineering at McGill University and then headed west to British Columbia.

Mr. Burden joined two friends, both University of New Brunswick graduates, in Nelson and they formed a land surveying company. He passed the British Columbia Land Surveyors Exam in 1903 and the Green Brothers, Burden and Co. worked together until the company branched out. In 1910, Mr. Burden came to Prince George to open an office for the firm. The first job was the surveying and subdividing of the Central Fort George town



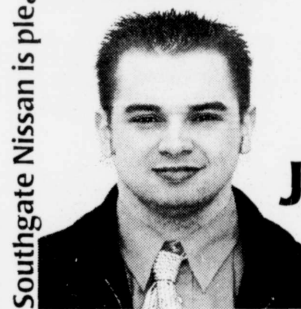
Fred Burden

site. He later subdivided the Grand Trunk Pacific town site (now downtown Prince George).

He was the General Manager for the Fraser Timber Syndicate in the early 1920s, which undertook studies for the proposed construction of a pulp mill. In 1928 he was elected to the provincial legislature as a Conservative member for Fort George and served as Minister of Lands for a short time before being appointed Agent General for B.C. in London, England.

After resigning in 1935 to return to private practice as a land surveyor in Prince George, Mr. Burden represented the BC Government with regards to land acquisition during the construction of the Alaska Highway.

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