

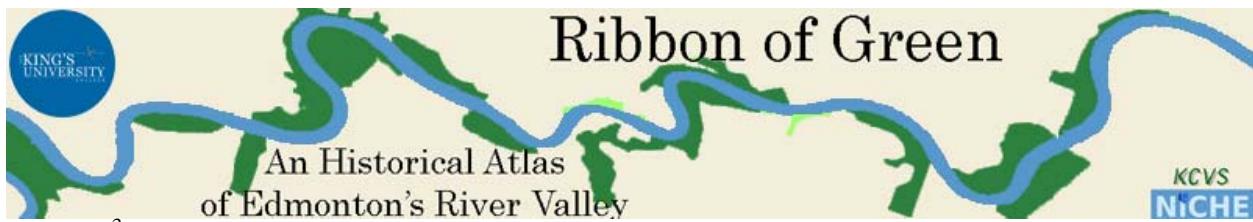
T'was the Night Before ... Opening day?

Written by Katie Wallbaum

In the lead-up to Edmonton's grand opening of the multi-million dollar Capital City Recreation Park, there were many finishing touches and last-minute additions put into place. Like a teenage girl putting the finishing touches on her make-up before prom, Edmonton's park department was hard at work ensuring that the CCRP was at its finest for its first public reveal. In June, just one month before the park's big opening day, thousands of trees and shrubs were feverishly being planted throughout the river valley.¹ Not only were planters hard at work but so too were the contractors hired to build the facilities and trail system throughout the park. All the time, hard work, and money put into the final stages of the CCRP was in preparation for the 70,000 people expected for the opening of the park. The opening ceremonies were set to begin at the Legislative grounds and then proceed to the Cloverdale/Rundle/Gold Bar Parks to celebrate the finished project which, in the end, is "twice the size of Vancouver's Stanley Park, [and] covers more than 3,000 acres of land and water, embracing the North Saskatchewan River for 16 kilometres."² The *Edmonton Journal* praised the work of the city and the province, saying "this park places Edmonton among the most fortunate cities in North America in regard to natural, open space. The river valley has always been a dominant visual feature of the this city, [but] first-hand enjoyment of the valley has been constrained by difficult access and often rugged

¹ "River valley is spruced up," in the *Edmonton Journal*, June 13, 1978.

² "70,000 are expected for park's opening," in the *Edmonton Journal*, June 21, 1978.



terrain.”³ In the eyes of the *Journal*, the city council, the provincial government, and the citizens of Edmonton, the CCRP was a huge success that warranted the large ceremonies and celebrations planned for opening day.

³ “Capital City Park,” in the *Edmonton Journal*, July 8, 1978.