



# Sylvan Lake & DISTRICT ARCHIVES

*Preserving the Past ~ For Future Generations*

## END OF AN ERA

Grain elevators were part of the western prairie landscape that was taken for granted for many years. They were utilitarian buildings, strung along the railways very few miles, close enough to be within horse-and-wagon distance of area farmers.

The Sylvan Lake Alberta Wheat Pool elevators were built in 1906. They towered over the downtown core of the community until 1999 from their location at 50 Avenue (Railway Avenue) between 46 and 50 Streets, on the Canadian National Railway line (Now Railway Plaza).

Victims of changing economies in agriculture, these iconic structures gradually disappeared. Railway system changes were a major factor in their demise along with the expensive upkeep and insurance. High levels of grain dust made for perfect conditions for explosions and extreme fires. Originally built to handle a horse and wagon the large trucks and semis found it increasing difficult to maneuver in the small spaces. All these factors made the smaller town facilities no longer profitable including the Sylvan Lake elevators.

After hours of preparation on May 20, 1999 the Sylvan Lake elevators went down, taking all of 8 seconds to topple into a great plume of dust. The event attracted a large crowd of onlookers who saw the iconic buildings become nothing more than a pile of lumber once the dust cleared.

Following the demolition, local grain went to the bigger, more modern and efficient facility with space suited to the bigger trucks at Niobe between Penhold and Innisfail on highway 2A.

## Contact Us!

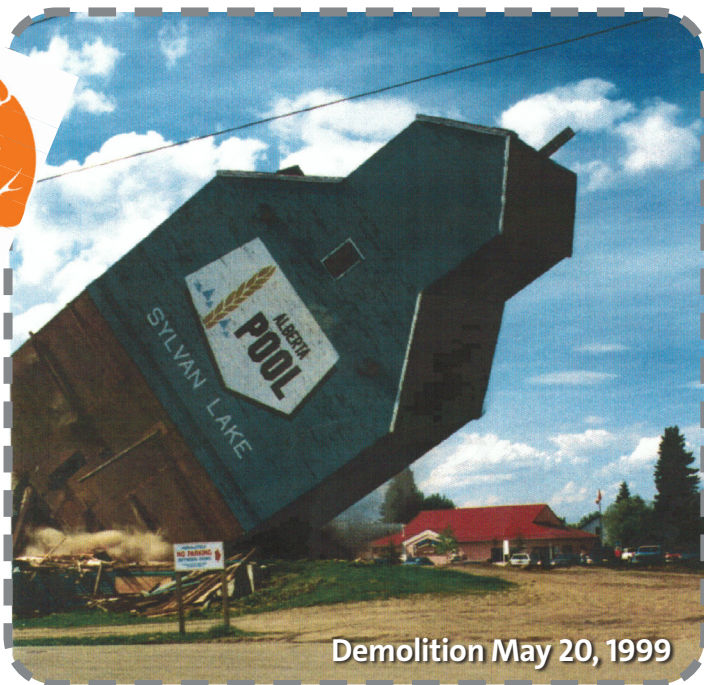
5012 48 Avenue, Sylvan Lake, T4S 1A2

T 403 887 1185 Ext. 262

E [archives@sylvanlake.ca](mailto:archives@sylvanlake.ca)

 [@sylvanlakearchives](https://www.facebook.com/sylvanlakearchives)

Alberta Wheat Pool Elevator 1984



Demolition May 20, 1999



Demolition May 20, 1999