

EDEY, Moses Chamberlain (1845 – 1919)

Moses Edey was an Ottawa based architect who designed many fine buildings in the City of Ottawa and throughout the communities of the Ottawa Valley. He was instrumental in introducing the Beaux Arts and Chicago styles to the region with his designs for the Aberdeen Pavilion (1898) and Daly Building (1904).

Edey was born in September, 1845 in Wyman, Quebec and was educated at a country school near his home. He moved to Arnprior at the age of seventeen where he began learning the carriage trade and after two years he relocated to Ottawa where he continued in the same profession. In 1865 Edey went to Toronto where he studied for a year under Mr. Thomas, which was followed by three years of study under the architect Z.D. Stearns of Moravia, New York. Upon his return he attended the Ottawa School of Art for five years where he earned a diploma in practical geometry, free-hand drawing, drawing from models, building and construction, and industrial design from the Ontario School of Art.

Upon his return to Ottawa he was in partnership with Mr. A. Sparks and for ten years was engaged in all aspects of the building trade, designing as well as erecting buildings. The two men formed a woodworking company and crafted the woodwork for many Ottawa homes and likely crafted the furniture and decoration for many of the buildings they constructed. In Ottawa Edey designed the gothic McLeod Street Methodist Church on Bank Street, Ottawa (1895-96); Westboro Town Hall, Richmond Road (1896) and the Garland Building, Queen at O'Connor Street, Ottawa (1899, demolished) a Romanesque brick building. He built the iron bandstand on the new Federal Driveway. In Ottawa Edey also designed Glashan Public School, Kent Street (1892), Ottawa Produce Company (1900), Deschenes Milling Company (1900), Ottawa

Dairy (1900), Eclipse Office Furniture Company (1900), and Victoria Yacht Club (1906).

The Aberdeen Pavilion, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa which he designed in 1898, was one of the first Ottawa buildings to be executed in the Beaux Arts style. This style was introduced to North America at the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, with the great spans of the pavilions clothed in ornament from the Classical styles. Here at the Aberdeen Pavilion all the Beaux Arts embellishment is present in its Renaissance ornament, with its corner pavilions, cupolas and dome executed in tin.

His Daly building, Rideau at MacKenzie, (1904) originally Lindsay's Department Store was the first Ottawa building to adopt the Chicago style of construction which used reinforced concrete to reduce the structure to minimum size and allowed maximum window space. This style expressed its post and beam structure clearly on the facade and allowed the exterior to be dominated by glass, in this case the tri-partite style of windows so typical of the Chicago style.

Edey's structures enhance many Ottawa valley towns and he built houses for the aristocracy of Shawville, Pembroke, and Ottawa. He designed the Presbyterian Church, Metcalfe, Ontario (1894); Roman Catholic Church, Ironside, Quebec (1900); Registry Office, Hull, Quebec, (1902) as well as the wooden hexagonal barn (1898) at the Shawville fairgrounds. His commercial buildings are distinctive with their elegant fanlights, fancy cornices and intricate brickwork. In Renfrew Edey designed three major office and retail blocks including the Barnet Block, Raglan Street South (1893-94); the Mackay Block, Raglan Street South (1896); and the Fraser Block, Raglan Street South (1901) is more classical in composition with a large Palladian style window on the second floor surmounted by a large segmental cornice above.