

LANGLEY, Henry (1836 – 1907)

During four decades of architectural practice, Henry Langley designed 70 churches in Ontario and altered or enlarged dozens of others.

The son of a shoemaker, Henry was born in Toronto in 1836 and educated at the Toronto Academy, a branch of Knox College. At the age of 18 he entered a seven-year apprenticeship with William Hay, a Scottish architect who had emigrated to Canada in 1848. From Hay, Langley received excellent training in Gothic revival architecture assisting on projects such as Gould Street Presbyterian Church (1855) and St. Basil's Roman Catholic Church (1856). In 1862, Hay moved from Toronto and his partner at the time, Thomas Gundry formed a new partnership with Langley. Their business continued successfully until Gundry's death in 1869.

From 1869 to 1873 Langley worked on his own, firmly establishing his reputation for versatility and excellence of design on such varied projects as the French Gothic inspired Metropolitan Methodist Church (1870) and the Second Empire style Eighth Post Office (1870). To keep up with the increasing number of commissions, Langley took his brother, Edward, a builder, and their nephew,

Edmund Burke, into partnership. As Langley, Langley and Burke the practice continued until 1884 when Edward retired.

Burke left the partnership in 1892 to take over the practice of the recently deceased William Storm and Henry brought his son, Charles Langley, into the practice.

Churches of all denominations were among the most numerous commissions for the firm which designed for no fewer than 16 communities in the province including Ottawa, Guelph, and Parry Sound. Spires were a specialty and many of the finest in Ontario were designed by Langley. As well as these ecclesiastical buildings, Langley and his partners executed many public buildings, residences, and offices. Oaklands (1860) the residence of John Macdonald (now De La Salle College); the Bank of British North America (1871) and Government House, the residence of the Lieutenant Governor (1868) are some of these other notable commissions.

Henry Langley trained 15 architects before he retired from practice in 1898. He was a founding member of the Royal Canadian Academy and a member of the Ontario Association of Architects.

Important work:

(Henry Langley alone)

Metropolitan Methodist Church, Queen St. E., Toronto	1870-72
Eighth Post Office, Adelaide St. E., Toronto	1871-72
Bank of British North America, Yonge St. at Wellington St.	1871

(Langley, Langley & Burke)

Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto	1874
Horticultural Pavilion, Allan Gardens, Toronto	1878
McMaster College, Bloor St. W., Toronto	1881

(Langley & Burke)

Robert Simpson House, Bloor St. W., Toronto	1886
Trinity Methodist Church, Bloor St. W., Toronto	1889