

MATHER, James (1843 – 1927)

One of Ottawa's most prominent early architects, James Mather arrived in the nation's capital just five years after Confederation. Still not much more than a logging town when he arrived, Mather played an important role in the architectural development of Ottawa.

Mather was born in Montrose, Scotland on December 3, 1843 and was educated there at Bowman Academy. It was no doubt through his father, a prominent contractor and inventor that the son became interested in architecture. In 1872 James Mather left his native home and set up practice in Ottawa soon becoming one of the city's most accomplished and best known architects.

Among the many buildings this versatile architect designed were the Ottawa Orphan's Home

(1875), the Rideau Club: Robinson House; the Woods Building; the Roxborough Apartments said when built to be one of the best of their type in Canada; the Alexander Stores, also said when built to be the best of their type in the country; the handsome gothic Baptist Tabernacle (1878); the residence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and a whimsically picturesque pavilion for the Provincial Exhibition at Ottawa (1875).

Mather was also the architect for the Bank of Ottawa and in addition to the Bank's head office designed most of its branch offices.

His wife was Margaret Piper. A private man, Mather did not enter into the social or club life of the capital.

Important work:

Provincial Exhibition Buildings including Crystal Palace, Horticultural Hall, Machinery Hall, poultry and cattle buildings, Landsdowne Park, Ottawa	1875
Byward Market building, George St. at William St. Ottawa	1874-75
Rideau Club House, Wellington st. at Metcalf St., Ottawa	1875
First Baptist Church, Elgin St. at Laurier St., Ottawa	1877-78
Grand Union Hotel, Queen St. at Elgin St., Ottawa	1881-82
Roxborough Apartment House (with Howard C. Stone), Cartier Square, Ottawa	1910