

## NOFFKE, Werner Ernest (1878 – 1964)

**I**n the Ottawa area a person could be born in a Noffke hospital, educated in a Noffke school, married in a Noffke church and work, live and be laid to rest in others of this architect's many buildings. For six decades W.E. Noffke was one of the busiest and most respected architects in Ottawa.

Born in Stolp, Germany, Noffke arrived in Ottawa in 1883 at the age of five. The family were staunch Lutherans and W.E., as Werner came to be called, was educated at St. Paul's Lutheran School. At the age of 14 he had decided to be an architect. He bought a suit with money he had earned working in a brickyard and asked for a job with local architect Adam Harvey. Noffke apprenticed with Harvey for four years and then spent five years in the offices of Moses C. Edey. Noffke also attended night school and earned the Ontario School of Arts Mechanical Medal in 1894 and the Architectural Medal in 1895.

In 1901 Noffke became partners with George W. Northwood of Winnipeg, directing the firm's Ottawa business until 1907 when he went into practice on his own. Noffke was interested in modern developments in architecture and historical styles

such as Spanish Colonial, Gothic and Tudor revival. In 1922 he went into partnership with his nephew, Walter Sylvester, and Henry J. Morin. Leaving the business in the hands of the two younger partners, Noffke went to California in 1923 to practice and study the Spanish Colonial style at its source, returning to Ottawa in 1924. In 1935 Noffke was once again in practice on his own. In 1954 his firm became Noffke and Ingram and in 1960, another partner, Sherrif, was added.

Until the depression, many of W. E. Noffke's Ottawa commissions were distinctive private residences which combined historical styles with the influence of the Prairie School. Other notable commissions were the Central Post Office (1937); dozens of church buildings including the Mother House of the Grey Nuns (1935); offices such as the Blackburn Building (1908-1913); utilitarian modern designs for Indian residential schools (1947).

Noffke was a Chairman of the Ottawa Chapter of the Ontario Association of Architects, a member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the Governor General's Foot Guards. Noffke was also Major of the Armed Guard of Honor for the first Dominion Parliament in 1914.