

ROLPH, Ernest Ross (1871 – 1958)

Ernest Rolph, a talented Toronto architect known as a versatile designer and sound builder is remembered for his academic and business buildings executed in the Tudor or late Gothic revival styles.

He began life in Toronto in 1871 and was educated at the model school and later Jarvis Collegiate. After articling with architect David Roberts he joined the architectural staff of the CPR in 1897. While employed at the CPR, Rolph showed his skill by overcoming what seemed impossible odds of depth and seasonal change of water levels in his design of the transfer slip at Kootenay Landing B.C. In 1899 he joined with Henry Sproatt in the partnership of Sproatt & Rolph and practiced architecture for over 40 years. It has been said that Dr. Henry Sproatt, the artist, could not have accomplished what he did without the confident and vigorous support of "Ernie" Rolph.

Sproatt & Rolph's Toronto buildings range from the basic – Briggs Seed Company, 49 Spadina Avenue (1911) to the grand classical and Beaux arts – the Canada Life Assurance Building Univer-

sity Avenue (1929-31), to the art deco – Eaton's College Street 444 College Street (1929) and to the chateau style – the Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W. (1928-29), the latter two in association with Ross & Macdonald. Sproatt & Rolph's reputation, however, was gained as a result of the firm's neo-Gothic or Tudor creations such as Burwash Hall (1909-1912) and Emmanuel College Library (1929-1931) both part of Victoria University, U of T; Bishop Strachan School and Chapel; Mooredale House, 146 Crescent Road (1902-03); Ridley College Chapel, St. Catharines, as well as the firm's neo-Gothic revival masterpieces such as Hart House (1911-1919) and the Soldier's Memorial Tower (1924) University of Toronto.

Rolph was a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

Married to Alice Haney, Rolph was a member of the Arts and Letters Club and a connoisseur and collector of objects d'art.

Important work:

Manufacturer's Life Insurance Co., Bloor St. E., Toronto	1924-25
Royal York Hotel, (with Ross & MacDonald) Toronto	1927-1929
Eaton's, (with Ross & MacDonald) College St., Toronto	1929-30
Canada Life Assurance Co. head office, University Ave., Toronto	1930-31
Ontario Hydro offices, University Ave., Toronto	1934-35
Hart House, University of Toronto	1911-19
Burwash Hall, Victoria University, Toronto	1910-13
Emmanuel College, Victoria University, Toronto	1930-31