

ANSON McKIM

Inducted 2005

Anson McKim is considered to be the pioneer in establishing advertising in Canada, and his model influenced companies for generations.

He was born on May 21, 1855 in Ernestown Township near Napanee and grew up on the family farm in Ernestown Township and educated in local schools. He was the son of John Nelson McKim and Jane Shibley, the fourth of their ten children. His grandparents were John McKim and wife Lydia Elizabeth Switzer, and great-grandfather was loyalist James McKim who settled in Ernestown.

He was on the staff of the Conservative Toronto Newspaper, *The Mail*, when still quite young, where he became involved in the sale of subscriptions and advertisements. On May 22, 1879 he was transferred to the newspaper's Montreal offices, located in the Star building on Rue Saint-Jacques. Here he headed the bureau as the person in charge of advertisements and subscriptions for both the daily and weekly editions of the paper. McKim was married on October 1, 1884 to Bessie True, of Portland, Maine, daughter of the Hon. George W. True, of Portland, Maine.

In January of 1889, after working for ten years with the Mail in Montreal, McKim founded his own advertising agency, which he called A. McKim and Company. In 1892 he published The Canadian Newspaper Directory, which listed more than 1,000 periodicals by province, city, town or village. Seven years later it published a second edition and by the time it ceased publication in 1941 there were 32 editions published. During the 1900 - 1910 period his advertising agency was recognized as the foremost among the 19 such operations in Montreal. In 1905 A. McKim and Co. had 150 large corporate clients in Canada and the United States, some of which were the Bank of Montreal, Chase and Sanborn, the T. Eaton Co., and Labatt and Co.

In 1907 Anson McKim went into partnership with three investors, one of which was his brother John Nelson Mc Kim, to form the A. McKim Advertising Agency Limited. The house established branch agencies in Toronto, Winnipeg and other Canadian centres and in London, England, and rapidly became famed for the success of its operations and prosperity. Anson McKim was the dominating personality of this organization and was largely responsible for its success and widespread reputation as one of the most progressive institutions in the country. His offices are shown here.



He was very involved in community life in Montreal. He was a lover of art and held membership in the Art Association of Montreal. He was a director of the Royal Canadian Golf Association and was president of the Royal Montreal Golf Club. He was also a member of the Montreal Club, Mount Royal Club, St. James' Club, Canada Club, Forest and Stream Club and the Montreal Racquet Club. He also was responsible for the founding of the Canadian Association of Advertising Agencies in 1915, and was elected as its president. In 1916 he was appointed as the second vice-president of the Montreal Board of Trade.

On Jan. 26, 1917, Anson McKim boarded a train to go to Ottawa. Shortly after the train started he realized he had got on the wrong train and was headed to Toronto, and so at the first stop he departed to catch the one headed back to Ottawa, but upon departing was struck by another train and died. His widow placed a memorial window in the Church of the Messiah in Montreal.