

# Letters

11 July 1994

I noticed your piece on Canadian architectural periodicals in the most recent SSAC *Bulletin*, but saw no mention there of the earliest periodical I've come across, *The Canadian Builder and Mechanics Magazine*. It would appear that this long-forgotten publication, of which only one copy is known to exist in public collections, may claim the distinction of being the first monthly magazine in its subject field to issue from Canadian presses.

On 3 February 1869 the *London Free Press* reported the appearance of the first number of *The Canadian Builder*, published by Thomas Dyas. In March 1869 the second number, published by the firm of Dyas and Wilkins, was noted in a Philadelphia periodical, *The Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal*.<sup>1</sup> Almost a year later, in February 1870, it described the January issue as wonderfully improved: "For fifty cents a year it gives twelve numbers filled with material useful and interesting, original and select, with engravings."<sup>2</sup>

The Dyas and Wilkins partnership was established in London, Ontario, in late February, 1869.<sup>3</sup> A London directory for that year lists the firm of Dyas and Wilkins as architects and patent agents on Richmond Street. Wilkins was also a partner in Teale and Wilkins, marble and stone dealers.<sup>4</sup> Thomas W. Dyas and Henry A. Wilkins dissolved their partnership on 29 April 1870.<sup>5</sup> Dyas continued to publish *The Canadian Builder* for only a brief while longer before selling it to Bell, Barker & Co., a Toronto printing and publishing firm, in whose ownership the periodical is thought to have expired after May, 1871.<sup>6</sup>

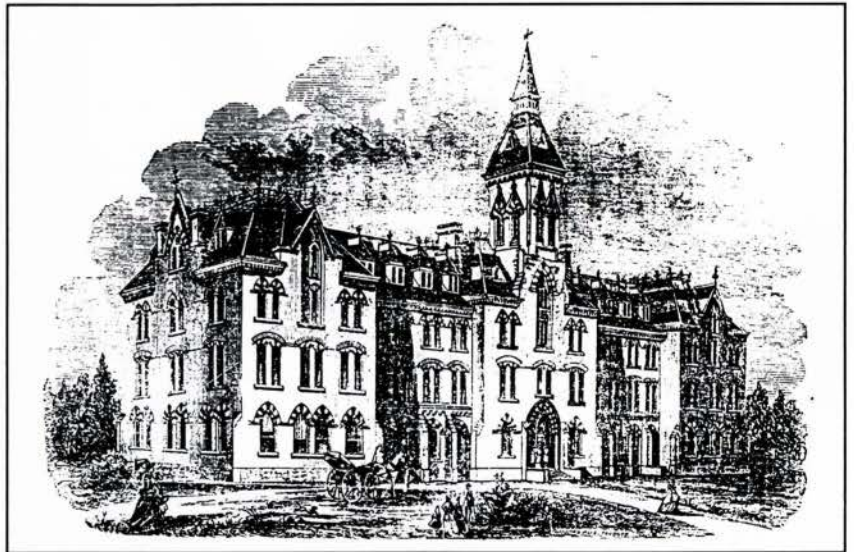
Thomas Winning Dyas was born in Ireland on 2 September 1845, one of seven children. His father John Dyas brought the family from Ireland to New Orleans about 1850 and then to London, Canada West, in 1859.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Dyas trained as a land surveyor and qualified for his profession in 1865, when he was living at Bothwell, Canada West.<sup>8</sup> He is said to have moved to Toronto the following year and entered into partnership with Charles Unwin and C.C. Forneri. In 1868 Dyas returned to live in London.

Thomas Dyas had a strong interest in writing and publishing. Not only does he appear to have been the moving force behind *The Canadian Builder*, but in 1872-74 he contributed to *The Farmers' Advocate*, an agricultural newspaper in London where his father was assistant editor. The younger Dyas's literary interests came to dominate his professional activity in 1875, when he left surveying and took a job in Toronto as superintendent of agencies for *The Globe* newspaper. In 1878 he joined *The Mail*, where he held various posts as manager of the business, advertising, and circulation departments until his death

on 22 June 1899. It is of some interest that his eldest daughter continued the family's links to publishing when she married Hugh C. Maclean, editor of *The Contract Record* and brother of James Bayne Maclean, founder of Maclean Hunter.

The National Library of Canada holds a single copy of *The Canadian Builder and Mechanics Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1 May 1869). This eight-page unillustrated issue is the only complete number known to have survived. In addition, a single article with illustrations was reprinted and reproduced in the April 1870 issue of *The Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal*. Charles F. Damoreau, who engraved an elevation and plan illustrating the article, was active in Toronto as a designer, artist, and engraver on wood from 1864 to 1871.<sup>9</sup>

Stephen A. Otto  
Toronto



1. *The Architectural Review* [also known as *Sloan's Architectural Review* after its founder and editor, Samuel Sloan, a Philadelphia architect], vol. 1, p. 608. The Canadian magazine was also noted in the *London Advertiser*, 13 October 1869, and was reported to still be in publication by the *London Free Press*, 1 March 1870.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 494.

3. *London Free Press*, 26 February 1869, p. 2.

4. *Province of Ontario Gazetteer and Directory* (Toronto: Robertson and Cook, 1869).

5. *London Free Press*, 30 April 1870. Dyas carried on as an architect and engineer with offices opposite the Canadian Bank of Commerce (*London Free Press*, 10 May 1870 *et seq.*). Wilkins became foreman at J.W. Smyth's marble works (*London Free Press*, 4 May 1870).

6. *Robertson & Cook's Toronto City Directory for 1871-2* (Toronto: Daily Telegraph Printing House, [May] 1871), opp. p. 112.

7. Report of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, 1924.

8. *Canada Classified Directory* (Toronto: Mitchell and Co., 1865-66).

9. J. Russell Harper, *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada*.

"Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Belleville, Canada," engraved by [C.F.] Damoreau, Toronto, and reprinted from the Canadian Builder in *The Architectural Review and American Builders' Journal*, April 1870, p. 589.



7 July 1994

I was very pleased to see your article entitled "Canadian Architectural Periodicals" in the latest issue of the SSAC *Bulletin*. This article is a valuable reference work in its own right, and builds upon the article written by Pamela Manson-Smith, the Architectural Librarian at the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto, and published in *The Art and Pictorial Press in Canada: Two Centuries of Art Magazines* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1979).

She covers many of the titles that you have cited, and also includes some I would term more obscure given that they are "annuals" or periodicals of local interest (such as *SOS* of Montréal). However, there are some titles that I would encourage you to consider for an expanded list of "pure" architectural periodicals, given that they focus primarily on architecture (as opposed to just "construction" or "interior decoration"). These are:

1. *The Royal Architect: A Journal devoted to the Architectural interests of Canada*, published monthly in 1911, 1912, and 1913. A complete run of vols. 4 and 5 (1911-1912) of this early Canadian architectural periodical is held at the RAIC headquarters in Ottawa. I also know that the Cleveland Public Library holds vol. 4 (1911) and the Engineering Societies Library in New York City holds a partial run of vol. 5 (1912). I understand the architecture library at l'Université de Montréal holds vols. 4, 5,

and numbers 1, 2, and 8 of vol. 6 (1913). I'm not aware of a more complete run anywhere else in Canada or the U.S.A.


2. *Acorn, The Journal of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario*, published regularly four times a year since 1976 and still going strong. It contains much valuable information on historic buildings in Ontario, with credits to architects (where known) and black-and-white illustrations.

I'm tempted to try to persuade you to include the long-running *Contract Record* (a.k.a. *Canadian Contract Record; Engineering & Contract Record*), published from February 1890 onward and including much information about architects and Canadian architecture, but I acknowledge that the primary focus of the journal was building and construction as well as road building, with virtually no articles on the theory or philosophy of architecture as a discipline.

Robert G. Hill  
The Biographical Dictionary of Architects  
in Canada, 1800-1950 (in preparation)  
Toronto

## THE ROYAL ARCHITECT

A Journal devoted to the Architectural interests of Canada

THE ARTAN COMPANY, Publishers

M. St. James Street, Montreal, Canada

CORRESPONDENCE — All communications should be addressed to THE ROYAL ARCHITECT, 88, St. James Street, Montreal, Canada.  
 SUBSCRIPTIONS — The annual subscription is sent free on all "fronts etc." (sentinel) in the Dominion of Canada. To those in other countries, please apply to the Editor, 88, St. James Street, Montreal, Canada. Single copies, 25 cents.  
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New Series, Vol. 4
Montreal, March 1911
No. 3

## AN INVITATION

We invite the Architects of the Dominion of Canada to consider the columns of THE ROYAL ARCHITECT as their medium for the insertion of correspondence, information and any contribution dealing with matters of general interest to the profession of architecture. We are at all times ready to publish plans and photographs of buildings, the originals will be carefully preserved and duly returned.  
 It is our intention in the very near future to devote a number of THE ROYAL ARCHITECT, each month, to the architects of each province of the Dominion having some organization. (Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, etc.) these issues will contain the charter, by-laws, schedule of charges, code of ethics, etc. respecting the architects in each province, as well as the names and addresses of all the practising architects in such province, and the photographs of the officers and members of the council of the provincial architectural bodies, therefore the Editor of THE ROYAL ARCHITECT will be pleased to receive all such information, year books, proceedings, photographs, list of members, etc., which will help him to give in THE ROYAL ARCHITECT a complete compendium of the profession in Canada.  
 The next number of THE ROYAL ARCHITECT will be devoted to the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.  
 THE ARTAN COMPANY,  
 Publishers.

Here are the publishing histories of the periodicals mentioned by Robert Hill:

*Institute of Architects of Canada Quarterly Bulletin.* Q.  
Vol. 1 (Nov. 1907) – vol. 1, no. 3 (May 1908). Continued by  
*The Architectural Institute of Canada Quarterly Bulletin.* Q.  
Vol. 1, no. 4 (Aug. 1908) – vol. 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1909). Continued by  
*The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Quarterly Bulletin.* Q.  
Vol. 2, no. 2/3 (Apr./July 1909) – vol. 3, no. 1/2 (June/Sept. 1910). Superseded by  
*The Royal Architect.* M.  
A Journal devoted to the Architectural interests of Canada.  
New Series, vol. 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1911) – vol. 6, no. 8 (Aug. 1913)?

*The Quarterly Bulletin was published by the A.I.C. (R.A.I.C. after Jan. 1909), The Royal Architect by the Artan Company, Montréal. The last known issue of The Royal Architect is vol. 6, no. 8. The A.I.C./R.A.I.C. also published The Year Book, which focused primarily on constitutional matters. The R.A.I.C. in Ottawa holds copies of The Year Book for 1908, 1910, and 1913-14.*

*Acorn.* Q.  
The Journal of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.  
Vol. 1 (1976) –