

James McKay, K.C. (b. 1861)

By Amanda Rozyk

James McKay was born at Fort Ellice, Manitoba on July 12, 1861. His father was William McKay II (born 1819 in the Red River Settlement), and his mother was Mary Cook born at Cumberland House). He was the grandson of John Richards McKay and Harriet Ballendine.

James, a lawyer, became the first Metis Queen's Counsel in the Northwest Territory. He was created a Queen's Counsel in 1891 when Saskatchewan was still the District of Assiniboia in the Northwest Territories. In 1906, the Province of Saskatchewan made him a King's Counsel. His brother, Thomas McKay, became the first mayor of Prince Albert in 1886 and for 12 years was an M.L.A. in the territorial government of the Northwest Territories.

James McKay had an accomplished career in the legal arena. He completed his college education in Winnipeg at St. John's College, and later graduated from the Manitoba University with high honours in 1882. He studied law in the offices of Bain, Blanchard, Mulock & Morphy of Winnipeg, and was called to the bar at Manitoba in 1886.

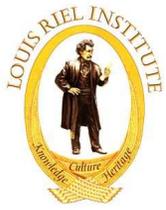
He then moved to Saskatchewan and was called to the bar of the North West Territories in 1887. James practiced in partnership with Stephen Brewster for three years, before taking over the business of the firm and operating it for over twenty years. The firm eventually became McKay, Adam, Beattie & Feary. He served as a Crown Prosecutor, and then as the representative of Prince Albert in the Dominion Parliament. Later, he was appointed as a Justice of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal.

It should be noted that James' career also included military achievement. As a young law student, he was a member of the C Company of Winnipeg Rifles during the Northwest Resistance of 1885. He was attached to French's Scouts for a period of time, where he was engaged in carrying dispatches. James acted as a dispatch-bearer when Colonel Bedson and Captain MacDowell went to Prince Albert to investigate the conditions in that vicinity. James was also involved in the engagements at Fish Creek and Batoche.

Throughout his career, James McKay was involved with a number of associations. He was a member of the Manitoba University Council; the Alderman in Prince Albert; a member of the Board of Governors of the Saskatchewan University; the chancellor of the diocese of Saskatchewan of the Church of England; the president of the Victoria Hospital Board at Prince Albert; a member of the Masonic Order; and a member of the Independent Order of Foresters. James married Florence Reid in 1900 at Prince Albert.

Reference

Black, Norman F. *History of Saskatchewan and The North West Territories*. Regina: Saskatchewan historical Co., 1913: 359-361.



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