

## The First President - Hon. Peter McGill

Peter McGill (McCutcheon) was born in August, 1789 at Cree Bridge, Wigtownshire, Scotland, son of John McCutcheon and Mary McGill, sister of the Hon. John McGill, Receiver-General of Upper Canada. At the suggestion of his maternal uncle, he came to Canada in 1809 and engaged in business in Montreal, later founding the mercantile firm - Peter McGill & Co. The Hon. John McGill, being childless, made his nephew his heir, bequeathing to him his extensive and valuable estates, on condition that he assumed the surname of McGill.



Hon. Peter McGill, copied 1866, I-21029.0 (Detail), McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal

In 1819, Peter McGill was elected a Director of the recently founded Montreal Bank (later Bank of Montreal) and by 1834 had been elected President, occupying that position until 1860 when he tendered his resignation. During his lifetime, he performed the duties of many other important offices including Chairman, St.

Lawrence & Champlain Railroad Company (first railway company established in Canada), Director, Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada, Governor of McGill College & Montreal General Hospital and Chairman, Colonial Life Assurance, President, Canadian School Society, President, Montreal Bible Society and Lieutenant-Colonel of Militia.

He was appointed a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada in 1832 and a member of the Executive Council in 1838; after the union of the Provinces, he was made a Legislative Councillor of Canada. In 1847, he was appointed Speaker of the Legislative Council and a member of the Executive Council by the Governor General, the Rt. Hon. Lord Elgin, serving until 1848 when he resigned along with his colleagues in the administration.

From 1840 until 1842, he was the first English-speaking Mayor of Montreal, during which period many great improvements were effected in the city. In his civic capacity and as a man of business, Peter McGill was eminent for his intelligence and liberal views; *“one of the Province’s most worthy citizens”*, a strictly honourable person who instilled the utmost confidence in others - *“he was one of those merchants of whom it is emphatically said, their word is their bond”*.

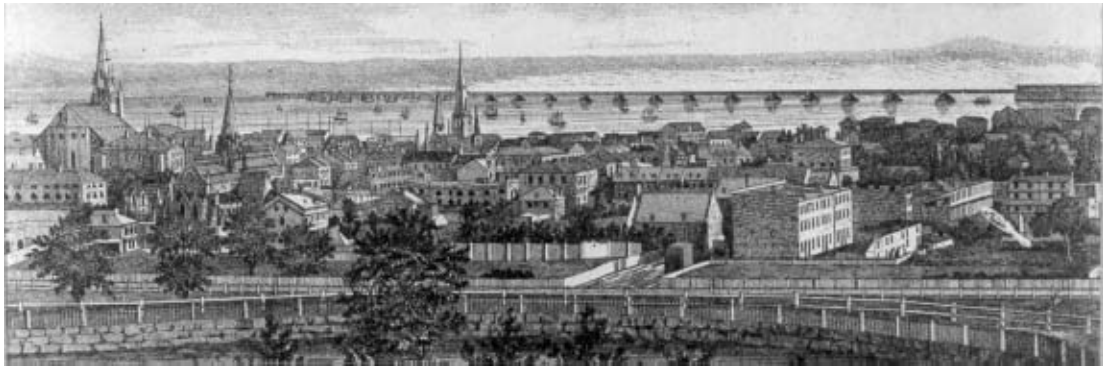
Dr. G. W. Campbell (one of the Society’s first Hon. Physicians) described his friend as *“one of nature’s noblemen; possessing a massive frame and endowed with physical as well as mental energy, he was such a man as would be chosen a leader in any circumstances”*. He was an active Presbyterian who was referred to as *“a tower of strength”* by the congregation of St. Paul’s Church where he had been ordained an elder and remained a member until his death on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1860. The rain fell in torrents on the day of his burial,

but the city's leading citizens were there in very large attendance. Many of the shops on the streets through which the cortege passed were closed out of respect, and the flags of vessels in the harbour were hoisted at half-mast.

*"Whether as a statesman and politician, a useful and active member of our municipal government, or as a patriotic liberal-minded and philanthropic citizen, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to name any man who, in the community of Montreal, or indeed in any community, so deservedly*

*merited the esteem and regard of his fellow-men as Peter McGill".*

St. Andrew's Society of Montreal was fortunate to have had such a leader to guide and counsel its members during those first early years. He served as the Society's first President from 1835 to 1842 and then returned as President again from 1844 to 1846. Records show that for many years during and after his term of office he gave much of his time and no small amount of his means to the support of the Society whose members held him in such high regard.



View of Montreal with Victoria Bridge, circa 1865

*"That man shall flourish like the trees  
Which by the streamlets grow;  
The fruitful top is spread on high  
And firm the root below."*

Robert Burns

## The Legends of Saint Andrew

The Apostle Andrew, son of Jonas, the Galilean fisherman and brother of Simon Peter, travelled as a missionary through the whole of Asiatic and European Scythia finally arriving in Achaia. He was arrested at Patras on the Gulf of Corinth and, by order of the Roman Consul, crucified being bound with ropes to a cross decussate (diagonal cross or saltire). Early in the fourth century, his remains were carried to Byzantium and honourably interred by order of the Emperor Constantine. During the same century and following the instructions he had received in a vision, the monk Regulus (St. Rule) set sail from Patras with the relics of Saint Andrew. He and his companions were shipwrecked off the east coast of Scotland and in fulfilment of his vision, he built a shrine on the spot where they landed at Kinrymont, placing the relics therein. While there may be some controversy between the traditionalists and the historians regarding the century of this occurrence, the fact remains that pilgrims devoutly visited St. Andrew's Shrine throughout the centuries. During her lifetime in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Scotland's saintly Queen Margaret greatly encouraged such pilgrimages and not only instituted a free-passage ferry across the Firth of Forth (North and South Queensferry) to aid the pilgrims but also provided dwellings near to the shrine for their shelter. The site of the shrine eventually became the royal burgh of St. Andrews, known for its magnificent cathedral, which was founded in the twelfth century but, due to many adversities, was not finally completed until 1318 when it was consecrated in the presence of Robert the Bruce, four years after the Battle of Bannockburn. Today, only ruins remain of what was once one of Scotland's finest cathedrals and the relics of the Apostle Andrew have long vanished but thanks to its University, the oldest in Scotland, and the Royal & Ancient Golf Club, the town of St. Andrews still remains world-renowned.

With reference to a second legend, which relates to the winning of a battle by Pictish and Scottish warriors against Athelstane of Northumbria's army, the following inscription on a simple memorial stone located in the quiet parish churchyard of Athelstaneford in East Lothian, Scotland describes the details: *"Tradition says that near this place in times remote Pictish and Scottish warriors about to defeat an army of Northumbrians saw against a blue sky a great white cross like St. Andrew's and made in its image a banner which became the flag of Scotland."*

It is related that on the eve of the battle, King Fergus of the Picts had a vision in which Saint Andrew told him to be of good courage and promised him a glorious victory. Thus, according to the legend, Saint Andrew became the patron saint of the Picts and later a united Scotland.

While doubt may be cast on the credence of these two legends, the fact remains that for centuries Saint Andrew has been acknowledged as the patron saint of Scotland and the distinctive blue banner with its white saltire is definitely recognised as Scotland's national standard which, in earlier times, the fighting Scots proudly carried into battle to the resounding cry of:

*"SAINT ANDREW FOR SCOTLAND"*



## List of Past Presidents

1835-1842 .....	Hon. Peter McGill	1924-1926 .....	Maj A. E. Ogilvie
1842-1844 .....	Sheriff John Boston	1926-1928 .....	BGen W. O. H. Dodds, CMG, DSO
1844-1846 .....	Hon. Peter McGill	1928-1930 .....	LCol Gavin L. Ogilvie
1846-1847 .....	Hon. William Morris	1930-1932 .....	LCol Andrew Fleming, VD
1847-1848 .....	Hon. James Ferrier	1932-1934 .....	Col William Leggat, OBE, MC
1848-1850 .....	Sir Hugh Allan	1934-1936 .....	T. H. McC. Hutchison
1850-1851 .....	William Edmonstone	1936-1938 .....	Col Hugh M. Wallis, OC, DSO, OBE, MC, VD, CD, KCLJ, FRSA
1851-1852 .....	James Gilmour	1938-1940 .....	John H. Bonar
1852-1855 .....	Sir John Rose	1940-1945 .....	Maj Keith O. Hutchison, ED, MD
1855-1857 .....	William Murray	1945-1947 .....	A. D. Campbell, MD
1857-1859 .....	Hon. Alexander Morris	1947-1949 .....	Kenneth W. Dalglish, CA
1859-1861 .....	John Greenshields	1949-1951 .....	LCol W. W. Ogilvie, ED
1861-1862 .....	David Brown	1951-1953 .....	Gordon S. Small, CA
1862-1864 .....	Hon. James Ferrier	1953-1955 .....	Col James W. Knox, MBE, ED
1864-1866 .....	Hon. John Young	1955-1956 .....	S. Boyd Millen, OBE
1866-1867 .....	J. C. Becket	1956-1958 .....	BGen W. C. Leggat, DSO, ED, QC
1867-1868 .....	Walter MacFarlan	1958-1960 .....	Alex Archibald, CA
1868-1870 .....	Andrew Robertson	1960-1962 .....	J. Alasdair Fraser
1870-1871 .....	Senator A. W. Ogilvie	1962-1964 .....	Maj James F. Macfarlane, CD
1871-1873 .....	Alexander McGibbon	1964-1966 .....	N. C. D. Mactaggart, CA
1873-1875 .....	Sir A. T. Galt, KCMG	1966-1968 .....	Col J. Ralph Harper, OBE, CStJ, TD, KCLJ, FRSA, FSA Scot
1875-1876 .....	David McKay	1968-1969 .....	BGen Duncan C. Campbell, CD
1876-1878 .....	Ewen McLennan	1969-1971 .....	G. B. Alex Hutchison, KLJ
1878-1879 .....	Col A. A. Stevenson	1971-1973 .....	The Hon. Mr. Justice K. C. Mackay, BCL, MCL, KCLJ, FSA Scot
1879-1880 .....	John C. Watson	1973-1975 .....	George D. Campbell
1880-1882 .....	James Stewart	1975-1977 .....	David M. Stewart, CM, KStJ, KCLJ, FRSA, Hon. LLD
1882-1883 .....	George Macrae, QC	1977-1979 .....	LCol John I. B. Macfarlane, CD
1883-1885 .....	W. W. Ogilvie	1979-1981 .....	Reford MacDougall, KLJ
1885-1886 .....	Hugh McLennan	1981-1983 .....	Judge George Gould, QC, KH
1886-1888 .....	R. B. Angus	1983-1985 .....	Eileen Clark, BSc
1888-1890 .....	Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal	1985-1987 .....	J. Stuart Spalding, CA
1890-1892 .....	Duncan McIntyre	1987-1989 .....	Clement J. Leslie, CA
1892-1894 .....	Senator Robert Mackay	1989-1992 .....	T. R. Anthony Malcolm, BCL, KCHJ, KLJ, FSA Scot
1894-1896 .....	Donald MacMaster, DCL, QC	1992-1994 .....	Keith W. MacLellan, MA
1896-1899 .....	Hugh Paton	1994-1996 .....	Malcolm E. McLeod, BA, BCL
1899-1900 .....	James Stewart, MD, LRCS	1996-1998 .....	LCol Daniel F. O'Connor, CD, BEng, LLB, BCL, MBA
1900-1903 .....	Alexander F. Riddell, CA	1998-2001 .....	Martin H. Barnes, BA
1903-1904 .....	Sir William Peterson	2001-2003 .....	Moira R. Barclay-Fernie
1904-1906 .....	Wm. Miller Ramsay		
1906-1907 .....	Not recorded		
1907-1909 .....	Charles Cassils		
1909-1911 .....	LCol Robert Gardner		
1911-1913 .....	Col Sir Hugh Montagu Allan, CVO, ED		
1913-1915 .....	Farquhar Robertson		
1915-1917 .....	Col George R. Starke		
1917-1920 .....	LCol George S. Cantlie, DSO, VD		
1920-1922 .....	W. G. Ross		
1922-1924 .....	LCol W. H. Clark Kennedy, VC, CMG, DSO, VD		



Sheriff John Boston, 1842-44



Sir John Rose, 1852-55



Hon. John Young, 1864-66



Walter MacFarlan, 1867-68



Sen. A. W. Ogilvie, 1870-71



Ewen McLennan, 1876-78



R. B. Angus, 1886-88



BGen W.O.H. Dodds, 1926-28



LCol A. Flemming, 1930-32

## Honorary Members

The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, KT, LLD, DLitt, JP  
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Dalhousie, KT, GBE, MC  
Capt. Alexander Ramsay of Mar, FRICS, DL  
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Minto, OBE, JP  
MGen The Rt. Hon. The Earl Cathcart, CB, DSO, MC  
The Lady Ephinstone  
The Viscount Melgund  
Lord Ramsay  
His Worship, Mr. Pierre Bourque, Mayor of Montreal, OC, CQ

## References

Campbell, Rev. Robert: *A Summary of the First Fifty Years of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal*, St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, 1885

Mackay, The Hon. Mr. Justice K. C.: *St. Andrew's Society of Montreal Handbook*, St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, 1973

Shearer, John: *Centennial History of the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal*, St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, 1935

Various: *Minutes of meetings and the records of the Society*, St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, 1835-2000