



HERITAGE  
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# HERITAGE news

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## PROFILE: THOMAS KELLY

Thomas Kelly was an Irish-born contractor who, along with his brother Michael, was responsible for construction projects such as the Lindsay Building, the *Manitoba Free Press* headquarters, the Imperial Bank of Canada Building, and many others. He was awarded the contract to build the Manitoba Legislative Building in 1912, but the project had massive cost overruns and major construction delays. Kelly was found guilty of stealing nearly \$1 million over the course of his involvement with the project in what arguably remains the biggest political scandal in Manitoba history; the government of Sir Rodmond Roblin resigned as a result in 1915.

Kelly fled to Chicago, but was arrested in 1915 and extradited back to Canada on a number of charges including perjury, larceny, embezzlement, and others. He was convicted and served 2<sup>1/2</sup> years at Stony Mountain Penitentiary, but is rumoured to have spent most of that time in relative comfort at the warden's house. Other contractors were brought on to complete the Legislative project, and it remained unfinished until 1920. After prison, Thomas Kelly left Winnipeg. He died in California in 1939.

The Kelly mansion stood on the corner of Assiniboine Avenue and Carlton St. from 1909 until 1965. Today, the site is home to the Kelly House Apartments. Gigantic stone columns were recovered from Thomas Kelly's mansion during demolition of the home, and stand today at the building's front entrance as a symbol of Winnipeg's built heritage.



The Kelly Mansion stood on the corner of Assiniboine and Carlton from 1909-1965.