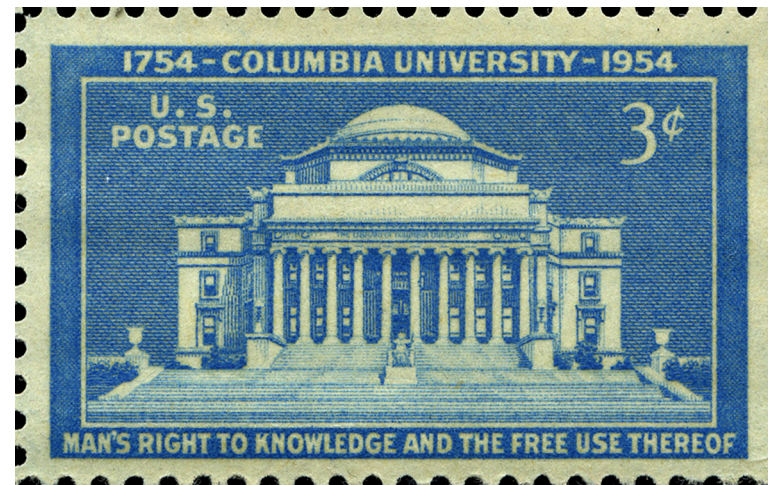


Charles Follen McKim

Architect (1847–1909)



Low Library was built in 1895 by Columbia University president SETH LOW, in memory of his father ABIEL ALLOT LOW, and financed with his own money when the university balked at the price. Now a National landmark, it is capped by the largest free-standing granite dome in the U.S. and is home to a beloved university symbol, the statue *Alma Mater* by DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH.

McKim was born in Pennsylvania, and studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before joining the office of HENRY HOBSON RICHARDSON in 1870. McKim formed his own firm in partnership with engineer WILLIAM RUTHERFORD MEAD, joined in 1877 by fellow Richardson protégé STANFORD WHITE.

Initially, the firm was primarily known for their informal summer houses. McKim became best known, however, as an exponent of Beaux-Arts architecture in styles, exemplified by his first major work, the Boston Public Library, begun in 1887. For this project, he engaged the services of JOHN SINGER SARGENT and AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS, among others. In 1891, he designed the old Madison Square Garden, in 1892, he designed the Rhode Island state capitol. In 1901, at the behest of the Senate, he joined with Saint-Gaudens, FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED and DANIEL H. BURNHAM to make recommendations to design Washington, D.C. He was primarily responsible for the central area around the Capitol.

Works in New York include the campus of Columbia University, the University Club, the Pierpont Morgan Library, and the magnificent Penn Station. McKim, with the aid of RICHARD MORRIS HUNT formed the American School of Architecture in Rome in 1894, which has become the American Academy in Rome.

McKim received numerous awards during his lifetime, including the Médaille d'Or at the 1900 Paris Exposition and a gold medal from Britain's Edward VII. He was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1877, and received the AIA Gold Medal, posthumously, upon his death in 1909.