

**COLORADO ARCHITECTS  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

**Architect:** Willison, Robert

**Birth/Death Dates:** 1865 - 1935

**Practice Dates:** 1896 - 1935

**Firms:**

Willison and Fallis (1910-1914)

Robert Willison Architect (1915-1935)

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**Biographical Information**

Robert Willison was born in Scotland and came to Denver in 1890. He worked as a draftsman for Robert S. Roeschlaub and John J. Huddart before joining the firm of Frank E. Edbrooke as an architect in 1896. Appointed by Mayor Speer, Willison served as city building inspector and architect from 1904 until 1910. He is best known for designing the Denver Municipal Auditorium (1908). He was a member of the Colorado chapter of the A.I.A. and also served on the State Board of Architectural Examiners from 1909 to 1912.

In 1910, Willison joined another prominent Denver architect, Montana S. Fallis, and together they designed numerous residences, factories, warehouses, offices and apartment buildings. Their projects also included the Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church (1911) in Denver, and the Vail Hotel (1911) and the Sacred Heart Cathedral (1912), both in Pueblo. One of the best known buildings by the firm of Willison and Fallis is the Oxford Hotel Annex (1912), a white glazed terra cotta-clad Chicago Commercial Style building with a Neo-Classical ornamental vocabulary.

Willison left Fallis to establish his own architectural firm in 1914 and three years later he was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives. He designed the Romanesque Revival style St. Malachy's Church (1921) in Fruita and was commissioned by the Roman Catholic Church to design St. Dominic's Church (1926) and St. Cajetan's (1926), both in Denver. St. Cajetan's and Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Alamosa (1926) are designed in the Mission Revival style while St. Dominic's is in the Gothic Revival style.

Willison married in 1895 and had three sons who all graduated from Denver's East High School. He suffered a heart attack and died at his home on July 3, 1935, and is buried with his wife, Anna, in Fairmount Cemetery.

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**Credited Buildings**

<b>Building Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Site No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Denver Municipal Auditorium	1323 Champa St., Denver	5DV521	1908	National Register
Vail Hotel (Fallis & Willison with Jacob Giles)	217 S. Grand Ave., Pueblo	5PE501	1910	National Register
McClintock Building (Fallis and Willison)	1554 California St., Denver	5DV499	1910	Denver HD
Twentieth Street Gym	1101 20 <sup>th</sup> St., Denver	5DV3353	1911	Denver Landmark

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West Court Hotel (Fallis and Willison)	1415 Glenarm Pl., Denver		1911	Demolished
Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church (Fallis and Willison)	1100 Fillmore, Denver	5DV8077	1911	
J.P. Dunn Shoe and Leather Company (Fallis and Willison)	1825 Lawrence St., Denver	5DV1749	1912	
Joslin Dry Goods Company Building (alterations) (Fallis and Willison)	93416th St., Denver	5DV1913	1912	National Register
Oxford Hotel Annex (Fallis and Willison)	1624 17th St., Denver	5DV47.9	1912	National Register
Reed-Curran House (addition) (Fallis and Willison)	1040 Humboldt St., Denver	5DV166.7	1912	Humboldt St. HD
Sacred Heart Church (Fallis & Willison with Jacob Giles)	1025 N. Grand Ave., Pueblo	5PE1125	1913	National Register
Robert W. Steele Gymnasium	3914 King St., Denver	5DV4629	1914	State Register
St. Malachy's Catholic Church	513 E. Aspen, Fruita	5ME4524	1921	
St. Dominic's Catholic Church	3005 W. 29 <sup>th</sup> Ave., Denver	5DV606	1926	National Register
St. Cajetans Catholic Church	9 <sup>th</sup> Street and Lawrence (Auraria Campus), Denver	5DV702	1926	Denver Landmark
Sacred Heart Catholic Church	727 4 <sup>th</sup> St., Alamosa	5AL262	1926	National Register
Stratford Apartments	1310 Stout St., Denver	5DV1781	1929	Demolished

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**Information Sources**

Noel, Thomas J. and Barbara S. Norgren. Denver: The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Noel, Thomas J. Denver Landmarks & Historic Districts, A Pictorial Guide (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado) 1996.

Site Files Database, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Revised: May 3, 2001