

"Acacia" Lodge at **Amherst** was chartered in 1845; "Keith" at **Bear River**, in 1854. In or about 1855, "Mariners" Lodge of **Granville**, saw the light, followed by "Royal Albert" at **North Sydney** in 1857; "Acadia" at **Pugwash** in 1858; "Keith" at **Stellarton** in 1860; "Westport" in the town of that name, and Scotia in **Canning** in 1861; Widow's Friend, **Weymouth** in 1863; and 1866 the year of transition, from a District or Provincial to a sovereign or independent Grand Lodge, saw the chartering of "Virgin" Lodge, **Wilmot**, "St. Marks" at **Baddeck**, "Eldorado" at **Wine Harbour**, "Ophir" at **Tangier**, "Queens" at **Sherbrooke**, "Thistle" at **Port Morien**, "Concord" at **Clarke's Harbour**, Shelburne County, "Acacia" at **Bridge-water**, and "Rothesay" at **Bridgetown**.

While the majority of these lodges paid allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England through a local or District Grand Lodge, governed for many years by Hon. Alex. Keith as District Grand Master—a large number of them owned the sway of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, which entered the Nova Scotia field in 1844 and formed a Provincial Grand Lodge, which was also under the guiding hand of M. W. Bro. Keith. This dual government by him of rival bodies who, unless tactfully handled, might become somewhat antagonistic spoke volumes for his efficiency and success as a wise administrator.

Before entering on the more recent and perhaps better known period of our history, viz: the formation of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, its struggles, its victories and its subsequent uninterrupted march of progress, let me briefly touch on a few of the many interesting social and other features of Masonic life here in the earlier days. The Craft took a prominent, if not the leading part in many great public events during the period under review. The corner stones of most of the public buildings, schools, churches, etc. were laid under Masonic auspices; chief among such were those of the Provincial Building or Province House in 1809, and of Dalhousie College in 1820.

The lodges met at first in private houses and inns; subsequently the Halifax brethren acquired a house on Grafton street (still standing) where communications were held until the Mason's Hall which preceded the present building was erected, the land for the latter being deeded from the Crown in July 1798; it had previously been used for military purposes. The corner stone was laid in June, 1800 with great ceremony. Lodges holding under the Grand Lodge of Scotland held their rooms at the Exchange, at the junction of Water and George Streets and Bedford Row.

Dinners and other forms of entertainment were frequently given by the Craft, and one feature (which is now