

AMONG THE SOCIETIES.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MASONIC ORDER IN ST. JOHN.

Something of the Men Who May be Said to be the Foundation of the Order in St. John—First of a Series of Articles on the Different Societies.

The Masonic craft should naturally have the place of honor in treating of the various fraternal and secret societies of the city for not only is it the most ancient organization of the kind the world over but it is by many decades the oldest in St. John.

The history of Masonry in St. John covers a period of 113 years and it is a most interesting story telling how from small beginnings it has increased and prospered until now every branch of Masonry is represented here, a statement that can be made of no other city in America. The handsome Masonic Temple built 18 years ago is a veritable home of free masonry. It was the ambition of certain leaders in the craft to extend the scope of its craft's work here until it embraced every branch of the order and they succeeded so well that this city became an important factor in developing Masonic history.

The Masonic bodies now existent in St. John, almost all of which hold their meetings in the Temple, are the following:

- Craft Masonry. Grand Lodge. Albion Lodge, No. 1. Saint John's Lodge, No. 2. Hibernia Lodge, No. 3. Carleton Union Lodge, No. 8. Union Lodge of Portland, No. 10. New Brunswick Lodge, No. 22.

- Royal Arch Masonry. Grand Chapter. Council of High Priesthood. Carleton Chapter. New Brunswick Chapter. Union Chapter.

- Royal and Select Masters. Grand Council. St. John Council, No. 1. Carleton Council, No. 3.

- Knights Templars. St. John Encampment Knights Templars and Knights of Malta, No. 53. Union Demolai Preceptory Knights Templar and Knights of Malta, No. 11. Carleton Council of Red Cross Knights.

- Knights of Rome. McLeod Moore Conclave, No. 13, Masonic and Military Order of Knights of Rome and of the Red Cross of Constantine, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and St. John the Evangelist. Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

- St. John Lodge of Perfection, 14. Harrington Chapter of Sovereign Princes of Rose Croix, H. E. D. M., 18. New Brunswick Consistory, S. P. R. S., 32.

- Royal Order of Scotland. Provincial Grand Lodge of Maritime Provinces. McLeod Moore conclave of the Knights of Rome is the premier conclave on this continent and an interesting story could be told about its inception here, but as Kipling says, that is another story. It was founded here in the sixties by Mr. Robert Marshall when there were but six branches of the order in the world and none in America, but now there are in Great Britain 400 conclaves and in America 140 Mr. Marshall was Intendant General for the Maritime Provinces from 1869 to 1896 when he was created a Grand cross of the order, a distinction which can be conferred on only fifty individuals in all the world. Mr. Marshall is also the senior 33rd degree mason in Canada.

The Royal order of Scotland is a very select and exclusive wing of the craft and there are but few branches in the United States. The head of this order is supposed to be the King of Scotland but there not being any the next rank in that country is at the head. In this order there can be only 200 members in the United States and there are always a large number of eager candidates for the first vacancy. Free Masonry in St. John dates back to the founding of the city. On March 6th, 1784, Elias Hardy, a prominent barrister of the city, made application at Halifax to organize Hiram Lodge. In response to the request a dispensation was granted by the two Halifax lodges to Rev. John Beardsley, who had been junior warden of the provincial grand lodge of New York, to congregate and hold such a lodge.

The lodge was duly opened early in September with Rev. Mr. Beardsley as worthy master and the officers were installed by Dr. Azor Betts in Kirk's Inn on Brittain Street near the intersection of Germain. Soon after this a grand lodge was formed in Nova Scotia and on Dec. 9th, 1786, they granted a warrant to Hiram, No. 17. This lodge lasted 12 years when it succumbed owing to some difficulty with Grand Lodge.

The dates of organization of the first lodges in New Brunswick were as follows: 1784—Hiram, No. 17, St. John. 1789—New Brunswick, No. 54, Fredericton. 1789—St. George's, No. 19, Monctonville. 1792—Union, No. 21, Kingston, King's Co. 1792—Solomon's, No. 24, Fredericton. 1793—Hiram York, No. 23, Fredericton. 1802—Saint John's, No. 29, St. John.

The oldest lodge in New Brunswick today is St. John's lodge of this city. It was organized by a warrant issued by the grand lodge of Nova Scotia on December 18th, 1801. On April 5th, 1802, the lodge was constituted and consecrated in the Mallard house on the north side of King street just above Germain. The lodge was installed by R. W. Bro. Wm. Campbell, grand master, assisted by Bro. Wm. S. Oliver, D. G. M., and others. Bro. George Smith was the first W. M. of the lodge. Among the founders of this lodge were some of the leading citizens of the day including Messrs. David Waterbury, John Dean, Nehemiah Merritt, Wm. Fayerweather, Caleb Merritt, Francis Watson, Edward Sands, Hugh Johnston, John Simmet, Joshua Upham, Daniel Bliss, Robt. Laidley, Thomas Jennings, Peter Wade, J. Forrester, D. Beveridge, Rev. John Beardsley, A. Read, Hugh McMaster, Alex. Humphrey, Linus Seely, J. Vail, C. Harris, Peter Blair and J. Riley.

The lodge continued until 1836 under the jurisdiction of the Nova Scotia grand lodge but previous to that year the authority of the provincial grand lodge had been circumscribed. Two other lodges were founded in St. John during that period, Union, No. 38, in 1814, and Albion, No. 52 in 1825, Union had, however, gone out of existence previous to 1836. In that year St. John's received a warrant under the United Grand Lodge of England as St. John's No. 632. In 1867 the Grand Lodge of New Brunswick was formed and St. John's lodge became No. 2 under its jurisdiction. The history of St. John's Lodge has been ably and fully told, however, in the late Mr. W. F. Bunting's exhaustive history of Free Masonry in New Brunswick. Among prominent worshipful masters of the lodge now living are Judge Wm Wedderburn, Judge J. G. Forbes, Judge A. I. Trueman, Mr. Frederick Sandall and Mr. W. A. Ewing. The lodge has had altogether on its role between 800 and 900 members.

Albion lodge was established by warrant dated Nov. 13th, 1825, and Wm. Durant was the first W. M. Like St. John's lodge it was worked under three different dispensations, first that of the provincial grand lodge of Nova Scotia, that of the grand lodge of England under date of March 10th, 1829, and that of the grand lodge of New Brunswick, dated March 31st, 1868.

Hibernia lodge was constituted under warrant No. 301, granted April 10th, 1837, by the grand Masonic lodge of Ireland. In 1867 the warrant was surrendered and a new warrant granted by the grand master of the grand lodge of New Brunswick. Carleton Union lodge received its warrant 21st March, 1846, from the united grand lodge of England, as No. 767, Justice S. Wetmore was the first master. Union Lodge of Portland dates from Nov. 3rd, 1846, when a warrant was granted from England. Alexander Balloch was the first master. New Brunswick Lodge was originally No. 1084 on the registry of England, its warrant being dated Dec. 5, 1865.

There were two other lodges which are not now in existence, Portland Union lodge, No. 324, registry of Ireland, warrant issued May, 1842 ceased to work 1846; Leicester Lodge, originally No. 347 on the registry of Ireland, warrant granted Oct. 7th, 1837, surrendered June 29th, 1881.

Attempts were made to organize a grand lodge for the province of New Brunswick in 1822 and 1829 but they were fruitless. At the latter date Rev. B. G. Gray, D. D. was elected grand master but the officers were never installed. In 1859 a provincial grand lodge was constituted and by patent bearing date July 4th, 1859, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Zetland, G. M. of the united grand lodge of England, appointed R. W. Bro. Alexander Balloch provincial grand master of New Brunswick.

The present grand lodge of New Brunswick is 30 years old, having been formed at meetings held in this city on the 9th and 10th October, 1867. On those dates "The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of New Brunswick" was established with the following officers:

- M. W. B. Lester Peters, Grand Master. R. W. Wm. Wedderburn, Deputy Grand Master. R. W. Wm. P. Fawcett, Senior Grand Warden. R. W. David Brown, Junior Grand Warden. V. W. Rev. Wm. Donald, D. D., Grand Chaplain. V. W. Wm. H. A. Keans, Grand Treasurer.

At this time there were 26 chartered lodges in the province 20 of which held their warrants from England, 3 from Scotland and 3 from Ireland. The bona fide freemasonry in St. John is the beautiful Masonic Temple on Germain Street which is controlled by a joint stock company incorporated April 11th, 1872. The two lots in which the palatial structure stands were purchased from Benjamin Smith and his executors for \$18,000. On July 1st, 1878, the cornerstone was laid and on May 1st, 1879, the masonic bodies

took up their quarters there though the main hall was not fitted up until 1884. The building cost altogether exclusive of the land about \$70,000. It was a heavy expenditure but it is a building for the 500 or 600 Masons of this city to be proud of. This sketch of blue or craft masonry in this city will now be concluded with a list of the lodges in St. John, the dates of the issue of their warrants and their membership on December 27th, 1896; and also with a list of the chief grand lodge officers of the last 30 years.

Table with columns: No., Name, Date of Issue of Warrant, Membership Dec. 27, '96. Rows include Albion, St. John's, Hibernia, Carleton Union, Union of Portland, and New Brunswick.

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE.

- Grand Masters. Benjamin Lester Peters, 1867-69. William Wedderburn, 1870-71. John Valentine Ellis, 1872-74, 1884-86. Robert T. Clinch, 1875-77. Robert Marshall, 1878-80. Benjamin R. Stevenson, 1881-82. William F. Bunting, 1883. James McNichol, 1887-88. Thomas Walker, M. D., 1889-1894, 1897. Julius T. Whitlock, 1895-96.

Deputy Grand Masters.

- William Wedderburn, 1867-69. John Valentine Ellis, 1870-71. Edward Willis, 1872-73. Robert Marshall, 1874. William F. Dibble, 1875. William H. A. Keans, 1876. Edwin J. Wetmore, 1877. Benjamin R. Stevenson, 1878-79. Rev. F. Partridge, D.D., 1880. Henry Duffell, 1881. William Bunting, 1882. Thomas A. Godsoe, 1883. James McNichol, jr., 1884. William J. Logan, 1885. Harry Beckwith, 1886. Julius T. Whitlock, 1887. E. Lee Street, 1888. George M. Jarvis, 1889. Henry A. White, 1890. David P. Merritt, 1891. George F. Pinder, 1892. Henry B. Fleming, 1893. John A. Watson, 1894. J. Henry Leonard, 1895. Fred W. Tomson, 1896. Alexander Burchill, 1897.

Grand Chaplains.

- Rev. Wm. Donald, D. D., 1867-70. Rev. Howard Sprague, 1871-72. Rev. Francis Partridge, D. D., 1873-77. Rev. Donald MacRae, 1878-80. Rev. Charles F. Medley, 1881. Rev. Richard Mathers, 1882-83. Rev. W. W. Brewer, 1884-87. Rev. A. McDougal, 1888-89. Rev. O. S. Newnam, 1891, 1895. Rev. G. M. Campbell, 1891-93. Rev. A. G. H. Dicker, 1894. Rev. Thos. Marshall, 1896. Rev. Robert S. Crisp, 1897.

Grand Treasurers.

- W. H. A. Keans, 1867-76. Jas. McNichol, jr., 1876-83. Charles Mathers, 1884-88. Henry J. Thorne, 1889-92. Thomas A. Godsoe, 1893-94. Edwin J. Everitt, 1895-97. Grand Secretaries. William F. Bunting, 1867-81. Edwin J. Wetmore, 1882-92. T. Nisbet Robertson, 1893. F. W. Wisdom, 1894-96. J. Twining Hart, 1897. \* Since deceased.

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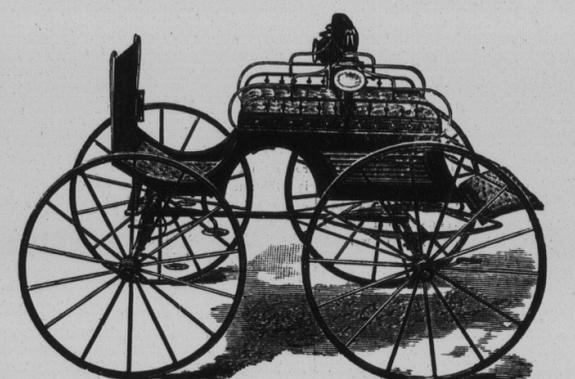
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