

York and Vermont, and they, crossing the line, carried their notions of Masonic government with them. They carried their preferences of Rituals with them, and as early as 1847, when I first began to form the acquaintance of Canadian Masons, the modes of working had received considerable form and coloring from Wadsworth, the New York Lecturer, and Salem Town a New York Mason, venerable for age, learning and many gifts. I found that in 1847 I had little difficulty, though a Mississippi-made Mason, in working with the brethren from Upper Canada.

The historian of the Grand Lodge of Canada makes William Mercer Wilson, of Simcoe, Canada West, (now the Province of Ontario) the central figure of the movement. Wilson was born to be a leader of men. Physically a person of great powers, tall, heavy, possessed of a bright eye and commanding voice, eloquent of speech, quiet and convincing of pen, one must look long and far to discover his equal. A Scotchman by birth, his views of ritualism were more Catholic, that is, less rigid, than those of English-made Masons. A man cheerful, social of habit, gentlemanly in manners, one who dressed well and held his place in the best of company, a favorite with the ladies, a favorite with children, thus he comes before me in the silence of my library while I write, and stands while I draw his likeness. Thus he appeared in June 1856, when he visited me at my Kentucky home, delivered an address to my neighbors, and delighted my family with his genial manners.

It was William Mercer Wilson, afterwards one of the judges of his Province, who bore the odium of a rebel in 1854, but won the crown of a conqueror in 1858. In the early meetings at Clifton, near Niagara Falls, he was the speech-maker who strengthened the feeble and encouraged the bold. He drafted the constitution and by-laws of the new Grand Lodge, drew up with some assistance, the

various proclamations of independence sent forth, and took upon his shoulders whatever odium was connected with the idea of secession.

This was not a little to bear. In Masonic English history no province or colony had thus far claimed the right to form an independent Grand Lodge, and it is quite amusing now to read the Masonic fulminations in the English and Masonic papers made at the time against Wilson and those who combined against him. They were much like the fulminations against the American colonies, when they declared their independence.

I have hinted that I was early in the movement. This was not because of my Masonic prominence, for up to 1854 I had never held a position more elevated than that of Lodge Master; but I was editor of a paper, *The American Freemason*, which enjoyed a great circulation; I was a diligent student in Masonic law and usage; an ardent admirer of the American system of Masonry and had already a large correspondence with leaders of the Craft in Canada and elsewhere; I was written to by Wilson, Bird Harris, and others, most active in the Clifton convention. It follows without saying that my replies, had they been preserved would show many hints towards constitution-making etc., which met a warm reception. As soon as independence had been declared, I wrote to numerous Grand Masters, Grand Secretaries and Chairmen of foreign correspondence committees, asking a favorable consideration of the matter, commending the effort, and showing how nearly it accorded with efforts that resulted in the establishment of American Grand Lodges. Being chairman of the foreign correspondence committee of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, I recommended in 1855, that the Grand Lodge of Canada be acknowledged as a sovereign power. It was done by unanimous vote, and by one of those popular demonstrations common to the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, when the