

CHAPTER XIX.

What is the Oldest Lodge in the British Empire Overseas?**A Study in Masonic Jurisprudence.***

Freemasonry previously to the Revival of 1717, did not spread into any part of what was then, or is now, the British Empire Overseas. Its activities were confined to the British Isles. It was not long, however, after the memorable organization of the Grand Lodge of England that the Craft and its principles were propagated elsewhere. It found its way out to India very soon afterward and a Grand Lodge was established (at least nominally), in Bengal in 1728. The first lodge in Boston began work in 1733-4, under the authority of Henry Price, Prov. G. M. of North America, and it was only a few years later, in 1738, that a lodge was established at Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia, by Erasmus James Philipps, which was the first on Canadian soil.

Thousands of lodges have since been organized all over the Anglo-Saxon world, and have served their day and generation in spreading a knowledge of the Craft, its principles, ideals and traditions. All have had their vicissitudes and have been affected by changing local conditions and not a few have ceased to be.

Of all those which survive and which are more than a century old, there are few whose history could not be made the subject of an interesting paper, and perhaps the history of St. Andrew's, No. 1; St. John, No. 2; Virgin, No. 3; and St. George's, No. 20, in this jurisdiction, all within this class, would be as interesting as any other.

I cannot mention more than half a dozen, and their mention must have reference to the consideration of the title question, "Which is the oldest Lodge in the British Empire Overseas?"

In considering this question, we are concerned with the claims of six lodges:

*(A paper read by W. Bro. R. V. Harris, W. M., of St. Andrew's Lodge, before the Lodge, March 26th, 1918, and before the N. S. Lodge of Research, June 11th, 1918).