

The first gathering of Freemasons in British Columbia of which we have any record was held on the 6th of September, 1859. It was an informal meeting, held for the purpose of arranging for the funeral of Brother Samuel J. Hazeltine. Brother Hazeltine was Chief Engineer of the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *Labouchere*, and on the 26th of August, 1859, had the misfortune to break his leg. He was removed to the Royal Hospital, Victoria, and died there.

As a result of the meeting referred to, the following notice appeared in "The British Colonist" of the 7th of September, 1859:—

"Masonic Notice.

At an informal meeting of Free and Accepted Masons held this day, it was.

*Resolved*, That all Master Masons in good standing, attached to the Navy, Army or Civil Departments of Her Majesty, or of the U. S. Navy, now sojourning in this colony, be invited to participate in the obsequies of our deceased Brother SAMUEL J. HAZELTINE, meeting for that purpose at the Hall of the Royal Hotel tomorrow.

Brethren in good standing, resident or sojourning on the Island, are fraternally invited to attend. By order,

B. F. Moses,

John T. Damon,

Secretary pro tem.

Acting W. M.

Victoria, V. I., Sept. 6th, 1859."

The meeting was accordingly held in the Royal Hotel, which was situated near the corner of Wharf and Johnson streets. A large number of the Craft attended the meeting; several California Masons vouched for each other and formed committees for the examination of others. When this had been done, the Brethren exercised their ancient prerogative and formed themselves into a Lodge and officers were chosen. Brother John T. Damon was elected acting Worshipful Master and Brother B. F. Moses Acting Secretary.

The following day the Craft again assembled, and being properly clothed in white gloves and aprons (the aprons having been made by a tent maker on Yates street) formed a procession and marched to the Hospital and thence to the Cemetery beyond Christ Church, that was mortal of the late Brother Hazeltine was interred with honours.

Unfortunately there is no record preserved of the name who were present on this interesting occasion, and the only record of the event is the following paragraph in "The British Colonist" of 9th of September, 1859.

"MASONIC FUNERAL.—The remains of the late Mr. Samuel Hazeltine, whose sudden death has been generally deplored, were followed to the grave, on Wednesday, by many friends—and a large number of Masons, of which Order he was a member. He was buried by the Masonic fraternity."

Although this is the first recorded meeting of the Craft others must have been held previously, as the Warrant for the formation of Victoria Lodge was granted by the M. W. Grand Master of England, who, at the time, was the Earl of Zetland, on the 10th of March, 1859. Events moved slowly in those days, however, and it was not until a year later, apparently, that the Warrant arrived in the colony. On the 20th of March, 1860, the following notice appeared in "The British Colonist":