

# Marmora Masonic Lodge offers brotherhood after 100 years

by Gerald Belanger

The Marmora Masonic Lodge No. 222. A.F. (Ancient Free) & A.M. (Accepted Masons), is the longest running men's group in the Village and are still having regular meetings. The Lodge held their first meeting on November 16, 1869 under the stairs of the Orangemen Lodge.

The apron belonging to Bro. Thomas Warren, first candidate initiated in the Marmora Lodge on January 18, 1870, had been presented to the Lodge by Miss Grace Warren. At a regular Lodge meeting held on April 24, 1964, a motion was passed to have the apron hung in the Lodge Room.

From the minutes of the August 25, 1874 meeting came a dispensation from the Warden Master (W.M.) to all brethren of the Marmora Lodge to appear in the public procession of September 1, 1874 to lay the cornerstone at St. Paul's Anglican Church.

At a Lodge meeting held on June 1, 1877, it was decided to send a note of Colonel Chambliss for his gift of a building lot for a lodge. The Building Committee, under Bro. Edward Cowain, urged all brethren to come and help in levelling the lot and digging the foundations. The cornerstone was laid on July 15, 1885 by Bro. Arthur McGuinness. The building contractor for the new Lodge was Bro. George Loucks. The Lodge was completed before the April 13, 1886 regular meeting of the organization.

Over eight hundred years ago, large gothic cathedrals were built in Europe. The Masons of that period, wanting to ensure a high quality of work, formed working guilds or lodges. Members of these

working Lodges were called Ancient Free Masons. As the need for these highly skilled workmen diminished and their numbers decreased, Lodges were forced to accept new workers of high honour who were not workmen in the craft. These members were referred to as Accepted Masons.

Masonry was first introduced in Canada in 1749 at Halifax with Erasmus James Phillips as the first Grand Master. The first recorded formation of the Grand Masonic Lodge took place on November 28, 1759 in Quebec City. At the time, the surrendered city was still under British rule. It was from early Military Lodges that Masonry gradually spread over the frontier of Canada and as far south as Detroit.

In 1792 the first Grand Masonic Lodge of Upper Canada was established by Bro. William Jarvis as Provincial Grand Master. From 1792 until 1804, he issued over twenty Warrants for Lodges in various parts of his jurisdiction. In 1792 the provincial capital was Niagara. However, in 1797 the provincial capital was transferred from Niagara to York (Toronto).

Finally in 1822, the Grand Lodge of England authorized Bro. Simon McGillivray, an official of North West Trading Co., to proceed to Canada to re-organize and unite the Craft and Craftsmen of the province. This he did, and the result was the opening of a Provincial Grand Lodge at York in October of 1822. This was the second Provincial Grand Lodge in Upper Canada or Canada West.

In October of 1855, the Grand Lodge of Canada was organized with Bro. William Mercer Wilson as the Grand Master. At that meeting, which was held in Hamilton that year, representatives of forty-

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one Lodges assembled; some under the arm of the Grand Lodge of England and some from Lodges in Canada warranted by the Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland. This Grand Lodge under Bro. Wilson was made up of Lodges in Upper and Lower Canada.

On July 14, 1858, the third annual meeting of the Grand Lodge (G.L) of Canada was held in Toronto. Here the G.L of Canada and the A.G.L of upper Canada united. Thus the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Canada was formed with Bro. William Wilson as Grand Master. The history of Masonry has been traced to this meeting of the Grand Lodge in Canada during 1855.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Masonic Lodge No. 222 in Marmora, the following were installed as officers for 1919; William L. Rigg (W.M); J.F Baker (I.P.M); Rev. W.P. Woodger (S.W); Harry O. Loveless (J.W); F.L. Auger (Chaplain); A.H. Connor (Treasurer); D.E. Bell (Secretary); Fred R. Wells (S.D); W.H. Boycott (J.D); Thomas E. Laycock (D of C); C.S. Boyd (S.L); S.F. Blake (S.L); H.C. Barlow (I.G) and Wilfred H. Leal (Tyler).

In 1923, Bro. Thomas Laycock was the first member from the Marmora Lodge to be elected to the office of District Deputy Grand Master (D.D.G.M) of Prince Edward District.

During the summer of 1925, the Lodge was completely renovated. The Lodge room was lengthened, the anti-room was sealed off from the outside and new chairs purchased for the officers.

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Masonic Lodge No. 222, the Marmora Herald dated December 5, 1929 wrote;

'Bro. Arthur V. Yates, acting Master of the Lodge, read the minutes from the November, 1869 which was the first meeting of the Lodge, thus linking the past with the present. All present then paid tribute of a moments silence to the brethren who have passed away.'

After their meeting held on December 2, 1929, members of the Order left their Lodge Room and adjourned to the Town Hall to continue the celebration of their 60th anniversary.

During the early years of the Lodge, records and other documents were stored in Bro. C.W. Gladney's store vault. After January, 1936 all documents were transferred from Gladney's store to the vault in Frank N. Marrett's business.

Immediately after reciting a Masonic poem at a regular Lodge meeting in Marmora on October 19, 1942 Bro. Joseph Stillman of Missoula, Minnesota, U.S.A died. He had taken a stroke and died before Dr. Crawford arrived.

On November 21, 1966 Bro. D.E. Bell was presented with a "60 Year Jewel" in recognition of being a devoted and active member of the Masonic Lodge. Bro. Bell was initiated in the Marmora Lodge on October 29, 1906, elected as Master in 1911 and held the position of Secretary for 25 years in Marmora.

On October 20, 1970 the Marmora Masonic Lodge celebrated its centennial birthday at its regular meeting held in the Lodge. Bro. Albert Burridge was presented with his 50 year service pin to the fraternity. On the following Sunday, October 26 over sixty member and visitors paraded from the Lodge to St. Paul's Church for the morning service at 11 a.m. to continue their celebrations.

On April 27, 1981 history was made in the Masonic Hall on Bursthall Street, when women were admitted to the hall for the first time in its 114 year history. The occasion was the presentation of a new Bible to the Marmora Lodge No. 222, in memory of Worship Bro. Harry O. Loveless who had been a member of the Lodge since January 11, 1916. Bro. Loveless was their Chaplain for twenty-two years. The new Bible replaced the old one that had been presented to the Lodge some 40 years earlier by the United Church.

Being a low profile, secretive organization, very little ever gets into the press concerning the essential features of its work. The Masonic Lodge in a community is to be judged not by perfection attained but by its aims, struggles and efforts. The Order does not advertise, believing that the best advertisement lies in the quality of the product which in the case of the Masons, is human brotherhood and kindly tolerance.