

***“THE OTTAWA VALLEY – MEETING THE NEEDS OF MASONS FOR TWO-AND-A-HALF CENTURIES”***

**By R.W. Bro. Ron Campbell for Templum Fidelis Lodge No. 746  
Bath, On – January 21, 2012**

The Ottawa Valley has been formed by the Ottawa River on its eternal flow from Lake Timiskaming near New Liskeard, through hard rock mineral deposits, timber reserves and farmland to join the mighty St. Lawrence near Montreal. The River, serving as much of Ontario's eastern border with the Province of Quebec, is supplied with water from many smaller rivers as it passes on its way to the St. Lawrence, including the Bonnechere, the Madawaska, the Mississippi and the Rideau, its course sometimes interrupted by obstacles such as the Chaudiere Rapids. These rivers and their tributaries have always been important to the inhabitants of the Valley: a source of fish and transportation as the Valley developed; a convenient means of moving logs when lumber was King; and a source of nourishment for the crops when agriculture blossomed. It should not be surprising, therefore, that Masonic lodges in the Ottawa Districts adopted these names of recognition.

But, let's start at the beginning .... In September 1759, following the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, six military lodges established a form of Provincial Grand Lodge and began granting warrants from Quebec City in the east to Sault Ste. Marie in the west.

Tracings of Freemasonry west of the Ottawa River prior to 1792 are sparse. Of those lodges warranted between 1759 and 1792, the date of the first Provincial Grand Warrant in Upper Canada, nine were of a permanent character and one was a military, or field, lodge. Of these ten lodges, only two were located in current-day Eastern Ontario, each warranted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Quebec: St. James' Lodge No. 4, at Cataraqui, and Union Lodge No. 521, at Cornwall. Enough, however, to gain a foothold in the area, and plant the seed that would grow and spread up the Rideau Lakes system and along the west side of the Ottawa River.

Masonry has a proud history in the Ottawa Valley. Its strength for more than 250 years reflects the pioneer spirit that wrestled a civilization out of the wilderness. They came to this region of old Upper Canada impelled by a series of relentless pressures. Some from the heart-breaking "clearances" of the Scottish Highlands; others escaping in plague ships from the potato famine in Ireland, or were driven from their civilized homesteads in the Mohawk Valley of New York State because of their unshaken loyalty to the Empire and the Crown. Still others came seeking peace after serving in the military during the War of 1812. All sought a new home in Canada, where freedom of creed and political rights were assured.

Among these settlers were Craftsmen who had seen the first light of Masonry either in Britain or in the early lodges of the western portion of Lower Canada. When these pioneers were settled, the faithful brethren began to assemble. Masonic lodges sprang up in numerous small communities, some to thrive and others to fade into darkness.

As Masonry spread its benign light up the river system, its first stop was Rideau Lodge No. 25, founded in Burritts Rapids, Upper Canada, in 1815.

In the year 1818, discharged soldiers from the 99th and 100th Regiments of Foot established a military settlement in what is now Carleton County, in an area currently occupied by the Village of Richmond. It was in every sense a military establishment; the men received half pay for several years in addition to their land grant, as well as tools and other necessities for the construction of their homes.

Within two years, the faithful brethren of the Craft were meeting in a hotel known as "The Masonic Coat of Arms". Included in the group were soldiers from the 89th Regiment, which had a Craft Lodge warranted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The Warrant was cancelled in 1818, as the Grand Lodge had not received dues since 1808. This did not appear to concern the Masons of Richmond, who used the Warrant from 1818 to 1820. In 1819, however, R.W. Bro. Charles Lennox, fourth Duke of Richmond and Governor General, visited and found fault with the brethren using this old Field Warrant. Efforts to have the Warrant legalized failed, so the brethren applied for and received a "Dispensation to Work" dated April 29, 1821, from The Grand Masonic Convention at Kingston, and founded Richmond Lodge. How long this lodge survived is not known with certainty. Records show that brethren attended lodge in Richmond into the 1840's.

There is little doubt that Masonic brethren existed in Carleton Place prior to 1842. As early as 1822, there was an attempt to establish a lodge there to be known as "Morning Star". Action was held in limbo for twenty years before a further petition to form a lodge was made. The Second Grand Masonic Convention granted the petition and the lodge was instituted on January 20, 1843.

St. John's Lodge made efforts to get a Charter from the Grand Lodge of England as early as 1844. After many tries, the members received a warrant on September 26, 1849, officially becoming St. John's Lodge No. 796 of Carleton Place on the Grand Registry of England. Records of the Provincial Grand Lodge refer to Carleton Place's "St. John's Lodge No. 16".

This situation was not unusual for the time. Between 1822 and 1855, lodges in Ontario holding their warrants from the United Grand Lodge of England had two numbers simultaneously: one on the Register of the Grand Lodge and a local number on the Register of the Provincial Grand Lodge. To further complicate the matter, every time a new Provincial Grand Master was named, a new set of local numbers was assigned. As a further source of confusion in the early years of our Grand Lodge, the numbers of extinct lodges were given to later affiliates.

In September 1858, the Minutes of St. John's Lodge notes that a letter had been received from the Grand Lodge of Canada, with an invitation to join that Grand Lodge. A committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities of joining their brethren in Canada West. The committee's investigation came forward on December 5, 1861, with a motion that St. John's Lodge join the Grand Lodge of Canada. An amendment was made to the motion that "St. John's Lodge remain firm in its allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England." After much heated debate, the question was held over to the next meeting, at which the original motion was withdrawn after the Master censured the

mover and seconder. This motion lay fallow for nearly eleven years before St. John's Lodge quietly made application to join the Grand Lodge of Canada. On May 5, 1872, St John's became St. John's Lodge No. 63 on the Grand Registry of Canada, being assigned the number previously allotted to Simcoe Lodge, Simcoe, which lost its warrant in 1858.

Lieutenant-Colonel John By arrived to plan the Rideau Canal in 1826. By the time the canal was completed six years later, Bytown was an industrial centre.

The first lodge in Bytown came into existence in 1848. Dalhousie Lodge received its Warrant on May 16th, from the Third Provincial Grand Lodge. After 24 years as a constituent lodge of the Grand Lodge of England, the members of Dalhousie Lodge decided to affiliate with the Grand Lodge of Canada and, on March 26, 1872, became No. 52 on its Registry, the number originally assigned to Wellington Lodge, Dunnville, which had had its warrant cancelled in 1865.

A dispensation to form Doric Lodge was issued on February 17, 1855, by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Canada West. The first meeting instituting the lodge was held on March 28th, some seven months prior to the formation of the Grand Lodge of Canada. The United Grand Lodge issued a Warrant on August 20, 1855, assigning Doric the number 952. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Canada West was dissolved in September 1857 and reformed as the Ancient Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada. At that time, there were two Grand Lodge bodies in Ontario: The Ancient Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Canada, headed by Grand Master Sir Allan McNab, and The Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada, headed by Grand Master William Mercer Wilson. The Grand Lodge under McNab was dissolved on July 14, 1858, with its constituent lodges, including Doric, simultaneously uniting with The Grand Lodge of Canada. Reassignment of numbers followed, with Doric receiving its current Number 58.

Renfrew was an industrious small settlement in 1859. Early that fall, ten members of the Craft sought to establish a lodge. This became reality when Renfrew Lodge No. 122 was granted a Dispensation signed by the first Grand Master. A history of Renfrew written around the turn of the last century noted the success of the Lodge with the statement: "Next to the Sons of Temperance, the Masonic Lodge is the oldest fraternal organization in Renfrew".

Masonry continued its journey up the Ottawa River the following year, with the formation of Pembroke Lodge No. 128. On July 9, 1860, an emergent meeting was held for the purpose of receiving R. W. Bro. J. C. Frank, D.D.G.M. of Prince Edward District, who read and presented a Dispensation to the brethren of Pembroke.

Instituted on March 19, 1861, Mississippi Lodge held its first Regular Communication in Almonte on May 24th. As the Charter had still not been received by the time of the December 15th meeting, the Secretary was directed to write Grand Lodge to ascertain the cause of the delay. All's well that ends well; with the Charter finally in hand, an Emergent Meeting was held on February 5, 1862, to formally open and recognize Mississippi Lodge No. 147. Notwithstanding the concern over the delay in receiving the

Charter, it was not until the meeting of March 6, 1868, some six years later, that a motion was passed to have said Charter framed at lodge expense!

Prior to Ottawa being selected by Queen Victoria as the permanent capital of Canada, the location of the federal government alternated every four years between Quebec City and Toronto. On May 14, 1861, Civil Service Lodge was consecrated and constituted at Quebec City. The lodge was comprised solely of public servants. With the permanent shift of the government to Ottawa, Civil Service Lodge No. 148 also moved up the Ottawa River. The lodge met at 18 Rideau Street, site of the current Rideau Centre, in close proximity to the Parliament buildings.

Although there had not been a lodge in Richmond for some years, the Masons of the village kept busy at many community activities. One group, who were businessmen, traveled of necessity the 21 miles to Ottawa at least once a month and timed their visits to coincide with the meeting night of Doric Lodge No. 58, of which most were members. One was Rev. Charles Biggar Pettit, Rector of St. John's Anglican Church. Bro. Rev. Pettit petitioned Doric Lodge to help establish a lodge in the Village of Richmond, situated on the Goodwood River. Doric Lodge agreed to forward a petition to Grand Lodge. Dispensation to form a lodge, to be named Goodwood Lodge after the river, was granted on September 29, 1863. It later took its place as No. 159 on the Registry of Grand Lodge.

Bytown was renamed Ottawa in 1855 and chosen as the capital of the Province of Canada in 1857 and of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. These events led to two major new industries: construction, with the erection of the Parliament Buildings between 1860 and 1866; and the federal public service. During the early part of 1865, a group of Freemasons working on construction of the Parliament Buildings resolved to seek a new lodge in the City of Ottawa. As the majority were builders, the name proposed was "The Builders Lodge". A petition to this effect was presented to the Tenth Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Canada, which resulted in a Warrant being issued dated July 13, 1865, for creation of The Builders Lodge No. 177.

On January 9, 1868, the first meeting of Madawaska Lodge No. 196 was held in the upstairs room of a small building, known as "the Engine House", situated on the Madawaska Bridge at Arnprior. The accommodation was very limited, neither convenient nor comfortable – but it was a beginning. The nine dedicated Charter members who attended that meeting planted the seed of Masonry in Arnprior, a seed that took instant root and blossomed with the passage of time.

On April 29, 1870, M. W. Bro. A. A. Stevenson, Grand Master, granted a Dispensation to organize a new lodge in the City of Ottawa. On September 22nd, M. W. Bro. Stevenson constituted and consecrated The Lodge of Fidelity No. 231. The following day, the Grand Master laid the foundation stone of the new Court House and the Carleton County offices.

As the City of Ottawa continued to grow during the 1870's, so did Masonry. R. W. Bro. Edward C. Barber, D.D.G.M., recommended that Chaudiere Lodge be granted a

Charter. The recommendation was accepted and Chaudiere Lodge was warranted on July 11, 1872, and assigned the number 264.

Several factors led to the formation of Prince of Wales Lodge in Ottawa. One was the surrender of the Charter of Corinthian Lodge No. 59 in 1875, one of the oldest lodges in the City of Ottawa; the other was the withdrawal of a large number of brethren from The Builders Lodge in 1877. The cause of this exodus was purported to have been "temperance", but lost in the passage of time is whether the "pros" or "cons" left. A clue, however, might rest in the fact that the namesake of the new lodge was reputed to have enjoyed the occasional libation! An application was forwarded to Grand Lodge, and a Dispensation was received on December 6, 1878. At the regular meeting on October 9, 1879, the Warrant was read and Prince of Wales Lodge, numbered 371 on the Grand Register, was established and dedicated.

To serve the needs of Masonry in Eganville and vicinity, a group of interested brethren decided in 1894 to seek a Charter to establish a Masonic lodge. On July 19, 1895, the necessary Charter was granted for the formation of Bonnechere Lodge, to be numbered 433 on the Register of Grand Lodge. R. W. Bro. Archibald Hood, D.D.G.M., issued a dispensation for Bonnechere Lodge to install and invest its Officers. Notwithstanding his action, in his report to the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, Bro. Hood expressed his view that the financial standing of the Lodge was "very bad" and the prospects for the Lodge were "poor." It is interesting to note that Bonnechere Lodge celebrated its centennial in 1995!

The village of Cobden is located on the current Trans-Canada Highway, virtually equal distant from Eganville, Pembroke and Renfrew. While that distance can be driven today in a half-hour or less, at the dawn of the twentieth century, the horseless carriage was only a curiosity and paved highways were but a figment of a vivid imagination. Twenty miles was a long distance to travel by horse and cart. Was it any wonder, then, that 21 brethren belonging to Pembroke, Mattawa and Renfrew Lodges expressed a desire to start a new lodge in Cobden? Grand Lodge gave approval on August 19, 1902, to proceed with forming the lodge Under Dispensation. A Warrant was granted at the Annual Communication in 1903, creating Cobden Lodge No. 459.

Situated some twelve miles from Mississippi Lodge No. 147, Almonte, twelve brethren in the agricultural community of Carp affixed their signatures to a request to Grand Lodge for permission to form a new lodge. Their wish was granted and Carleton Lodge was instituted on January 12, 1904. An emergent meeting was held on October 4th to consecrate Carleton Lodge No. 465.

In 1905, fourteen Master Masons from Henderson Lodge No. 383 in Winchester signed a petition to Grand Lodge seeking to institute a new lodge in the village of Russell. Dispensation was granted and a special meeting was called on September 30, 1907, to dedicate and consecrate the Lodge, and to receive the Lodge's Charter, designating it as Russell Lodge No. 479.

Beachburg had a Masonic lodge named Enterprise Lodge and numbered 310 on the Register of Grand Lodge from 1874 until 1881, when it went into darkness. Thirty-two

years later, the local Masons were ready to try again. A new lodge was instituted on September 1, 1913, in rooms rented on the top floor of the Orange Hall. There was never a question of a name for this lodge; it was considered a continuation of, or at least a successor to, the original Enterprise Lodge of the village. An Emergent Meeting was called for October 5, 1914, for the purpose of constituting Enterprise Lodge No. 516. R. W. Bro Thomas Shanks, D.D.G.M. of Ottawa District No. 16, conducted the ceremony.

One of the ideas promoted in the Grand Lodge "Brother-to-Brother" Programme is to ensure that the lodge meeting ends at a reasonable hour, so that the brethren might enjoy a social period. While there is no specific proof, October 5, 1914, at Enterprise Lodge may well have been the genesis of that recommendation. The dedication meeting in the afternoon was considered an Emergent Meeting of the Lodge, even though it was held on the date of the Regular Meeting. The meeting opened at 3:00 p.m. and closed at 5:45 p.m., following the dedication of the Lodge and the installation and investiture of the Officers. That meeting was followed by a banquet, at the conclusion of which numerous visiting brethren expressed their congratulations to the members of Enterprise Lodge. The Regular Meeting was held that evening. One resolution passed during the business portion was that Bro. Henry Davies would be kept in good standing while serving with the British Expeditionary Force. Bro. Davies survived the War and retained his membership until his death in 1945. After the business of the lodge was concluded, two candidates were initiated and another passed to the Second Degree. The meeting closed at midnight. R. W. Bro. Shanks persevered to the finish – he had to - the evening meeting was his Official Visit to the Lodge!

Unfortunately, the Masonic presence in Beachburg faded away for a second time, when Enterprise Lodge amalgamated with Cobden Lodge No. 459 on September 11, 2007.

Masonry has always consisted of a cross-section of society. One of its major strengths is that, within the lodge room, these men of diverse backgrounds and professions all meet "on the level" as equals. A microcosm of the cosmopolitan nature of this truth can be seen in the creation of Enterprise Lodge.

The first Worshipful Master was a farmer; the Senior Warden, a miller; and the Junior Warden, a farmer. Of the other 16 Charter members, seven were farmers, and the rest were comprised of a doctor, a dentist, a Civil engineer, a minister, a banker, a teacher, a lineman, a blacksmith and a machine agent.

On March 5, 1914, R. W. Bro. Steele, D.D.G.M., instituted Hazeldean Lodge under a Dispensation granted by Grand Lodge at its Annual Communication held in Ottawa in July 1913. The first and subsequent meetings until July 1914 were held at the Orange Hall while the present lodge building was being constructed. Total cost for that building was \$3,180, of which \$1,060 was for furniture and \$150 for the lot and legal fees. This property now sits squarely in the middle of the residential housing boom of Kanata, on the city centre side of Scotiabank Place.

Hazeldean Lodge No. 517 was duly constituted, consecrated and dedicated on October 9, 1914.

After a 45-year hiatus during which the Valley gained seven lodges, Freemasonry in Ottawa finally experienced further growth. Several Masons residing on the Britannia Line and meeting on the streetcar going to and from the City discussed starting a lodge in Westboro. On June 27, 1914, R. W. Bro. Steele received an application from 20 brethren for a new lodge. He recommended the petition to the Grand Master, who concurred, and Ionic Lodge No. 526 was instituted on December 9, 1914.

By then, however, the world had been plunged into the dark days of the First World War. While it lasted four years, it changed lives forever. Many members of the Craft and countless others who might well have asked to join remained in Europe, buried in massive cemeteries devoted to fallen Canadian troops. It was five years before Masons in Ottawa sought dispensation to form a new lodge.

With the end of that war still fresh in their minds, and with the fraternal feeling for their comrades-at-arms still in their hearts, returning veterans sought something to fill the gap. Many turned to Masonry, inundating the existing lodges. As the Twenties roared in, optimism for the future replaced the horrors of the past. So began a decade of unparalleled growth and the "I-don't-care" attitude towards enjoying life, which continued virtually unabated for ten years. Masonry in the Valley also grew. In 1919 and 1920, Ottawa saw the institution of four new lodges: Sydney Albert Luke No. 558, taking its name from the Past Grand Master from Ottawa, on October 22, 1919; St. Andrew's No. 560, of which the majority of its Charter Members were from lodges in Scotland, on January 10, 1920; Acacia No. 561, on January 23rd, and Ashlar No. 564, on February 7th. During the next two years, Ottawa gained two additional lodges with the institution on October 13, 1921, of Defenders Lodge No. 590, with membership originally restricted to returned servicemen who sought a unique environment; and Rideau Lodge No. 595 on January 12, 1922.

The Roaring Twenties yielded to the Dirty Thirties, and a world-wide Depression that saw high unemployment among the population, many of them young men who might otherwise have sought to join Masonry if not for being preoccupied with the daily struggle to survive.

The sorrow of the Depression yielded to the greater grief of the Second World War. The reality of a world conflict was brought to the home front in the form of rationing. Many staples were hard to come by, not the least of which was butter. Fraternal visits "up the Valley" were great experiences, particularly banquet tables loaded with items city folk often only dreamed of, especially big chunks of fresh butter!

While Masonry in the Valley continued to grow in membership over the next twenty-eight years, the institution of new lodges went into a hiatus; the rapid expansion of new lodges during the period from 1895 to 1922 seemed to meet the need of the brethren. No new lodges were formed in the Valley until the institution of Temple Lodge No. 665 on October 27, 1950, to meet the demand in Westboro from a growing membership following World War 2. Atomic Lodge No. 686 was instituted on February 1, 1957 at Deep River to address the growth of the area as a result of atomic energy development at nearby Chalk River. With the decline in atomic energy usage, however, the lodge faced a membership problem, which it addressed in 1996 by relocating to Pembroke

and becoming a daylight lodge to serve the needs of an aging population in the upper portion of the Valley.

The next expansion came on October 11, 1969, with the institution of Bytown Lodge No. 721, spurred by the efforts of "The Blue Coats", the Masters Group of 1969-70, the last of the united Ottawa District. Edinburgh Lodge No. 736, a lodge with a military theme, followed on June 11, 1983, and was brought up to the current complement by the establishment of Luxor Daylight Lodge No. 741 on September 18, 1991, to address the needs of an aging membership in Ottawa and the surrounding area.

On May 27, 2003, Rideau Lodge No. 595 amalgamated with Chaudiere Lodge No. 264, adopting the name and number of the latter.

Lodges must have structures in which Masons can meet. Masonic buildings were established during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in communities throughout the Ottawa Valley far enough apart so as not to encroach on each other's territory, but close enough to avail the opportunity of an interested man to join a lodge within the length of his personal cable tow.

The concept of erecting a suitable Masonic Temple for Ottawa had been discussed for a number of years. These efforts reached fruition when the stately edifice at 111 Metcalfe Street opened on February 10, 1914. The laughter and camaraderie that reverberated through the new building rang hollow, however, for, in a few months, Canada would be involved in *The War to End All Wars*.

The new Temple boasted of having one of the first elevators in Ottawa – a cage-like device that shot out sparks in its latter life and no one was certain on which floor they were arriving, or if they would even arrive at all! After 61 years, that once grand building became just a tired old structure. This led to the construction of the Masonic Centre at 2140 Walkley Road, which opened in October 1976 and is the current home of twelve Ottawa lodges.

The West end of Ottawa has been served since 1924 by the Westboro Masonic Hall. Built by the Masons of Ionic and Acacia Lodges, the Hall has witnessed the city grow up around it and currently serves as home to five Masonic Lodges.

In all, Masonry has been active in the Ottawa Valley for some 250 years. Today, in the two Ottawa Districts, 29 lodges meet from Russell in the southeast to Pembroke in the northwest. They serve 2,400 Masons, many of whom have served both Grand Lodge and its Board of General Purposes with distinction over the years. Seven "Valley Lads", both native-born and adopted, have served as Grand Master, including: William R. White, 1894-1896; James H. Burritt, 1905-1907; Sydney Albert Luke, 1915-1917; John A. Dobbie, 1939-1941; Clarence M. Pitts, 1959-1961; Howard O. Polk, 1981-1983, and Donald H. Mumby, 2003-2005.

With such a sure foundation, we can look forward with confidence to the next two-and-a-half centuries of the Craft's presence in "The Valley".

R.W. Bro. Ron Campbell