

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH – SPECIAL EDITION – Aug 8, 2003

FREEMASONRY

I didn't realize that Freemasonry was such an interesting subject until, one day, while e-mailing Don Frizzell I happened to mention that my former father-in-law, Bill Ross, was head of the Masons in Atlin, B.C. Don responded that he was a past District Deputy Grand Master in Whitehorse. Then I mentioned this conversation with Henry and he responded that he was past District Deputy Grand Master. This started me thinking there might well be a story here. After much research, e-mails back and forth with people "in the know" and documents coming in on Freemasonry the story evolved on its own

I would like to thank Don Frizzell (Whitehorse), Dennis Eve (England) and Henry Breaden (Nanaimo) for all the valuable information and help in getting this article together. I certainly have learned a lot about the Masons as, I'm sure, the readers will also. - Donna

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FIRST, A LITTLE HISTORY

Freemasonry is the world's oldest and largest Fraternity. In 1717, Masonry created a formal organization in England when the first Grand Lodge was formed. There are now approximately 13,200 lodges in the United States alone.

Prior to 1717 were the working lodges of Rock Masons. At the time of construction of a large stone building such as a cathedral, a Lodge was built on-site to house and feed the workmen. The workmen according to skill were: Entered Apprentices, who in time became Fellowcrafts, and later Master Masons who had attained the proper skills. And so it is in Freemasonry today with those three degrees in the Craft Lodge. Although there are concordant bodies up to the Shriners or 33rd degree, the Craft Lodge is the foundation of Freemasonry. If a member was for reason suspended from one, he is suspended from all.

The significance of the aprons worn by Masons is from the leather aprons to protect clothes from spot, stain and rock work.

The Golden Rule applies to all of us, and especially if you recognize a Brother. I am sure that it was Masons that started the YOOP (Yukon Order of Pioneers). In the old Lodge we had a fire escape door upstairs which was draped with a Royal Blue heavy curtain. We had a United Services Degree Team that was conferring a degree that evening, consisting of Army, Air Force and RCMP all in uniform. They were being led by a piper who was getting his pipes started directly below that door. Henry remembers, "I was Chaplain, in front of the door and hearing,

“eeeeeeeeee” wondered what on earth could be behind that curtain! Can still chuckle today when I think of what could have been behind that curtain. Finally the drone and I realized it was the pipes.”

The Masons’ are worldwide and their “Volume of the Sacred Law” is the Holy Bible, Koran or any other volume that is used in any particular country. In a mixed Lodge, it is not unusual to see three volumes open on the altar. In recent years it is more relaxed where wives and friends may enter a Lodge when it is not at “Work”. In this case the Warden’s pedestals and altar are there but the Volume of the Sacred Law is not open or the three lesser lights on that are adjacent to the altar. Below is an example:

When the Grand Master made his official visit to District 5 at Barkley Lodge this past year, he called the Lodge from labour to refreshment. The Eastern Star were admitted and both the Job’s Daughters of Port Alberni and Nanaimo did their closing cross which was most impressive. I guess I may be prejudiced as I play the organ for them. - *Henry*

CLOSELEIGH

The first Lodge in Whitehorse was located at First Avenue and Lambert Street. It was the former Savoy Hotel, which was hauled across the ice from White Horse at the termination of the log railway from Canyon City. The new Lodge between Fifth and Sixth on Lambert was completed in 1968. Once completed the old Lodge was sold to Joe Lamb for wrecking.

To explain further regarding Closeleigh; The Close Brothers were the people that financed the building of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad. This was a most difficult task of building and financing and is a great story in itself. A small village had sprung up at the end of the White Pass Railway and was called Closeleigh; presumably after the Close Brothers who had financed the railway. When the tramway became unnecessary due to the completion of the railway, White Horse was moved across the river. The Commissioner of the day ordered that the name White Horse be used at the new location. As everything was pulled across the river including the Savoy Hotel, there was nothing left but the rotting logs from the log tramway. No easy way to get across unless you used a boat or waited for winter. This did not happen overnight, but over a series of years. The Close Brothers (the business) still exists today as a large financial institution in London, England.

WEBSITE

The lodges mentioned in this website were under the Grand Lodge of Manitoba until 1908. The present Grand Lodge would not have been their father. Atlinto # 42 in Atlin, B.C., Yukon # 45 in Dawson City and Whitehorse # 46 were the originals.

Below is a URL for information on Freemasonry in the Yukon:

http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/history/yukon_history.html

*The information presented in this URL took Dennis Eve about 5 years to put together.
If you find any inaccuracies he would be happy to hear from you. – Sherron Jones*

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THE IVORY GAVELS OF THE G.L. OF NEW ZEALAND

By Don Frizzell

The Ivory Gavels and Striking Blocks are the property of the Grand Lodge of N.Z and were donated to that Grand Lodge by the late Bro. Frederick James Browne. The Gavels were used until a few years but as they are very fragile are now locked away in the safe at Grand Lodge in New Zealand.

The actual date of Bro. Browne's birth is not known to us, however he died on Sept 22, 1919 aged 57.

We have no information regarding his life between 1862 and 1895 but on Aug 9, 1895 Bro. Browne was initiated into Otaki Lodge No. 72, New Zealand Constitution.

Freemasonry made an immense appeal to Bro. Browne, for he became very enthusiastic about the Craft, and showed a keen desire for Masonic knowledge. In 1897, some 18 months after his initiation, the news of the great gold strike in the Yukon reached New Zealand and like many others he at once started out on the long journey to that beautiful and far away land. He landed in Victoria, B.C. during the month of August, only to learn with regret that it was practically useless to try and get to the Klondike at that season of the year because the hard winter was close at hand and would effectually prevent anyone from using the Yukon River as a means of transportation. He therefore decided to defer his planned journey and remain in Victoria until the spring of 1898. During his stay in Victoria he received a truly Masonic welcome from the Brethren resident there. In a letter he wrote to family members, he stated that the members of Victoria had extended the kindest and best treatment, which he remembered for the rest of his life.

To Bro. Browne, this proclaimed the fact that Masons have friends, and good friends, even amongst strangers and impressed upon his mind that there was absolute proof of Masonic teachings, and showed the duty we all owe to the Fraternity. He was then a young Mason, and to see the teachings learned in his Mother Lodge (Otaki), so practically exemplified towards himself, he decided that he could not do too much for such a Fraternity, and out of this grew the idea which resulted in his eventually donating the Gavels and Striking Blocks to Grand Lodge.

Believing that the winter had almost terminated, Bro. Browne, with others, eager to reach their objective, set out on the long journey to the frozen North. They had not gone very far when they were met by a recurrence of a winter storm. Their progress was hindered and their food supplies began to get low. Struggling on they found themselves at a small Indian Camp and applied for food and shelter. The Indians, however, turned them away, saying that they had barely enough

for their own needs. They were about to resume their journey, when a man, who later turned out to be an Englishman, offered to speak to the Indians on their behalf.

On his return, he informed them that the Indians had consented to them remaining in the Camp and that they would share what food they had with them. The man who had interceded on their behalf explained that when he saw the Masonic emblem on Bro. Browne's watch chain, he realized that he had a duty to perform. Bro. Browne stated afterwards that this act appealed to him immensely and quickened his desire to show his appreciation of it.

Bro. Browne's claim was a rich one and he was looking forward to being able to accumulate enough money to be comfortable for the rest of his life. While working his claim, he uncovered a Mastodon Tusk from the frozen ground on one of the banks of the creeks. Thus was born the idea for the Gavels and Striking Blocks. There was some delay in the completion of the Gavels and Striking Blocks, because of finding a sufficient quantity of matched nuggets, which were themselves a rarity, and of which were required 400 large nuggets, 219 of medium size and 55 smaller ones, a total of 674 altogether.

The Gavels and Striking Blocks are made from the tusk of a Mastodon, and were carved and ornamented with gold bands upon which the matched nuggets were mounted. The Grand Master's Gavel has 219 nuggets on the head, and 55 smaller ones on the handle. Also carved on the Master's Gavel are the lines, "Let us work while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work." On his Striking Block are mounted the 400 larger nuggets.

Plain gold bands adorn the Warden's Gavels and Striking Blocks. Each Striking Block is really a slice from the Mastodon Tusk. The Gavels and Striking Blocks were carved and finished by a firm of Jewelers in Dawson City. A special Oak case was made for the Gavels and Striking Blocks which was lined with Blue Velvet and the outside of the lid was decorated with a painting of Bro. Browne's claim.

Before the gift was sent to New Zealand, Bro. Browne conceived the idea of having them used, Masonically, in the land of their construction. As a meeting was being held in Dawson City in connection with a visit by R.W. Bro. Elkington, D.D.G.M. of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba to the most Northerly Lodge of Freemasons in the World, arrangements were made for their use on that occasion. Accordingly Bro. Browne advanced to the East and in a few words asked the presiding officer to use them at that meeting, after which they would be forwarded to the most Southerly Jurisdiction in the World. The request was readily granted.

At a later stage, Bro. Browne's good fortune deserted him, when large wealthy syndicates were formed and checked the richest claims to find any legal errors or omissions in their execution. Finding some technical defect in Bro. Browne's claim they immediately claimed it for themselves and took possession.

Unable to find redress, Bro. Browne fell ill and his mental balance was affected to the extent that he had to be cared for by the State. He returned to New Zealand, but his health never recovered. He resigned from Lodge Otaki in 1915 and joined Lodge Whangarei No. 102, having moved to that City. He died on Sept 22, 1919.

An inspection of the cemetery where he is buried revealed that it was now converted to a lawn cemetery, but the location of the exact burial spot of Bro. Browne had been found and the Brethren of the Lodge saw to it that it was properly marked and identified.

When the gift was sent to New Zealand, special arrangements had to be made with the Postmaster General of Canada for their safe transit.

The gift was presented to Grand Lodge on May 10, 1905, by M.W. Bro. R.J. Seddon, who deputized for M.W. Bro. J.H. Williams who had been requested by the donor to hand over the gift on his behalf.

The value of the set of Gavel and Striking Blocks cannot be accurately stated. The Ivory from the Mastodon Tusk is irreplaceable and the matched natural nuggets can never be duplicated. Their true value is inestimable. As the Ivory is becoming brittle, the gavels are no longer used at the Annual Communications but are securely kept in the custody of the Grand Lodge

Note: This article was taken from a letter written in 1933 by R.W. Bro. Col. George Barclay, PDGM., Grand Secretary and sent to the Ontario Mason Magazine by Harry Hulmes, P.M. Lodge Kerikeri No 402, New Zealand.



Photo courtesy of Dennis Eve

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is not solicited as it is part of our constitution. Some of the older members were very strict about this, but if we know of a friend that is upright and material to make a Freemason you can steer the conversation. You might mention the Lodge, but are advised not to solicit membership. If at some time they were interested, they must submit their own application. My own son, Roy is a Mason, and I told him when he was a young fellow that I would never ask him to join. When he was interested and thought he was man enough, he would have to submit his own application. I think there are a few words that explain it well, "Of my own free will and accord!" - *Henry*

Usually, once a member, you will be a Freemason for life. Each year there are 50 and 60-year pins that are pinned on by the Grand Master when he is visiting a particular Lodge. Many Lodges at the age of 80 years confer an Honorary Membership on these senior Brothers.

Henry Breaden

I have been a Mason for 44 years and am a Past District Deputy Grand Master besides being a Past Master and a past about everything else. McLeod-White was the first master of Northern Lights Lodge, and I was Master in 1968-69. Northern Lights in Mayo was not constituted until the 1950's. In the 1930's there was a Masonic Club in Mayo to which George Aylwin belonged as did Kippy Boener and George Andison (Mary Laing's grandfather).

In the North, Mason's never tried to hide anything but also never talked about it. Likely from this it may have been thought of as a real secret organization.



Henry Breaden

The gavel I have as Master of Northern Lights Lodge No 157, is most unusual, it is made from part of a moose horn with an attached handle. At this moment, our Master of Nanaimo No 110 has an aluminum gavel that his father in law fabricated in Kitimat for him. The normal can be maple, hickory, spruce or oak. Normally the head is made of a hardwood and the handle can be of a softer wood like spruce.

Dennis Eve

A paper "Freemasonry in the Yukon Territory" written by W. Bro. Dennis eve is available on:

URL = <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/history/Yukon.history.html>

A copy of a letter Dennis sent to Henry:

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July, 2003

Hello Henry,

Would you believe that I had never written an article of this magnitude before in my life, and when I initially sent it to the Temple of Athene Lodge No.9541, being the Premier Lodge of Research in the Province of Middlesex for their interest they enthusiastically invited me to present it at their meeting on Tuesday the 26th October, 1999, also present as a guest at that meeting was our present ProGrand Master, The Marquess of Northampton. It was probably the most nerve wracking but wonderful experience of my Masonic career. He was very kind and gracious in his remarks and wrote me a lovely letter complimenting me on the presentation and the content of the paper which he found very interesting. At that time I lived in Middlesex my mother lodge Hayes St.Mary's No.6168 meet at the Uxbridge Masonic Centre, in Middlesex.

I have done approximately 30 presentations at lodges in Middlesex, Surrey, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, West London, Mark Masons Hall, St James's London, and now that I have moved from Middlesex up to the North East of England, Northumberland and Durham.

I had also read the paper in Whitehorse Lodge in 1999, and more importantly for me presented the paper together with a slide show in the Main Temple of Yukon Lodge No.45 at the Centenary celebrations in Dawson on the 26th May, 2001.

I suppose it must have taken me about five years to get the first copy in print, it would have been a lot easier if I was living locally! Time was really a big factor in communication, as I am sure you will appreciate, and really Masonic information was not really pouring forth in great quantities, but bits and pieces have been forthcoming over the years with the encouragement and support of my very good friends; Don Frizzell and Tom Mickey. Without their loyal support and enthusiasm this paper would have not got off the ground.

For my sins I am an identical twin and my brother Brian and his (large) family live in Northern Ireland, he is a Provincial Grand Almoner of the Province of County Down, (Irish Constitution). We keep in constant touch and I manage to pop over for one of his meetings every so often, I love the Irish workings. The lads have worked very hard these last few years and completely refurbished their own Masonic hall in the local village, it looks like a palace

Most lodges in and around the London area meet on average four times a year, but in a lot of the Provinces, for instance up here in the northeast they meet ten times a year. I suppose that is another good reason why my 'Yukon Presentation' is in demand, sadly many lodges have not had candidates for a long while but cannot keep putting rehearsals on their agenda's. The craft over here has also been going through difficult times and although a few lodges are healthy and full of candidates there are many that have not had candidates for a long time.

Close Brothers were a merchant bank in the City of London, and knowing of their existence and having worked in the money markets, I was able to visit them and obtain the last copy of their

history which incorporated details of the building of the White Pass Railway through the initiative of W.B Close. That history booklet I have now placed in the Yukon Archives.

My research paper had to be prepared and written for a 45-minute presentation, this was the maximum time allowed to me initially. However, lodges in this part of the world now expect a lecture or presentation to take no longer than 30 minutes. This will not put any restraints on my continuing research as I am determined to continue building.

W.Bro.Dennis M. Eve, PprDepGReg (Middlesex)
Member of Lodges in Middlesex and Northumberland.



Dennis and Brian Eve
This one was taken in the Masonic Hall at Dawson in 1999



Bill Ross
Atlino # 42 1951
Photo Courtesy Richard Ross

As I don't have any information on my former father-in-law and neither does his son, Richard Ross we have had to depend on others to fill in the gaps. - Donna

Henry Breaden explains:

Bill Ross is wearing a Past Master's Jewel on his left breast, the collar with the seal of the Grand Lodge of B.C. attached with his rank as a District Deputy. The apron of a District Deputy Grand Master with the gold fringes and on the face is the crest of his office. You will note that on his cuffs is the same symbol, all in gold. The gold fringes signify over 100 years in Masonry by the Grand Lodge. What all this means is that Bill Ross was Master of Atlinto Lodge 42 for a full year to achieve his past master's jewel. He would have been appointed in rotation of the three Lodges as District Deputy Grand Master of District 11 for a full year until the next Deputy was installed. A Master wears the same square on his apron as a DDGM, but it is silver. All regalia of a DDGM is in gold. If you note, he has a gavel in his left hand and without doubt his hand is resting on the Book of Constitutions, which applies to all of us. The colour of his regalia would be Royal Blue of Grand Lodge, which I wear today. Officers and Brethren of a constituted Lodge have aprons and regalia in a light blue colour. I know that Atlinto Lodge suffered a fire where they lost near all their records, and it depends what year that Bill was DDGM for District No. 11.

Don Frizzell elaborates:

Bill Ross would have been firstly a master of Atlinto Lodge No. 42. His past masters jewel is evident on his breast pocket. His regalia indicates the photo was taken during his stint as District Deputy Master. Bill would have to have a lot of respect from his fellow Atlin and Yukon masons to be asked to let his name stand for District Deputy Grand Master. These things are not usually taken lightly, so, Richard, you can be very proud of your dad for that.

SERVICES

Cancer Car Project By Henry Breaden

Being that Dennis and I are both Masons', I was mentioning about some of the services that we have for the departed. In an earlier mail I mentioned about our "Cancer Car Project" which has been in place in British Columbia and Yukon for over ten years. We have volunteer drivers, and on Vancouver Island alone have five vans now operating. Anyone, anywhere needing transport to a hospital, whether it is Vancouver or Victoria or any other hospital for treatments are free to use it. It is coordinated with the Cancer Office, and the Masons have a dispatcher who works with them. Anywhere in B.C. or Yukon, if a patient needs transport to or from an airport to get to a hospital, they only have to ask at their local Cancer Office. The most important thing is that these patients have enough to worry about, and a friendly face along with transportation means a lot to them. At the moment there is much interest in most of the Provinces, and many are thinking of putting a similar plan in place. We are proud of this one, and the assessment to each Brother each year is only five dollars.

Funerals

By Henry Breaden

If we lose any of our membership, whether there is a Lodge Funeral or not, at the next regular meeting the Master calls for silence, and I softly play, "Abide with me" during the silence. The charter is draped for the next thirty days. It is rough to lose old friends that you have travelled to so many Lodges with. Sometimes we will have a combined Church and Lodge service in which the Ministry and Lodge both officiate. If the Brother has been cremated as is very common today, his apron is placed on a table at the front of the aisle usually along with a photo. Each Brother has a sprig of evergreen that he places on the apron, and on completion, Grand Honours are given with the normal words. We usually file along the aisle at the exit and honour the departing family with what we hope are comforting words. We usually have a nice representation, and as was the case of one of our members, we had Grand Lodge and members from many concordant bodies. The church was so full that it was packed.