



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: S. CARL HECKBERT, P.G.M.

HOW OLD IS ANCIENT ?

Written for the Bulletin by

DOUGLAS FRASER

PAST GRAND MASTER—SASKATCHEWAN

*"Yea, I have lived on Egypt's sands,
Travelling from other distant lands;
From my Brothers there, I sought
To learn the mistakes they have taught;
Of signs and secrets I have heard,
Of compass, square, of grip and word;
And of the things to me they told,
Each, they said, was very old."*

If one asks the question, "How old is ancient Freemasonry?" he may get the very general reply, "Its beginnings are shrouded in the mists of antiquity," or, "It derives from the ancient mysteries," or he may receive a more precise statement, "It arose with the building of Solomon's Temple, B.C. 1014," or, "From the Roman College of Architects, the guilds or the builders of the Gothic Cathedrals of the Twelfth Century A.D., those poems in stone which were the glory of European Christianity." All of these answers rest on myths, legends or tradition.

What credible proof have we to establish the actual antiquity of Speculative Freemasonry? Let us take a somewhat unusual approach and work backward.

On June 24th, 1717, the Grand Lodge of England was formed by four London Lodges, taking their names from the taverns where they met, the Goose and Gridiron, the Crown Ale House, the Rummer and Grapes, and the Apple Tree. The founders were speculative Freemasons, Dr. de Sauguliers, Elias Ashmole, Anthony Sayre, Sir Christopher Wren and Dr. James Anderson, to name but a few. There were several other Lodges then in existence and these men had, for years, been active members; for instance Ashmole was admitted October 16th, 1646.

Dr. Anderson, the premier historian of the Craft wrote the first constitution embodying the Old Charges in 1723 and the second in 1738. May I suggest that you take time to read the Old Charges in your constitution; they are a key with which to unlock mystery. Dr. Anderson himself writes, "in compiling my constitution and the Old

Charges I had access to earlier documents from which I adopted much."

What documents were these and how early? Following the introduction of printing in 1477 many old manuscripts were wantonly destroyed and scattered. One writer tells of seeing beautiful vellum manuscripts used as window panes, as fuel for bakers, book backs, fly leaves and bindings by printers and 'many other vile uses'.

It is a marvel that any survived, but many were preserved, and among them are some thirty Masonic records which are still in existence. To these Dr. Anderson had access; I shall refer to but three, and those in reverse order of age. The first, the Grand Lodge manuscript in the library of Freemason's Hall in London; it bears the certain and authentic date of 1583. It is a roll of parchment nine feet long and five inches wide and contains various readings of the Old Charges.

Secondly, the Matthew Cooke manuscript in the British Museum, dating from about 1410. Many Masonic usages are traced back to it and it expressly refers to 'Speculative Masons'.

Thirdly, the Regius (Royal) manuscript, also known as the Halliwell Poem. This invaluable document is the oldest truly Masonic record extant. It was purchased by Charles the Second from an antiquary and presented by George the Second in 1757 to the British Museum and is one of its treasures.

Then how old is the Regius manuscript?

There is a legend that persists and is referred to in the poem itself that in June, 926 A.D., Prince Edward, with the approval of his father, King Athelstane, called together a congregation at York with himself as Grand Master and comprising those master builders whom the King had gathered to England to rebuild the churches destroyed by the invading Danes. It is said, "they brought with them all the old records and writings of the Craft extant, some in Greek, some in French and other languages, and from these, they framed the constitution and charges of an English Lodge,

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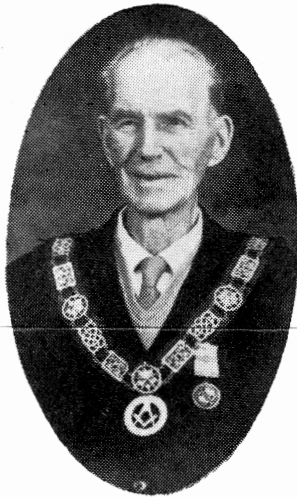
GRAND LODGE AT THE JUBILEE AUDITORIUM, EDMONTON, JUNE 11th AND 12th

Within The Craft In Alberta

MASONRY'S INFLUENCE ABROAD

Twenty-two members constitute Dominion Lodge No. 848 of the Grand Lodge of Germany; that Alberta is well represented is evidenced by the fact that the Senior Warden is Bro. Otto Ulrich of Dominion Lodge No. 117, Edmonton; the Inner Guard is Bro. D. F. Archer of Cairo Lodge No. 32, Claresholm, and Bro. R. F. McConnell of St. Marks Lodge No. 118, Calgary, is a member.

Alberta Masons visiting Europe would doubtless be most welcome to visit this enterprising Lodge and could make the necessary arrangements for a visit by contacting the Lodge Secretary, LAC John Speedie, 4 (F) Wing, RCAF, C.A.P.O. 5056, Canadian Armed Forces, Europe. The Bulletin extends greetings to the Brethren overseas.



**PIONEER MEMBER
LAID TO REST**

R.W. BRO. WILLIAM JOHN CRAIGEN

Star of the West Lodge, Leduc and, indeed, Freemasonry in Alberta suffered a great loss in the passing of R.W. Bro. W. J. "Bill" Craigen recently. Coming to Alberta from the United States at the turn of the century he settled at Leduc and was a Charter Member of Star of the West Lodge, the adoption of this name being in itself a tribute to R.W. Bro. Craigen, he having been raised in Western Star Lodge in Washington State.

R.W. Bro. Craigen was an ardent Mason and a devoted member and officer of his Lodge and District. He was honoured on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Lodge, being presented with a 50 year jewel and a ten year bar.

His passing is a matter of regret; the example of his life, a stimulation to all who enjoyed the privilege of his friendship.

ALBERTA PAST GRAND MASTER HONOURED

M.W. Bro. J. Watson Younge, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alberta 1921-22 and who was the first candidate in Camrose Lodge No. 37 on January 8th, 1908, was honoured by the presentation of a 50 year jewel in Tuscan Lodge No. 195 of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario on February 3rd, 1958. The presentation was made by M.W. Bro. Nelson C. Hart, Past

Grand Master of the eastern Grand Lodge and an Honorary Past Grand Master, Alberta.

M.W. Bro. Younge is now residing at London, Ontario, and his many friends throughout this province and Canada will join in extending the most sincere congratulations on his well deserved honour.

EDITORIAL

Technical and practical agriculturists are devoting much time and effort to combat erosion of the soil of Western Canada and despite all that has been done we see evidence in many areas of the serious inroads of erosion; just as other enemies of a buoyant agricultural economy have been solved, so will this more recent attack on soil productivity be gradually overcome, as those charged with the responsibility of better and more advanced farming practices come to know more of the causes and effects and the ultimate 'cure' for soil drifting and the washing away of the valuable top soil by the spring run-off and the flash storms of the spring and summer months.

Not only is it advantageous to us all to be on guard in respect of this threat to our advancement, but there is another type of erosion that must be overcome, if we are to fully meet our responsibilities as members of the Masonic Order.

The Masonic future of most new members, says the Iowa Masonic Bulletin, is largely determined during the first year of membership. That is when they are putting down roots. If the soil is badly eroded, stony and sterile, those roots will not go deep and the plant will soon wither.

Over the years there seems to have developed a widely accepted idea that once degrees have been conferred responsibility for the newly obligated brother has been fulfilled and it is sometimes intimated to him that if he gets nothing out of Masonry it is the fault of no one but himself.

What further devastation is done when the new brother is told or discovers that the Lodge has nothing more to give him, that whatever else he gets is his own responsibility?

When we admit that all the Lodge can do for a new member is to confer three degrees which will enable him to attend his own Lodge or to visit others, and whatever else he gets he will have to dig out for himself, we make the monstrous confession that our lodge soil is badly eroded and that no real spiritual growth can be expected from it. Until we get that soil thoroughly fertilized with Masonic truth and practice we can expect to lose members, or, at best, to include in our membership Brethren who are almost wholly unconvinced that Masonry is all that they had hoped and expected.

If we, in Masonry, can be as ardent in overcoming spiritual erosion as are those working so faithfully to reduce or eliminate erosion of the soil on the western prairies, there is every reason to believe that our fellow members will have a broader grasp of our tried and trusty principles and that the whole science of Freemasonry will be stronger and more effective than it has ever been before.

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and that this poem is the record of the matters dealt with thereat. This is legend, though not without some grounds in support of its validity as history. Scholars, however, are fairly well agreed that the Regius manuscript dates from 1390 A.D.

And so we answer the question by saying that so far as recorded history is concerned Speculative Masonry is 568 years old.

Someone may say "Well, what does it matter how old Freemasonry may be?" In reply, I submit for your consideration the fact that Freemasonry, the oldest, and the pattern of all fraternities and orders, is still universal in its appeal and is today at an all time high and continually growing. To quote a few statistics, Canada has 1,521 Lodges with a membership of some 253,154 members; the British Isles have 8,500 Lodges with 825,000 members; the United States lists 15,734 Lodges with the huge membership of 4,059,670 members, while the Scandinavian countries have 104 Lodges and a membership of 46,125. Together with the remainder of the 143 recognized Grand Lodges throughout the rest of the world, this makes a mighty army.

How does one explain this tremendously popular appeal? I suggest that it is first by the very fact of its antiquity. It has been well said that "whatever is old is new, and whatever is new, is old," or, to put it another way, "what is new is not true and what is true is not new."

There has been a marked tendency in our age and land to deride tradition, to regard as effete the things that are old, to think that because things are new they are necessarily better. But the pendulum is swinging the other way, we are coming to realize that the very fact that a thing has stood the test of time gives it a certain sanction of validity.

Secondly, because of the simplicity of its teachings. In these days of difficulty and peril, men and nations, in their frantic search for a solution of their problems tend to allow issues to become confused and complicated by an over intellectual approach. The power of prayer and the force of faith have been, in some cases, ignored and forgotten. A Persian King, famous for his wisdom, wore only one ring, it being inscribed, "in simple things the secret lies." Again it is a fact that men are turning their thoughts back to the fundamentals. Yesterday many great scientists were atheists, today they testify there is a God and that His laws are beyond human understanding.

Modern man, in ever greater numbers, is subscribing to the simple fundamental beliefs of Freemasonry in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Of the first, may I say that faith in the Father God will counteract the present day denial of Him and the assertion of human self-sufficiency, that ideology which we know and fear as Communism, and, of the second, may I remind you that the blood of a Chinaman will save the life of a white child as well as that of its own father.

In the practice of the simple age-old truths of our Fraternity lies the secret of the 'survival of civilization and our way of life'.

Our task is to save freedom under law in a spiritual universe.

*"The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."*

—Wordsworth.

M.W. BRO. DOUGLAS FRASER

The distinguished brother who contributed the article completed above, generously and readily acceded to the request of the Editor to prepare the interesting material for publication and members of the Craft in Alberta will be most appreciative. M.W. Bro. Fraser, B.A. (Oxon), Q.C., is a native born citizen of the neighboring province of Saskatchewan and is a typical Westerner, having at various times engaged in teaching, homesteading and ranching; he has an enviable scholastic record and is a former Rhodes scholar.

Upon the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of King George V, he was honoured by being named one of His Majesty's Counsel, learned at law and has been active in the Saskatchewan Historical Association.

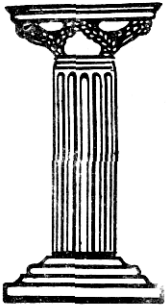
Brother Fraser's Masonic career commenced in 1913 and he has engaged in many and varied activities, serving in numerous capacities and making a most valuable contribution to the condition of Masonry. He is a life member of the Regina Lodge of Perfection and of the Regina Chapter Rose Croix; he was a member of the Manitoba Consistory and a charter member of that body in Saskatchewan, being further honoured by election to the Thirty-third degree in 1931. He was elected Sovereign Grand Commander in 1950, serving until 1952, thus adding to the lustre of an unusually outstanding and devoted Masonic career.

We are indebted to him for his splendid contribution to this issue.

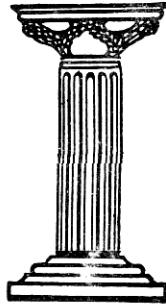
You cannot run away from a weakness; you must sometime fight it or perish; and if that be so, why not now, and where you stand.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.—Abraham Lincoln.

Whatever may be his trade, occupation, or profession, if a man does not in all his social and business transactions deal honestly and squarely with his neighbor, he is not a Freemason, and all the forms, ceremonies and rituals in the world cannot make him one.—New South Wales Freemason.



Between the Pillars



Let Knowledge Grow

Many of our readers are familiar with the words of Tennyson, "Let knowledge grow from more to more, but more of reverence in us dwell." These challenging words came to mind recently as we read an address of Bro. S. F. Herbert, Lodge of Research No. 429, England, and we pass on one of the thoughts expressed by Brother Herbert.

"At last the building can be erected, and it is in the *Second and Third Degrees* that our attention is called to the way in which Masonic character is developed. In the *Second Degree* we are reminded that character depends on a growing knowledge of the 'liberal arts and sciences'. A man who turns his back on general knowledge, even though much of it may be beyond his particular capabilities, is a man whose character becomes narrow and weak. Masonry will collapse if Masons are content to keep the Craft enshrined in the knowledge of the eighteenth or any other century. The truth which is in it, like all truth, is capable of applications to every situation and to every development of circumstances. It is easy to maintain the established landmarks of the Order and still be men of our own time. But if we are to do this we must take our Masonry seriously.

When we become Master Masons, we are shown the most beautiful and inspiring ceremony of Craft Masonry that our knowledge must extend to our knowledge of ourselves.

This is the most difficult of all knowledge because it is so easy to deceive ourselves.

But it can be said with truth that loyalty to the Obligations of a Master Mason will help us more than most things to self-knowledge and it can be said also that the Masons who find most help and enjoyment in the pursuit of their Craft are those for whom Masonry has been a way to greater knowledge of themselves and a help to strengthen their weaknesses.

I have tried to look at Masonry as a builder. I trust that in doing so I have helped you to see the meaning and the purposes of our Order more fully and more clearly. I have tried to remind you that it is on the basis of the deepest understanding of Masonry that we can build the joy and gaiety of our fellowship together."

The Ashlar,

Published by the Grand Lodge of Queensland

GRAND MASTERS ARE BUSY FOLKS

A perusal of the itinerary of our Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Bannan, and that of the Grand Master elect, R.W. Bro. McQueen, should prove interesting and enlightening to our membership and will serve to indicate something of the demands upon their time and their physical resources, as well as the devotion to the welfare of Freemasonry that attends the achievement of leadership. It is hoped that Brethren throughout the Grand Jurisdiction will study the accompanying outline and make a definite reservation in their minds to attend the meetings of their choice and to meet the distinguished Grand Lodge Officers as they fulfill their obligation of their high office.

ITINERARY, M.W. BRO. BANNAN, Grand Master:

- May 20. Unity Lodge No. 51, Edmonton—RCMP night.
- May 21. Hope Lodge No. 38, Mannville—50th Anniversary.
- May 29. Mizpah Lodge No. 35, Medicine Hat—50th Anniversary.
- May 30. Lethbridge Lodge No. 39, Lethbridge—50th Anniversary.
- June 2. Attend Grand Lodge of Manitoba to June 6.
- June 10 to June 12. Attend sessions of the Board of General Purposes and Grand Lodge in Edmonton.

ITINERARY, R.W. BRO. McQUEEN, Grand Master-elect

- June 12. Board of General Purposes and Meeting with newly installed District Deputy Grand Masters, Edmonton.
- June 16. Attend sessions of Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon until June 20.
- June 23. Attend sessions of the Grand Lodge of Montana at Billings until June 26.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

- July 2. District No. 13 at Grande Prairie.
- July 4. District No. 12 at Edmonton.
- July 14. District No. 6 at Granum.
- July 15. District No. 8 at Pincher Creek.
- July 21. District No. 14 at Hanna.
- July 22. District No. 9 at Castor.
- July 23. District No. 5 at Daysland.
- July 25. District No. 17 at Tofield.
- July 25. District No. 10 at St. Paul.
- July 28. District No. 19 at Edmonton.
- July 29. District No. 4 at Rimbey.
- July 30. District No. 15 at Acme.
- July 31. District No. 16 at Hussar.
- Sept. 3 to 6. Attending Banff Conference.
- Sept. 12. Consecration of Mosaic Lodge in Calgary.
- Sept. 29 to Oct. 3. Grand Lodge of California, San Francisco.
- Oct. 8. District No. 2 at Brooks.
- Oct. 9. District No. 7 at Lethbridge.
- Oct. 10. District No. 11 at Carmangay.
- Oct. 23. District No. 18 at Strathmore.
- Dec. 7-8 100th Anniversary Grand Lodge of Washington, at Tacoma, Wash.
- Jan. 28, 1959, 75th Anniversary, Bow River Lodge, No. 1, Calgary.
- Meetings for Districts Nos. 1 and 3 to be announced.
- Feb. 19 to 21, 1959. All Canada Conference, Montreal.
- Feb. 22 to 26, 1959. Washington Conference, Washington, D.C.