History of Union Lodge
No. 7, A.F. & A.M.
Grimsby, Canada.
HISTORY
of UNION
LODGE, No. 7;
Grimsby, Ont., Canada.

COMPILED from the Ancient Records
by J. W. Drope, M. A., Principal
Grimsby Preparatory School.
TOUCHING THE LODGE AND ITS FOUNDERS

In the Dying Days of the Eighteenth Century, when the fruitful plains of this "Garden of Canada" were covered with primeval forests that had seen but little of the pioneer's axe, eight good men and true banded themselves together for the purpose of establishing a lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the Township of Grimsby. Theirs was no easy task when we take into consideration how difficult were the means of communication, and how sparsely was the country populated in those early days. Some of them had to travel several miles to their place of meeting, and the regularity of their attendance at their monthly communications was but an evidence of the enthusiasm and enterprise displayed by our great-grandfathers in all their undertakings.

On December 17th, 1799, the Lodge was instituted, and the following officers were installed by R. Wor. Bro. Sylvester Tiffany, Grand Secretary.

ROBERT NELLES, Worshipful Master.

JONATHAN WOLVERTON, Senior Warden.

ALLAN NIXON, Junior Warden.

JOHN FOOTE, Secretary.

JONATHAN MOORE, Treasurer.

GEORGE RANSIER AND JAMES HENRY, Deacons.

STEPHEN COON, Tyler.

These are the men who were the fathers of Masonry in Grimsby, and it is to commemorate their untiring energy and devotion to the Craft, that we are assembled here this afternoon. Any of those present who are familiar with the genealogy of some of the leading families of Grimsby, will recognize that several of these names have been perpetuated in our midst to the present time, and that they have been indelibly stamped on the map of this section of our country.
Concerning the first Master of Union Lodge, Wor. Bro. Robt. Nelles, I am indebted to an early history of Grimsby for the following:

"Col. Robt. Nelles, with his father and two brothers, were the pioneers of Grimsby, having settled here in 1783. He was a man of strong will and great endurance, was a valiant warrior, and was often employed in carrying despatches of a confidential nature, and under difficult circumstances. On one occasion, Feb. 14th, 1780, he and four Indians were so driven and surrounded by a superior force of Continentals, that they could only escape by swimming the Oswego river, near its mouth. Nelles and one Indian only, made good their escape, though the bullets whizzed about their heads. Their clothes were soon frozen on them, and they had no means of drying them except the heat of their bodies, until they reached Fort Niagara. Nelles became a member of Parliament in 1800, and lived in his comfortable residence in Grimsby to a good old age, having filled many places of position and trust."

Jonathan Wolverton, the first Senior Warden, came from New Jersey, and settled in Grimsby in 1798. He was a man of distinction in the United States, and held civil and military positions there. For thirty-five years he was a resident of Grimsby, and during that time was a faithful and useful member of Union Lodge. He was elected Master to succeed Wor. Bro. Robt. Nelles.

To Allan Nixon, the first Junior Warden, belongs the distinction of having made the first tools and implements of the Lodge.

These three brethren, along with many others of the Craft, sleep in the pretty little cemetery of St. Andrew's Church, at the foot of the mountain yonder.
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The members of the Lodge held due respect for the temperance proclivities of their fellow-members, for on July 3rd, 1800, a motion was passed, providing "that Bro. Pettit pay only one shilling each night, instead of two shillings, as he took no refreshment."

Great difficulty was experienced in these early days in collecting the dues. Money was scarce, and very frequently mention is made in the minutes, where members paid their dues by notes and due bills.

On June 24th, 1802, an oration was delivered by Bro. Phelps, Chaplain of the Lodge, and the sum of $4.00 was paid him for his services. After the oration, the brethren marched in good order to the house of Bro. Wolverton, where they partook of an excellent dinner with some refreshment, and the cost was but £3 9s. In fact for a number of years these excellent dinners with the necessary refreshment, were partaken of on St. John the Baptist's and St. John the Evangelist's days.

THE LODGE ENTERS THE FIELD OF BUSINESS

During the first twenty-eight years of the existence of the Lodge, the meetings were held in nine different places. I have had as much difficulty in locating these as is experienced in locating the battle field of Stoney Creek; but of one thing I am quite certain, namely that only one of these buildings is now standing, and that is the stately stone residence near St. Andrew's Church, built in 1798, by Col. Robt. Nelles, and now owned and occupied by his grand-daughter, Mrs. Adam Rutherford. The Lodge was moved to this house in May, 1802.

On Feb'y 23rd, 1804, it was resolved to go into the business of purchasing bees, and "for the better accommodating our said Lodge, and making further provision for the same, in order to make it more extensively charitable," it was thought prudent to fall upon the following plan. The Lodge at this time was in a good financial condition. There was the handsome sum of £64 8s 2d in the treasury. It was decided to take one dollar out of every pound to purchase bees. A committee was appointed to look after the same, and make returns at the autumnal St. John's day. On December 23rd, 1804, two candidates paid their fees in bees. The bee industry was evidently not a success, as I can only find two records in the minutes where sales of honey were made.

On the 24th of June, 1805, beside partaking of an excellent dinner, and the usual refreshment, it was decided to take a sufficient sum out of the treasury to cover the expense of building a pulpit in St. Andrew's Church.

On January 7th, 1805, as Bro. Stephen Coon was lying on his deathbed, and as he was not likely
remain long in this world, it was his wish and desire
that the Lodge grant him the sum of fifteen dollars to
purchase the lot on which he lived at that time, for
his widow. His request, and I may add many similar
requests for charity, was granted. Bro. Coon passed
away during the month of January, and at the regular
Communication of the Lodge in February, it was
passed unanimously in the Lodge that the price of
three gallons of whiskey, drunk at Bro. Coon's funeral,
be taken out of the treasury.

I have no apology to make for the amount of
whiskey drunk by our ancient brethren. There was
a distillery close at hand, whiskey was very cheap,
and seems to have been the favourite beverage in
those early days.

On December 27th, 1808, a church procession was
held, and a well adapted discourse was delivered by
Bro. John Palmer from these words, “And the cup
was found in Benjamin's sack.” After the service, a
dinner was served at Crook's Hotel.

On June 24th, 1809, Bro. Hixson agreed to furnish
the room for the use of the members, also candles, for
six shillings per night. He also agreed to furnish one
quart of whiskey, for which he was to be paid extra.

During the troublesome times from 1812 to 1815,
no meetings of the Lodge were held. This may be
accounted for by the fact that during this period this
district was infested with American troops. Many of
the members were engaged in active service in defence
of their country. That many of them died during the
war is proven by the minutes. A motion was passed
at the first meeting in 1816, declaring that all notes
held against deceased brethren should be destroyed.
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Brethren guilty of unmasonic conduct, were often suspended, and reported to Grand Lodge. The action of our ancient brethren in these respects is commendable, and worthy of emulation by ourselves.

On May 6th, 1824, the request of Bro. Wolverton, that on account of his great age, he be exempt from paying dues except when he attended, was granted. From 1827 to 1854 no meetings of the Lodge were called, at least no records are forthcoming which would show that any communications took place during these years. These were the dark days of Masonry in Canada. In searching for information relative to this period, I have been told that the cause of dormancy of the Lodge was due to the political troubles of the time, and to the action of a man named Morgan. If any of those present outside the pale of Masonry are anxious to know who this man Morgan was, what he did, or what became of him, the records of our Lodge are at their disposal, and a searching examination may be made.

The Lodge was resuscitated in 1854. Brothers Dr. Lundy, John W. Lewis, and Samuel Kitchen were chiefly instrumental in the work of restoration. During the twenty-seven years of the dormancy of the Lodge the records, jewels and implements were carefully guarded by Bro. Samuel Kitchen. They were locked in a box, and for a portion of the time were concealed in a cave on the side of the mountain and covered with brushwood and leaves. I am told that it was with some reluctance that his wife parted with this treasure on the restoration of the Lodge. The box is still in existence, and is in the possession of R. Wor. Bro. Forbes.

The ceremony of Installation of the Officers in 1854 was performed by R. W. Bro. Sir Allan MacNab, who at this time held the responsible position of Prime Minister of the Parliament of Canada.

OF A FESTIVE OCCASION
OF MUCH MERIT

The first candidate initiated after the restoration of the Lodge, was Bro. Andrew Randall, who is at the present time the oldest living member of the Lodge.

During the last half of this century, the Lodge has continued to hold meetings without interruption. True, it has had its days of prosperity and its days of adversity, but its old age has been strong and vigorous. The events of these years can scarcely be characterized as ancient history, but there are one or two events of which I wish to speak.

I am indebted to a copy of the Canada Gazette of July 4th, 1863, for an account of a festival held on June 24th, of that year. As this event happened only thirty-six short years ago, undoubtedly some of those within the hearing of my voice were present on that occasion. The following is a brief summary.

"Wednesday, June 24th, being the anniversary of St. John the Baptist, a number of the brethren of Barton, Strict Observance, St. John's and Acacia Lodges of Hamilton, with Union Lodge of Grimsby, united in celebrating the Festival of their Patron Saint, by a picnic at Grimsby. At 3:10 p.m., two car loads of the brethren and their friends, accompanied by a number of the fair sex, left the Hamilton Station by the Accommodation east. On arriving at Grimsby, the excursionists were received by the brethren of Union Lodge, who conducted them to a beautifully shady grove between the railway track and the lake shore. A large plot of ground had been carefully sodded for dancing, and immediately after the arrival of the party, the festivities commenced. Some found pleasure in the dance, others strolled about the woods, while more sought recreation and amusement in strolling along the wave-washed shore. Thus "all went merrily as a marriage bell," until
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six o'clock, when dinner was announced, and with appetites sharpened by the amusements of the afternoon, they gathered round the festive board.

After full justice had been done to the good things, several toasts were proposed and responded to, and then dancing was resumed with renewed vigour. As the shades of evening fell, four large fires, placed on elevated positions, were lighted, throwing a bright, lurid glare over the scene. Until eleven o'clock, the dancing was kept up with great spirit, and during those few short hours, more than one susceptible city youth felt the bewitching power and sweet influence of soft tender glances from country lassies. They cannot be blamed for that though, for it is certainly almost impossible to withstand the power of those dear Grimsby girls."

Another interesting event took place in March, 1873. It was the presentation of a Past Master's gold pencil, and a Royal Arch Jewel to R. W. Bro. Forbes, who was Master of the Lodge for four consecutive years. Twenty-five years later, a P. M.'s gold jewel with diamond setting was presented to his son, Wor. Bro. W. D. Forbes.

It is a matter of pride and pleasure to the Masons of Grimsby, that amongst the many social and other changes of a century, Masonry has lived and flourished in this section. Fourteen lodges were established in Ontario, prior to the foundation of Union Lodge, and of these, only four are now in existence.

In conclusion, may we lift the curtain and take but a glance into the dim, distant future? Will Union Lodge be in existence a hundred years hence? We venture not only to hope, but also predict that Masonry will be a potent factor, and an educating influence in our midst until time shall be no more.

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THOSE WHO HAVE SAT
IN THE EAST

FROM the Records of the Union Lodge, No. 7, A. F. & A. M., the following list of Worshipful Masters has been compiled, covering the period from the institution of the Lodge to the present day:

1799—Robt. Nelles
1800—Jonathan Wolverton
1801—Allan Nixon
1802—Jonathan Moore
1803—John Pettit
1804—Henry Hixson
1805—Wm. Harrington
1806—Jonathan Wolverton
1807—Jonathan Wolverton
1808—Jonathan Wolverton
1809—Jonathan Moore
1810—Jonathan Moore
1811—Henry Hixson
1812—Allan Nixon
1813-15—No meetings
1816—Cyrus Sumner
1816—Henry Hixson
1817—Samuel Kitchen
1817—William Nelles
1818—Jonathan Wolverton
1819—Henry Hixson
1820—Thomas Hewit
1821—Robt. Nelles
1822—Jonathan Wolverton
1823—Edward Pilkington
1824—Edward Pilkington
1825—Edward Pilkington
1826—Alexander Millmine
1827—Alexander Millmine
1828 to 1853—No meetings
1854—F. J. Lundy
1855—W. B. T. Lundy
1856—W. B. T. Lundy
1857—W. B. T. Lundy
1858—W. B. T. Lundy
1859—W. B. T. Lundy
1860—W. B. T. Lundy
1861—W. B. T. Lundy
1862—W. B. T. Lundy
1863—W. B. T. Lundy
1864—W. B. T. Lundy
1865—W. B. T. Lundy
1866—W. B. T. Lundy
1867—W. B. T. Lundy
1868—W. B. T. Lundy
1869—W. B. T. Lundy
1870—W. B. T. Lundy
1871—W. B. T. Lundy
1872—W. B. T. Lundy
1873—W. B. T. Lundy
1874—W. B. T. Lundy
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1876—W. B. T. Lundy
1877—W. B. T. Lundy
1878—W. B. T. Lundy
1879—W. B. T. Lundy
1880—W. B. T. Lundy
1881—W. B. T. Lundy
1882—W. B. T. Lundy
1883—W. B. T. Lundy
1884—W. B. T. Lundy
1885—W. B. T. Lundy
1886—W. B. T. Lundy
1887—W. B. T. Lundy
1888—W. B. T. Lundy
1889—W. B. T. Lundy
1890—W. B. T. Lundy
1891—W. B. T. Lundy
1892—W. B. T. Lundy
1893—W. B. T. Lundy
1894—W. B. T. Lundy
1895—W. B. T. Lundy
1896—W. B. T. Lundy
1897—W. B. T. Lundy
1898—W. B. T. Lundy
1899—W. B. T. Lundy
1900—W. B. T. Lundy

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MASTER MASON'S OF
UNION LODGE

THE LODGE ROLL shows a long list of Master Masons, all of whom are entered as members of Union Lodge. The dates of Initiation or of Passing or Raising are not herein specified.
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Jacob S. Turner
Gyru Sumner
William Lyons
John Graham
Wm. Nelles
Jacob Colter
James Gilmore
John Kahre
Erastus Derby
David Cargill
Edward Taylor
David Palmer
Richard Hill
Thomas Hewitt
Philander Hopkins
Samuel Harvey
S. Cotlar
John Durham
Jacob Patrick, Jr.
Major Steeling
Samuel A. Moore
Alex Milmine
John S. Collasth
James Gilmore
Noble F. Dean
Percy S. Dean
Corvin Berry
Thomas Dier
Edward Fiskington
John Wright
Erastus Derby
Henry Canfield
William Howard
William Mitchell
William Howard
William Gardner
Francis I. Landy
John W. Lewis
John W. Wilson
Samuel Kitchen
Clement L. Clark
Geo. F. Thomas

Alfred Patterson
Thos. C. Brownjohn
John R. Holden
George Pettit
Thos. W. Street
James O. Hewry
Joseph E. Vining
George Thomas
Chas. Parlington
Wm. A. Cole
Neil McGowan
Chas. Hunter
Edward Collingwood
Joseph Chambers
William Hayden
John Muir
David Allison
John Vandyke
Robt. Shepherd
Siles W. Spillette
Jacob Huffman
Daniel Brower
Walter C. Smith
James Wood
Gerald E. Boyle
John A. Allison
Jas. Culp
Wm. Forbes
Wm. Scott
Wm. W. Kitchen
M. E. Kitchen
Robt. Brown
Nelson J. Teeter
John A Nelles
Joe. Gilson
Hamiton House
John Elen
Jas. H. Lee
Wm. H. Patterson
Geo. H. Howson
John Taylor
Walter L. Nixen
Alforno C. Crayley
Andrew R. Randall
Walter L. Woleerton
Nathanael F. Hemming
H. E. Rome
Theodore E. King
Dymanke Kerman
Samuel L. Warrenler
Edwin Wilson
Geo. N. Looseley
Arthur B. Wilson
Frederic B. Henry
Delex. V. Vandyke
Theon D. Vandyke
Roland A. Hunter
Robt. R. Maitland
Wellingon R. Vandyke
Richard Liptai
Danon H. Fitzsimmons
Kenneth W. Lawrence
Wm. H. Prebleday
Geo. Elwyn Moore
David Sykes
William Cowan
William H. Allford
Samuel Whitaker
Chas. W. Melloy
Fred M. Young
Albert F. Hawke
Victor H. Carpenter
Andrew Beal
Wm. Duncan Forbes
Wm. B. Calder
Hugh J. Minchiniek
Edwin M. Mithell
Wm. H. Hunt
John Moffett
Augustus Cole
Geo. Cann
Robt. O. Cook
Winifred H. Spurling
Albert E. Fipps

Master Masons

Wm. Roberts
Neil McGreggor
Andrew Randall
Wm. W. Waddell
Wm. Nixen
Geo. S. Nixen
Wm. E. Tench
James M. Farewell
John S. Walker
Jan. A. Preston
Andrew G. Muir
Geo. Macon
Geo. H. Vandyke
Wm. F. Brown
Gratton T. Tuttor
John Walsh
Murdoch Randall
Robert Thomson
Bernard Rogers
Robert Byrons
Geo. P. Lowder
Edward Gardner
Robt. F. Nelles
William Jeffrey
David McCarthy

Jas. D. Bennett
William E. Millward
Andrew J. Chetiet
Alex. Sandyson
John McCornich
Jas. N. Kitchen
Robt. Milligate
Geo. Walker
Edwin Udell
Robt. Thompson
Jas. Troup
John H. Walker
Jas. F. Carter
William Eddy
Thos. Buchanan
Alon Conne
Andrew Milne
Robt. B. Montgomery
Jas. Broley
Wm. F. Clark
Jas. C. Duggan
John W. Davall
Alex. Campbell
Robt. F. Randall
Albert R. Henry
Donald J. McKimson
Henry S. Oakley
Wm. H. McCornell
Wm. H. Harrison
John P. Gibson
Roland Wismer
Geo. W. Meyer
Hugh D. Walker
Calvin C. Wanner
Wm. J. Drope
Irving S. Boyes
Wm. F. Randall
Thos. J. Noble
Geo. Smythe
John E. Ten Eyck
Chas. T. Farrell
Herbert C. Kerman
Allert L. Cherry
Amos B. Fisher
Geo. Henry Wilson
Marcus O. Nelson
John H. Gibson
Gen. W. Goodwin
John W. Cartwright

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