



Presentation on the history of King Solomons Chapter #8 on the occasion of its 150th anniversary- October 2nd 2007at Scarborough Masonic Temple. by Rt Ex Comp James B Evans

Welcome Companions, Masons ladies and gentlemen to the 150th anniversary of King Solomons Chapter which we are combining this evening with a reception for Rt Ex Comp David Ross Dainard in honour of his election to the office of Grand Superintendent for District No 8.

We are honoured to have the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario M Wor Bro Allan J Petrisor and the Grand First Principal of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada M Ex Comp George H Gifford , their ladies and many distinguished guests from all branches of Freemasonry with us this evening.

The history of a Chapter is primarily a succession of dates and occasions etc which I don't think would prove very interesting, so I have decided to highlight some of the history of the Toronto area, and a few of the interesting personalities whose hard work formed our Chapter.

Royal Arch Masonry was established in Toronto 207 years ago when Royal Arch Lodge No 16 was formed. St Johns Chapter was attached to Royal Arch Lodge No 16, and it was to this Chapter that the Charter members of King Solomons Chapter belonged.

King Solomons Chapter began, or in Masonic terms “received its dispensation” on May 18th 1857. Toronto was a vastly different place in those days with a population of just 42,000 souls. The most impressive building in town was the Mental Asylum. The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada was formed with William Mercer Wilson as it’s first Grand Z - Ottawa was named as the capital of Canada by Queen Victoria – Edward Elgar the composer and Lord Baden Powell the founder of the Boy Scouts movement were born, there were riots between Catholics and Protestants and the police force was composed of approximately 50 Constables and six sergeants. At the Apollo nightclub you could take in a floorshow and have a drink for 12 ½ cents, Those were the days!

But back to King Solomons Chapter. The person named on the dispensation as the first Principal of our Chapter was a G.L Allen, but he resigned after a few months and Kivas Tulley was installed as 1st Principal. Tully was an Irishman who came to Canada at the age of 24, and was a renowned architect. Many buildings in Toronto were designed by him, including the Old Bank of Montreal building and the Custom House at Front and Yonge Street. In 1847 he was elected as Senior Warden of Ionic Lodge, and became an honorary Grand 1st Principal in 1891. Ionic Lodge is still active in Toronto and we have some members with us this evening.

Another distinguished member was Daniel Spry who was Scribe E or secretary of the Chapter in 1860 and became 1st Principal in 1863 and Grand 1st Principal in 1882.

In 1875 Toronto was still suffering through the repercussions caused by the Fenian Raids in 1860. During these turbulent times, a prominent member of our Chapter was John Ross Robertson, founder of the Toronto Telegram and a major benefactor of the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children, He was installed 1st Principal on January 19th 1880, the same year that Ned Hanlon won the World Rowing Championship. A banquet to celebrate that installation was held in January 1881, and we are fortunate to have a copy of the banquet menu for that occasion. In 1882 Robertson became Grand Superintendent, and was Grand 1st Principal in 1894. At the Grand Chapter Convocation of 1895 he said "The Royal Arch Degree is one of merit. It stands and will stand as the perfection of Masonry".

In 1901 Queen Victoria died, Edward VII was crowned king and J.A. Carveth was installed as 1st Principal of our Chapter. We are fortunate to have his great grandson Richard Carveth as a member of our Chapter. Richard was 1st Principal in 1997. J.A. Carveth was also the first WM of Birch Cliff Lodge which meets in this Temple. At the 50th anniversary of the Chapter in 1907 both John Ross Robertson and J.A. Carveth took a large part so it's very special Richard that you should be with us 100 years later at the 150th anniversary.

By 1927 the population of Toronto has risen to 570,000 and Union Station on Front Street was opened. The design of the crest on the front of our summons was presented to the Chapter in that year. The word “INVENIMUS” on the crest is Latin for “We have found it”, a phrase which has significance for all Royal Arch Masons. During the 115 years of existence 1,623 members had been admitted and the membership numbered 197.

The 30's was a difficult period for everyone, including Royal Arch masonry and it's only because of the hard work and dedication of our members that the Chapter survived. It wasn't all bad – Conn Smythe's Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup in 1932 – you could rent a 10 roomed house in the city for \$50 per month and you could take your best girl to the pictures and have an ice cream on the way home for 50cents, and I was born!

Our Chapter has met at several places in Toronto since its inception, the Grand Superintendent in 1879 reported” King Solomons Chapter has recently leased , and very tastefully furnished a suite of rooms in Victoria Street, but in 1918 we moved into the Masonic Temple at Yonge and Davenport where Beaches Chapter affiliated with us in 1967. After the sale of the Temple we moved to York Temple and then to Markham. In 1992 Scarborough Chapter affiliated with us and we moved into Scarborough Temple.

Many of our members have served Grand Chapter and Grand Lodge over the years. If I tried to name them all we'd be here till midnight, but we have copies of our latest summons here this evening, and the names of Principals since 1969 appear on the back cover.

Suffice to say that we are fortunate to have with us this evening several dedicated Masons who have served Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter in many capacities. I've already mentioned Grand Superintendent Rt Ex Comp David Ross Dainard who is a distinguished member of several Grand Lodge committees and Rt Ex Comp Eugene DeBeaupre who was appointed Grand Senior Sojourner in 1999 and I had the honour of being elected Grand Superintendent in 1994.

From the 12 charter members 150 years ago, over 2000 companions have been admitted into our Chapter, and we have a present membership of over 100.

While our Chapter celebrates it's 150th anniversary, our Grand Chapter has also reached it's 150th year. Some events have already taken place and more are planned and it's all leading up to a big celebration at the Annual Convocation on April 4th 2008 in St Catherines. The theme of the celebrations is "Remember yesterday – Enjoy today – Embrace tomorrow".

Companions, while we celebrate let us not forget the ladies of our Chapter, who have not only supported us and our predecessors for the past 150 years, but continue to this day to help us in our efforts to assist this great Chapter.

To quote a passage from our official history “ We are both humble and proud as we sit in the reflected glory of Brothers and Companions who have distinguished themselves in areas of civil, municipal and community activity, as well as in fields of Masonic endeavor. We cherish the memory of those companions of this Chapter who have been called to the presence of the Grand Geometrician of the Universe in the Grand Chapter above. May they find that our work, in this their heritage to us, acceptable to the Builder and may they rest in peace in the safe and certain assurance that their great aims will be preserved untarnished in the strife torn world of modern times”

Thank you, Excellent Sir.