

The Watermark



June – Thanks Dad!

My father was a Freemason and I clearly remember the night he came home from his Master Mason degree. I had never seen my father so moved by anything in my life. I was 14 and can still see the emotion in his eyes as he tried to explain to me what Freemasonry was.

He showed me his apron, and the blue Bible with a gold square and compasses emblazoned on the cover that his brethren had given him. That experience with my Dad had such an impact on me that at the age of 21 I gladly asked to join an organization that I knew nothing about

other than the fact that it had to good to be pretty good to make such an impression on him.

31 years later I am still an active Freemason, and I like to think that the late evening with my father so long ago helped me be a good dad. I have a wonderful wife and two great adult children and if nothing else I can say that the slogan “*Freemasonry – making good men better*” for me is not a cliché.

I miss my father, but I did get to attend Lodge with him once and for the emotional night in 1974 I say “thanks Dad and Happy Father’s Day!”

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The Marco Polo: The Fastest Sailing Ship in the World



This 1999 stamp (Scott # 1779) was designed by Brother Lee Sackett a member of my lodge here in St. Andrews New Brunswick; St. Mark Lodge #5. The stamp design is based on a painting of the ship by J. Franklin Wright.

Irish born ship builder James Smith built this truly unique ship in Saint John NB and launched her on April 17th 1851. She was one of the first hybrid designs of her day with the body of a cargo ship above the water line and the hull of a fast clipper ship below. Her launch was not as impressive as her career because her keel struck bottom and she rolled over on her side and was stuck in the mud for 6 days before being refloated. Then she was accidently grounded and was stuck in the mud again for a further two weeks. When freed she set sail and established her first world speed record by sailing from Saint John, NB to Liverpool in only 15 days.

The days of wooden shipbuilding is long gone but in the 1800's Canada was number four in the world among ship-owning nations and the Maritimes built most of them. Historical records show that New Brunswick alone built nearly 500 vessels, an astonishing

feat when one considers the population and tools of the day.

The Marco Polo was a big ship she was 184 feet long with a beam of 36 feet, and draught of 29 feet. She displaced 1625 tons had three full decks and was fully rigged with three masts and square sails. She took her name from her full-length figurehead representation of the famous Italian explorer,

Marco Polo.



Recognizing the economic advantages of owning a fast ship, she was purchased by James Baines of the Black Ball Line, and refitted from a cargo ship to a luxurious passenger ship. She set sail for Australia from Liverpool on the 4th of July 1852 and arrived back in an amazing five months and 21 days, having set a new speed record for circumnavigating the globe. Her life as an emigrant ship on the Liverpool-Australia run continued for 19 years and it is claimed that one in every twenty Australians can trace their roots to the *Marco Polo*.

She was sold and converted back to a cargo ship in 1871 and was wrecked in a storm off of Cavendish Prince Edward Island on July 25th 1883.

The remains of this glorious ship now rest in the frigid waters off of Prince Edward Island National Park is considered a National Historic Site.

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Freemasons on the Titanic – Part II

Survival, Tragedy and the Truth

Relatively few people know that all of the White Star Olympic class ships (Titanic, Olympic and Britannic) claimed lives of their passengers and two of them went to the bottom!. The Titanic sank on her maiden voyage; the Olympic had a collision with a naval ship on her maiden voyage killing seven and the Britannic, sank faster than the Titanic cost the lives of 30 souls. The curse of these ships was their three enormous propellers that were so powerful they literally sucked anything into them including other ships.

48 year old Elmer Zebley Taylor was a wealthy inventor and manufacturer of the paper cup and was returning to America with his wife Juliet from one of their many trips to Europe. They both survived but it appears that he changed his story from him and his wife being placed in one of the first lifeboats to him jumping



overboard and being plucked from the sea. This was likely due to the scorn that was later heaped upon the male passengers who survived.

A serving Master of a Lodge who perished was 48-year-old William Anderson Walker. The wealthy clothing manufacturer was Master of Hope Lodge No. 124, F. and A. M. of East Orange, NJ.

Less known was the 29-year-old carpenter William John Turpin a member of Lodge of St. George #2025. He and his wife Dorothy were not supposed to be aboard the Titanic. The national coal strike resulted in their passage aboard the “New York” cancelled and they being transferred to the doomed ship. Nether one made it back to their new home in Salt Lake City UT.

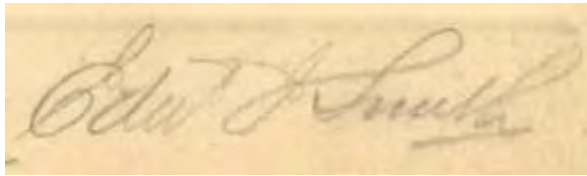
Most members of the fraternity are very proud of the many distinguished men through history that chose to become a Freemason (*one cannot become one without asking to be one*) and too often we are quick to accept the

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claim that an individual was a member of the Craft when they were not. Such is the case with the Captain of the Titanic; Edward John Smith.



For some time Oriental Lodge #144 in San Francisco has believed the ill-fated captain was a member of their lodge. After the sinking the secretary noted in the minutes that Edward John Smith was member of their lodge and had joined when he was working in the area as a telegraph cable salesman before he went to sea with the White Star Line. This claim was never challenged and the Lodge has had a Titanic dinner every year since to honour their fallen brother.



It was not until research for this article was conducted that the author noted that Smith went to sea at the age of 14 and was employed by the White Star Line at the same time as the other Smith joined the lodge. Comparing Captain Smith's signature to the one in the lodge record book proved it was a different man who belonged to the Lodge. The real Captain Smith never worked as a salesman and appears to never have been a Mason.



Ironically a member of Oriental Lodge #144 (now **Phoenix Lodge** No.144) was a survivor of the sinking. 48-year-old Dr. Washington Dodge was a wealthy doctor and the assessor of the City of San Francisco.

Legend has it that the captain personally put him into a lifeboat saving his life, but there is nothing to support this claim.

Other researchers note that after Dodge put his wife and four year old son aboard lifeboat #5 or 7 on the port side of the ship, he went over to the less populated starboard side where chief Officer Murdock put him in lifeboat #13 because no women or children were present. Brother Dodge committed suicide in 1919. Many believe that he like other male survivors could not live with the guilt of being a survivor and subsequently shunned by society and killed himself.

Others believe his death was the result of the stock market crash. We will never know, but unfortunately for the Lodge, their Titanic dinner tradition has been upset but they can still celebrate the life of Brother Dodge.

Thomas W.S. Brown was a 45-year-old hotel owner from Cape Town South Africa. He is believed to have been a Freemason (still trying to confirm) and he had sold his "Masonic Hotel" in Worcester and was in



the process of moving his wife and daughter to America where they planned to open a hotel in Seattle Washington. He never made it off the boat alive and unfortunately his wife and daughter escaped the ship penniless for their entire life savings was in a bag in their 2nd class stateroom and their supplies for a new hotel (furnishings tableware and 1,000 rolls of bed linen) were in the hold of the ship Virtually penniless and destitute his wife and daughter eventually returned to South Africa.

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Titanic continued

Ironically his daughter Edith was one of the last survivors of the Titanic to die. She passed at the ripe old age of 100 in 1997 in Southampton UK. In 1996, at the age of 99, Edith along with two other fellow survivors went on a cruise to the location of the wreck of the Titanic and before leaving the site she threw a rose into the water in memory of her father who died there 84 years ago.

Unfortunately we may never know how many Freemasons were aboard the Titanic but we can be confident that with more research additional members of the Craft will be identified. Hopefully this article will be a start in the search to both identify and remember them. Who knows maybe the lodges in the communities where these men either came from or are buried (if they are buried) will incorporate into their lodge traditions a remembrance ceremony for these souls who perished one hundred years ago.

Summertime is here and most Lodges in Canada go dark until fall. It is time for me to get the sailboat in the water and take a much-needed break. Just as Mr. Rat in the Wind and the Willows said *"If you believe me, my young friend, there is nothing - absolutely nothing, half so worth doing as - simply messing around in boats!"* So if you are looking for me away from work, you will be able to find me somewhere on water near beautiful St. Andrews by the sea searching for whales!



A Rant!

The Over Commercialization of the Craft

I spend a lot of time surfing the web for article ideas and recently came across this weapon. I have to tell you this really disturbs me. It is bad enough that the S&Q is being slapped on everything from soup to nuts so junk peddlers can make a buck, but producing covert



weapons crosses the line for me. As many of you know I am policeman by profession and I regularly get intelligence warnings about hidden weapons that serve no purpose other than to harm someone. It is bad enough that the craft is being continuously maligned and exploited, now criminals and idiots can wear a weapon disguised as a symbol of good. So if you see someone wearing one of these beware, if he is a Brother ask him what he is thinking. He may think it's cute but it's not. It can only serve to damage the credibility and reputation of the Fraternity.

Canadian Freemason of the Month

William Andrew Cecil Bennett

W.A.C. Bennett the 25th Premier of British Columbia was the longest-serving premier in BC history (1952-1972) winning re-election six times. He was born on a small farm in Hastings New Brunswick and his father was a third cousin of Richard Bedford Bennett the 11th Prime Minister of Canada (*see April 2012 Watermark*). He moved to Alberta in 1919, then to BC in 1930, where he bought and ran a successful hardware business in Kelowna. He became active in the provincial Conservative Party, and won election to the legislature in 1941. In 1951 he joined the Social Credit Party, and when they won a surprise victory in the 1952 election he was chosen leader of the minority government. He resigned a year after losing power and his son William "Bill" Richards Bennett eventually succeeded him as the 27th Premier of British Columbia in 1975.



1998 Scott #1709g

Initiated: St. George Lodge No. 41, Kelowna in 1932, Worshipful Master: 1944

Marco Polo continued...

Films, books, and songs have been written about her. Even the famous Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery who is known for writing "Ann of Green Gables" published an essay when she was 16 years old based on her eye witnessed account of the wrecking of the Marco Polo (found here: <http://new-brunswick.net/marcopolo/wreck.html>).

If you are ever in Saint John NB be sure to check out the Marco Polo exhibit in the New Brunswick Museum.



Brother Lee Sackett 2nd on the left at the official unveiling of his stamp.



The Watermark

*Is published 10 times per year
and is distributed via the
Internet free of charge.*

*Submissions can be sent to
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