

Education & Enlightenment

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Freemasonry and Confederation

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On July 1, 2017, Canada celebrated the sesquicentennial of Confederation when the Dominion of Canada was formed by the confederation of the Province of Canada (Canada East and Canada West), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

This was one of the key periods in our history which would help to define what it is to be a Canadian. The process would continue with the addition of Manitoba and the North West Territory (July 15, 1870), British Columbia (July 20, 1871), Prince Edward Island (July 1, 1873), Alberta and Saskatchewan (September 1, 1905) and Newfoundland (March 31, 1949). These ten provinces are considered co-sovereign divisions deriving their power and authority directly from the Constitution Act of 1867 where the “Crown” is represented by a Governor General and Provincial Lieutenant-Governors. The three Territories—Northwest Territories (formed July 15, 1870), Yukon (formed 1898) and Nunavut (separated from the Northwest Territories on April 1, 1999)—derive their mandates and powers from the federal government and are headed by a Commissioner.

Throughout the process leading to Confederation, and afterwards, the thirty-seven men who were directly involved were ones who saw

beyond the limits of religion, race, nationality and language. They sought a common ground with benefits to an evolving "country." Compromise achieved results which accepted diversity in society. Eleven of these men were Freemasons. The majority were not. But when we look at their activities we see men for whom brotherly love, relief and truth were truly present and practiced in their daily lives.

Who were they? What were they? Why did they take these steps?

The "event" of July 1, 1867, is "book-ended" between political actions in the late 1830's in the two Canadas (Rebellions in 1837 and 1838 and the investigative visit of John George Lambton, 1st Earl Durham and his famous Durham Report which saw Lower and Upper Canada united into the Province of Canada in 1841) and in 1949 (when Joey Smallwood won the referendum to bring Newfoundland into Confederation with an affirmative vote of 52.3%). Lord Durham was a sixth generation Mason, a member of Marquis of Granby Lodge in Durham and a one-time Provincial Grand Master of Durham. Right Worshipful Brother Joseph Roberts Smallwood was a Past Master of Lodge Northcliffe, No. 1086 (Scottish), Grand Falls, Newfoundland.

Of the thirty-seven Fathers of Confederation, nine were born in the UK, one in Bermuda, one in Jamaica and one in the USA. The rest were born in the "Canadian colonies." By occupation, 20 were lawyers, 5 journalists, 8 merchant businessmen, 2 doctors, 1 land promoter and 1 soldier. Although they would vary the terms used to describe their political affiliations from time to time, fifteen could be labelled Conservatives, twelve Liberals, five Reform, two Liberal-Conservatives, two Reform-Liberals and one "radical independent/conservative." Six had entered politics as appointed members of government and 31 were elected when entering the political arena. Twenty-seven were supporters of Confederation almost from the beginning of their political careers.

As a result of the creation of the Dominion of Canada, fifteen of the “fathers” would be elected to the new Canadian Federal Parliament in the elections of 1867. One of the fifteen would be our first Prime Minister (Sir John A. Macdonald) and one would be our first MP who was assassinated (Thomas D’Arcy McGee). Six were appointed to the new Canadian Senate. Three were appointed to other senior offices (federal Commissioner, federal Deputy Minister of Justice and one as Lieutenant-Governor of Rupert’s Land and the North West Territory, although he was never installed). One chose a career in provincial politics. Three delegates lost in the 1867 elections. Eight were not eligible for any federal office by election or appointment as they were from PEI and Newfoundland which did not enter Confederation in 1867. After Confederation activities and “active” political careers, three would later become Senators, nine would become Lieutenants-Governor of Provinces (including one for Manitoba and the Northwest Territories and was later appointed for Nova Scotia), three would become Provincial Premiers, one would become a Federal Supreme Court Justice and six Provincial Supreme Court Justices, two were appointed as Canadian High Commissioners to London, one became Governor of the Bahamas, one returned to his military career, one returned to business as a railway promoter and one was appointed to collect and classify Canadian statutes of the time.

Who were the eleven Freemasons?

- Hewitt Bernard, friend, colleague and brother-in-law of John Alexander Macdonald, of Ionic Lodge, No. 25 (Ontario) of Toronto. He resigned during 1859 when he left Toronto for Quebec to work in government;

- Sir Alexander Campbell (later 6th Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario) of St. John’s Lodge, No. 3 (Ontario) of Kingston (now The Ancient St. John’s No. 3). He resigned in 1858 when he removed to Quebec with the government;

- Sir Frederick Bowker Terrington Carter (later Prime Minister of Newfoundland) of St. John's Lodge, No. 579 (England), now No. 1 (Newfoundland), of Saint John's;
- Edward Barron Chandler (later Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, 1878-1880) of Sussex Lodge, No. 480 (England), now No. 4 (New Brunswick) of Dorchester, NB;
- Alexander Tilloch Galt was reported in the media to have been a member of Victoria Lodge, No. 16 (Quebec) of Sherbrooke, PQ;
- John Hamilton Gray of New Brunswick's Albion Lodge, No. 500 (England), now No. 1 (New Brunswick) of Saint John, NB. He later affiliated with Civil Service Lodge, No. 148 (Ontario) of Ottawa;
- Thomas Haviland of Victoria Lodge No. 383 (Scotland), now No. 2 (PEI) of Charlottetown;
- William Alexander Henry of Nova Scotia listed himself as a member of St. John's Lodge, No. 161 (England) now No. 2 (Nova Scotia) of Halifax at the time he affiliated with Civil Service Lodge No. 148 (Ontario) of Ottawa on March 13, 1883;
- Sir John Alexander Macdonald (Canada's first Prime Minister) of St. John's Lodge, No. 758 (England) of Kingston (now The Ancient St. John's Lodge, No. 3 (Ontario) of Kingston). He was also a member of Zetland Lodge, No. 326 (Ontario) of Toronto for a time. He subsequently joined Dalhousie Lodge, No. 731 (England), now No. 52 (Ontario), of Ottawa after his removal there in 1867 as Canada's first Prime Minister. In 1867 he was presented with the honorary rank of Past Grand Senior Warden of our Grand Lodge. He was named by the United Grand Lodge of England as their Grand Representative near to the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada (now the Grand

Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario). He later joined Civil Service Lodge, No. 148 (Ontario) of Ottawa.

- William Henry Pope of Victoria Lodge No. 383 (Scotland), now No. 1 (PEI) of Charlottetown; and

- Sir Leonard Tilley (later Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick), is apocryphally reported to have been the father of the title of Canada as a "Dominion." Macdonald wished to call the country the "Kingdom of Canada" and Tilley was later reported to have been reading his Bible, and lucked upon Psalm 72 which, in verse 8, describes a ". . . dominion from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth." As Canada was perceived as stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the word "Dominion" was proposed by him and adopted by all attendees. According to R.W.Bro. Hon. Donald M. Fleming in his article *Masonry in the Centennial Setting*, Tilley was a Freemason but details of his membership have proven elusive.