

Countryside Rambles

In Search of Famous Canadian Freemasons

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Now that pleasant weather has returned at long last, a Sunday afternoon drive through the countryside is an attractive prospect. May I suggest some nearby destination points of particular interest to Freemasons. **Highway** 24 will provide easy access from which our three stops en route may be conveniently reached.

We often encounter lists and biographical sketches of "Famous Americans who were Masons" - great men whose celebrated achievements reflect credit on the Craft. By nature, Canadians are more reserved and we seem reluctant to acclaim, or even identify, national heroes. Yes, **Sir John A. Macdonald**, our first Prime Minister, was initiated into Freemasonry in 1844, and remained active in the fraternity for four decades until his death in 1891, achieving honorary Grand rank in both the Grand Lodges of Canada and England. On our proposed day-trip we will visit **three** historic sites which commemorate **three** important figures in the early life of Ontario, all of whom were **Freemasons**.

Let us begin our outing close to home. At the top of Kress Hill on Fountain Street North, **Preston Cemetery** forms a peaceful oasis between 401 Highway and the Toyota Plant, a final resting place for many pioneers of this community. (Preston was incorporated as a Village in 1857.)

Here we find an imposing granite memorial to one of the great men of Masonry, **OTTO KLOTZ**. He was initiated into Barton Lodge, No. 6, Hamilton (1846), affiliated with Alma Lodge, No. 72, Gait (1856) and subsequently served as its Master, elected the first District Deputy Grand Master of Wellington District (1873) and the first Worshipful Master of Preston Lodge, No. 297, when it was Instituted (1873). He served on Grand Lodge Committees which revised the Constitution and drafted the Ritual. In 1885, Grand Lodge conferred the rank of Honourary Past Grand Master. A plaque near the entrance to the Preston Hespeler Masonic Temple records his Masonic achievements, a large portrait of the Most Worshipful Brother adorns the Lodge Room, and Otto Klotz Lodge, No. 731, which meets there, was named in his honour.

Parsell's Illustrated Atlas of the County of Waterloo (1881) describes Otto Klotz as "Justice of the Peace, Notary Public, Conveyancer, and Division Court Clerk." From his arrival in Preston in 1837, this man was at the centre of civic life: elected to the Board of Trustees for the first public school (1838); Owner of the Klotz (later renamed the Central) Hotel; Secretary of the first Fire Brigade - The Hook and Ladder Society (1844) and when an Engine Company was formed in 1850, Klotz was the Chief Engineer. In 1845 he proposed free education for all, a concept not generally established in Ontario until twenty-five years later. At his death Klotz was mourned as "one of Preston's most civic minded citizens", an honour well and truly earned.

On top of the stone is a stylized scroll with the square and compasses superimposed, possibly representing the Altar with the Volume of the Sacred Law. On the west end of the stone in high relief is a hexagram, a six-pointed star known as David's Shield or Solomon's Seal, with the initials **OK** in the centre.

Otto Klotz

Geb. den 25ten November, 1817 in Kiel, Holstein, Deutschland,
Gestorben in Preston den 6ten Juli, 1892.

Our thoughts go back to the beginnings of Freemasonry in this County during the years following Confederation when several Lodges were instituted, a time when the Brethren of New Hope Lodge met on the Wednesday, and those of Preston Lodge met on the Friday "*on or before the full moon*" to take advantage of the brighter moonlight to guide them (and their horses) on their homeward way after the Lodge was closed.

This cemetery is rich in fraternal symbolism for collectors of tombstone art. Many Freemasonic symbols, including examples of "advanced" appendant degrees, may be found openly displayed. Just behind the Klotz memorial is a splendid example of a broken column, which in Masonic terms, represents the unfinished temple. There is a large memorial erected by the I.O.O.F.. The Sons of England memorial is emblazoned with the sword in the form of a cross, a modern use often seen in civic war memorials, derived from the ancient practice of the Knights Templar, who marked the graves of the warrior monks by inscribing an impression of the dead brother's sword in the stone.

Before we become completely absorbed in the symbols used in funerary art, let us turn south to **Brantford**. St. Paul's Anglican Church, commonly known as Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks, was erected by King George III in 1785. This beautiful white frame building holds pride of place as the first Protestant Church built in Ontario. Here in an enclosure at the south side of the building is the tomb of **JOSEPH BRANT**

During the Seven Years War and the American Revolutionary War, the Indians of the Six Nations Confederacy in the Ohio valley had sided with and aided the British Army. ' At the conclusion of hostilities in 1784 these "Loyalist" Indians were led by their intrepid Chieftain, Joseph Brant, north to lands across the lake and as a reward for this support a grateful King George III ceded a vast tract of land in the Valley of the Grand - stretching six miles on either side of the Grand River from its mouth on Lake Erie to its source at the forks at Elora "*as long as the sun shines, rivers run and grass grows.*"

What is his connection with Waterloo County? The same Joseph Brant, in 1798 acting as agent, persuaded the Colonial Government to sell a northern portion of the Indian Land Reserve (92,160 acres which would become **Waterloo County**) to Richard Beasley and two associates – The Beasley Tract. Beasley, in turn (1799), sold 60,000 acres to two Mennonites from Pennsylvania, Joseph Sherk and Sam Betzner, who joined with others to form the German Company. The destiny and character of the area was determined by a decision made by this man almost two centuries ago.

This tomb is erected to the memory of THAYENDANEGEA, or Captain **Joseph Brant**, Principal Chief and Warrior of the Six Nations Indians, by his Fellow-Subjects, admirers of his fidelity and attachment to the British Crown. Born on the banks of the Ohio River, 1742; died at Wellington Square, U.C. 1807.

It also contains the Remains of his son, AHYOUWAIGHS, or Captain John Brant, who succeeded his Father as, TRKARIHOGEA, and distinguished himself in the War of 1812-15. Born at the Mohawk Village U.C. 1794; died at the same place, 1833.
Erected 1850.

This plaque erected by the **Masonic Foundation of Ontario**, 1984

You might notice a headstone close to Brant's tomb marking the grave of *one Arthur Wellesley* Smith: such was the fame of the hero of Waterloo, Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington, in whose honour so many of these newly-surveyed lands – counties, townships, villages and towns (and Masonic Lodges) – were named in the years following his greatest military triumph over Napoleon in 1815, ending the Napoleonic Wars. (Incidentally, both Wellington and Napoleon were Freemasons.) Making your way back to the parking area, also notice a white marble headstone, now lying flat to the ground, on which the sculptor has carved a fine example of two columns so familiar to Freemasons. As we have noted earlier in the broken column at Preston, our symbols have often been borrowed by artists, either consciously or unconsciously.

¹ For a summary of the significant part Freemasonry played in the American Revolution on both Imperial and Republican sides and a fascinating hypothesis explaining the outcome see Baigent and Leigh. The Temple and the Lodge. 1989. "Freemasonry and American Independence".