

TREPANIER LODGE NO. 83

1913 - 2013



Trepanier Lodge, No. 83, Peachland, B. C.

100 YEARS OF FREEMASONRY
IN PEACHLAND BRITISH
COLUMBIA





repanier, the Name

History does not relate how this Lodge came by the name Trepanier, as there is no record on the minute book of early days to indicate why the choice was made; but it is a safe assumption that the Peachland Westbank Lodge took its name from the creek which flows into Okanagan Lake, a mile or so north of the Lodge building.

Then comes the natural query: "How did the creek get this name of French extraction?"

It is related by old-timers that the name "Trepanier Creek" was originally applied to the creek south of the town; and "Deep Creek" (now carried by the southern stream), once belonged to the watercourse to the north, which certainly reaches the lake on a much less precipitate grade and, therefore lies deeply in the hills. Some time or other a switch in names was made (most likely in error).

Early maps of this part of the country refer to a large section of the mountains, west of Peachland, as the Trepange Plateau. It is reasonably evident that Trepanier and Trepange, from their

French derivation, and their somewhat common meaning, might have a common application in this district.

One story of the pioneers is that, while on a bear hunting expedition from Kamloops through the Nicola and up the divide between the Nicola and the Okanagan, a fur trader performed a trepanning operation upon one of his Indian hunting companions, whose skull had been injured, perhaps by a bear. The fur trader performed a crude operation with a hunting knife, lifted a portion of the man's broken skull and the injured chap lived. So great was the marvel of his recovery that the name, "trepan," a noun, meaning a small circular saw for skull operations, or the verb meaning to perform such an operation, was applied to the area, and to the stream which rose in that vicinity.

We can assume, then, that the Freemasons of Peachland, who gathered in scant but zealous numbers to form a Lodge those many years ago were inspired to name the local body after a landmark which had somewhat of an historical, or at least a romantic association, dating back to the eighteen eighties or even to the seventies (1880's or 1870's).

The First Meeting of Trepanier Lodge



The Lodge's minute book records what was described as the inaugural meeting as being held on August 12th, 1913. Peachland was then an official community only four years old. It dated from the time miners thought

they had found pay gold in Glen Robinson, and it continued when these same miners, swelled in number by newcomers from the numerous "Gold Rush Fevers" of the time, and instead of mining started to plant fruit trees to harvest a golden crop of peaches.

The first meeting was held in a room above the old general store and which continued as a Lodge room until the construction of the present building at 5842 Beach Avenue, Peachland British Columbia.

Permission for this inaugural meeting came from Most Worshipful Brother William Henderson, Grand Master of British Columbia. The District Deputy Grand Master of that day was Hamilton Lang, of Vernon. His brother, W. A. Lang, sat as Worshipful Master, and another brother, Grant Lang, (who in later years also became the District Deputy Grand Master), sat as Senior Warden; A. Chilton sat as Junior Warden, and Thos. Powell recorded the event as Secretary.



The new Lodge, having received authority to function, immediately became quite active and almost immediately began to bestow degrees upon local men of the area. The first candidates for Trepanier Lodge were voted upon at the September meeting. They were B. M. Whyte, Ernest McKay, J. D. McGregor, J. Michael, Alex. McKay and William Coldham. Alex. McKay, Bryson Whyte and James Michael received the Entered Apprentice Degree at that same meeting.

Later that autumn, others received into the fraternity of our young Lodge were: J. S. Seaton, C. R. Somerville, B. F. Gummow, J. L. McLaughlan, and A. Town.

These names are detailed because of their special interest. A number of these newly made Freemasons of that day remained

fully active in Trepanier, or other Lodges of the Okanagan. All of them were well known in the district, and many of them made an important impression on Okanagan life.

Application for a Warrant

Application for a warrant was made in May, 1914, and on August 25th of that year, a formal dispensation was received from Most Worshipful Brother Stark, Grand Master of British Columbia.

Trepanier laboured for a long time under dispensation. The whole history of the Lodge in those days can be summed up in a few sentences:

It struggled for constitution; it rebelled constantly against its original inadequate premises until it finally achieved its own home; and it carried on through one Great War into another, through years of adversity, with respect not only to finance, but also to the number of local members. Finally, it gained success in a safe financial position, but more important still, in the determination of its older members, aided by new and younger brethren, to work together for the preservation of a permanent spirit of Freemasonry in these little communities of Peachland and Westbank.

First Worshipful Master

Grant Lang is noted as being the first Worshipful Master, under dispensation from the Grand Master, and he had the promise of Right Worshipful Brother D. W. Sutherland, of Kelowna, then District Deputy Grand Master., that he would recommend a charter. It may be noted that two young men previously mentioned as joining in 1913, became Senior and Junior Wardens respectively in 1914. They were Alex McKay and William Coldham. Such were the opportunities for immediate progress in such a new endeavour.

WWI (The Great War)



The district has a proud, but mournful record for the First Great War. Its enlistment percentage was exceedingly high, and its

death toll inevitably followed suit (Peachland being saddened to have the highest per capita death toll percentage in all of Canada).

The young Lodge had a hard time in the war years in keeping up its attendance, such was the drain upon it, occasioned by the call to duty. The first joint meeting was that at Summerland, in March, 1915. In December of that year, the District Deputy Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother James Kirkpatrick, of Orion Lodge, Penticton, agreed to recommend a charter. He was paying an official visit to Trepanier, and, according to the porch book, was accompanied by a host of Orion brethren. It may be remarked that a trip from Penticton to Peachland, 24 miles, was much more of an undertaking then than now, but the spirit was willing.

Lodge records of that day reveal the arrival of many letters from the boys at the front and the dispatch of many parcels overseas. There was a change in the East, as a Past Master, Worshipful Brother Alex. Miller, took charge of the Lodge, succeeding Worshipful Brother Grant Lang who had joined the military forces. Here and there, throughout the pages of the 1915 porch book, it can be observed that there was lack of a quorum.

In May, 1916, the Lodge applied for a renewal of dispensation,

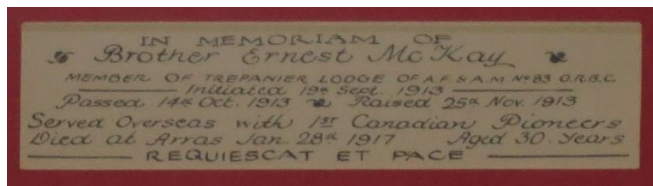
the charter not being forthcoming. At this meeting, there were sixteen visitors from St. George's Lodge, Kelowna; other lodges were apparently helping out in the matter of attendance.

Coming to the end of the year, we find that on December 8th, 1916, the Lodge received a cheery letter from Trepanier's Brother Ernest McKay, from overseas.



On January 31st, 1917 there was word of his death, "somewhere in France."

Brother Ernest McKay in a casual pose in his WWI uniform. This picture hangs on the south wall in the Trepanier Lodge hall in honour of his sacrifice.



Although Brother McKay's untimely loss was tragic, Trepanier Lodge has been fortunate to not lose any other Brethren in the serious wars, conflicts and actions that have occurred since this war to the present.

The Grand Master of that year, Most Worshipful Brother William Astley, visited the Lodge on April 26th, 1917, and was the first Grand Master to do so.

Off and on, in the minutes of those early years, there crops up the question of rent. The rent for the room above the store had started at \$150.00 per year, but the Lodge wore it down to \$60.00, plus light. Then it got down to \$3.00 per month, then back to \$5.00. There were regular complaints from the members about the unsuitability of the premises.

From June, 1918, to November of that same year, there were no meetings, due to the pressure of the fruit business, and then to an outbreak of influenza (the great Spanish Flu outbreak of that time).

May, 1919, the Women's Institute was given permission to use the Lodge premises and to provide an organ, which was used

for many years until it was replaced with a “modern” electric “Wurlitzer” sometime in the fifties or sixties.



The original organ that was donated to Trepanier Lodge by the Women's Institute. It now resides in the Westbank, B.C. Museum.

In July of 1919, the Lodge was getting desperate about its uncertain status, and passed a resolution to the effect that it could not see its way clear to remain under dispensation.

Constitution

On August 10th, 1920, the Lodge was constituted, with Right Worshipful Brother Morley officiating. Fifteen members were present, and forty-seven visitors. Dispensation had lasted for seven years. Truly, Jacob had laboured for Rachel.



The original Charter as it still hangs on the East wall in the Lodge Hall. Dated August 10, 1920

By-laws were passed on October 12th, and on December 27th, there was a joint installation at Penticton with Orion and Summerland.

Worshipful Brother Grant Lang became Worshipful Master again in the East. Brother William Coldham was seated as Senior Warden, and Brother A. McKay as Junior Warden, reversing the positions of earlier years.

Establishing a Community Presence

The following year, 1921, came the preparation of a Great War Honour Roll. This same Honor Roll became the original “cenotaph” before the existing granite edifice was constructed.



As the Honor Roll spent much of its time outdoors, it was rebuilt for preservation in later years and now resides in the Peachland Legion Hall

There was also the burial, on May 6th, of Worshipful Brother W. A. Lang, who had occupied the East (Worshipful Master's Chair) at the inaugural meeting back in 1913. New members presented

themselves. They included John Percy Long, W. H. H. Moffat, Harold Miller, W. D. Miller, and W. B. Gore. The influence of new blood from Westbank began to manifest itself, and the Lodge grew out of a purely Peachland organization. Note can be made that in the 1921 year, every regular meeting had at

least one or two degrees, sometimes three or four. There was also twelve regular meetings that year!

Rent was raised by the landlord, in February 1921, to \$6.70 per month, and members were told they would have to use the back stairs.

In 1922 It was decided to discontinue meetings in July and August, due to Okanagan heat in the low-ceilinged rented Lodge room.

Brothers Dr. Buchanan and J. Powell were commissioned to write a detailed history of the Lodge the autumn of 1922. It may be still be in existence but unfortunately, the Lodge itself no longer has a copy.

The social life of the Lodge was encouraged, in arrangements made from time to time, either for a social or a picnic, according to the season, sometimes at Peachland, or at Westbank, or with St. George's, at Kelowna.

Building our Home

In May, 1926, the Lodge placed \$300.00 in the Savings Bank. Ventilation of the Hall was a topic for serious discussion.

It was decided that autumn to install a home. Negotiations were opened up with the Royal Bank to purchase ground for a building, so it can be seen that the \$300.00 in the Bank had some significance.



The funeral of the beloved member, Worshipful Brother Alex. Miller, was held on June 6th, 1928. He was the maker and donor of the altar still used in the Lodge to this day.

*Worshipful Brother Alex. Miller
(W.M. 1916 and 1920)*



The altar in the centre as designed and built by Worshipful Brother Alex Miller and still in use in the Lodge to this day

It is to be noted that about

this time there continued discussion about rent, the poor condition of the roof of the building, and the unsuitability of the back entrance.

In 1931, a school room was examined as a possible Lodge premises. There had also been a previous examination of the upper section of a packing house

There was some discussion again about the outside staircase, towards the end of 1932, but after discussing it at several meetings, no satisfaction was obtained.

On April 11th, of the following year, 1933, the Lodge discussed the advisability of having a new building, with the members taking up debentures.



On February 13th, 1934, note was taken of the fact that Dr. Buchanan was absent because of an accident, and that it was his first absence from all Trepanier Lodge Meetings in a period of over twenty years.

*Worshipful Brother Dr. William Buchanan
(Worshipful Master Trepanier Lodge 1928)*

Permanent Residence for the Lodge

On October 9th, a committee recommended the purchase of a building, next to the Government wharf, for Lodge premises, but nothing came of the plan. Estimates were later obtained for a new building, 22'x60'. That same month an estimate of \$4,000.00 was given for a two-storey structure 30'x50', and a committee was appointed for the purpose of buying a lot. The Members present promised donations totaling \$385.00. Later, a more modest estimate of \$1,500.00 was given for a smaller Lodge building. It can thus be seen that the Lodge was getting down to business in the matter of a new home. Report was made on February 12th, 1933, of the purchase of two lots from the municipality. Then for unknown reasons a number of years passed without further discussion on a building but discussion was revived in June, 1937. In April, 1938, a committee was empowered to borrow up to \$1,200.00 for a period of ten years for building purposes. Tenders for a new building were considered on June 14th. At that time, it was decided to buy the McCall lot, (the present day site) for \$130.00, and J. T. Long donated the funds for the purchase.

Worshipful Brother J.T. Long (Worshipful Master Trepanier Lodge 1929)



The two lots previously obtained from the Municipality were allowed to revert.

Construction of the new home was started, and the first regular meeting in it was held on **September 13th, 1938**. We were in our own Lodge premises but some things still remained to be done, such as: a coat of stucco on the exterior, the completion of the interior of the lower floor, more lodge furnishings, and washroom facilities on the Lodge floor; but, we now had our own home.

A few weeks after the first meeting in our new home, a special Emergent Meeting was held on September 29, 1938 so that the Grand Master of British Columbia, Charles Morgan Kingston, could make a special visit to inspect the new premises and offer its dedication.

Here are some figures on the project:

- The lot cost \$130.00, funds for which were donated entirely by Worshipful Brother J.T Long
- The building cost \$2,350.93
- The time from final approval of the building to the first regular meeting in the building was 91 days (June 14 – September 13 1938)
- The project was partially financed by a five-year

mortgage for \$1,500.00

- Interest paid on the mortgage was \$395.65
- Cash contributions from the members for the project totalled \$9,913.00
- The Lodge building was originally insured for a replacement value of \$3,000.00

The Lodge found no difficulty in financing its new building and property values since the time of construction in 1938 have shown CONSIDERABLE growth!

Its investment decision has been a wise one, not only financially, but also in the added interest created among the members. Over the years it has had excellent ground floor tenants, including a bank, a butcher shop, restaurants, a Real Estate office and even a fledgling Cable TV company.

The Lodge room itself started with a handsome square-pattern linoleum for floor covering and now has a custom carpet with custom inlaid design befitting our craft as well as hand crafted Dias in the four cardinal directions of the Lodge room. It has been sufficiently provided with furniture for all our needs.

As of this September (2013) Trepanier Lodge will have been meeting for 75 years in this building and plans are to continue to do so for many years to come.

“May we continue on the principle of friendship and brotherly love, which guard the precincts of our temple that nothing may enter to disturb the peaceful sanctity of that holy place.”

WWII and Beyond

With the ending of the Second Great War, and the return of young men from overseas, Trepanier Lodge, in common with other Masonic bodies, experienced new life and vigour. Its members who had been overseas resumed their stations in Lodge, and in consequence, much activity was experienced. Quite a number of desirable young men of the Peachland-Westbank community were received into membership; various improvements to the building, and additions to the Lodge furniture were provided; and, above all, a fine growth of fraternal feeling among a wider circle was experienced.



Trepanier's Own Grand Master

Each year, the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon elect from within the Grand Lodge jurisdiction, a Grand Master to preside for the year. The Grand Master's duties are extensive and it is a great honour to the individual and to his Home Lodge to be so elected.

The duties of a Grand Master include extensive travel during his term to all districts within the Grand Lodge Jurisdiction, Dedication of new lodges, personally signing Master Mason Certificates and thus honouring all new Master Masons raised during his term, visits to other Grand Lodge Jurisdictions to represent the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon as well as numerous other ancillary duties and responsibilities.

The Grand Master's year is always very full and it takes special individuals to meet the challenges.

In 1967, the year of Canada's Centennial, Trepanier's own Hamish MacNeill was elected to this venerable position.



Hamish Campbell MacNeill (1908 – 1981)
Worshipful Master of Trepanier Lodge 1955 - 1956
Grand Master of British Columbia and Yukon 1967 – 1968



Brother MacNeill's Grand Lodge Regalia now holds a permanent place of honor in Trepanier Lodge's Lodge room on the South wall next to the picture of Brother Ernest McKay who was lost in the First World War

Improvements Continue

After the initial completion of the Lodge Building in 1938, several objectives were set. In this department were new seats for the officers, entrance pillars, and an extension for the Lodge room to the west in order to provide a more suitable preparation room for Masonic Candidates.

Over the years, all of these objectives and more have been achieved by the tireless dedication of the many past and present members of the Trepanier Lodge Building Committee which was originally formed prior to the construction of the present and continues on to this day.

Of particular Note are these improvements over the years:

- Donation of the Master's Chair by Right Worshipful Brother R.J. McDougall (Trepanier Past Master 1943)
- Construction of a Kitchen area
- Addition of a Chair Lift to assist the aging Brethren up our steep stairs
- Renovation of Kitchen by Very Worshipful Brother Robert Grieve (Trepanier Past Master 2006-07) and Worshipful Brother Derek Coyle (Trepanier Past Master 2010-11)
- Construction of a large enclosed Deck on the West of

the building

- Addition of a Candidates Entrance at the West of the Lodge Room
- Candidates Preparation area
- Entrance Pillars, constructed and donated by Right Worshipful Brother Robert Grieve
- Renovation of the Past Masters photo galleries
- Donation of a beautiful Hammond B3 organ by Brother Russell Kennedy

Improvement to the lodge continues on and the Building Committee continues to meet and through wholly volunteer effort keeps the building in a state of excellent repair and is always looking ahead as to how to improve the facility for all member and visiting Brethren.

The 2013 Trepanier Lodge Building Committee are:

- Worshipful Brother Derek Coyle
- Very Worshipful Brother Robert Grieve
- Worshipful Brother Bert Fredin
- Very Worshipful Brother David Wooldrige
- Worshipful Brother Raymond Spencer

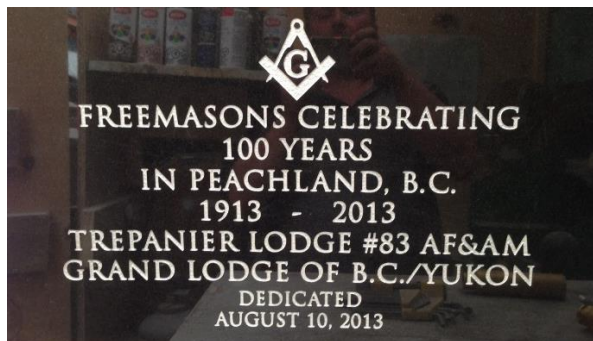
100 Years of Freemasonry in Peachland British Columbia

Trepanier Lodge No. 83 is proud to be a historic part of Peachland. The Lodge has now met in Peachland on regular basis for 100 years and will continue to do so for many years to come.



Masonic Lodge Building as it stands today, 2013

To mark this 100th Anniversary of Freemasonry in Peachland British Columbia, a commemorative plaque was commissioned to be placed prominently on the Lodge Building.



Trepanier Lodge No. 83 Officers for the 2013-2014 Term

Worshipful Master	W. Bro. Dennis Savage
Immediate Past Master	W. Bro. Robert Stabb
Senior Warden	W. Bro. Raymond Spencer
Junior Warden	Bro. Fred Osborne
Treasurer	W. Bro. Derek Coyle
Secretary	V.W. Bro. David Wooldridge
Director of Education	W. Bro Allan Owen
Chaplin	W. Bro. Graham George
Directory of Ceremonies	W. Bro. Bert Fredin
Senior Deacon	Bro. Gary Stickland
Junior Deacon	W. Bro. Dave Boot
Organist	R.W. Bro. Don Hyslop
Historian	V.W. Bro. David Wooldridge
Inner Guard	W. Bro. Derek Coyle
Senior Steward	Bro. Al Henderson
Junior Steward	Bro. Pat Borton
Tyler	W. Bro. Bleu St.Louis

Bro. = Brother (Brother in Freemasonry)

W. Bro. = Worshipful Brother (Past/Present Worshipful Master)

V.W. Bro. = Very Worshipful (Past/Present Grand Lodge Officer)

R.W. Bro. = Right Worshipful (Past/Present District Deputy Grand Master)

If you have a further interest in Freemasonry or in the Trepanier Lodge in particular, please visit our Website at:

www.Trepanier83.ca

Or contact the Lodge Secretary at:

Secretary@Trepanier83.ca



*Centennial History of Trepanier
Lodge No. 83 written and
compiled by Worshipful Brother
Robert Stabb (Trepanier Lodge
Worshipful Master 2012-13)*

