

Hugh Murray

Grand Master (1884 – 1886) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario



Photo from the Grand Lodge

(1843 – 1907)

Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.

Hugh Murray was born in Scotland on the 26th of June 1842, in Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland. He was the 7th child of a family of 12. The family was able to send young Hugh Murray to the private school of Dr. Thomas Moore. At the age of 16 he came alone to Canada and lived with his uncle in Kent County. In 1860 he relocated to Hamilton where he worked in a wholesale grocery warehouse until he started a grocery business. He and his partner ran “Murphy & Murray” near James St. on the

north side of King St. in Hamilton. In the early 1870s he was appointed to the position of clerk in the Customs House. He rose to the position of Chief Clerk until 1903. He left the Customs House to become the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Canada.

He was also an Honorary President of the Hamilton Tigers Football Club. This was in the era that the team played under the Ontario Rugby Football Union. His son, Hugh Murray, was a player on the team.

Hugh Murray served on the Hamilton school board for over 25 years, with two years as Chairman. It is largely due to his efforts on the school board that a Normal School (or teacher's college) was established in Hamilton. He was a director of the Federal Life Assurance Company.

In the 1878 election he unsuccessfully ran as a Conservative against the Hon. James M. Gibson. Hugh Murray and James Gibson knew each other well through Masonry. Gibson was DDGM in 1876, with Murray as DDGM in 1877. Both became Grand Master; M.W. Bro. Hugh Murray in 1884 – 1886 and M.W. Bro. Gibson in 1892 – 1894.

He and his family were active in the First Methodist Church, where Hugh Murray was an important member of the board, and superintendent of the Sunday School.

Hugh Murray and Elizabeth Ann Crisp (1847 – 1905) married on February 1, 1869. They had 6 children, one of whom died as an infant.

Hugh Murray died of a stroke on November 28th, 1907. His final resting place is in the family plot of his wife, who predeceased him in 1905. While there was a Masonic Memorial Service led by Acacia Lodge No. 61, there are no Masonic identifiers on the monument at his grave.

There is a large portrait of Ill. Bro. Hugh Murray in the regalia of a Scottish Rite Sovereign Grand Inspector General at the Scottish Rite Cathedral in Hamilton.

Masonic Career

In Craft Masonry, on January 24, 1865, at age 22, Hugh Murray was initiated into Acacia Lodge No. 61. He served as Worshipful Master 6 years later, in 1871. Shortly after that he was elected as Grand Junior Warden (1874 – 1875), and then as District Deputy Grand Master of Hamilton District (1877 – 1878 and 1878 – 1879). He reported that as DDGM he held a Lodge of Instruction that was well-attended and followed by an excursion by boat on Burlington Bay and Lake Ontario. M.W. Bro. William H. Weller assigned R.W. Bro. Hugh Murray the task of preparing a set of Bylaws that could be used as a model for all lodges in the jurisdiction.



Brethren across the jurisdiction elected him the Deputy Grand Master (1883 - 1884 and 1884 - 1885). He was elected and served as Grand Master for 1884 through 1886.

M.W. Bro. Hugh Murray was the first of four brethren of Acacia Lodge No. 61 who rose by eminence to the position of Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. The others are: M.W. Bro. William Hugh Wardrope (Grand Master 1917 - 1919), M.W. Bro. Thomas Hamilton Simpson (Grand Master 1947 - 1949), and M.W. Bro. Russell Williams Treleaven (Grand Master 1961 - 1963).

He served as Grand Treasurer of Grand Lodge from 1891 to 1903 and as Grand Secretary from 1903 until his death in 1907.

In Capitular Masonry information about his Chapter is not available. He was elected as Grand Superintendent of the Hamilton District. For his work on behalf of Freemasonry he was elected as an Honorary Grand First Principal in July 1903.

He is an honorary past preceptor of Godfrey de Bouillion preceptory of the Knights Templar.

He is identified with the several bodies of the Scottish Rite in Hamilton and was the presiding officer of each. He was a member of Moore Sovereign Consistory and served as Commander-in-Chief. He was coroneted as an Active Sovereign Grand Inspector General, 33°, in 1876. He served as Secretary General of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of the Dominion of Canada for a number of years and became the Grand Chancellor. He was the provincial grand master *ad vitam* of the Royal Order of Scotland for the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

He was named the representative of the Grand Lodge of New York near the Grand Lodge of Canada; representative of the grand chapter of the District of Columbia near the grand chapter of Canada; and the representative of the supreme council of Italy near the supreme council of Canada.

As Grand Master

In his first year as our 11th Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Murray convened a permanent committee on the Ritual. The three established degrees were exemplified at the Grand Lodge Communication to achieve greater uniformity of the work in all lodges.

Jurisprudence, as well as questions of conduct, are often left in the hands of the Grand Master. M.W. Bro. Hugh Murray had to expel several Masons, and delivered rulings on some questions. He ruled that all candidates must believe in a Supreme Being, who has revealed his will to man, and who will punish vice and reward virtue. He ruled that the affirmation of a Quaker in lieu of the oath or obligation of Masonry is

not admissible. He ruled that an Indian can be made a Mason and stated “Color, creed or country is no bar to initiation.” He ruled that balloting is for accepting candidates, and at Masonic trials, and for the election of certain officers; in other cases, the Masonic mode of voting is by a show of hands.

As other Grand Masters had done before, and would do later, M.W. Bro. Murray reminded the brethren that Masonry is not a benefit association, or an insurance company and lodges should not form insurance companies.

M.W. Bro. Murray decried the use of Masonic emblems for unworthy purposes such as for the purpose of increasing business or attracting customers to a tavern.

Our Grand Master noted that Bro. Rob Morris was hailed as the Poet Laureate of Freemasonry. While M.W. Bro. Murray was not able to attend the event hosted by the Grand Lodge of New York, he noted that Bro. Morris was an Honourary Past Deputy Grand Master of our Grand Lodge.

M.W. Bro. Murray deplored the outbreak of the North-West Rebellion. He gave thanks that peace was restored. He reminded DDGMs to take pains to see that the wives and families of brethren called to duty in the Northwest “are not permitted to want for the necessaries and comforts of life.”

Our Grand Master was pleased to note that some lodges make of a point of having a lecture or Masonic Education and discussion at every meeting. He further urged lodges to organize Masonic libraries to furnish the opportunity for brethren to improve themselves in the knowledge of every Masonic subject.

Several pages of Grand Master Murray’s Address were devoted to a review and explanation of the ongoing jurisdiction issues felt by the Grand Lodge of Quebec with several lodges in that province still holding Warrants from foreign Grand Lodges. Although M.W. Bro. Murray sympathized with the position of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, he felt bound by the agreement achieved years earlier between our Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge of Quebec and could not intervene.

Several jurisdictional issues had to be addressed by Grand Master Murray. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts had a provision in their Constitution that they have ‘perpetual jurisdiction’ over any man who makes application to be a Mason. For the case in question, a man living in Massachusetts applied to a lodge there and was rejected. When he moved to Ontario and met residence requirements here, he made application to a lodge, was accepted, and made a Mason. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts objected to this action, and M.W. Bro. Murray referred the question to the full Board of General Purposes.

A Masonic lodge in Rat Portage, now known as Kenora, held a Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Manitoba. This happened before the border between Ontario and Manitoba was formally determined. Communication between the two Grand Lodges was cordial, and Peguonga Lodge No. 22 of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba became Pequonga Lodge No. 414 of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

The Constitution required revision to properly codify the rulings of Grand Masters, change the name of the Grand Lodge to 'Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario', set out better rules for election of officers, define the role of the Board of General Purposes, and describe the powers and duties of the Grand Master as well as the DDGMs. M.W. Bro. Murray appointed a committee which returned with a plan not for revision of the Constitution, but a new Constitution. The complete Constitution and several Appendices were included in the Annual Proceedings for 1886.

As Past Grand Master

M.W. Bro. Murray was working at his office as Grand Secretary on a Monday when he suddenly took ill and went home. On the following Thursday morning, November 28th, he suffered a stroke and died. The funeral was held on Saturday November 30th, 1907.

In eulogizing our Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Freed by saying "Brother Murray was a man of whom it may be said that duty was the guiding star of his life. That which he thought he ought to do he did with his might. That which he thought he ought not to do he could not be persuaded nor forced to do. His life was a service of activity and love."

There are two Masonic lodges named to honour M.W. Bro. Hugh Murray. One is Murray Lodge No. 408 of Beaverton, Ontario. The other is Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602 of Hamilton, Ontario. It is interesting to note that the son of M.W. Bro. Hugh Murray, also named Hugh Murray, was a Past Master of Acacia Lodge No. 61 when he affiliated with Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602 in 1925. And Bro. Hugh Murray III, grandson of our Past Grand Master, became a member of the Fraternity in Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602.

Sources:

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- (3) *Commemoration of the Graves of the Grand Masters*, December 2018. A project of the Museum and Archives Team.
- (4) Herrington, W.S., and Foley, R.S., editor Dunlop, Wm. J. 'A History of the Grand Lodge A.F.&A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario' (1955) McCallum Press Ltd., Toronto.
- (5) McLeod, Wallace editor, *Whence Come We?* (Hamilton, Grand Lodge of A.F.&A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario, 1980)



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- (7) Robertson, J.R., *'The History of Freemasonry in Canada from its Introduction in 1749'*, (1900), George N. Morang & Company.
- (8) Runnalls, J. Lawrence (1979) *Our Past Grand Masters* privately published
- (9) Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada Seventy-fifth Birthday, published under authority of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Canada for the 75th Anniversary celebrations, February 24, 1932.
- (10) Obituary, November 28th, 1907. The Hamilton Spectator.
- (11) W. Bro. Lorne Evans delivered "Hugh Murray No. 602 – A Lodge Profile" for the 1000th Regular Meeting of the lodge on January 16, 2023.
- (12) History of Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602 <https://hughmurray602.ca/> Accessed August 30, 2024
- (13) Alexander Fraser. A History of Ontario Its Resources and Development Volume II Canada History Company 1907.
- (14) Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602 75th Anniversary Booklet (1997)
- (15) Jenkyns, Michael, *History of Wentworth Lodge No. 166. History of Murray Lodge No. 408. History of Hugh Murray Lodge No. 602.*