



**Daniel Fraser Macwatt**

Grand Master (1909 – 1911) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons  
of Canada in the Province of Ontario

Grand First Principal (1913 – 1914 and 1914 – 1915) of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch  
Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario

Supreme Grand Master (1897 – 1898 and 1898 – 1899) of the Sovereign Great Priory, KT,  
of Canada

Grand Master (1891 – 1892) of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Ontario  
(Cryptic Rite)



*Photo from the Grand Lodge*

(1853 – 1920)

*Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.*



Daniel Fraser Macwatt was born in Nairn, Scotland on July 9, 1853, the son of Charles Macwatt, MA, of Aberdeen and the proprietor and publisher of The Nairnshire Mirror. He began his education in the Nairn Academy, but his parents died when he was 13 years old and he joined the service of the Highland Railway Company at Blair, Athole, Perthshire, Scotland. He came to the United States in 1869 where he was employed by Messrs. Slauson and Company, Wholesale Confectioners, in New York and was eventually bookkeeper and confidential clerk for the Company. He came to Canada in 1873 with failing health, entering into articles as Student-at-Law with D'Alton McCarthy, QC, of Barrie, in 1876. He graduated in law in 1881, was called to the Bar in the same year and took up practice in Barrie, Ontario for 18 years first with McCarthy, Pepler and McCarthy and later in a partnership with John Dickenson, BA, and William Lount, QC, MP and a later Judge of the Ontario Supreme Court. Daniel Fraser Macwatt was appointed as a County Judge for Lambton County in 1899 and a Surrogate Judge in the Admiralty Court in 1906. He was President of the County Judges' Association of Ontario.

The reserve militia in Simcoe, the Simcoe Foresters, counted him as Lt.-Col. Macwatt. He also served as the Chairman of the Public School Board, and the Board of Public Health in Barrie.

While living in Sarnia Judge Daniel Fraser Macwatt enjoyed the sport of golf. He was a Director of the Sarnia Golf Club, and a biography of him was published in The Canadian Golfer by the Royal Canadian Golf Association.

He took an active role in local affairs and wrote a book on the biographies of the wardens, parliamentary representatives, judiciary officers and County officials of Lambton County from 1851 to 1918 which was published by the Lambton County Council in 1917.

His leadership in fraternal organizations was not limited to Freemasonry. Daniel Fraser Macwatt was also High Chief Ranger of the Ancient Order of Foresters of Canada (1891 - 1893), Grand Regent of the Royal Arcanum for Ontario (1889 - 1891), President of the Canadian Fraternal Association (1893) and Grand Master of the Ancient Order of Workmen for Ontario (1894).

Daniel Fraser Macwatt was twice married. He first married Elizabeth Helen McWatt on the 20th of March 1876, at Toronto. Elizabeth Helen McWatt (1814 - 1912), was the daughter of Simcoe County Justice of the Peace, John McWatt. They had two daughters, Mary Brodin and Jean Elizabeth. His first wife died in 1912.

On the 6th of April 1914, Daniel Fraser Macwatt married Griselda McDonald (1882 - 1974), a nurse from Nova Scotia who was 29 years his junior. They had two sons before his death in 1920. One of the sons died in Glace Bay, Cape Breton of pneumonia a few months after his father's death. This son, Charles, is interred in the family plot in

Barrie. The other son, Flight Lieutenant Ian Fraser Macwatt (1917 – 1943), died over Germany while piloting a Halifax bomber on a night mission during World War II.

M.W. Bro. Daniel Fraser Macwatt died of influenza on February 12, 1920, at the age of 67 years, in Sarnia, Ontario. M.W. Bro. Macwatt's body was conveyed to Barrie, where he was buried in Union Cemetery. The funeral was attended by many members of the judiciary as well as a Masonic delegation led by M.W. Bro. Frederick W. Harcourt. A Grand Master's jewel is engraved on the monument marking his last resting place. The plot is shared with his wife, Griselda, and son, Charles.

At the time of his death his second wife, living in Sydney, Nova Scotia, gave his papers and books to M.W. Bro. Reginald Vanderbilt Harris, (a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia). This collection of about 1000 volumes included original manuscripts from W. J. B. MacLeod-Moore, was to have been transferred to the Scottish Rite offices in Hamilton. It was lost with the untimely and tragic death of Grand Master Harris.

A portrait of Grand Master Daniel Fraser Macwatt is displayed at the Annette Street Masonic Hall in Toronto.

### **Masonic Career**

Mr. Daniel Fraser Macwatt was Initiated into Corinthian Lodge No. 96, Barrie, on April 2, 1885, and numbered 240 on their roll. He was Worshipful Master in 1889. He was elected as District Deputy Grand Master of Georgian District (1890 – 1891). He provided oversight to the 24 lodges in the District by visiting each lodge at least once. This required travel of 1,835 miles. In his report he strongly recommended that the boundaries of Georgian District be revised. His report as DDGM is very detailed, and he states his opinion of the quality of ritual work for each of the lodges in his care.

M.W. Bro. Daniel Fraser Macwatt was elected as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario for 1909 – 1910 and 1910 – 1911.

In 1910 he was a charter member of University Lodge, No. 496, Toronto. He was a member of the Correspondence Circle of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076 ER, London.

In Capitular Masonry, he was exalted in Signet Chapter, No. 34, RAMO, Barrie on December 14, 1886 and was elected as Grand Superintendent of Georgian District in 1903. He was active in Grand Chapter and was elected as Grand Third Principal in 1909, Grand Second Principal in 1911 and Grand First Principal for 1913 – 1914. He was also Past President of the Order of the High Priesthood of Ontario.

In Knights Templary, Daniel Fraser Macwatt was a member of Mount Calvary Preceptory No. 12, Barrie, Ontario and filled a number of senior offices in Sovereign



Great Priory before being elected as Supreme Grand Master for 1897 – 1898 and 1898 – 1899.

In the Cryptic Rite he was reported to be an active member although his name does not appear in the Proceedings from 1871 to 1887 inclusive. The records indicate that he was Grand Master for the 1891 – 1892 term.

Daniel Fraser Macwatt was a 33° Scottish Rite Mason. He served as Grand Chancellor for 1913 – 1919, and was Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Supreme Council for the Dominion of Canada at the time of his death.

He was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland.

For many years he was the representative of Grand Lodge of Louisiana near our Grand Lodge.

### **As Grand Master**

M.W. Bro. Daniel Fraser Macwatt was the 24th Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. He had the sad duty of announcing the death of His late Majesty, Edward VII, the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England from 1875 to 1901, when he ascended the throne of the Empire, and since that date the Patron of the Grand Lodge and the Protector of the Craft. M.W. Bro. Macwatt noted solemnly that there were numerous memorial services in churches across Canada in honour of the late King. Some lodges sought dispensation to attend these services while wearing regalia, but Grand Master Macwatt did not support this. He found it to be far more appropriate that lodges hold Memorial Services in their lodge room on the evening of the day of the funeral.

Grand Master Macwatt also had the sad duty to announce the death of Most Worshipful Brother Alexander Allan Stevenson who was our oldest Past Grand Master at the time of his death. M.W. Bro. Stevenson was our 4th Grand Master, serving three years from 1868 through 1871.

M.W. Bro. Macwatt continued the detailed documenting of his travels, just as he had done as a DDGM. He recorded travelling over 28,000 miles during his term as Grand Master.

Our Grand Master applied his judicial skill in numerous instances. In his Address he detailed a plot to initiate a man by excluding a Mason who was expected to ballot against the candidacy of the man. Four Masons of two lodges were investigated and disciplined with suspensions. Grand Master Macwatt continued in his Address to give summaries of other instances of improper Masonic conduct, and his decisions.

In one case Grand Master Macwatt suspended three Masons for attending another Masonic body that was not recognized by our Grand Lodge. At the time, only Royal Arch Masons were recognized. He went further by instructing a DDGM to arrange for the removal of the Order of the Eastern Star which was meeting in a Masonic lodge room. He presented a list of 27 Rulings in his first Address as Grand Master, and further 17 Rulings in his second Address.

As for protocol and decorum, he was concerned about Masons appearing in parades and processions in regalia when he stated: "We are something more than an ordinary society: we are not of yesterday: we have been in existence for many generations, and display, or advertisement, we do not need: in fact, it is foreign to our professions."

With regard to administrative aspects of the Craft, M.W. Bro. Macwatt instructed the Grand Lodge office to begin a card index of all Masons in the jurisdiction since 1855. He reiterated that the correct position of the Lesser Lights within a lodge is two on the north side of the altar, at each corner, and one on the south side, in the middle. He gave oversight to revisions to the Ceremony of Installation and Investiture of Officers, and directed that the Masonic Memorial Services be revised. He ruled that all movements in the lodge room should follow the course of the sun.

There are two important anecdotes of decisions and actions by M.W. Bro. Macwatt. First, as M.W. Bro. Macwatt began his term, the brethren of Sarnia District elected a member of Tuscan Lodge No. 437 as DDGM. Soon after his election, R.W. Bro. J.B. Livingston moved to Battle Creek, Michigan. This was not only out of our jurisdiction, but out of any reasonable possibility of fulfilling his role as DDGM. M.W. Bro. Macwatt made several attempts to contact R.W. Bro. Livingston. But, in February of 1909 M.W. Bro. Macwatt removed R.W. Bro. Livingston from the office of DDGM. For this reason, the plaque listing all the DDGMs of Sarnia District shows the word 'Suspended' by the name of R.W. Bro. Livingston.

Fortunately, Past DDGM R.W. Bro. Cornell stepped forward and was appointed DDGM to complete the term. R.W. Bro. Cornell was a member of Tuscan Lodge No. 437 and had served as DDGM in 1905. Other Past DDGMs assisted and the duties of DDGM were properly handled.

Second, there was an international incident that required, and received, decisive action. To quote from *Whence Come We?* (1980, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario):

"The Grand Master's concern to uphold the dignity of the Craft is shown clearly in his reaction to an episode which took place at Sarnia one Sunday in June 1910. A lodge of Masons from Port Huron, Michigan, journeyed to Sarnia and performed (in regalia) a funeral service for a member of their lodge who had died there. M.W. Bro. Macwatt



rightly saw this as an invasion of jurisdiction, but the Grand Master of Michigan treated the affair in an offhand manner. When he failed to obtain satisfaction, M.W. Bro. Macwatt on January 27, 1911, issued an edict of non-intercourse with the Masons of Michigan. Fortunately, the ban was of short duration. When the Grand Lodge of Michigan met in May it sent a deputation to meet with Br. Macwatt, to admit invasion and make amends. He withdrew the edict, and cemented fraternal relations by attending the Grand Lodge of Michigan on the following day.”

M.W. Bro. Macwatt’s vocation in the law and as a long-serving judge, may be felt in his concluding remarks as Grand Master: “I have had to discipline, and regretted it; but as I object to members getting into careless ways and overlooking our Constitution, and deliberately violating our laws, it had to be done, and was done for the good of all.” He added: “I can only say I gave you my best. I did not spare myself in any way to perform the duties efficiently and effectively.”

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