

Clarence McLeod Pitts

Grand Master (1959 – 1961) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario



Photo from the Grand Lodge

(1894 – 1965)

An extensive biography of Clarence McLeod Pitts was prepared by Evans F. Greer and presented as Paper No. 95 of the Canadian Masonic Research Association in 1968. It is used by permission of The Heritage Lodge No. 730.

An Addenda with additional information prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.



CLARENCE MACLEOD PITTS

On March 15, 1969, Clarence MacLeod Pitts, of Ottawa, while attending a meeting of the Advisory Council of the Presbyterian Church in Canada at Toronto, suffered a coronary attack and was immediately confined to hospital.

He appeared to be making slow but steady progress toward recovery, when, without warning, he suffered a fatal stroke on April 7 and passed away on April 10 without gaining consciousness. Thus passed from the scene one of Canada's great Masons, churchmen, industrialist, and philanthropist.

Family Background

Clarence Pitts was born at Fredericton, N.B., May 5, 1894, the second son of Herman Henry Pitts and Alexandrina MacLeod. He received his early education at the Fredericton Model School. When the family moved to Ottawa in 1903, he continued his education in the Ottawa Public Schools, the Lisgar Collegiate Institute and then at McGill University, Montreal, from which he graduated in 1914 with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

In 1933, he married Elsie Georgina King of Ottawa who predeceased him on June 19, 1958. There were no children of the marriage.

Professional Life

On graduation from McGill University, Clarence Pitts immediately entered upon the work for which he was trained, that of engineering. His labours took him to Halifax, Hawkesbury and Montreal as well as to Ottawa.

World War I broke in upon this for a period, and he enlisted in the Second Battery of the Canadian Field Artillery and attended the Royal School of Artillery at Halifax, afterwards joining the 10th Siege Battery Canadian Expeditionary Force at Halifax with the rank of Lieutenant.

Following the Peace, he joined his father and brother Gordon, in the Pitts Construction Co., the Canadian-American Exporters and the People's Gas Supply Company, becoming President and General manager of each.

A most successful businessman, he was supremely happy in his relations with employees, business associates and competitors. His several endeavours gave him opportunity to take an active part in commercial and professional organizations.

He was a life member of the Engineering Institute of Canada; Chairman of the Ottawa Branch in 1933; and Councillor in the years 1934 and 1935. He was also a member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario, Chairman of the Canadian section of the Compressed Gas Manufacturers Association 1942-45; President,



Compressed Gas Manufacturers Association Inc., New York, 1946; President International Acetylene Association Inc., New York, 1945; Member National Fire Protection Association; Committee Member Canadian Standards Association and Member of The Chemists Club of New York.

He also enjoyed membership in The Seigniory Club, Quebec, The Rivermead Golf Club and the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, Hull, P.Q.

Civic Activities

Besides the many professional groups with which he was associated, his interest in young people induced him to take a leading part in the Boy Scouts Association in which he was an Executive member of the Ottawa District Council, Vice-President of the Ontario Council and an Executive member of the Canadian General Council.

He also served for many years as Chairman of the Ottawa Charitable Foundation.

A Layman in the Church

Along with Freemasonry, the Church was Clarence Pitts' great love. His work in and for the Presbyterian Church was one of supreme devotion and dedication. On May 9, 1926, he was ordained and inducted as an Elder of the Kirk Session of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, and for twenty-three years served as Superintendent of his church's Sunday School. In the Presbyterian General Assembly, he was highly respected as one of the most dedicated laymen in the Church, and his leadership, especially as the long time Chairman of the Pension Board, was highly appreciated throughout the length and breadth of Canada. The Church-at-large and, in particular, retired ministers, ministers' widows and orphans, as well as a great host of others who were the recipients of his beneficence, owe him a debt of gratitude which they can never repay.

In the 'Acts and Proceedings' of the 91st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in a memorial to our late esteemed brother, it is written: "Amid the many calls upon his time and energy, Mr. Pitts' first love was for the Church. From 1946 he was Chairman of the Pension Board. On taking office, he was appalled at the small amount of the pension given to ministers and their dependents. He found that after forty years of service and attaining the age of seventy, a full rate paying minister received a maximum of \$600 per annum. Largely through his leadership the maximum in 1965 was raised to \$1,500 per annum. In 1946, the widow of a minister received \$300 per annum; in 1965 the pension had been increased to \$750. He gathered to the Board some of the most distinguished experts in the pension field. He organized the Group Insurance Plan which has proved a blessing to so many. Out of his own money he established the Pension Assistance Fund and the Group Insurance Assistance Fund, so that, if he could prevent it, no minister should lose his equity. One of his last acts was to send from his death-bed a cheque to augment the Group Assistance Fund. As Chairman of the Council's Committee on Benevolence, Mr. Pitts rendered an extensive service to



those in great need. His benefactions to ministers and their widows and orphans ran into thousands of dollars."

It is said that The Pension Board which he set up for the Presbyterian Church was so successful that the United Church of Canada adopted some of its principal features.

On this note, a certain Presbyterian minister (who wishes to remain anonymous) told the writer of his own experience with our late brother. Unable to pay the pension fund, he told Mr. Pitts about his plight and informed him that he would be unable to pay for some time. Later, on, when he had saved enough money to pay up, he went to the Chairman of this Fund but was told that 'it was all taken care of. This case could be repeated in similar cases in untold number.

It was while attending the courts of the Church that Clarence Pitts took his fatal seizure.

FREEMASONRY

Symbolic

Clarence MacLeod Pitts came from a Masonic family. His grandfather, Henry W. Pitts, affiliated with St. John Lodge, No. 2, St. John, N.B., on May 1, 1821. His father, Henry Herman Pitts was also a Mason.

Clarence Pitts found in our great fraternity something that appealed to him and in which he found great joy. His many years of devotion to Masonry in all its branches earned for him the affection of an innumerable company of friends in the Craft the world over, as well as an appreciation by them of his leadership qualities. His contribution to the Order was outstanding, reflected in the many honours and high offices conferred upon him all deserved and worthily filled.

He was initiated in Hawkesbury Lodge, No. 450, G.R.C., on November 22, 1917. It is said of him that while "going through" the lodge he learned the 'work' while skating on the Ottawa River in the wintertime. On returning to Ottawa, he affiliated with Dalhousie Lodge, No. 52, on November 2, 1920.

He served this lodge as Worshipful Master for the year 1928-9 and again in 1939-40. He was elected District Deputy Grand Master for the Ottawa District for 1940-41. For fourteen years, from 1943, he was regularly elected to the Board of General Purposes and during that time served on several major committees. In 1957 he was elected Deputy Grand Master and two years later, Grand Master. He was Grand Master for the years 1959-61 and filled this office with distinction.

In the Bulletin of the Grand Lodge of "Canada", which is published three times a year, the Grand Master usually has a message. In the January 1960 issue, M. W. Bro. Pitts had this to say:



Ontario Masons

"Freemasonry, in its labours to diffuse a spirit of brotherhood among men, and to benefit those areas in which it is practised, has continued to advance in many jurisdictions, but with somewhat less acceleration than has been enjoyed in recent years. The enduring struggle for the loyalty and devotion of men's minds to the high principles of right-living and just dealing between men in this present day's selfish race for comfort, security, position and self-gratification in social prestige, has had its influence on the influx of candidates for the fraternity. Masonry does not compete by high-pressure advertising to tell of the advantages of our self-honoured Craft; nor by soliciting any to join our ranks. We are all 'volunteers' who, once received, approved and enrolled, should set an example by our living and conduct in all affairs of life – whether domestic, civil or national – such as will draw others into our fellowship to share our high privileges of association and service."

While he was Grand Master, he gave a dispensation for the initiation of a blind man, Graham Stoodley. Stoodley was initiated in William Mercer Wilson Lodge, No. 678, Woodstock, Ontario. Bro. Stoodley is now a barrister in Toronto and he and his wife, also blind, are workers in the cause of the blind. This dispensation is thought to be the first and only one of its kind. (*Nova Scotia had an exactly similar case in 1956. – M.W. Bro. R.V. Harris, of CMRA.*)

Bro. Pitts served as Representative of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. He was made an Honorary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodges of New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Capitular

Companion Pitts was exalted in Ottawa Chapter, R.A.M., No. 222, in 1929 and was elected First Principal in 1943. The following year he was installed Grand Scribe of the Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons of Canada. Then followed in order Grand Third Principal in 1945, Grand Second Principal in 1947 and Grand First Principal in 1949.

He was named as Representative of the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia (with jurisdiction over Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland). He presided over the Conference of Canadian Grand Chapters of which he was a founder and first President. He held the Honorary rank of Grand First Principal of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and Honorary Past President of the Order of High Priesthood of Ontario.

Knights Templar

This is the only branch of Masonry in which our distinguished brother did not reach the pinnacle. However, had he lived longer, he would in all likelihood have attained this honour too. He became a member of the Ottawa Preceptory, No. 32, and was Preceptor in 1946. He held the office of Grand Director of Ceremonies in the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada and became a Member of the Grand Council. His title, Knight Commander of the Temple, was received from the College of Honours of the Sovereign Great Priory on August 11, 1959.

Cryptic Rite

The Cryptic Rite is a very old branch of Masonry having been started in Canada in 1867. Adoniram Council, the first in Ontario, and dates from 1870. However, the order



became dormant for a number of years and for that reason it is not as well known as many of the others. Clarence Pitts joined the Ottawa Council, No. 16, Royal and Select Masters (now the Gedeliah Council) and became its Thrice Illustrious Master. He also joined the Bay of Quinte Lodge, No. 11, Royal Ark Mariners and held the rank of Commander Noah.

York Cross of Honour

Any person who presided over the four branches of York Masonry, viz., the Craft Lodge, the Holy Royal Arch, the Royal and Select Masters, and the Knights Templar may be elected a member of the York Cross of Honour. Bro. Pitts fulfilled these qualifications and was elected to the Ontario Priory, No. 49 and became the Warden of this organization.

Red Cross of Constantine

There is no Conclave of this Order in the vicinity of Ottawa so our brother went to Toronto to be knighted in Holy Land Conclave, No. 3, Red Cross of Constantine, in 1948. Two years later, he was given the rank of Honorary Past Sovereign by his Conclave. In 1951, he was elected to the office of Very Illustrious Grand High Prelate (2) of the Sovereign Grand Conclave, which office he held until 1961 when he was elevated to the rank of Honorary Past Grand Sovereign and given the title of Knight Grand Cross of Constantine.

Scottish Rite

Clarence Pitts became a member of Ottawa Lodge of Perfection and went on to the Murray Chapter of the Rose Croix, Ottawa, becoming the Most Wise Sovereign in 1930. To receive his degrees to the 32nd., he went to Hamilton in May 1922. He was coroneted 33° Honorary Inspector General on October 1, 1940. Two years later, on October 7, he was made an Active member of the Supreme Council. On October 15, 1952, he was installed Sovereign Grand Commander at Niagara Falls and served in this office for three years.

Honours came to him too from outside of Canada. He was named as an Emeritus Member of Honour of the Supreme Councils of both Northern and Southern Jurisdictions, U.S.A., in 1953, and an Honorary Member of the Supreme Councils of England and Wales and of Scotland, Ireland, the Philippines and France. He was elected an Honorary Member of the subordinate bodies of Calgary, Vancouver, Moncton and Halifax.

One of his great accomplishments was in 1954, during his term as Sovereign Grand Commander. Recognizing the need for better understanding and closer fraternal relations between the English speaking Supreme Councils of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, he organized and was elected chairman of the first meeting of what was to be known as 'The English Speaking Supreme Councils of the British Isles and North America in Amity'. This meeting was convened at the Seignior Club and

representatives came from the Southern and Northern Masonic Jurisdictions of the United States and from England, Ireland and Scotland. So much good was accomplished that it was agreed that further meetings should be held and the organization perpetuated.

Royal Order of Scotland

On April 15, 1942, he became a member of the Royal Order of Scotland in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ontario. The characteristic of "Intelligence" was bestowed on him by the Provincial Grand Master and he was known to the brethren as 'Sir Clarence Intelligence'.

Masonic Education and Research

Although Bro. Pitts did not himself engage in research writing, he encouraged others to do so. In 1949, when the Canadian Masonic Research Association was formed he became a member and remained very active until his death. He became the President in 1953, following M. W. Bro. W. J. Dunlop. Afterwards the office of President passed to other hands, he attended every meeting that he could and on many occasions, presided when the president was absent. On one occasion he journeyed all the way from Ottawa to Niagara-on-the-Lake to be present at the meeting and to give encouragement. He also became a member of the Philalethes Society, a group of research students in the United States of America.

He served as an active Director of the Ottawa Masonic Temple Association.

Masonic Jewels

After serving as the chief head of the three branches of Masonry he continued to be a tower of strength to each and travelled extensively throughout Canada and the United States of America, as a representative of one or the other.

At the time of his death, the "*Freemason*" listed his Masonic Jewels as follows:

1. Past Master's Jewel Dalhousie Lodge, No. 52, 1928-29, with Bar 1939-40.
2. Past Most Wise Sovereign Jewel of Murray Chapter Rose Croix, Ottawa, presented 1933.
3. Jewel of a First Principal of Ottawa Chapter, No. 222, Royal Arch Masons, awarded 1943.
4. Joseph Conway Brown Medallion for meritorious service by the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Nova Scotia.
5. Jewel of an Emeritus Member of Honour of the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, United States of America, awarded September 21, 1953.

6. Jewel of an Emeritus Member of Honour of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction, United States of America, presented October 20, 1953.
7. Medal of Membre D'honneur Des Sup. Cons. De France R.E.A.A., with certificate, awarded January 1, 1958.
8. Philip C. Tucker Medal from the Grand Lodge of Vermont, F. and A.M., awarded by vote of the Grand Lodge June 16, 1960.
9. Erasmus James Philipps Medal, awarded for meritorious service rendered, by the Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M. of Nova Scotia.
10. The Jeremy L. Cross Medal awarded by the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire, F. and A.M., July 20, 1960.
11. Jewel of an Active member and Past Sovereign Grand Commander Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Dominion of Canada.
12. Josiah Hayden Drummond Medal awarded for Distinguished Service by the Grand Lodge of Maine, A.F. & A.M.
13. Jewel as a delegate from Canada to the 7th International Supreme Council of Scottish Rite, Havana, Cuba.
14. Christopher Champlin Jewel for outstanding Masonic achievement, awarded by the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island.

A LIFE WELL LIVED

Between the time when Clarence Pitts had his first heart attack on March 16, 1965, until his death on April 10, he was confined to the Toronto General Hospital. He was able to see visitors and many close friends called. One of these was the pastor of his church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Ottawa, Brother the Reverend Arthur W. Currie. They talked over future plans and Bro. Pitts made known to him some things he wished done. As was the way with this man, these were not to be given publicity.

On April 10, after suffering a stroke from which he did not regain consciousness, he quietly slipped away.

His body was taken back to his beloved church, where he had played such a major role over the many years, for burial on April 14 in Beechwood Cemetery.

The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Dr. Currie, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Hugh A. MacMillan, Moderator of the General Assembly, and the Rev. Dr. J. Logan-Vencta. High tribute was paid to our departed brother. The church was filled with a host of



friends from all walks of life including representatives from each organization in which he had been a member.

The Honorary Pallbearers represented the various branches of Masonry, the Church and business associates. They were:

J. A. Irvine, London, Ont., Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

George C. Derby, Vancouver, B.C., Sovereign Grand Commander of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Dominion of Canada.

George A. Newbury, Buffalo, N.Y., Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, U.S.A.

F. C. Ackert, Gait, Ont., Supreme Grand Master of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada, Knights Templar.

Dr. Fraser E. Hay, Listowel, Ont., Grand First Principal of the Royal Arch Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

William J. Roe, Ottawa, Ont., District Deputy Grand Master of the Ottawa Masonic District.

R. M. Stanton, Ottawa, Ont, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Valley of Ottawa.

Rev. James Cochrane, Montreal, P.Q., representative of the World Alliance of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches.

J. Allan Perham, Toronto, Ont., President Canadian Oxygen Ltd. C. H. Cunningham, Hamilton, Ont., Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland.

The writer, on going through some old issues of the Masonic Sun, came across a picture of Brother Pitts in the May-June issue of 1949. This was the year that he was Grand First Principal of Royal Arch Masons. Under the picture was this inscription:

*"He who serves his brother best
Gets nearer God than all the rest"*

This, I am sure, is the summary and secret of his life. It is evident that a man, upon whom so many responsibilities and honours were bestowed, must have possessed in unusual measure, qualities of mind and heart which commanded the confidence and regard of his fellows. In him high integrity and lofty idealism were joined with a keen mind and an understanding and generous heart.



Ontario Masons

In his life he exemplified the spirit of Christ. He never nourished bitterness in his heart. He was ever the friend of the friendless and the champion of the oppressed. Many lives have been made happier through his kindly ministrations.

R. W. Bro. the Reverend Alex K. Campbell, Past Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Canada, the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thorold, and a long-time friend of Bro. Pitts, had this to say of him:

"I think of his matchless gifts of mind and heart which he gave without reserve during long years of selfless, untiring, consecrated public service to the Church, to Masonry and to his country. Amid all the changes and chances of public life, he revealed his stainless integrity, his courage, his high sense of duty and his steadfastness of faith, his devotion to truth, his love of beauty in word and deed, his pursuit of goodness and his abhorrence of all sham and pretence and all shoddy thinking and opportunism.

'Clarie' — for by this name he was known to all his friends — had a heart as fragrant with the love of God as dew drenched roses on a summer morning. Truly, he was taught of God to love. It was seen in his love for God's world. For him, the sun, the moon and the stars, the forests, the lakes, the rivers, the birds and the cattle in the field were all part of the Divine orchestra. His joy in God's creation was infectious. The quiet way in which he talked of these things made one intensely aware that here was a man who considered the lilies of the field with the same mind that kindled in our Lord in Galilee of old. He always wanted to share this joy with others. And at times one could grasp that here was a love manifesting itself in a liberality and understanding that he wished only God to know of. He loved old folk as well as young folk.

He loved the Church, the true Church, the people of God. He was a staunch Presbyterian, but most of all he loved the fellowship of God's people that overflowed the frontiers of denomination.

To watch him rise in the courts of the Church and speak with forcefulness and sincerity was something to warm the heart of any minister. In the fullest sense of the phrase, he was a good steward of the Grace of God.

What was the secret of his victorious life, for it was victorious? The truth was that he had the peace of God, and he shared it. He loved his Master and sought to do everything humanly possible to fulfill his commission. He delighted in the well-chosen and fitly spoken word in poetry and prose, revealing God's way and will for man in his pilgrimage from earth to heaven. His real friendliness and concern for the sincere seeker after truth and righteousness was shown to all, but especially to the young with their dreams of high adventure. It is a well-known facet of his life when we mention his open-handed generosity towards all worthy causes and his concern for the unfortunate, the downtrodden and the enslaved. He loved the Word and derived great pleasure from his faithful attendance at the services of worship. It gave him an unshakeable conviction that 'All things work together for good to them that love God' and that " 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him' ".

It is very difficult to express in words, or in writing, the contribution this great man has made for his Church and Masonry; however the Reverend A. Campbell, with his beautiful command of the English language, has expressed it in a manner, that is fitting and appropriate. The writer is grateful for his contribution to this history. I would also like to express my thanks to the many interested persons for their help.



Ontario Masons

To close the account of the life and work of Clarence MacLeod Pitts, we can do no better than to quote a short poem used by R. E. Comp. J. A. Payton, Grand Chaplain, to close the memorial service in Grand Chapter in Toronto in April, 1966:

I want to think when life is done
That I have filled a needed post;
That here and there I've paid my fare
With more than idle talk and boast.
That I have taken gifts divine,
The breath of life and manhood fine,
And that I used them now and then
In service for my fellowmen.
I hate to think when life is through
That I have lived my round of years
A useless kind that leaves behind
No record in this vale of tears;
That I had wasted all my days
By living only selfish ways;
And that this world would be the same
If it had never heard my name.
I want to think when life is through
That here or there shall remain
Some happier spot which might have not
Existed had I toiled for gain;
That someone's cheery voice and smile
Would prove that I had been worthwhile,
And that I'd paid with something fine
My debt to God for life divine.

APPENDIX

Clarence MacLeod Pitts was a member of the following Masonic bodies:

Symbolic

Dalhousie Lodge, No. 52, Ottawa.

Acacia Lodge, No. 61, Hamilton.

Central Lodge, No. 110, Prescott.

Belleville Lodge, No. 123, Belleville

Cornwall Lodge, No. 125, Cornwall.

Rising Sun Lodge, No. 129, Aurora.

Hawkesbury Lodge, No. 450, Hawkesbury.

Melita Lodge, No. 605, Thornhill.



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Ashlar Lodge, No. 701, Tillsonburg.

Hon. Past Grand Master, Grand Lodges of Alberta, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan.

Capitular

Ancient Frontenac Chapter, No. 1, Kingston.

The St. Andrew and St. John Chapter, No. 4, Toronto.

Moir Chapter, No. 7, Belleville.

Carleton Chapter, No. 16, Ottawa.

Prince of Wales Chapter, No. 71, Essex.

Occident Chapter, No. 77, Toronto.

The St. Patrick Chapter, No. 145, Toronto.

London Chapter, No. 150, London.

Ottawa Chapter, No. 222, Ottawa.

Quinte Friendship Chapter No. 227, Belleville.

Hon. Member The Hiram Chapter, No. 3, Windsor, N.S.

Hon. Past Grand First Principal, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

Cryptic

Gedaliah Council, No. 16, Royal and Select Masters.

Bay of Quinte Lodge, No. 11, Royal Ark Mariners.

Knights Templar

Ottawa Preceptory, No. 32, Ottawa.

Scottish Rite

Ottawa Lodge of Perfection, Ottawa.

Murray Sovereign Chapter of the Rose Croix, Ottawa.

Moore Sovereign Consistory, Hamilton.



Supreme Council for Canada.

Hon. Member of the subordinate Bodies at Calgary, Halifax, Moncton, and Vancouver.

Hon. Member of the Supreme Councils for England and Wales, and for Scotland.
Emeritus Member of Honor of the Northern and Southern Jurisdictions, U.S.A.

Masonic Bodies and Associations

York Cross of Honour
Ontario Priory, No. 49

Red Cross of Constantine
Holy Land Conclave, No. 3, Toronto

Royal Order of Scotland
Provincial Grand Lodge of Ontario
Canadian Masonic Research Association
Second President 1953-55

The Philalethes Society
Member

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND REFERENCE

The Freemason — 1949:6 and 1965:2

The Masonic Sun — 1949 May-June Issue

Grand Lodge Proceedings (Ontario) — 1959, 1965

Grand Chapter Proceedings (Ontario) — 1949, 1965

Grand Conclave Proceedings — 1962, 1965

The History of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada Ninety-first General Assembly

Notes from the following interested persons:

Rev. Alex K. Campbell, Thorold.

W. S. Coolin, St. Catharines, Ont.

Rev. Arthur W. Currie, Ottawa, Ont.

The Late Mrs. Sarah J. Fiske, St. Catharines, Ont.

R. V. Harris, Halifax, N.S.

B. Lishman, Ottawa, Ont.

A. E. Thurlow, Woodstock, Ont.

J. Lawrence Runnalls, St. Catharines, Ont.

Dr. C. A. Sankey, St. Catharines, Ont.

Addenda by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern

A portrait of M.W. Bro. Clarence McLeod Pitts in the regalia of our 49th Grand Master is displayed at the Ottawa Masonic Centre. M.W. Bro. Pitts twice sat for photographs by the master photographer Yousef Karsh.

The mortal remains of M.W. Bro. Pitts were interred in Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa. The monument for his grave does not have Masonic symbols or designation.

As Grand Master

The new Grand Lodge Building at 363 King Street West in Hamilton was under construction as M.W. Bro. Pitts began his term as Grand Master. The building was completed, and festivities were held on the evening of October 31, 1960. An Especial Communication was held with Grand Lodge being opened in Ample Form by Grand Master Pitts. Ceremonies of 'Unveiling the Corner Stone', and 'Dedication' were conducted.

The Address of M.W. Bro. Pitts in 1960 acknowledges the loss of four Past Grand Masters in the previous year. They were: M.W. Bro. Frank A. Copus, M.W. Bro. John A. McRae, M.W. Bro. Charles S. Hamilton, and M.W. Bro. Nelson C. Hart. M.W. Bro. Pitts devoted time in his Address to honour each of them and their contributions. "The great losses we have sustained in the ranks of our Past Grand Masters have been a great blow to your Grand Master in the loss of friendship, counsel and advice".

This was followed in 1961 by the death of M.W. Bro. William James Dunlop. M.W. Bro. Pitts called his career and character an inspiration and example to all.



Ontario Masons

Thirteen lodge rooms were dedicated in the first year of the term of M.W. Bro. Pitts. He saw this as “evidence of the interest and pride the brethren are demonstrating in improving the physical conditions of the Masonic premises.” He took pleasure in attending nine out of ten centennial celebrations for lodges in the jurisdiction that same year. A further six lodge rooms were dedicated in the second year of the term of M.W. Bro. Pitts. And thirteen lodges celebrated their centennials.

The Grand Master had to take action on several serious matters of discipline. He also devoted time to admonish lodges regarding functions on Sunday. He reiterated that no meetings can be held on Sunday except for the purpose of Divine Service or performing the Funeral Ceremonies. Consistent with his own devotion to his church, he emphasized “the preservation of Sunday as a day of rest from Masonic labours”. In the same Address, M.W. Bro. Pitts noted and encouraged holding District Divine Services. “It is not in the spirit of parading ourselves for public attention, nor to detract from our private responsibilities in the Church of our choice, but, rather, as a composite evidence of our adoration and the need of the blessing of the Most High that we do this, and we are strengthened and sustained as individuals and Masons.”

The respect that M.W. Bro. Clarence McLeod Pitts earned was not limited to our own jurisdiction. In his address at the end of his first year, he shared: “I acknowledge with gratitude and humility, the honours conferred upon me as your Grand Master by sister Grand Jurisdictions and which I will always cherish as a mark of fraternal friendship and mutual regard.” These high honours from other Grand Lodges include (in addition to those listed earlier in this biography): The Henry Price Medal presented by M. W. Bro. Andrew G. Jenkins, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, in Boston on December 28th, 1959, and Honorary Rank of Past Deputy Grand Master by the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan in Regina on June 18th, 1959.

Sources for Addenda:

- (1) *Annual Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge A.F.& A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario: 1959, 1960, 1961, 1965.
- (2) *Commemoration of the Graves of the Grand Masters*, December 2018. A project of the Museum and Archives Team.
- (3) Reynolds, John W., (2012) *An overview of some significant or interesting contributions during the terms of the Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, revisited* ‘The Architect’ December 2012
- (4) Runnalls, J. Lawrence (1979) *Our Past Grand Masters* privately published
- (5) Confirmation of the portrait location by R.W. Bro. Allen Wright.
- (6) Website of Yousef Karsh: <https://karsh.org/sittings/pitts-3/> Accessed February 2024. Two sittings are recorded: 10829 on December 13, 1952, and 10800 on November 18, 1952.