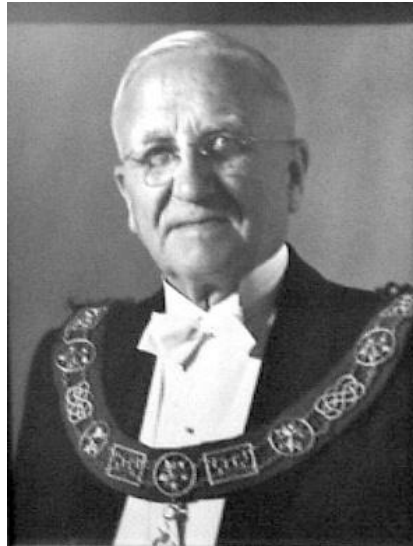


James Noble Allan, BSA, LLD, MLA

Grand Master (1965 - 1967) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Canada in the Province of Ontario



(13 November 1894 – 9 May 1992)

Prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern with contributions from W. Bro. Allison Gowling.

James Noble Allan came from humble roots. He was born in Canborough, Haldimand County, Ontario on November 13, 1894, the son of James and Minerva Allan. To this 'farm boy', service to God, family, the church, and the community were first and foremost in his life.

His family were members of Canborough Methodist Church, which in 1926 became part of the new United Church of Canada as Grace United Church.

He received his early education in the one-room schoolhouse in Canborough. Instead of pursuing a matriculation or high-school education in nearby Dunnville, he enrolled in the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph (now the University of Guelph) in 1908 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science – Agriculture (B.S.A.) in 1914.

He managed the 300-acre family farm until 1919 when he became owner of the King Edward Creamery, renaming it the Dunnville Dairy. He continued as an owner until the 1960s when the business was sold.

His municipal experience began as Councillor for Canborough Township in 1915. In 1922 he was elected as Councillor for the town of Dunnville. He served as Dunnville's Mayor for 1923 and 1924 and then returned to the Creamery business for five years. In

1929 he was elected as Deputy Reeve of Dunnville and served this office for almost 16 years. In 1940 he was elected as Warden of Haldimand County.

In 1951, at the age of 58, he was elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Haldimand-Norfolk and focused his activities on roads and highway safety. In 1956 he was made Minister of Ontario Highways. Many parts of the King's Highway system were upgraded, and plans made for further expansion. Some 10,000 miles of new roads were constructed under his leadership.

In 1958 he was named Minister of the Departments of Economics, Public Works, Transportation and Treasury. In this position he had the responsibility of implementing Ontario's first sales tax.

In 1966 he was made Minister without portfolio and held this office until January 1968. He continued as an MPP until the election of 1975 when he was defeated – the first election he lost after winning every election since 1915.

To recognize his public service, particularly his commitment to roads, the Burlington Skyway Bridge was named in his honour. At an event in 1984, on James Allan's 90th birthday, it was officially named "The Burlington Bay James N. Allan Skyway Bridge".

In his civic activities, James Noble Allan and his family were all active in the Grace United Church, Dunnville, of which he was an Elder. He was also a member and Vice-Chairman of the Dunnville Hospital Board, chairman of nine Canada Savings Bond Campaigns and Chairman of the Haldimand County Centennial Celebration. When he left provincial politics he was appointed to head the Niagara Parkway Commission, and Niagara Bridge Commission.

In 1961 James Noble Allan was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by McMaster University and an Honorary Doctorate degree from Guelph University in 1970. He was an honorary member of the Mohawk Tribe of the Six Nations and made an honorary Chief, "Ga-nedas" ("Tall Pine").

In 1916 he married Lilian Jane Harvie of Orillia. James and Lilian had two children, Harvie and Jean, and eight grandchildren. Lilian Jane Allan died November 12, 1989. She and James Allan had been married for 73 years.

M.W. Bro. James Allan had many traits that allowed him to deal easily and comfortably with people. He used those traits in the most unselfish manner possible by helping his neighbours and constituents for some two-thirds of his life. To all who knew him in business, in politics, or in a Masonic Lodge, he was always just "Jim".

It is impressive to think about the organizational skill that M.W. Bro. Allan had to manage the workload and scheduling of being a senior cabinet minister, and leader of the Masons of Ontario. When he was the Treasurer of the Province of Ontario, he was also the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge. And he was in his early 70s. This speaks to his commendable drive, aptitude, abilities and capacity.

M.W. Bro. James Noble Allan died on May 9, 1992, in Dunnville. A Masonic Memorial Service was held on May 11, and his funeral on May 12. He is buried in a family plot at Riverside Cemetery. His role as Grand Master shown on his gravestone.

Masonic Career

Mr. James Noble Allan was initiated into Amity Lodge, No. 32 GRC, Dunnville, on June 12, 1918, at the age of 23. He was passed on December 18, 1918, and raised on February 12, 1919. He served as W.M. for 1925.

He was elected as DDGM of Niagara District A for 1931-1932. His District Secretary was a local lawyer, Walter Robb. Bro. Robb was himself elected to be DDGM in 1939.

M.W. Bro. James Noble Allan was a charter member of The Heritage Lodge, No. 730 GRC, Cambridge.

He was a member of McCallum Chapter, No. 29 RAMO, Dunnville and served as First Principal for 1924.

He was a member of Murton Lodge of Perfection, Hamilton Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix and Moore Sovereign Consistory, A.A.S.R. He was coroneted as Honorary Inspector-General 33rd degree in 1961.

He was a life member of Rameses Shrine, A.A.O.N.M.S., Toronto.

He was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland.

He was appointed (1947-1951) and elected (1951-1963) to the Board of General Purposes and elected as Deputy Grand Master for the 1963-1964 and 1964-1965 terms. It was during his term as Deputy Grand Master that the Masonic Foundation of Ontario was founded.

He was elected and installed as the 52nd Grand Master in July 1965 for the 1965 through 1967 terms.

As Grand Master



M.W. Bro. James N. Allan presided over the 1967 Grand Lodge Communication which included an extensive Service of Thanksgiving and a special Resolution regarding the Centennial of Confederation.

Noting that there were many receptions and events to mark Canada's centennial year, M.W. Bro. Allan considered his term as Grand Master to be "one of great honour, inspiration, and much pleasure."

Grand Master Allan attended a number of annual Communications of other Grand Lodges including the centennial celebrations of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia in 1966, and that of the Grand Lodge of New Brunswick in 1967. Other Communications attended included the Grand Lodge of Illinois, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, the Grand Lodge of Michigan, the Grand Lodge of New York, the Grand Lodge of Ohio, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin. He travelled overseas to attend the Grand Lodge of England for the 250th Anniversary celebration which included the Installation of the Duke of Kent as Grand Master.

Declining membership and financial challenges for some lodges prompted M.W. Bro. Allan to promote a plan of action to reverse the decline as a Centennial Year project. There were three elements of this project. First, to reduce the number of resignations and suspensions for non-payment of dues. Second, to invite Masons that come into Ontario from other jurisdictions to feel at home in our lodges. And third, to "let our light shine before men" so that men who are not Masons will become familiar with Freemasonry and seek membership.

During his term as Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Allan laid the groundwork for the creation of a new Grand Lodge committee with the mandate to constantly examine the condition of Masonry in this jurisdiction. He left the striking of the committee to his successor.

As Past Grand Master

M.W. Bro. James Allan was elected the Grand Treasurer from 1977 to 1985.

The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, M.W. Bro. R. Lewis Smith, presented M.W. Bro. James N. Allan the Albert Gallatin Mackey Medal. This medal is awarded by the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons of South Carolina for Distinguished Masonic Service.

Sources:

- (1) *Amity Lodge, A.F. & A.M. No. 32, 150th Anniversary History Booklet*, prepared by the Lodge for the 150th Anniversary, April 2000.

- (2) W. Bro. Allison Gowling (personal communication), author of "*James Noble Allan: The Man, The Mason, The MPP*".
- (3) Proceedings of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario: 1965, 1966, 1967 1992
- (4) *Commemoration of the Graves of the Grand Masters*, December 2018. A project of the Museum and Archives Team.
- (5) *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* R.W. Bro. John W. Reynolds; 'The Architect' December 2012
- (6) Ontario Legislative Assembly, "Parliamentary History". Accessed March 2022.