

Alexander Keith

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HON. ALEXANDER KEITH Ruler of the Craft of Nova Scotia 1839-1873

By Reginald V. Harris, P.G.M., Nova Scotia.

Alexander Keith was born on October 5, 1795 at Halkirk on the River Thurso, six miles from the town of Thurso in Caithness-shire, Scotland. The cradle in which he was rocked in his earliest days is still preserved in Keith Hall, Halifax. His father was a highly respected farmer and the chief of the clan Keith.

In his boyhood and youth, he received the benefit of an excellent education.

BUSINESS CAREER

In 1812, at the age of seventeen, he went to Sunderland, England, then the centre of the brewing trade in Northern England, where he was placed under the instruction of his uncle to learn the brewing and malting business. At that time there were four large breweries and eight smaller ones in the town of Sunderland. He seems to have also had experience in both London and Edinburgh.

Five years later he embarked for Halifax, where on his arrival he became sole brewer and business manager for Charles Boggs, who carried on business on Argyle Street on a property assessed to Lawrence Pender. In 1820, Mr. Keith purchased the growing business from Mr. Boggs and continued it on his own account.

In the Acadian Recorder, July 7, 1821, appeared the following advertisement: "Alexander Keith begs leave to inform his friends and the public in general, that he has commenced the brewing business in the house lately occupied by Mr. L. Pender, Argyle St., opposite Dalhousie College (where the City Hall now stands) where he intends to brew strong ales, porter, ginger wine, table and spruce beer; and hopes by strict attention to his business, added to his long experience in the above line both in London and Edinburgh, and also in this town to merit a share of the public patronage and support."

Shortly afterwards, however, the business was removed to its present site on Lower Water Street, where a large stone building was erected occupying several acres. The site had previously been owned by W. Story & Son, well-known merchants of that period and the joint owners of a brewery operated by Lydiard and Story near the same site. Upon this site were subsequently constructed solid and substantial granite buildings, replacing the original building. The vaults and cellars of the later buildings are most extensive.

In 1853, Mr. Keith's son, Donald G. Keith, was admitted to partnership and the name "A. Keith & Son" adopted, which name has been retained until the present time. Mr. Donald Keith died in 1886, without issue and his three sisters continued the business.

One of the earliest managers of the business was Mr. George Fraser, Mayor of Halifax from 1881 to 1883. For many years he was Secretary of the District Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia (Scottish Constitution) of which body he was for a term Grand Warden. From 1869 until his death in 1889 he represented the Grand Lodge of Scotland near the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia. He died at Truro, February 28, 1889, aged 68 years.

HIS RESIDENCE

About 1835, Mr. Keith built the double house, north of "Keith Hall" and lived in the north end of it until Keith Hall was completed. From this house he built an underground passage to the great granite Keith brewery in Water Street. It began almost two stories underground from the Hollis Street level, and ran on the level, under the garden. This passage is still in use by the present owners, A. Keith & Son.

KEITH HALL

In 1863, Mr. Keith began the erection of Keith Hall built of Wallace stone. In those days it was the custom to make a ceremony of laying of the corner stone of a new home, and in the files of a Halifax paper published in that year, we find the announcement that "the corner stone of a new residence for the Hon. Alexander Keith on Hollis Street, was laid by that gentleman in the presence of

some of his friends with appropriate ceremony, after which the workmen, and others were entertained with a repast."

Again, on the completion of the new home, Mr. Keith gave a sumptuous dinner to all the workmen engaged in its construction.

Keith Hall was sold to the Halifax Council of the Knights of Columbus about 1912 but resold in 1949 to an A. Keith & Son Ltd. and is now used by that company as its head office.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Tradition says that during the Civil War in the United States (1861-65) many Halifax families were much more interested in the success of the South than of the North. While many a young man from this city and from other parts of the Province served in the Union armies, for adventure's sake, a considerable number were engaged in blockade running to southern ports.

Business interests in the capital city were closely associated with the South, perhaps because of the intimate link of the latter with Britain due to the similarity of upper class customs based upon many retainers and large estates.

It is a tradition that the Hon. Alexander Keith on more than one occasion assisted southern raiders, captured off this port, to escape when they were being landed with a guard at one of the docks along the waterfront. By sheer impertinence, as a paper of the day called it, he stood before the guard while the men leaped into a boat and were rowed across the harbor to escape near Dartmouth. The newspapers discussing the event in such general terms that it is impossible at this later date to piece them together, apparently taking it for granted that the whole town knew the circumstances.

PUBLIC LIFE

During his long life, he filled several important public offices and had a proud record of service to his adopted country.

In civic affairs he served as a Commissioner of the Court of Common Pleas for the town of Halifax before its incorporation. He was a member of the first Council in 1840, representing Ward Two; Councillor and Alderman in 1842;

and Mayor in 1843. He again served as Councillor in 1849, and again as Mayor in 1853 and 1854.

In 1843, he was appointed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria a member of the Legislative Council in the place of the Hon. Edward Kenny, and served as a President from 1867 until his death in 1873.

At Confederation in 1867, he was offered a seat in the Senate but declined the appointment.

He joined the North British Society in 1822 and was for many years an active member of the Society serving on its Committee of Charity; as Vice President in 1830, and as President in 1831. He was also Chief of the Highland Society of Nova Scotia and was a Director of the Bank of Nova Scotia.

ENGLISH MASONIC CAREER

For more than a generation Mr. Keith was the head and front of the Masonic fraternity in the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland, and to the Craft and its concordant branches he gave 57 years of his life.

While a resident of Sunderland, England, he was initiated in the Lodge of St. John No. 118 (English Constitution) on July 23, 1816 (while still under 21 years of age); passed August 6, 1816; and raised August 27, 1816. This Lodge was warranted December 18, 1805 and constituted January 4, 1806 under a warrant from the "Ancients" No. 94. At the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1814 it received the number 118, which was changed in 1832 to No. 95 and in 1863 to No. 80, its present number.

It originally met at the Mason's Arms, Union Street, Sunderland, but at the time of Keith's initiation it held its meetings at the Duke of Wellington, Low Street. Before he left town the Lodge moved to the "Queen's Arms," Queen Street. The lodge met fortnightly.

The historian of St. John's Lodge, W. Bro. William Maples, writes:

"Bro. Keith joined at a critical period in the history of the lodge, for the Brethren were at sixes and sevens. A Bro. Hobkirk was Master, and he died some time after Bro. Keith was initiated. Hobkirk was a Regular at the Garrison,

and was a distinguished soldier. His funeral in 1817 was reported to be the largest ever seen in Northern England; attended by officers of the highest rank, and witnessed by thousands of people. He was one of the outstanding soldiers at Waterloo, and I think he served in the 33rd Regt. Of Foot, which was for some time late in 1815 stationed in Sunderland."

"Bro. Keith undoubtedly saw in Hobkirk one of the great heroes of his day. Following Hobkirk's death in 1817, Bro. Keith was made Senior deacon of the Lodge, being appointed by one of the finest Masons who ever presided over St. John's brethren, i.e. W. Bro. William Baglee. Bro.Keith in his office of S.D. would wear the Deacon's jewel of the "Ancients," a jewel which has been worn by many distinguished Masons, and of which we are proud. It is one of the original solid silver set, made by Bro. Thomas Harper, D.P.G.M. of the Grand Lodge of the "Ancients" and a famous London silversmith."

HIS MASONIC CAREER IN HALIFAX

On coming to Halifax in 1817 Mr. Keith immediately affiliated with Virgin Lodge No. 1 on the Provincial Registry, now No. 3, G.R.N.S., and remained a constant member until his death. He served in all the principal offices of the Lodge with great credit to himself and profit to the brethren.

Elected Junior Warden in 1821, and Senior Warden in 1822, he served as Master of the Lodge in 1823; 1830; 1834-37; and 1845; and Treasurer in 1824 to 1842 with the exception of the years when he was Master.

THE PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE (ENGLISH AUTHORITY)

On December 27, 1825, Mr. Keith was appointed Grand Deacon in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia (English authority) by John Albro, the Provincial Grand Master. In 1827 he was advanced to the office of Grand Marshal and in 1828 to that of Junior Grand Warden.

On the formation in 1829 of the District Grand Lodge of England in Nova Scotia (replacing the Provincial Grand Lodge but known more commonly by its former name) he was appointed the first Senior Grand Warden, an office he held until 1837 when he became Deputy Grand Master, and continued to discharge the

important duties of that high position until his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, by letters patent dated September 24, 1840, elevated him to the head of the Craft in Nova Scotia in succession to John Albro who had died in 1839. He was installed and proclaimed Provincial Grand Master on December 27, 1840.

On February 1, 1847, his jurisdiction was extended to include also New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. He held this office until 1869 in which year the English lodges in Nova Scotia joined the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia which had been formed in 1866 by the Scottish Lodges which in that year had seceded from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland then under the authority of Mr. Keith, its Provincial Grand Master.

Here we encounter an intensely interesting bit of Masonic history. Mr. Keith's friend, the Hon. John Leander Starr, had been for several years the Provincial Grand Master over the Scottish lodges in the Maritime Provinces previously to 1845. IN that year he resigned on his removal to New York and apparently recommended Mr. Keith, the District Grand Master of the rival Masonic body, as his successor. Mr. Keith was appointed and it is a very interesting and unique fact that for twenty-one years Mr. Keith was head of two "rival" Grand Lodges, each "contending" with the other in the work of extending the Craft in Nova Scotia. He gave of his great talents and leadership equally to both organizations and preserved throughout his reign the utmost harmony between the two Grand Lodges.

PRESENTATION

On December 1865, at an annual communication of the District Grand Lodge the following address was read by James Forman, Deputy Grand Master:

To the Right Worshipful the Honorable Alexander Keith, Provincial Grand Master for Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, and the Masonic jurisdiction thereunto belonging, &c, &c, &c.

Right Worshipful Sir and Brother,-

The Freemasons of Nova Scotia, under English authority, gladly avail themselves of the recurrence of this time-honored festival, to tender to you their

cordial congratulations on your having presided for a quarter of a century over English Masonry in this Province.

Appointed Grand Deacon on 27th December, 1825, and having subsequently filled various other offices in the Provincial Grand Lodge, you received the appointment of Deputy Provincial Grand Master in 1837, and continued to discharge the important duties of that high position until his Royal Highness the late Duke of Sussex, by letters patent dated the 24th September 1840, elevated you to the head of the Craft in Nova Scotia, and you were installed and proclaimed Provincial Grand Master on the 27th December in that year.

The present state of Masonry in this Province exhibits a striking contrast to that which existed at the time you assumed your important functions; while the records of the Craft in 1840 exhibited but six Lodges holding warrants from the Grand Lodge of England, they now show twenty-two warranted lodges in efficient working order, and dispensations for the formation of two new lodges have been granted during the year.

To the strenuous exertions of yourself, in conjunction with your principal Grand Lodge officers, was due the establishment of a local fund of benevolence, by which the monies which had been previously contributed to the Grand Lodge of England were dispensed in Masonic charities throughout the Province; and it must be gratifying to you, Right Worshipful Sir, as to every Mason, to know that this fund, notwithstanding the numerous calls upon it, has attained to very respectable proportions, £400 being invested at interest, and a considerable balance being at the credit of the Grand Lodge for charitable purposes.

Believing that these marked improvements in the position of the Order are attributable, in a very great degree, to the warm interest which you have ever taken in its welfare, and to the zealous and impartial manner in which you have discharged the duties of your exalted and important office the English Freemasons of Nova Scotia beg your acceptance of this piece of plate as a token of the esteem and respect which they entertain for you, and a testimonial of their appreciation of your faithful and valuable services; and they indulge the hope that you may long

continue to occupy your present position, and, with your amiable lady and family, may enjoy many happy returns for the present festive season.

Halifax, N. S. 27th December A.D. 1865, A.L. 5865.

The piece of silver plate was a Silver Epergne of Candelabrum, with three branches for lights, and a group of finely-modelled figures emblematical of Faith, Hope and Charity, on a triangular base under a palm tree, with a centre cut-glass dish, and weighing two hundred ounces; it bore the following inscription:-

"Presented by the Freemasons of Nova Scotia to the Right Worshipful the Honourable Alexander Keith, Provincial Grand Master, on his having presided over English Masonry in the Province for a quarter of a century. Halifax, 27th December, A.L. 5865."

The R. W. the Provincial Grand Master then returned the following reply:-

To the Right Worshipful and Deputy Provincial Grand Master and Officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge under English authority; the Worshipful Masters, Wardens, and members of the respective Lodges; The M. E. First Principal, Officers and members of the Royal Union Arch Chapter; and the Eminent Commander and Officers of the Encampment of Knights Templar, &c, &c.

Right Worshipful Sirs and Brethren,

I have the honor to return you my sincere and heartfelt thanks-for this highly gratifying expression of your affectionate regard, as well as for this valuable testimonial of your appreciation of my humble services in promoting the best interests of the Craft entrusted to my care.

Having been for so many years actively associated with the Masonic institution, and having had the honor, for the past twenty-five years to occupy its highest office in this Province, I cannot but rejoice with you in its rapid rise and present prosperity; and if I have succeeded in performing the important duties of Provincial Grand Master satisfactorily to all, it is to be attributed, in no small degree, to the fact that I have ever received the cordial co-operation and assistance of my Grand Lodge officers and of the brethren generally, to all of whom I take this opportunity of expressing my obligations for the important services rendered me on all occasions.

It, is indeed, a source of much gratification to me to find that my exertions, in conjunction with those of my principal Grand Lodge officers, in connection with the fund of benevolence, have been so eminently successful; and as our venerable institution is founded on heaven-born virtues, "Faith, Hope and Charity." (so beautifully represented in the testimonial which I have this day had the honor to receive at your hands), we may rest assured that amidst all the mutations of time and changes of circumstances it will stand "a strong refuge" to the "worthy Mason" in the hour of need or the storms of adversity, and will cheer the heart of the widow and the fatherless when misfortune leads them to feel the need of sympathy and the aid of friends.

I again thank you, my brethren, for these tokens of your esteem and regard, and for your kind wishes on behalf of Mrs. Keith and family; and in conclusion, allow me to return you the congratulations of the season, and to express my earnest wish that you may, each and all, be spared to enjoy many happy returns of the same.

I have the honor to remain,

R. W. brethren and companions,

Very fraternally yours,

A. Keith, P.G.M.

A deputation from the Provincial Grand Lodge and Craft Lodges under Scottish authority was then announced, and, advancing to the East, presented a congratulatory address, to which the R. W. the Provincial Grand Master returned an appropriate reply.

In 1869, Mr. Keith was unanimously elected Grand Master of Masons in Nova Scotia, holding office until his death in December 1873. Throughout his Masonic career he was the most prominent figure on many public occasions.

PUBLIC CEREMONIES

On June 24, 1847, he assisted in laying the cornerstone of the New Brunswick Asylum, West Saint John. On this occasion he was associated with Sir William M. C. Colebrooke, K. H., Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick. The silver trowel used in this ceremony was presented to the Provincial Grand Master and is among those preserved in the museum of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia. In the evening the Masters of the several lodges in Saint John, the Mayor (John R. Portelow, M.P.P.), the Commissioners for the building of the asylum and others were entertained at dinner by the Provincial Grand Master in the St. John Hotel. A local newspaper referred to the day's ceremonies as follows:

"The assemblage of the brethren of the mystic tie on the important occasion was greater than was ever before collected in this city. The day was delightfully fine, and the proceedings were witnessed by a vast concourse of people who availed themselves of the opportunity of visiting the most agreeable and interesting portion of the western side of the River St. John, contiguous to the city."

Hon. Alex Keith made another visit to Saint John in February 1854 and presided over a meeting called to consider the formation of a Deputy Provincial Grand Lodge for New Brunswick. Later on October 10th, 1855 at Halifax, he installed Alexander Bulloch as Deputy Provincial Grand Master for New Brunswick. He again visited Saint John on September 24, 1865 and consecrated the new Provincial Grand Lodge and dedicate the new Masonic Hall.

In March 1855, the Saint John Courier announced that the Hon. Alexander Keith of Halifax was to make an official tour in Saint John in his official capacity as Provincial Grand Master of the Masons for the Lower Provinces. The notice added that: "We have much pleasure in announcing to our readers that the Hon. and Right Worshipful Alexander Keith, Provincial Grand Master for the Lower Provinces, has received a patent from the Masonic authorities in Paris, constituting him an honorary member of the Grand Lodge of France,

accompanied by an official communication, couching in the most flattering terms. This mark of distinction is the more flattering to the Provincial Grand Master as it was entirely unsolicited; and it adds another to the many known examples of the universality of the ancient Masonic institution.

ROYAL ARCH MASONRY

Mr. Keith was exalted as a Royal Arch mason in Royal Union Chapter No. 118 R.E. (now No. 1) in 1819. In this Chapter he also filled the principal offices with great ability and until within a few years of his death, a period of fifty years, was frequently in attendance rendering his assistance in the performance of its rites and ceremonies. In 1827 when he was elected King of the Chapter, holding the office until 1841, when he succeeded to the Chair, continuing in that office until 1856, with the exception of one year when he persuaded Rev. J. T. Twining of St. Paul's to serve in the office and 1850 and 1855 when he induced James Forman to accept the chair.

Because of his well known proficiency and excellence of character, he was appointed on May 1st, 1839 by the Supreme Grand Chapter of England as Grand Superintendent over Royal Arch Masonry in Nova Scotia and held that office until the formation of the Grand Chapter of Nova Scotia in 1869 when he was unanimously elected and installed as Grand High Priest.

KNIGHT TEMPLAR

Mr. Keith was created a Knight of the Temple in 1841 in St. John's Priory No. 47, Halifax which was warranted by the Supreme Grand Conclave of Scotland on July 1st, 1839, the revival of an earlier Templar Encampment. In 1842 and 1843 he was Treasurer of the Priory; in 1848 and 1849 its Chancellor; and in 1850 its Prior. In 1858, St. John's Priory under his leadership petitioned the Grand Conclave of England and Wales for a new warrant which was granted on the 11th day of October, 1858 with Alexander Keith as its first Eminent Commander. He continued in office until 1863 when he was appointed Provincial Grand Prior over Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, a position he held with great distinction.

ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE

In 1871 he received the degrees of the A. & A. S. Rite up to and including that of Sovereign Prince Rose Croix, 18°, and was one of the founders of Keith Sovereign Chapter A. & A. S. Rite, Halifax, named in his honor.

HIS DEATH AND FUNERAL

The Hon. Alexander Keith died December 4, 1873, aged 78 years.

His funeral which was a state funeral was one of the largest ever seen in Halifax. The Masonic society made an imposing display, there being six Master Masons as pall-bearers.

The order of the procession was as follows:-

Grand Tyler, with drawn sword.

Band 66th Halifax Volunteer Battalion.

Stewards with white rods.

Master Masons in the order of their respective Lodges, viz:-

Royal Standard Lodge No. 398, R. Eng.

Eastern Star Lodge No. 51, R. N. S.

Orient Lodge No. 49 R. N. S.

Lodge of St. Mark No. 38 R. N. S.

Scotia Lodge No. 22, R. N. S.

Union Lodge No. 18, R. N. S.

Keith Lodge No. 17, R. N. S.

Athole Lodge No. 15, R. N. S.

Acadia Lodge No. 14, R. N. S.

Burns Lodge No. 10, R. N. S.

Royal Sussex Lodge No.6 , R. N. S.

St. John's Lodge No. 2, R. N. S.

St. Andrew's Lodge No. 1, R. N. S.

Royal Arch Masons

Keith Chapter A. & A. S. Rite

Past Deputy Grand Masters

Past Grand Masters and distinguishing brethren

Officers of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia

The Master of St. Andrew's Lodge, carrying the Book of Constitutions

Deputy Grand Master

Band 63rd Halifax, Volunteer Battalion

Officers and members of Virgin Lodge No. 3.

Tyler and Inner Guard, with drawn swords.

Stewards with white rods.

Master Masons of visiting lodges.

Senior and Junior Deacons.

Senior and Junior Wardens.

Past Masters.

The Holy Writings carried on a cushion.

The Master of Virgin Lodge No. 3.

Chaplain and Clergy.

Guard of Honour from N.S. Encampment No. 5.

Knights Templar.

Knights Templar - COFFIN - Knights Templar.

Knights Templar.

Private carriage of deceased.

Chief mourners.

Lieutenant General Haley, in his carriage.

Lieutenant Governor Adams G. Archibald.

Chief Justice Sir William Young.

The Judges of the Supreme Court.

The members of the Legislative Council.

Staff of Lieutenant Governor.

Members of the Senate of Canada.

Members of the House of Commons of Canada.

Members of the House of Assembly.

The City Police.

The City Council.

The North British Society.

Employees of the deceased.

Citizens in general.

Carriages.

The coffin was borne on a sleigh with white pall, bordered with blue and inscribed with scriptural mottoes. The jewels and other emblems of deceased's Masonic rank were placed on top of the coffin. Upwards of six hundred Masons, including many from neighboring country towns, and a delegation from New Brunswick were in the procession. The Knights Templar with drawn swords and wearing the regalia of their Order formed a guard of honor; the others adorned with

regalia and jewels, according to their rank; the whole forming a brilliant and imposing scene.

In token of respect to the deceased, the flags were flown at half mast from the public and many private buildings in the City, and from all the shipping in the port. Most of the shops on the route of the procession were closed.

TRIBUTES PAID

At the time of his death, "The British Colonist" of December 16th, 1873 said:

"Mr Keith was a self-made man, attentive to business, public-spirited, enterprising, of a kindly manner, and warm-hearted, and hospitable in the highest degree. He was an unwavering friend and not slow in lending a helping hand to those who had won his confidence. He was every inch a Scotchman - and look and speech, hand and heart, told the story. His fellow countrymen trusted him thoroughly, and delighted to show him honor. The business prospered from the first, the result of upright and honorable business habits and indomitable energy, coupled with sterling integrity of purpose and urbanity of manner."

The Evening Reporter" of December 17th, 1873, in referring to Mr. Keith's death, said:

"In the course of the years the business grew rapidly, and at length it became one of the largest in the Dominion. His mercantile character was unimpeachable. In all his transactions which were necessary large, he ever bore the character of an honorable man, of whom, as frequently as of any man in the mercantile history of the province, it was said in the words of this own loved countryman - the poet Burns - 'An honest man is the noblest work of God.'"

The Rev. Dr. Allan Pollock, writing in 1915 his impressions of the Halifax of the past century said:

"I sat in the house and at the table of the most hospitable man who ever lived in this city; the Hon. Alexander Keith. He was a Scotsman from Caithness, a man of the most generous disposition. He dispensed much of what he

acquired in business in entertaining friends, visitors, and especially officers of the army and navy. Mrs. Keith was a most charitable woman."

GRAND LODGE PAYS TRIBUTE

On January 13, 1874 an emergent communication of the Grand Lodge was held at Masons' Hall, Halifax to pay tribute to the memory of the late Grand Master. The meeting was presided over by William Taylor, the Deputy Grand Master and there were present the leaders in the Craft from all parts of the Province. In his address to the Grand Lodge Brother Taylor said in part:

"Our Most Worshipful Grand Master the Hon. Alexander Keith departed this life a short time since at the advanced age of seventy eight, most highly respected as a citizen and in the varied duties and callings of life that devolved upon him; also most deeply regretted in his death by his immediate relatives and friends and by the Masonic fraternity at large.

"This was amply confirmed by the very large attendance at his funeral on the seventeenth of last month, not only of the citizens generally but of the Freemasons from almost every portion of this jurisdiction. That numerous attendance of the brethren, as well as their becoming and solemn demeanor throughout, very fully testified their fraternal regard and esteem towards him whose remains they then so solemnly consigned to their final resting place with the appropriate funeral ceremonies of our Order."

"At the last annual meeting of Grand Lodge in June last he expressed himself as still deeply interested in the welfare and prosperity of the Order, and willing to aid and assist the work by his counsel and advice, although, as he said, his age and infirmity prevented him from being with us in our assemblies as frequently as he wished. May the useful lessons that his long and active life set before us be lasting and beneficial to us. We may do well to be still more careful and considerate in our legislation and action in Masonic matters, knowing that the influence of his more mature ideas and judgment is no more at hand to give us direction."

Following the address, a resolution of sympathy with the members of his family was adopted. It set forth in appropriate words that under his watchful

care and guidance a period of 32 years in which he filled various high offices, the Order had developed from a condition of comparative feebleness and inefficiency into the proud position numerically and socially which it occupies today."

"To his truly Masonic example and to the care with which he always inculcated sound Masonic precepts, it is in a large measure owing that Masonry has now taken so deep a hold upon society in this Province; that Masonic charity is being so largely and beneficially dispensed; and that even among those who are not of our Order, our ancient and honorable institution commands universal respect.

"The virtues which as a Mason he practised were but the reflex of those private virtues which he, throughout life, exhibited in the social and domestic circle, and which endeared him to the members of his family, who now mourn his loss."

The name of this distinguished Freemason is perpetuated in the titles of three Masonic lodges in Nova Scotia;

The Keith Lodge No. 16, Bear River,

Keith Lodge No. 17, Halifax,

Keith Lodge No. 23, Stellarton.

also in Keith Lodge No. 23, Moncton, N.B. In Royal Arch Masonry, Keith Chapter No. 4, Truro, likewise perpetuates his name as does Keith Sovereign Chapter Rose Croix, Halifax, in the Scottish Rite.

MEMORIALS

In 1878, his widow presented to the Grand Lodge certain jewels of the late Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland. The Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia in 1923 was also presented with all the regalia and many other memorials of his long Masonic career and reign over the Craft in Nova Scotia. Among these are many silver trowels used by him to lay cornerstones on various important occasions.

His monument in Camp Hill Cemetery is a massive granite obelisk of red granite imported from his native Scotland. It bears the following inscription:-

"Sacred to the memory of the Honorable Alexander Keith, a native of Caithness-shire, Scotland, who departed this life on the 14th December, 1873

aged 78 years.

Also his wife, Eliza

who died December 27, 1895

aged 81 years."

HIS FAMILY

Mr. Keith was twice married.

In the Acadian Recorder of August 24th, 1832, we find the following:-

"On August 21st, 1832, Sarah Ann, wife of Alexander Keith, aged 36 years. During a very painful illness, which she bore with patient resignation to the Divine will, she evinced an eminent example of the hallowing influence of Almighty grace upon a temper naturally placid and serene, and having a strong consolation, through faith, in her Redeemer, she died with an assured hope of eternal glory in that bright world,

"Where all is calm and free from human pains,
Jesus, the sinner's friend, in glory reigns,
And smiling from his bright eternal throne,
Welcomes the weary wandering pilgrim home,
Bids her rejoice with all the saints above,
And crowns the soul with never-fading love."

In 1834 he married Eliza (a relative) who died December 27, 1895, aged 81 years. Six children were born of this marriage.

1. Eliza Ann,. Died 25, 1835.

2. Alexander, died May 28, 1837.
3. Donald George, born 1838, died October 25, 1886.
4. Eleanor Jane, born 1840, died March 14, 1873.
5. Ann Amelia, died December 15, 1854.
6. Margaret Louise, Married June 28, 1870 Dr. William Nathan Wickshsire,, who succeeded Donald G. Keith, as Manager of the business in 1887.
7. Marjorie Eliza, resided in England.
8. Alexandrina (Rena) married L. Huddleston, Cambridge, England.

By Hon. John Doull, Grand Historian, Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia; Printed in
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Submitted by Bro. D. Roy Murray

King Solomon Lodge, No. 58, GRS

MBBFMN #483.