

Concise History of the AMD of Canada

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(For more details see the papers in the 2009 issue of The Architect.)

The Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees of Canada was Instituted on October 13, 1984 in Toronto Ontario. Eleven Councils, who had been chartered by the Grand Council of AMD of the USA, assembled to create the Grand Council of AMD of Canada and to elect the first Grand Officers.

There was a lot of history both before and after that point however so we'll have to look first at how we this came to pass and later we'll look at how we have progressed from that point.

Prehistory

England and the USA

In England, a Council of Side Degrees was formed in August 1879. This soon renamed itself the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees. By June 1880 it had taken under its protection the Orders of Grand High Priest, St. Lawrence the Martyr, Red Cross of Babylon and Knights of Constantinople. (See Reference 1).

In the USA, the Sovereign College of Allied Masonic and Christian Degrees for the Western Hemisphere was formed in January 1892. It soon amended its title to "for America" and then dropped the words "and Christian". It assumed control of fifteen degrees, including the Saint Lawrence the Martyr, and The Secret Monitor. This system became dormant by about 1924. In July 1932 the present Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America was formed. It negotiated a union of the two under the present name in July 1933. (See Reference 2).

Early Canadian History

The first mention of an AMD Council in Canada was in Reference 1 which has Badgley Council No. 9 in Montreal Canada granted a charter by the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees of England on June 10, 1884. It seems to have disappeared in 1893 or 1894.

The next reference to the AMD in Canada is that Charles Fotheringham, who lived in Kitchener Ontario, called a group of seven interested brethren to his home on March 29, 1963. He had joined Grand Master's Council "A" of the Grand Council of the AMD of the USA. From this start, Medwayosh Council U.D. (later #62) was instituted on July 13, 1963. Those eight members then brought in others and by the early 1980's there were nine councils in Ontario. At least four other councils were being planned, including two more in Ontario, one in Winnipeg Manitoba and one in Vancouver BC.

At this point it was suggested that the Constitution of the Grand Council of AMD of the USA did not authorize them to operate outside of the USA and several groups started planning for Grand Councils in Ontario and in Canada.

On July 28, 1982, a "General Assembly of Canadian Brethren AMD" was held in Toronto at the

request of the SGM, M.V.Bro. William B. Smith with the Senior Grand Deacon, R.V.Bro. Raymond Loose, to act as his Commissioner. The Commissioner was to inquire into the advisability of the formation of an Association of Canadian AMD Councils. The meeting voted in favour of the formation of the Association and approved a draft set of bylaws.

The following were elected as officers of the new Association. Reg Forest-Jones (President), James Shaw (Vice-President) and Norman Robertson (Secretary). To mark the occasion, the SGM appointed three Canadian Brethren (R.V.Bros. Ronald Groshaw, Gerald O. Smith and Ralph Howard) to the honorary rank of Past Grand Senior Warden.

In Sept 1983, the Association published its first newsletter, The Architect. The was the brain-child of V.Bro Glenson Jones. The purpose was: to keep brethren informed of the AMD events occurring within Canada; to promote interaction and exchange of visits among our Councils; to encourage holding of field days for the exemplification of the AMD degrees; to provide a forum for the exchange of information and to publish extracts of papers.

On October 13, 1984, the Founding Convention of the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees of Canada took place in Toronto Ontario to which all Canadian Councils were invited. Eleven of the 19 Councils in Canada attended. Those were: Medwayosh #62, London #68, Ontario Shores #151, Capital City #154, Richmond Hill #168, Willowdale #170, Keystone #172, Scarborough #175, Peel #183, Yellowhead #187 and Bridge City #197. Twenty-two names had been submitted for the Ballot. After the ballot, the SGM, M.Ven.Bro. Charles Glassmire Constituted the new Grand Council and Installed its first Grand Officers.

The first Officers were: John Carson of London Council (SGM), Reginald Forest-Jones of Medwayosh Council (Dep.GM), Leslie Davies of London Council (S.G.W.), Glenson Jones of Capital City Council (J.G.W.), Allan Baumbick of Keystone Council (Board of G.P.), William Dixon of Scarborough Council (Board of G.P.), Thomas Berry of Yellowhead Council (Board of G.P.), Norman Robertson of Ontario Shores Council (G.Secretary-Treasurer), Harold Whalley of Keystone Council (S.G.D.), Marcus Klawieter of Richmond Hill Council (J.G.D.), Albert Sewell of Capital City Council (G. Chaplain), Russell Varley of Peel Council (G.D.of C.) and Peter Maydan of Yellowhead Council (G.Tyler). The new SGM appointed R.V.Bro. Glenson Jones as the first member of the Council of Nine Muses.

The Architect continued to be produced under the banner of the Association until 1989 when it absorbed as a Committee of Grand Council.

It might appear that all the problems had been resolved but not quite. It came to light that certain AMD members had applied for, and had been granted, letters patent of "The Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees of Canada in the Province of Ontario Incorporated". This impasse was eventually resolved and the Corporation was dissolved.

On April 2, 1985, the Grand Council of England and Wales formally recognised the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees of Canada.

The jostling for position that had accompanied the creation of the Grand Council had resulted in a number of disappointments, disagreements and alliances being developed. These worked themselves out over the next few years with the accompaniment of some heat and noise.

Over 30 AMD Councils have been created in Canada during the forty-five years since that meeting in Kitchener. Some of their individual histories are described in the Architect. Some were very successful and some survived only a few years; some simply drifted into darkness while others amalgamated to produce more viable units.

Our Grand Council is still very young and, although there are still a few growing pains, the organisation is stable. We have had a number of good leaders and should be proud of what we built.

References:

1 A Century of the Allied Masonic Degrees by H.H.C. Prestige, CBE, MA published in London England in 1979.

2 Centennial History of the Allied Masonic Degree of the United States of America 1892-1992. By William G. Peacher, MD, MA, PSGM, KGC.