



Richmond Lodge #23 and The Rose

Freemasonry, being ancient, is influenced by history as well as being an influence on history. Freemasons use symbols to bind that history with a moral path for our brothers to follow. One such Masonic symbol is the Rose. Although the Rose is used in many cultures and religions as a symbol, the red Rose symbolizes the heart of love in Christian doctrine. More specifically, the Rose symbolizes God's love for the entire world. Medieval Christians identified the five petals of the Rose with the five wounds of Christ. The red Rose was eventually adopted as a symbol of the blood of the Christian martyrs. After the War of the Roses, the Tudor Rose was created to unify England. The national flower of England is the Rose.

Freemasons hold true to a set of timeless values. The enduring tenants of brotherly love, relief and truth help to guide men in their daily conduct. By practicing the cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice, freemasons become better fathers, better professionals and better citizens. In earlier times, this code of conduct was called Chivalry. In the face of adversity, soldiers need a fraternal bond in order to work as a cohesive force. Knowing that your brothers-in-arms will do all that is possible to protect each other on the battlefield is critical. To that end, Freemasonry cements the bond between brothers-in-arms. In the absence of international law, Masonic principles were used by officers in the treatment of brothers in the opposing army.

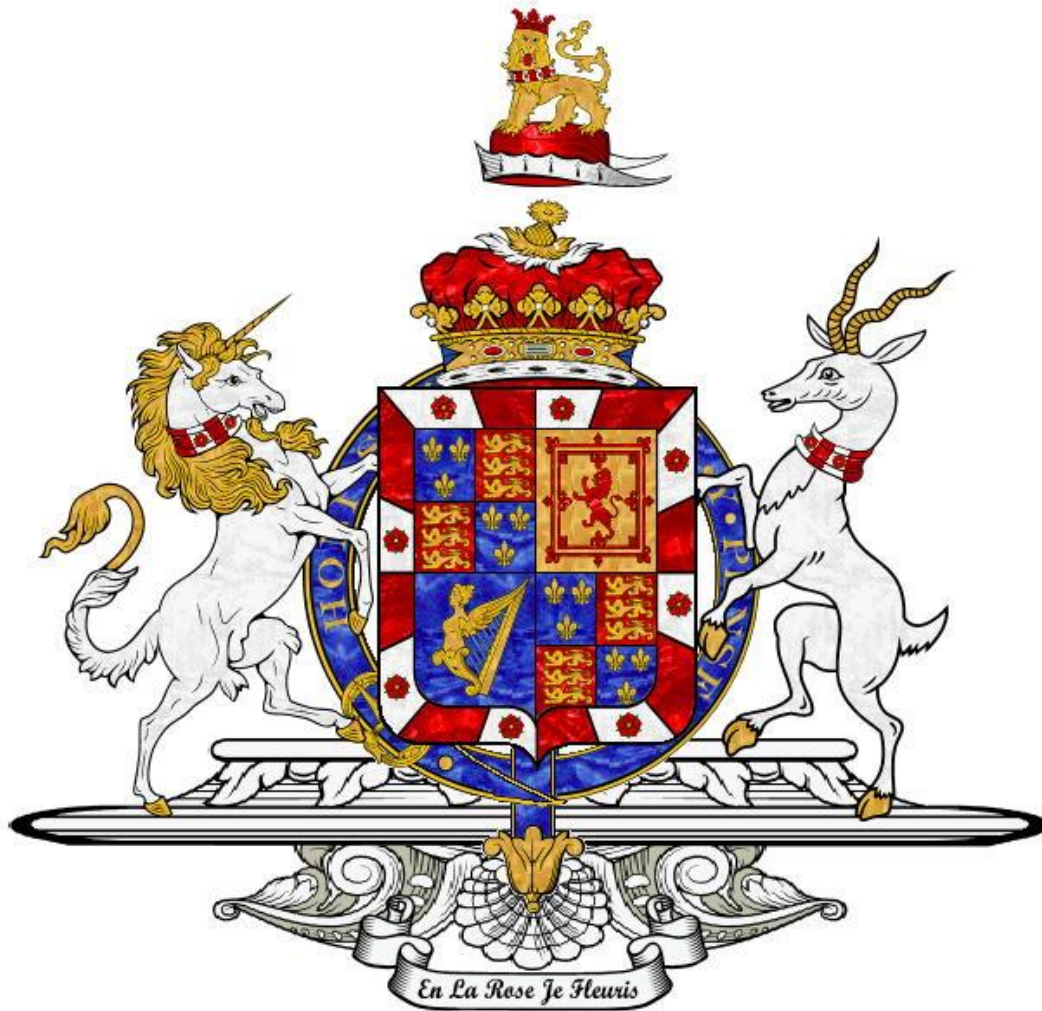
We still see commissioned and non-commissioned officers meeting on the Level. The last military incursion for the Canadian military was Kandahar, Afghanistan. During their stay in Afghanistan, the Canadian military formed a new Masonic lodge.¹

On the 13th of July, 1819,² Right Worshipful (R.W.) Brother Charles Lennox, the 4th Duke of Richmond, visited our region, now called Richmond Hill, Ontario. As the leader of the British military, His Grace was serving as Governor General of British North America. Like his father and many of his peers, the Duke of Richmond was a Freemason. This commitment to the fundamental tenants and principles of Freemasonry is emphasized in the motto on the coat of arms of the Duke of Richmond:

En La Rose Je Fleuris

¹ SEE: http://www.grandchapter-bc-yukon.ca/news_articles/canadalodge2.pdf

² SEE: <http://edrh.rhpl.richmondhill.on.ca/default.asp?ID=s4.5#p4.5.1>, par 3



The major panel of this coat of arms of the 4th Duke of Richmond depicts twelve roses.³ In the Victorian era, a dozen roses became symbolic of love because it represents a complete cycle, such as the twelve months in the year, the twelve hours on the clock, the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twelve Apostles. The coat of arms for the Town of Richmond Hill bears a dozen roses, this motto as well as the minor panel depicted at the top.

By stating that the Lennox family blooms or flourishes in the Rose is an affirmation that blessings come from the Grace of God. This Masonic motto acts as a reminder that the measure of a man is reflected in what he does. Placing your faith in the Rose makes you a better person. For the brethren in the Lennox family, Freemasonry teaches to practice our religious beliefs in order to grow. To practice good deeds is the best way to glorify God.

R.W. Brother Charles Lennox died in the Town of Richmond which is located near Ottawa, Ontario. This Town of Richmond began as a military settlement.⁴ One of Richmond's earliest buildings was *The Masonic Arms* inn.⁵ The keeper of this hostelry was our brother-in-arms,

³ SEE: <http://www.europeanheraldry.org/united-kingdom/families/families-e-g/house-gordon-lennox/>

⁴ SEE: http://goulbournmuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/goulbmus_duke.pdf

⁵ SEE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lennox,_4th_Duke_of_Richmond

Sergeant Major Hill, who fought with the 100th Regiment of Foot during the War of 1812. In August of 1819, R.W. Brother Charles Lennox, while staying at *The Masonic Arms* died. His Grace had generated a lot of respect, even affection, while the Canadas were under his command. The General's tragic passing was deeply felt on both sides of the Atlantic. To mark this tragedy and to remember Brother Lennox's good deeds, seven townships and counties in Upper and Lower Canada are named after the 4th Duke of Richmond.⁶ Lennoxville PQ,⁷ Richmond PQ, Richmond BC, Richmond ON, and Richmond Street in Toronto are name after His Grace, the 4th Duke of Richmond.⁸ There are several stories surrounding the naming of our town of Richmond Hill. One conjecture is the citizenry of Richmond Hill chose to name their town after the two freemasons most affected in this tragedy - the Duke of Richmond and Sergeant Major Hill.⁹

So, why do Canadians feel the need to remain connected with R.W. Bro. Charles Lennox? He gained our respect for many reasons. The Governor-in-Chief of the Canadas was our first leader to be bilingual. Spending much of his first year in Lower Canada, the Governor's ability to converse with the French-Canadians in their mother tongue engendered a lot of good will and mutual respect. To this day, His Grace's body remains in Québec City as reminder of his sacrifice to the Canadas and the good deeds he did to safeguard that city.

Lennox's military career began in 1787 as a captain of the 15th Foot. In 1789, Captain Lennox obtained a captaincy in the Coldstream Foot Guards, which carried with it a lieutenant-colonel in the army-at-large. His brother officers persuaded him to transfer back to the 35th Foot as lieutenant-colonel. The Lennox family is fond of sports and considered an important patron of cricket and horse racing. Charles Lennox encouraged athleticism amongst his officers which made him popular. After serving with his regiment in the West Indies in 1794, he was appointed aide-de-camp to the King in 1795. Promoted to major-general three years later, he became colonel of the 35th Foot. He was made lieutenant-general in 1805 and general in 1814.¹⁰

In 1790, Lennox had been elected to his father's seat of Sussex in the House of Commons and he was re-elected in 1796, 1802 and 1806. He succeeded to the dukedom of Richmond and Lennox on the death of his uncle in 1806. In the following April, His Grace was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His administration of the island was relatively quiet due, in part, to his interest in horse racing, hunting and other sporting activities and his lavish hospitality which garnered him popularity among the Irish. His Irish appointment ended in 1813.

In 1814, he temporarily closed his estate for reasons of economy. R.W. Bro. Lennox moved his family to Brussels, Belgium. There on June 15, 1815, on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo, the Duke and Duchess held an exquisite banquet and ball to which every principal officer of the Duke of Wellington's army was invited. Given the setting, this glittering event was destined to become one of the most famous balls in history. It was at this ball that the Duke of Wellington learned of the advance of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's army into the Netherlands. This event is remembered in a poem by Lord Byron.

On the following morning, many of those brave men died only 15 kms away in this bloodiest of Napoleonic battles. The Duke of Richmond was in the thick of this battle, dressed in civilian clothes and waving his beaver hat as he charged with the Inniskilling Dragoons while under fire from French batteries. The Duke and his family remained in Belgium until 1818. In that

⁶ SEE: IBID

⁷ SEE: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lennoxville/>

⁸ SEE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_east%E2%80%93west_roads_in_Toronto#Richmond_Street

⁹ The author acknowledges and thanks Mr. Peter Wilson for his generous contribution to this paper. Mr. Wilson is a historical librarian with the Richmond Hill Public Library system.

¹⁰ *The Canadian Connection, The Journal of Canadiana Philately*, Vol 13, No. 4, Whole No. 52, Dec. 1, 1999. Pg. 3

year, he was appointed Governor-in-Chief (Governor General) of British North America. By all appearances, he did not seek the appointment, but he willingly accepted it.¹¹

On the 29th of July, 1818, aboard HMS IPHIGENIA, the Duke arrived at Québec with a broadside salute to the citadel. The arrival of the Royal Navy triple-decker was certain to attract an audience. In this case, word spread quickly that the new Governor-in-Chief of British North America was on-board. Among those who watched were some 400 officers, other ranks and their families. These officers and militia were soon on-board a fleet of bateaux to carry them to Upper Canada where they planned to begin a new life as settlers.

R.W. Bro. Charles Lennox was given the task to build and to improve defensive works at strategic locations across the Canadas. He achieved this goal on several accounts.

Upon arrival to Québec City, the Governor General witnessed the demolition of the city gates to widen the entrances for wagons. His Grace dismounted his horse and directed the workers to only unhinge the gates. This order increased the width of the entrances without destroying the integrity of the fortification. Québec City is the last remaining fortified city in English and French North America. For this reason, it is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Governor General commissioned the building of a fort on Isle aux Noix which was occupied by the Americans during the American Revolution. This fort was built to protect the Richelieu River and was named Fort Lennox upon completion. He also strengthened the forts at Isle Sainte-Hélène in Lower Canada and Kingston in Upper Canada.¹²

The Duke had received instructions to continue the policies of his predecessors to conciliate Canadian political and religious leaders. R.W. Bro. Charles Lennox breathed new life into the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning. This Royal Institution was responsible for the colony's public schools. This involvement in education was much opposed by the Catholic bishop. To advance learning in Lower Canada, the Duke asked the Anglican bishop, Jacob Mountain, to draft plans for a university to be founded under the auspices of this Royal Institution with the aid of a bequest from the merchant James McGill.¹³ McGill University received its royal charter in 1821.

As in Ireland, the Duke considered leisure an important means of popularizing his administration, both among the military officers and the elite. According to an officer of the garrison, the Duke was one of the finest tennis players in England and an excellent racket baller. He joined the members of the garrison in good sport, which endeared him to all. He was a patron of the Garrison Racing Club. The Duke encouraged the Tandem Club to make winter excursions into the countryside.

During His Grace's tour of the Canadas, R.W. Bro. Lennox inspected the planned route of the Rideau Canal. In 1819, he started his tour, leaving Québec City, travelling to Montréal and on to Kingston. From Kingston, he headed overland, along rough tracks and trails, until he reached the new community of Perth on the 21st of August.

Unfortunately, the Duke had been bitten by a soldier's pet fox in Sorel (near Montréal) two months earlier. Upon his arrival to Perth, his symptoms of rabies first appeared. He was able to continue on to the new settlement of Richmond, but died a day later. Prior to his death, His Grace had managed to release an important letter, advocating the opening of navigation on the Ottawa and Rideau rivers and the construction of canals at Lachine, Lower Canada as well as between Lakes Ontario and Erie. Bro. Arthur Wellesley, better known as the Duke of

¹¹ The Canadian Connection, The Journal of Canadiana Philately, Vol 13, No. 4, Whole No. 52, Dec. 1, 1999. Pg. 4

¹² IBID. Pg. 5

¹³ SEE: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lennox_charles_richmond_5E.html

Wellington (aka the “Iron Duke”) received that letter. Wellington was The Master-General of The Ordnance (the branch of the government in charge of fortifications and canals).¹⁴ Based on Charles Lennox’s recommendation, the construction of the Rideau Canal was begun as part of the defense system for Canada. Today, the Rideau Canal is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

By remaining true to his orders to improve the defenses of the Canadas, R.W. Bro. Charles Lennox has played a part in creating and in preserving our heritage. A heritage now cherished by all Canadians.

In large part, Freemasonry was spread across the planet by military lodges. “Travelling Warrants” from the Grand Lodges of Ireland, Scotland and England were granted to regiments to permit lodges to travel from place to place.¹⁵ After the American War of 1812, many in the British militia remained in Upper and Lower Canada. To keep our brethren-in-arms connected, freemasons built inns and other public buildings to hold lodge meetings. In the Richmond Hill area, many inns, including *The Masonic Arms* existed along Yonge Street.¹⁶ In the absence of a formal lodge building, local inns, private homes and other buildings were used for the meetings of freemasons. Richmond Lodge began with members of the militia. Our earliest lodge records were burned. Based on known records, our first Worshipful Master was Colonel David Bridgeport. Very Worshipful Bro. David Bridgeport carried on the business of Richmond Lodge from 1824 to 1831. V.W. Bro. David Bridgeport served as the first Master of Richmond Lodge and did so for twelve years between 1846 and 1861. Richmond Lodge’s namesake and its beginning under Colonel Bridgeport’s leadership underscore our lodge’s military ties.

For a significant duration of the twentieth century, Richmond Hill was the largest producer of roses in Canada. In the following aerial view, we can see these greenhouses in the 1930s:



Looking west from the Canadian National Railway tracks towards Yonge Street, one can see the H.J. Mills greenhouses at the top centre.¹⁷ During the day, Mr. Harold Mills grew roses. In

¹⁴ SEE: <http://www.rideau-info.com/canal/history/hist-canal.html>

¹⁵ SEE: <http://www.algomadistrict.ca/articles/the%20rifle%20and%20the%20apron.htm>

¹⁶ SEE: <http://edrh.rhpl.richmondhill.on.ca/default.asp?ID=s6.4>

¹⁷ SEE: <http://edrh.rhpl.richmondhill.on.ca/figures.asp?ID=f11-13>

the evening, Worshipful Brother H.J Mills cultivated our Masonic Rose. He served as Worshipful Master of Richmond Lodge in 1929. In this picture, one can see Crosby Avenue running East and West on the northern border of this rose nursery.

In 1959, Richmond Lodge purchased land on this rose nursery to construct our current Masonic temple which resides at 112 Crosby Avenue. This avenue is named after Worshipful Brother I. Crosby who served as Master of our lodge during 1878-9 and 1886-7.

So, our Masonic circle in Richmond Hill is complete. The historical fabric of Richmond Hill is woven by one common thread. For 200 years, our Lodge serves as an unbroken link from Rose to Rose and from Freemason to Freemason.

This story is about one town. There are thousands of similar stories across North America. Where our military brothers-in-arms settled in a town or city, they carried their apron with their rifle. Although the principles of Freemasonry are immutable and universal, brethren of the fraternity learn that Freemasonry is a progressive science that is both broad and deep. This science touches many facets of our society. So, it should not be surprising that the red rose of Freemasonry still echoes today in Richmond Hill.

