

**Hon. John Strickler Martin**

Grand Master (1927 – 1929) of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons  
of Canada in the Province of Ontario



*Photo from the Grand Lodge*

(1875 – 1931)

*This biography was prepared by R.W. Bro. Jacob (Jack) Pos and delivered to a meeting of The Heritage Lodge No. 730 on September 21, 1994. The Proceedings (Volume 18, 1994-1995) include two reviews and rebuttal. Photographs from that biography are not available to be reproduced here. Used by permission of The Heritage Lodge No. 730.*

*Addenda information and sources prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern.*

## **EARLY FAMILY HISTORY**

John Strickler Martin was born on the family farm in the Township of Walpole, Haldimand County, in the Province of Ontario, October 11, 1875, the attending physician was Dr. Sherk of Cheapside. He was the first of seven children (four boys and three girls) born to Mr. and Mrs. George Martin. George Martin was born April 28,

1846, the son of Benjamin and Esther Martin, residents of Walpole Township, and died in Port Dover February 27, 1905. Mrs. George Martin, formerly Clara A. Strickler, a descendant of United Empire Loyalist stock, who went to Ontario after the American War of Independence, was born in 1853, and died in Port Dover February 21, 1931. Walpole Township records show that John Martin's great grandfather, who was an ardent church worker, deeded land for St. John's Church, at Cheapside, where the Martin family lived.

From the archives of the Port Dover MAPLE LEAF<sup>1</sup> August 29, 1890, we learn that Mr. George Martin, a reliable dealer in pianos and organs, "*had recently effected three sales in our town ... he is agent for the Bell Piano.*" Even though times were hard, people looked to music as a major form of entertainment and relaxation. In 1893 the lowcost "Pianette", made only by the Guelph Organ and Piano Company, became a popular instrument, "*being only half the price of a piano and seemingly as good*". George Martin was the popular agent for these lovely instruments. At the time Egerton Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Education, was promoting a bill to "Improve the Common and Grammar Schools of Ontario", the evolution of the one-room country school began with the small log cabin, which was first replaced with a wood frame building and then, in many cases, with a masonry structure, often on the same site. In pioneer days, and before church buildings were erected, church meetings were held in the local school house. Music formed an important component of the religious service; occasionally a small group formed a choir to support the congregation in the singing of hymns. These small choral groups often practiced in the schoolhouse and were called "Singing Schools". A historical clipping of a local paper reads as follows<sup>2</sup>:

*"A singing school was started in the schoolhouse. The master was George Martin. One of the girls who attended was Clara Strickler. He sold her one of the first parlour organs and he also married her. Their son became the Hon. John S. Martin."*

During the following ten years, George Martin sold many fine musical instruments, including pianos and organs, in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties from his home in Cheapside.

Many of these sales were the result of his generous promotional efforts. All Martin's children were musical, and often performed at concerts and recitals on instruments loaned by their father for the occasion. His eldest son John Martin in September, 1891 . . . "*until lately a pupil of Port Dover High School . . . has been engaged by the Bell Piano Company to exhibit their instruments at the Toronto Industrial Exhibition. This talented young man gives promise of becoming a first-class musician.*" In 1896 John filled the position as pianist for the Dominion Organ & Piano Co., for the Toronto Fair; and was also engaged by the Bell Organ & Piano Co. for the London Fair. The following year both John and his brother Charles played for the Dominion Piano Co. in their pavilion at the Toronto Exhibition. In August, 1901, Charles spent some



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tune in Toronto learning the piano tuning business with die Heintzman Piano Mfg. Co. A third brother Harry C. Martin, 11 years junior to John, returned from Toronto in June, 1906, where he had been employed by Heintzman & Company. The following letter<sup>1</sup> speaks for itself:

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Mr. Harry C. Martin has been in our employ for a number of years and has gone through such a thorough course in our factory as to fit him for an exceptionally good tuner, having learned the stringing, action, finishing, regulating, tuning and general repair work.*

*Having taken such a thorough course, the highest grade of piano can be safely entrusted to his care.*

*George C. Heintzman, President, Heintzman Co.*

Miss Lena Martin, daughter of Mr. George Martin has recently (July 6, 1900) taken First-class Honours in Piano and Theory at the Conservatory of Music, Toronto; she also won die First Year Scholarship over a class of fifty. In 1906, Miss Lena Martin, A.T.C.M., while regretting having to leave Port Dover, had obtained a very favourable opening as a music teacher in Owen Sound. But the town of Port Dover would not be without a music teacher for, as we learn from the Maple Leaf, in the same year, Nellie Louise Martin, Lena's sister, continued to teach music in Port Dover and her pupils in Primary, Junior and Intermediate Piano were successful in their recent examinations. During this 15-year period, George Martin continued to promote his business by various means, the most popular being loaning the use of a piano or other musical instrument at many functions including high school commencements, county fairs, concerts, weddings and social gatherings.

A brief note in the Port Dover MAPLE LEAF dated June 6, 1902, reads as follows:

*"Mr. George Martin reports business in his line to be very good, he having sold in two weeks, nine upright pianos and one 'grand'. The country must be in a prosperous condition when the people purchase pianos like that."*

George must have thought so as well, for three months later he sold his valuable farm at Cheapside, and purchased the Manse of Knox Church on Prospect Hill in the town of Port Dover. Before the year end and after making extensive improvements to the property, which also included a considerable enlargement to the barn and the erection of a large piano 'wareroom' or house, the family moved to the new location. George Martin's business continued to prosper but the father would only live three more years when he died on February 27th, 1905, in his 59th year. His sons, John S. and Charles entered into partnership to carry on the piano business, having rented from the O.F. Falls Estate the store at die corner of Norfolk and Peel Streets in the town of Simcoe, Ontario. In the same year, brother Harry also joined the business. After four

years John, who had still not found a satisfying career, forsook the piano business to enter upon his life work at the farm.

## EDUCATION AND TEACHING CAREER

John Martin received his primary education in the Township of Walpole and completed his secondary education with the first two years at Port Dover Continuation School where he obtained his third-class certificate, and continuing with the final two years at the Caledonia Collegiate, where he passed his matriculation examination with firstclass honours in chemistry. He enrolled in science at the University of Toronto in 1893, but later transferred to arts.

The Appendix for the UNIVERSITY of TORONTO CALENDAR<sup>3</sup> has the Register of Students for 1893-94, and on page 3, among the Students in Arts in University College and Victoria College, first year, we find - **Martin, J.S., Cheapside**. The Port Dover Maple Leaf, June 29, 1894, notes that Mr. John S. Martin of Cheapside, has passed his first year University, with first-class Honours. The same paper, October 26, 1894, records that *"Mr. John S. Martin, formerly of the High School here, and who is now an undergraduate of Toronto University, has been chosen Musical Director of the Literary Society by his fellow students."* No doubt a reflection of his earlier music training and the musical influence of the entire Martin family. In April, 1896, he was elected president of the Varsity Banjo and Guitar Club; *"This is a coveted honour among students of the university, and John 's friends in Port Dover congratulate him on his ability and popularity with his fellow students."* In the spring of 1897, John S. Martin successfully passed his 4th year in Arts, University College, which entitled him to a B.A. Amongst his classmates were Rt. Hon. Arthur Mieghe, Rt. Hon. Mackenzie King, Sir Hamar Greenwood, W.E. Beatty, president of the C.P.R., and Justice W.M. Martin, Premier of the Province of Saskatchewan. In the Fall of the same year, he attended Normal College in Hamilton and following graduation returned to Port Dover to teach high school, "Moderns and Classics". He was assistant principal to W.R. Liddy. He was first an earnest and conscientious teacher. Roy Hammond, a student of John S. Martin, said *"he had a soft voice, was well liked, and a poor disciplinarian"*. He also served on the local board of education.

In the following six years, students at the Port Dover High School must have received an excellent education, for on one occasion 100% of all students matriculating, passed their examinations. He was well liked by the students, and on his retirement from teaching he was presented with a gold locket having his monogram engraved on one side and *"Presented to John S. Martin, B.A., by the pupils of the Port Dover High School, December 1905"* engraved on the other side. This was accompanied by a complimentary address expressing regret at his departure from the school and profession. Following this they had a veritable banquet laid out, the tables being tastefully decorated and laden with all the good things one could wish for.

Having refreshments on such an occasion was a new departure in saying farewell to a teacher.

Many friends expressed their concern and wondered how he could give up a successful teaching career to pursue his earlier hobby of poultry breeding in general, and White Wyandottes in particular. However, shortly after his appointment to the staff of the Port Dover High School he visited the Pan American Exhibition in 1901, where he saw and studied for the first time virtually all the various breeds of poultry under one roof. It was here he decided to specialize in White Wyandottes. Early in January, 1906, John S. Martin was appointed lecturer on Poultry at the Ontario Agriculture College, Guelph, where he assisted in the month-long winter short courses. It would appear that he did not give up teaching, but simply changed his general high school audience to a special agricultural audience of college students interested in poultry.

## **POULTRY SPECIALIST**

His interest in poultry was manifested early, when at 10 years of age the inventory under his bed included a basket of eggs and a sitting hen. We presume that he wanted to be close to his charges. At age 14, he attended the Agricultural Fair in London, Ontario, where {The London Advertiser, April 19, 1928}<sup>4</sup> "*he saw a wonderful exhibition of Cochin poultry, shown by a Mr. Wyatt, which he coveted so much that he could not rest until he possessed them. This was practically the start of the poultry business in which he has since gained such prominence*".

While attending Port Dover Continuation School as a student, he boarded with his Aunt Jane (Mrs. Henry Best), in the red brick house on St. George Street, which property backed up to the rear of the offices of the Port Dover Maple Leaf. John persuaded his aunt to allow him to build a chicken coop at the back of the property for his prized poultry. This did not endear him to the neighbours who often referred to him as "Hen Coop John". In 1893, his father bought him his first purebred chickens, Light Brahmas. His passion for poultry breeding never diminished, even during his formal education and his teaching career.

An article appeared in the MAPLE LEAF, dated January 12, 1906, (just prior to John Martin taking up his position as lecturer at the O.A.C.) announcing that local poultry men, Messrs. Martin and Cosh were the chief prize takers at various shows. Cosh took all the "special" prizes offered at Guelph for his Barred Rocks, while Martin showed at Toronto, Syracuse N.Y., Guelph and Simcoe, he competed for five silver cups and won them all obtaining more 1st and 2nd Prizes than all his competitors combined. In September of the same year, Martin captured the majority of the prizes at the New York State Fair with his prize-winning White Wyandottes; there were only six firsts in competition and he took them all, including one over the championship bird shown at



Madison Square Garden and other leading exhibitions. The following year his Wyandottes made a clean sweep at the New York State Fair at Syracuse. From 39 entries he brought back 23 prizes, including the Championship Trophy.

In 1907, the poultry representative of the Imperial Japanese Government at the Boston show awarded Mr. Martin a handsome bronze vase in recognition of his showing of the best bird in the entire exhibition. As a result, the Japanese Government's Department of Agriculture became one of Mr. Martin's best customers and many individual Japanese followed suit. On his farm, (Lakeview) Mr. Martin had an immense collection of cups, shields, bowls, medals and other trophies testifying better than many words to the excellence of his breeding program with White Wyandottes.

As mentioned earlier, it was during his visit to the Pan American Exhibition that he decided to specialize in White Wyandottes, and in particular to attempt to improve the species' egg-laying qualities. From a paper<sup>5</sup> written for the O.A.C. Review, under the title THE USEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL WHITE WYANDOTTE by John S. Martin, Port Dover, Canada, we learn that: The first White Wyandottes were "Sports" from the Silver Laced, and hence are pure Wyandottes in origin. Wyandottes were formed primarily from the Cochin (a fine table bird, gentle in disposition and not given to flying but very slow to mature, another objection was the feathered shank), and the Hamburg (a most excellent layer with a rose comb, and although the eggs are small, they lay a large number). Fortunately this particular cross combined all the good characteristics of both breeds and none of the bad.

The demand for bred-to-lay stock had increased considerably and John Martin then made up his mind to make use of the trap nest to get the records of his best layers. One chicken, hatched in February, began laying early in the fall. Its record for the first year was 241 eggs. He named the chicken "Dorcas", and decided to use her to build up a flock of heavy layers. Mated to a fine vigorous cockerel, bred from a hen with a record of 205 eggs in one year, this Dorcas hen became the basis for all the Martin stock and of his successes with the "Regal - Dorcas" strain. The superiority of this strain was proven when the United States Government, after conducting several tests for adaptability and stamina with the view of stocking the United States farm in the Panama Canal Zone, chose the Martin strain for its high record egg-laying propensities.

Not only had Mr. Martin become famous for his prize-winning Wyandottes, but demand for his stock had increased world wide. In the third week of April, 1910, he shipped orders to Bosewig in Saxony, Germany; and also to the Countess Bentinck Auer Bach, in Hessen, Germany. Enquiries were received from England, Brazil and South America. In January, 1914, he shipped 30 White Wyandotte cockerels to various parts of the world; and in March, 1914, he made a shipment to Victoria, Australia; informing the press that in such long shipments, the birds invariably arrive in good

shape. In May, 1914, he shipped something like 7,000 hatching eggs to various parts of the world.

From the diary of Winnifred Barrett, August 14, 1915: "We all went over to the Chicken Farm this morning and Gladys (Gladys Farray, wife of Quintin Barrett, Winnifred's brother) took a picture of the \$1,000.00 rooster." (average broiler stock was selling at the time for \$1.00 each)

From the Port Dover MAPLE LEAF, November 25, 1921: "John S. Martin, the American Wyandotte King, shipped 30 purebred White Wyandottes to Germany this week. This is the third shipment to that country by Mr. Martin, and the second made since the close of hostilities. The birds are to be used in improving strains of German poultry."

The Regal Poultry Feed Company was formed to meet the public demand for a 100% poultry feed made from formulas developed by John S. Martin for his own birds. The Company put on a large display of poultry feeds, etc., at the Guelph Fair in December 1921, and was given a great reception by the leading poultry fanciers of the day. Many orders were placed, and the new company is confident of success. The following year, the Regal Milling Company, with the Hon. John S. Martin as President and Chas. G. Ivey as General Manager, erected a four-storey frame and stucco mill building for the manufacture of poultry feeds. Accepting the principle that "It Pays To Advertise", the company, in 1924, had a large sign painted on the side of their factory building, telling all and sundry that this is the home of "John S. Martin's", "Just as he feeds it", "Poultry Feed". The lettering was white on blue. In 1926, the new owner, Archie Milne from Markham, equipped the building for the manufacture and production of cereal foods under the trade name of "Sunera". The building was completely gutted in April 1938 in one of the most spectacular fires that had visited the district in many years.

In early August, 1922, John Martin sold and made shipment of one pen of White Wyandottes each to Genond Lagos, and A.D. Ferrari, of Buenos Aires; and a shipment of 50 stock birds to the Argentine Government. The latter was one of four lots of different breeds bought by the southern republic through Johnson and Gallouher, of Philadelphia, who had instructions that while the order with respect to the other three breeds might be selected from United States stock; the White Wyandottes must be from the Martin pens at Port Dover. Six weeks later shipments of pens of Regal Dorcas, White Wyandottes were made to Buenos Aires, British Guiana, Puerto Rico and the Barbados.

To facilitate business with the Spanish-speaking countries, Martin issued catalogues in the Spanish language. This was apparently fully warranted as no fewer



than six letters from South America were received in one day's mail. In early October, 1922, the following article appeared in the TORONTO STAR WEEKLY:

*"John S. Martin, of Port Dover, Ontario, the man who twenty years ago took what appeared to some people to be the awful plunge from High School Principal to start a poultry farm; and who is now famous throughout the continent and enjoys an income as large as that of a cabinet minister, is a believer in perspiration rather than inspiration.*

*"He wins prizes in the greatest poultry shows in America, but he says there is no magic about it, only hard work and the power to look at your own birds just as critically as the judge looks at them.*

*"His motto is 'Never leave anything undone beforehand and you will have no regrets afterward.*

*"When taking his birds to shows at a distance he buys a pullman ticket, and then spends most of his time in the baggage car where his charges are."*

Port Dover was well represented at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, in 1925, and even though the centre of attraction in the poultry section was the large and attractive exhibit of the Regal Milling Co. Ltd., manufacturers of the John S. Martin line of poultry feeds, most attention was given to the winning individual bird in the recent Ontario Egg Laying Contest in the capital city of Ottawa. The bird was the product of the Parfaite Poultry Farm, owned by J. Hambleton Thompson, and won out over 400 birds entered. The Parfaite hen laid 257 2-oz. eggs; which was a record well worth crowing about. In the contest, 56 birds of the 400 entered, were awarded Record of Performance Certificates and of this number, Penhall's Dover White Leghorns captured 10 Certificates. Bert Thompson, brother to "Ham", ran a poultry operation on the McBain Estate, specializing in Orpingtons ... a heavy, full-bodied, buff-coloured chicken with featherless legs; some of which he kept on his brother's farm with whom he was in partnership. It would appear that Port Dover was becoming the Poultry Capital of the Province.

At a council meeting, July 9, 1923, John S. Martin formally tendered his resignation as Reeve, a position he had held for one year and six months, to take up a new post as Ontario Minister of Agriculture in the Howard Ferguson Government.

In November, 1927, Hon. John S. Martin expressed his delight with the announcement that the Federal authorities would bring down new legislation that would mean jail for "chicken" thieves.

According to the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, stealing chickens had been looked upon by many magistrates as more or less of a joke, and now jail sentences for the crime would mean that many breeders, who had been on the verge of quitting the game, would now be encouraged to "stick by their guns".



## PLACES OF RESIDENCE AND POULTRY FACILITIES

John S. Martin's place of birth was the house on the family farm near Cheapside, in the township of Walpole; probably where three generations of Martins had been born before him. John Martin lived with his parents at Cheapside from 1875 to 1888. For the next two years, while attending high school in Port Dover, he boarded with his aunt Jane (his father's sister, Mrs. Henry Best) in a red brick house on St. George Street; returning to the farm at Cheapside during the summer and fall. From 1890 to 1892, he probably boarded at a home in Caledonia while attending the Caledonia Collegiate. Similarly, he must have boarded in Toronto during the four academic years he studied at the University of Toronto. After receiving his B.A. in 1897, he completed his teacher training at Normal College in Hamilton and immediately took up his post as Assistant Principal at the Port Dover High School. We presume he lived with his parents in the former Knox Church Manse on Prospect Hill.

On October 30, 1908, entry #112190, Registry Office, Simcoe, Ontario, we note that Emma C. Battersby, executor of the will of Eleanor Battersby, spinster, sold to John S. Martin for the sum of \$2,480.00 the property, on Prospect Hill across the street from his parents, identified as Lot 2, Block 59, except for that part conveyed to the late Arthur Battersby.

On Saturday, September 18th, 1909, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. Arthur Cope, 10 Lombard Road, Arlington, Massachusetts, John S. Martin was married to Miss Lillian M. Else of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

By the end of November, Mr. Martin had made extensive improvements to his new home having put in new oak floors and repaired and repainted the house throughout in a first-class up-to-date manner. He also removed the barn to a more suitable location and placed it on a concrete basement.

Needing more property to expand his already extensive poultry facilities, He purchased the fine adjoining property of Mrs. Horn, in June, 1910, taking possession later in the Fall. The following spring he added new buildings to accommodate the increasing business; which also necessitated the hiring of additional employees.

The Port Dover MAPLE LEAF, dated June 7, 1912, reports: "*Mr. John Martin, B.A. has purchased a fine new automobile. We can now boast of three in town.*"

A triangle piece of property, comprising about three acres, adjoining and directly north of the original Battersby estate was purchased by John Martin in November, 1912, to enlarge his already extensive poultry grounds, and to accommodate a small deer herd. At the same time he erected a state-of-the-art brooder house of the very

latest design, incorporating all the latest improvements. It was 50' long and 14' wide, and heated with steam pipes along the walls and down the centre. It was similar to the only other one of its kind that was being erected, at the same time, for the Poultry Department at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph.

In July 1914, John Martin purchased the adjoining property of Mr. Jas. Bannister, and three weeks later we learn that he was erecting some twenty portable colony houses for his range birds. This was a new concept in poultry management.

The July 9, 1920, issue of the Port Dover MAPLE LEAF reports: "*Mr. John S. Martin has purchased the beautiful residence on Prospect Hill, from Mrs. Arthur Battersby.*"

This beautiful Gothic Revival style home, built on the high point of Prospect Hill overlooking Silver Lake, was constructed in 1867 for the former Irish tea merchant, Arthur Battersby. Extensive renovations were made by the Martins at the time of purchase. Jack and Elva Brooker and family were the proud owners from 1957 to 1980. For the next 10 years, the estate was in the possession of Lynn and Michael Hagen. In 1984, the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) recommended that the estate be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. In 1990, Julianna and Stephen Gadatsy became the new owners and opened the "Gadatsy Gallery." December 2nd, 1990 marked a first for the artists of Port Dover when the work of 10 very talented locals was put on exhibit for a two-week show at the Gadatsy Gallery. Two of the talented artists were Norma and William Parkinson, Bill for his birds (finished in rough wood rather than painted) these were exceptional examples of his carving skill; and Norma for her exceptional talent in water colour. Norma is the daughter of J. Hambleton Thompson, owner of the Parfaite Poultry Farm, that brought fame to Port Dover in 1925, with their winning exhibit at the Royal Winter Fair, Toronto.

John S. Martin died in 1931, and Mrs. Martin continued to live in the Battersby house (Lakeview) until 1957. She had a new home built across the street where she lived until her death in 1967.

The largest real estate deal for some time in the Port Dover area, was the sale of the 145-acre farm owned and made famous by the late Hon. John S. Martin to H.A. Swartz, well-known Norfolk dairy farmer of Simcoe, Ontario.

## **POLITICAL CAREER**

Having served for a number of years on the local Board of Education, he was urged, in 1921, to offer his services to the municipality and after much hesitation and considerably more persuasion, he contested the office of Reeve, to which he was elected by a handsome majority. Things took on a decided change in Port Dover and



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also in county council for Reeve Martin was a bear for work. The municipal waterworks system was undertaken during his tenure of office and drastic changes were also made in the way of meetings and fees payable to the county councillors for John Martin was head of the finance committee and nothing escaped his eagle eye.

In June 1923 he decided to contest South Norfolk in the interests of the Conservative Party and he was elected to the Ontario Legislature. He was immediately given the Agricultural Portfolio in the new Howard Ferguson Conservative government after the defeat of Premier Drury's party. Alexander M. Ross in his *THE COLLEGE ON THE HILL*<sup>6</sup> writes: "*E.C. Drury (former Graduate of the O.A.C) had become Premier of Ontario in 1919 when the United Farmers of Ontario (U.F.O.) swept to victory in the election of that year.*" It must be noted that the administration of the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, even though a College of the University of Toronto, was in the Agricultural Portfolio. George C. Creelman was President of the O.A.C. from 1904 - 1920. Ross continues<sup>7</sup> ". . . *What Dr. Creelman lacked after the defeat of the Conservatives by the United Farmers of Ontario in 1919 was political favour. He lacked influence with both E.C. Drury, the new Premier, and Manning W. Doherty, the Minister of Agriculture. His removal as President of the Ontario Agricultural College was largely a political matter. Although the President had not played politics in his office, it was no secret that his leanings were Liberal, and that in 1909 he had been asked to undertake the leadership of the Liberal Party in Ontario. This offer he turned down publicly early in January, 1910. But in 1920 a new Government with new friends was in power. George Christie Creelman was compelled to resign as President to accept the position of Agent-General for Ontario in London, England.*"

When Drury became Premier, he chose Manning Doherty (O.A.C. grad of 1895) as his Minister of Agriculture, and it was Drury & Doherty who put forth the name of Joseph Benson Reynolds, a graduate of the University of Toronto. He had taught for 22 years at the O.A.C. and had assumed the presidency of the Manitoba Agricultural College in 1915. After five years in Winnipeg, Reynolds returned to Guelph to become President of the Ontario Agricultural College.

The central attraction of the semi-centennial celebrations of the Ontario Agricultural College was an historical review by Professor O.J. Stevenson, head of the Department of English. Dr. Stevenson traced the College's development over the fifty years of its existence with scholarly care and accuracy. His account is really the only detailed history of the College in existence, and as Ross writes:<sup>8</sup> .... "*and it is a pity that it was never given a more permanent form. Some of his material appeared in a bulletin issued under the authority of the Honourable John S. Martin for the Semi-Centennial, but the bulletin rather crassly omitted any reference to the source of its material.*"

Early in June, 1928, the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. John S. Martin, announced the appointment of Dr. George Irving Christie, (O.A.C. graduate of 1902) Director of the Experiment Station and Director of Extension at Purdue University, Indiana. Dr. Christie's name was one of those sent to President Coolidge in 1925 to be considered for the post of Secretary of Agriculture. He was a member of the Indiana Development Council, a prominent Rotarian, and the kind of public speaker who had a knack of saying newsworthy things; for example: "Christie Scores Propaganda Which Dictates to Farmers on Marketing", "Christie in Strong Plea for Greater Town-Country Unity"; the latter statement certainly coincides with John Martin's commitment, at the 73rd Annual Communication of Grand Lodge<sup>9</sup> to "promote a more complete understanding between our rural and urban populations".

The Hon. John S. Martin, after taking the Oath of Office at Government House, returned home to a large demonstration staged in his honour. Thousands of citizens of Ontario flocked to Port Dover to pay tribute to John S. Martin; the day was recalled as one of the biggest crowds ever congregating in the port. In the 1926 Provincial election he was returned with a majority double his first one and on October 26th, 1929, despite the fact that he was sick and unable to conduct a campaign, he was again elected. It was said "he was a through and through Conservative, but was an all-round dirt farmer".

Dr. Christie must have cultivated a harmonious relationship with the Minister of Agriculture for during the period 1923-31, the following activities stand out as milestones in the progress of the Ontario Agricultural College: War Memorial Hall was dedicated on June 10, 1924, during the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the O.A.C.; in the same year, the name Agricultural Engineering Option was changed to Agricultural Science to prepare graduates as high school teachers; one of the great forward movements in the academic life of the College, was the introduction of the Degree of Master of Science in Agriculture in 1926; three new building programs were initiated in 1929, the Horticultural Building, Watson Hall (the girls' residence), and the new Administration Building (now Johnston Hall). The old administration building was vacated on October 1, 1929, and the new structure of Scholastic Gothic and using Queenston limestone and concrete was completed the following year at a cost of more than \$1,000,000. In 1930, another three projects, although of lesser scale but very important, were underway, namely: the elaborate greenhouses south of the new Horticulture Building; the new Dairy Barn, and the 50,000-gallon water tank tower east of the power plant. His six active years as Minister of Agriculture revealed high devotion to duty and a record of constructive achievement.

He came to office at a time when there had developed sharp division between city and country; by his speeches and by his policies, he strove for a better understanding between urban and rural residents. He did much to break down this cleavage. Press reports claimed that no cabinet minister was better known than Mr.

Martin as he was untiring in his efforts to visit every part of the province and to learn for himself at first hand the problems of the farmer. He initiated an enquiry into farm conditions in the province, the first for many years. He launched the Junior Farmers' movement which brought 500 farm boys and girls to the Royal Winter Fair each year for their wider education. The Three-Month Course for boys and girls was broadened over the Province to upward of a dozen centres, and the One-Month Course was extended to more than a score of towns and villages.

He was instrumental in bringing 1700 boys from the Old Country to Ontario farms and as a consequence this form of supervised immigration was expanded by the Salvation Army and other agencies. A vocational school was established at Ridgetown; a cold-storage plant at Simcoe; important new buildings were erected at the Ontario Agricultural College; and overseas marketing work advanced through his efforts. His earnest endeavours in the House were toward effecting better and closer understanding between country and city. He also often emphasized the need for education among the farmers themselves as to better methods and higher standards on the farm.

On September 18, 1930, Hon. John S. Martin, Norfolk's representative at Queen's Park, announced his resignation as Minister of Agriculture, because of ill health, but will stay on as the member. His six active years as Minister revealed high devotion to duty and a record of constructive achievement.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

**CHURCH** - Honourable John S. Martin was a devout Christian man. He was never willingly absent from church, and his example in this respect as a public leader of his country, was a tremendous influence for good. He was a well-known member of the Synod of Huron. He glorified his occupation and his Christian service. According to The Gifts Register of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Port Dover, the following items were listed: 1932, a Stained Glass Window in the Nave to the memory of John Strickler Martin presented by his wife, Lillian E. Martin; 1932, a Prayer Desk presented by Lillian E. Martin; 1942, A Union Jack with Staff and Stand, presented by Mrs. John S. Martin; June 30, 1961, the new Credence Table, donated by Mrs. John S. Martin, and dedicated by former rector, Canon D.J. Cornish; 1968, donation to East Window, In Memory of: Lillian E. Martin, given by The Cope Family.

**ODDFELLOWS** - John S. Martin was Initiated into Norfolk Lodge No. 225, Imperial Order of Oddfellows, Port Dover, Ontario, November, 1917; and completed his First, Second and Third Degrees.

**ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE** - John S. Martin received his Fourteenth Degree from the Murton Lodge of Perfection, Hamilton, March 22, 1922;



and his Eighteenth Degree from the Hamilton Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix, November 27, 1923; and his Thirty-Second Degree from the Moore Sovereign Consistory in Hamilton, November 6, 1925. He was Coroneted an Honourary Inspector General Thirty-Third Degree of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Canada, May 13, 1931.

SPORTS (May 8, 1959) - "*The coveted John S. Martin trophy for hockey was won this year by Robert Woolley and Keith Duxbury . . .*" (It would be interesting to know something of the origin of this trophy as John Martin himself was not a sportsman.)

MASONIC CAREER - John S. Martin was initiated into Freemasonry in Erie Lodge No. 149, December 12, 1904; passed to the second degree, January 17, 1905; and raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason, April 28, 1905. He was installed as Worshipful Master of his mother lodge on the day of St. John the Evangelist, December 27, in the year 1911. The Lodge Register shows that W. Bro. John S. Martin, attended every Regular and Emergent meeting of the Lodge during the year he was Worshipful Master.

From the archives of the Port Dover MAPLE LEAF we learn that: "*The largest gathering that ever took place in Erie Lodge, No. 149, A.F. & A.M., and the most pleasing and notable event in its history of 50 years took place last Monday evening in its handsome lodge rooms over Caley's Block, it being the dedication of their spacious quarters after their complete renovation and refurbishing, a special communication of Grand Lodge being held here for that purpose at which many distinguished members of the order were present and took part in.*" Following the very interesting ceremonial of dedicating the Lodge and a number of presentations, "*. . . there was also presented to the lodge a handsome gavel made from the wood of a table formerly owned by the First Grand Master of the Order of Canada, William Mercer Wilson of Simcoe, by Bro. Dr. McIntosh of Simcoe, who on a former occasion also generously presented the Lodge with a fine bust of the late G.M. Wilson, for which a cordial vote of thanks was tendered the popular donor.*" (Port Dover MAPLE LEAF, May 12, 1911).

A historical event took place on May 18, 1983, when 12 Lodges of Wilson District were invited to a Regular Meeting of The Heritage Lodge to give a brief history of identical gavels in each Lodge's possession matching the description of the gavel presented to Erie Lodge<sup>10</sup>.

At the 65th annual communication of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, held at the City of Niagara Falls, commencing July 21st, A.D. 1920, A.L. 5920, John Strickler Martin, Port Dover, was elected District Deputy Grand Master of Wilson District No. 611.



## Ontario Masons

The character of the man can be determined in part from the contents of his report on the condition of Masonry throughout his district for 1920-1921<sup>12</sup>. On the subject of Lodge Secretaries, and after complimenting them on the excellent manner in which the books were kept throughout the district, he added these comments:

*"A poor secretary will ruin any lodge, no matter how strong it may be. A careless secretary will result in a careless membership and deterioration immediately sets in. A Lodge should be very particular in the selection of a secretary and if you are successful in getting a good man, use every effort to keep him there."*

His agricultural awareness is exemplified in the following observation on his official visit to Oak Branch Lodge, No. 261, Innerkip<sup>12</sup>: *"Driving through the country this beautiful autumn afternoon, one could not help being impressed with the thought that the Great Architect has been most bountiful towards this part of Ontario, and the wonderful green fields of fall wheat gave excellent promise for the coming year."*

The concept of a Lodge of Instruction had been initiated in the district some twelve years previously. It was customarily held on a Saturday. All three degrees were fully conferred or exemplified by different lodges from the district, with discussions immediately following each degree. Two degrees being presented in the afternoon, and the remaining degree following the banquet in the evening. On this occasion Erie Lodge No. 149, celebrating its Sixtieth Anniversary, was the host lodge. Over four hundred Masons registered for the meeting, which was held in the large Port Dover Town Hall. Grand Lodge was represented by M.W. Bro. W.H. Wardrope, P.G.M. from Hamilton, R.W. Bro. W.M. Logan, Grand Secretary, and R.W. Bro. Robt. S. Hamilton, of Gait, D.D.G.M. of Wellington District No. 7. For the information of other brethren in the District, R.W. Bro. Martin said<sup>13</sup>: *"The supper was not put on by any association or society. We simply called to our assistance the wives, sisters and mothers of the members of Erie Lodge, they responded gladly and their organization was practically perfect."* Music was provided by the Masonic Orchestra of Woodstock; this group was very much in demand throughout the District and beyond. In his report<sup>14</sup> to Grand Lodge, R.W. Bro. Martin records: *"I have always regarded Woodstock as the capital of Wilson district so far as Masonry is concerned . . . "The speech of the evening was made by M.W. Bro. W.H. Wardrope, who, at the time, was undoubtedly one of the most popular of the Grand Masters. The forepart of his address was an entertaining and instructive description of his trip to England, where he represented Grand Lodge at the Peace Celebration. The latter part of his address dealt with the purposes and high ideals of Freemasonry. The evening's entertainment was brought to a close by R.W. Bro. W.M. Logan, Grand Secretary, who had lived in Port Dover during his childhood. The Officers of King Solomon's Lodge No. 43, Woodstock, closed the Lodge in the three degrees at 11:40 p.m."*<sup>15</sup>



## Ontario Masons

A special note of concern was expressed in his report to Grand Lodge on the District Divine Service, that was held at St. John's Anglican Church, Woodhouse.<sup>16 & 17</sup> *"After church, the brethren marched to the graveside of the first Grand Master . . . I wish to say, Most Worshipful Sir, that the stone which marks the grave . . . is a disgrace to the Masons of Canada. It is neither level nor plumb, and is most ordinary in appearance. In fact, visitors to the cemetery would never find it unless properly directed. Has the time not come for a suitable stone, properly inscribed, to be erected to preserve this ancient landmark? Col. William Mercer Wilson holds a unique place in the Annals of Masonry and was re-elected time after time. His generosity and devotion to Masonry sapped his resources. In fact, he gave his all to Masonry and died a poor man".* These words did not go unheeded, as in due time Grand Lodge did dedicate a more appropriate monument; to which V.W. Bro. Bruce M. Pearce records:<sup>18</sup> *"R.W. Bro. John S. Martin of Port Dover, who as D.D.G.M. of Wilson District initiated the movement to have the First Grand Master recognized in this way".*

A Special Communication of Grand Lodge, June 16, 1922, was held at the cemetery at St. John's Anglican Church, Woodhouse, located on Highway #24, south of Simcoe, with the Grand Master (M.W. Bro. Wm. N. Ponton) in attendance, and R.W. Bro. Martin acting as Deputy Grand Master. An imposing monument was unveiled to the memory of the First Grand Master.<sup>19</sup> In his Report, R.W. Bro. Hutt D.D.G.M. for Wilson District No. 6 writes:<sup>20</sup> *" . . . the brethren proceeded to a quiet country churchyard, midway between Simcoe and Port Dover, where under the shadow of St. John's Church, the mortal remains of Most Wor. Bro. Wilson have rested for almost half a century, forgotten, almost, in the stress and strain of modern life. The thread of remembrance, however, was not entirely broken, and it needed but a hint from R.W. Bro. Martin, of Port Dover, to awaken the brethren to a responsibility not shirked, but overlooked. Here on June 16th, a monument, the gift of the entire Fraternity in Ontario, was unveiled by the Grand Master assisted by Most Wor. Bro. W.R. White and other brethren, which shall forever mark the spot where lie rests and preserve indelibly in our minds his Masonic achievements."*<sup>21</sup>

From the Grand Master's Address,<sup>22</sup> *"The unveiling of the Monument of our first Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Col. William Mercer Wilson at Simcoe, was in every way worthy of Grand Lodge. The massive granite, the appropriate inscription, the exquisite beauty of the surroundings, the large concourse of Masons present, the whole character of the function, left nothing to be desired."*

The Special Committee on the Wilson Monument had been appointed at the 67th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge in Thunder Bay, 1921. R.W. Bros. John S. Martin and R.B. Hutt were members of the Committee. The report of the Committee gives the cost to the Grand Lodge treasury for the monument at \$1,140.00.

John Martin's leadership characteristics would be exemplified on many occasions throughout his Masonic career, particularly his recognition of "dedication to service" by others. On his visits as D.D.G.M. to the Lodges in his District, he never failed to recognize the contributions and sincere efforts by individuals in particular and lodges in general, always complimenting the positive actions but giving only mild rebuke for neglect of duty. He had a faithful following on all his Official Visits, particularly Past Masters of Erie Lodge, and he always acknowledged their support. At a Regular Meeting, April 18, 1921,<sup>23</sup> of his mother lodge, he proposed that "*The Secretary shall be exempt from all Lodge dues and shall receive 35 cents per member per year for his services.*" The motion passed. Several years later he would endeavour to encourage lodges to increase the attendance at divine services and to ease the financial burden to individual lodges, by the following announcement in his Grand Master's Address,<sup>24</sup> "I would therefore recommend that no fee be charged for a dispensation to attend divine worship".

By the time of the 67th Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, held at the twin cities of Fort William and Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay), John Martin had made many Masonic friends, not only during his agricultural career, the music business and his teaching experience, but more particularly in Masonic circles. Therefore, it was no surprise when he was elected to the Board of General Purposes of Grand Lodge, ranking third behind R.W. Bros. Thos. Rowe and J.A. Rowland<sup>25</sup>. He was appointed a member of the Committee on Warrants,<sup>26</sup> and again in 1923<sup>21</sup>.

At this time, the Masonic Lodge Rooms in the Caley Block were proving inadequate to meet the needs of Erie Lodge and a committee was appointed at the Regular Meeting on May 8, 1922, to meet with a similar committee of the Odd Fellows to consider a joint venture for new quarters or rooms.

From the MAPLE LEAF archives we learn that on the twentieth day of May in 1861, thirty-five Masons gathered above one of the stores of the Powell Block, the next block south (where the Town Hall now stands), for the purpose of constituting of a new Masonic Lodge to be known as Erie Lodge. The Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. William Mercer Wilson, presided over the ceremony. In 1889, and for the next 50 years the Masons met in rooms in the Caley Block. About 1906, the Caley Block was destroyed by fire, and the Lodge suffered considerable damage, many valuable records and books were destroyed. The block was rebuilt and the Lodge continued to meet in rooms provided. In 1921, the Lodge moved to the McQueen Block, but here too, the brethren were in need of more spacious quarters.

Apparently the joint meeting between the Masons and the Odd Fellows proved fruitless, for in the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Erie Lodge on January 1, 1923, R.W. Bro. J.S. Martin initiated a motion "that the matter of installing the electric lights in the Lodge Room be left to the committee appointed to have it done in the near

future". At the April meeting a committee was appointed to consult with Mr. Caley with regards to enlarging or changing the Lodge Rooms. The subject was still being debated at the August meeting for a proposed new banquet room, raising the ceiling in the Lodge Room and the installation of a ventilation system. There being little progress by September, a committee was empowered to enter into an agreement with McQueen and Co. for new Lodge Rooms in the McQueen Block. An article in the MAPLE LEAF of November 21, 1924, states "*In the McQueen Block, work is in progress making the necessary changes for the new occupants, and when completed, Erie Lodge No. 149, A.F. & A.M., will move from their present location in the Caley Block.*" The minutes of May 4, 1925, show that a committee was appointed to look after finishing the new Lodge Rooms in the McQueen Block. Another committee was appointed to "look into and have a toilet installed if possible".

From an Excerpt in the Port Dover MAPLE LEAF, we learn that "At a regular meeting of the Lodge on January 25, 1929, a committee was appointed to advise as to the best way of Erie Lodge doing honour to our Grand Master and reported that we believe it best to secure a permanent home for Erie Lodge and connect it with our Grand Master's (M.W. Bro. John S. Martin) term of office in such a way that it will commemorate that term forever". The Grand Master expressed his approval of the project and gave the Committee encouragement in their efforts by promising a most generous contribution. It should be noted that an equal amount was pledged by Bro. W.H. Barrett and lesser amounts by other prominent Masons. The site at the corner of Nelson and Main Streets found favour with the majority of the brethren, thus the fanciful dreams of many years of a Masonic Temple in Port Dover began to take definite form.

At an Emergent Meeting, May 6, 1929, the Finance Committee reported on their canvass of the brethren and informed the Lodge that promises totalling between nine and ten thousand dollars had been received. A Building Committee was appointed to get plans and estimates on a Lodge building and submit to the Lodge for approval. The plans were reviewed, discussed and approved at the Regular Meeting, May 20, 1929, with instructions to the Committee to finish the details and to call for tenders. Three tenders were submitted at the next Regular Meeting, June 17, 1929; and the lowest tender (\$9,100.00) by Geo. W. Nunn was accepted. The first meeting of Erie Lodge in the new Temple was held on Monday, December 16, 1929. Present were M.W. Bro. Hon. J.S. Martin, 75 Brethren and 31 Visitors.

From the Lodge minutes: "*This being the Annual Installation and Investiture, R.W. Bro. J.R. Waddle assumed the gavel and assisted by M.W. Bro. Martin, proceeded with the beautiful ceremony of Installation. M.W. Bro. Martin, after the Investiture was complete, gave the beautiful lecture relating to the Ideal of a Freemason which was delivered in beautiful form and appreciated by all the Brethren. He also presented the*



*P.M's Jewel to W. Bro. MacGaw Macdonald, congratulating him on the harmony of the Lodge and the success of the year he had just completed."*

The year 1929 is remembered the world over as the year of the great Stock Market Crash. Savings were lost, institutions crumbled, industrial giants collapsed and the great depression was being felt by all levels of society. Nevertheless, the stout-hearted Masons of Port Dover responded to the need for a permanent "home", and in the short period of less than eight months from the establishment of the building committee to holding the first meeting of the Lodge in the new building was a remarkable achievement; particularly at a time when a full week of labour at 10 hours per day was worth the equivalent of one hour today. The Brethren of the 1920s certainly deserve to be congratulated for their foresight, commitment and dedication. It is unfortunate that succeeding generations lacked the same foresight in not initiating contingency plans to provide for the proper maintenance and updating of the handsome building. Approximately 60 years later, in 1991, the Officers of Erie Masonic Hall Inc., notified the 104 members of Erie Lodge that the lower part of the Masonic Temple had to be completely renovated to meet today's building by-laws. The debt, which is owed to the bank amounted to approximately \$50,000.00, with an annual interest of \$6,000.00 or \$500.00 per month, which is considerably more than the lodge income. How often is this scenario being repeated in modern times?

In 1924, R.W. Bro. John S. Martin was re-elected to the Board of General Purposes, again ranking third. The next year, at the 70th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, held in the city of Hamilton, July 15, 1925, he was elected Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario. Later (LONDON FREE PRESS, April 19, 1928), at a reception in London, Ontario, the local paper reports: "... *He told of his decision to accept the position as deputy and later the grandmaster ship because he felt the need existed for a greater unity between rural and urban people. Nowhere was that unity found to exist as it does in Masonry, he said, and he hoped that it would be developed to an even greater degree in the future.*"

As Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Martin assisted Grand Lodge in the performance of many duties including the laying of the cornerstone for the Church of Ascension, in the City of Windsor, June 11, 1927.<sup>28</sup>

From "A History of the Grand Lodge":<sup>29</sup> "*Through the good offices of the Deputy Grand Master, the Hon. John S. Martin, Minister of Agriculture, the seventy-second Annual Communication was held at the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph. The location was ideal for such an assembly and the buildings placed at the disposal of Grand Lodge were admirably adapted to the requirements.*"

Grand Lodge convened in Memorial Hall, a beautiful limestone building erected by Scottish Masons to the memory of soldiers of the First World War. The Mayor of

the City of Guelph and Mr. J.B. Reynolds, President of the Provincial Agricultural College were invited to the dais for the welcoming addresses. The Mayor was particularly gratified that this historic visit should occur on the Centennial Anniversary of the Founding of Guelph, and also the Diamond Jubilee Year of Confederation.

It was in these familiar surroundings, and where he had taught agricultural students some 23 years earlier that the Hon. John S. Martin was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

Two years earlier the Grand Master, M.W. Bro. J.A. Rowland, had appointed a Special Committee to report on the Grand Secretary's Office, with R.W. Bro. J.S. Martin as Chairman. The Report of the Special Committee on the Grand Secretary's Office was presented by R.W. Bro. J.S. Martin at the 72nd Annual Communication held in Guelph, and the third item of the report reads as follows:<sup>30</sup>

*"3. While the general management of the office and the control of the staff is and always must be vested in the person of the Grand Secretary, your Committee feels that it is advisable to establish a permanent committee with which the Grand Secretary may consult and advise, with power to fix salaries of the staff should occasion arise, and generally to make such recommendations in regard to the office as it may deem proper. The Committee recommends that this permanent Committee should consist of the Grand Master for the time being, and the third member to be appointed by the Board of General Purposes, and that in the meantime and until further appointment is made, the third member of the committee should be M. W. Bro. E.T. Malone (Grand Treasurer)."*

The Report was approved for adoption, but a perusal of subsequent Grand Lodge Proceedings did not reveal any formal or standing committee. One may presume that the central administration obtained informal counsel from the senior officers of the Craft and possibly others as the need arose. By so doing, there would be no formal connection with the Board of General Purposes and the self-styled body would function independently of the main body of Freemasonry. This is probably not what the Special Committee intended.

In an address delivered by the Grand Master at a reception given in his honour by Ontario District at Newcastle on June 4th, 1928, the Grand Master said:<sup>31</sup>

*"The days of operative Masonry are over. We are all speculative Masons for we take the rude apprentice and mould him into good material for the temple. There is no organization that has the same opportunity to make good citizens as Masonry. For a few moments I would like to apply Masonry to immigration which is a vital question in this country at the present time. The first thing that Masonry requires is obedience to all laws of the country and in this way you can help the stranger to our shores."*



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*"I have connected with my Department of Agriculture that of Immigration. I have tried to give every newcomer a personal welcome to this Province. Operating with the Department of Immigration is the British Welcome League. Much fine work has been accomplished by this organization. The quarters that the Welcome League were using were not suited for the work and the Government purchased a property near the Allen Gardens in Toronto, which is clean and wholesome, and which gives the newcomer a better idea of this country when he first sees it."*

The Grand Master spoke of the Vimy Ridge Farm Boys. This farm is located just south of the City of Guelph. The dormitory, which could accommodate about 55 boys at a time can still be seen from the Speed River just off Guelph Township Road No. 5. The boys would receive at least two weeks' farm training before going on the farm with some honest and reputable farmer who would give them a good home, and where they could obtain further farm experience. The Grand Master continued:

*"We want boys from the Old Land, but not those on the dole for two or three years, for they are useless. We try to give them a smattering of agriculture at this farm and then put them out in a good home. It is then up to the farmer to use the boy right and try to help him get along. In this way Masons can help, for they can look after a boy in the district in which they reside and see that he is properly cared for and hear something of the ways of the new land. The Barnardo Home is doing great work and I believe Dr. Barnardo is one of the greatest men of the last half-century. The people from England, Scotland and Ireland have the British sentiment firmly implanted. After we take care of the Britishers, then let the European members come. Extend the right hand of fellowship to all."*

Martin was obviously aware that some of the Farm Boys and Barnardo children that arrived in Canada were being mistreated, and he appealed to the hearts of his fellow Masons to *"speak peace and consolation to the troubled spirit, to carry relief and gladness to the habitations of want and destitution and to dry the tears of the widow and the orphan"*.

The LONDON ADVERTISER dated July 19, 1928, records that 2,000 Masonic delegates registered for the 73rd Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, and following a stirring message from Hon. John S. Martin, Grand Master, Ald. Paul Doig and City Clerk Samuel Baker extended the city's welcome and presented to the Grand Master, in documentary form, the scroll of THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY. The Grand Master was the first man to have conferred upon him the freedom of the city, which entitles him and all others upon whom it may be conferred in future the right to sit within the bar of the City Council *"without let or hindrance"*.



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The assembly was held in the auditorium of the Masonic Temple, Queen's Ave., London, Ontario. During the welcoming ceremonies, R.W. Bro. W.M. Logan, Grand Secretary, presented the Grand Master with a gavel made from the wood of the famous old tree at Woodhouse, near the grave of the First Grand Master, William Mercer Wilson. History records that Governor Simcoe camped near the tree in 1793, and it was under the same tree that General Sir Isaac Brock recruited 170 troops for the march on Detroit in 1812.

From the address of the Grand Master we read in part:<sup>32</sup> "... *Western Ontario reminds one of a beautiful garden and when we realize that one hundred and twenty-five years ago it was practically a forest wilderness, we are filled with respect and admiration for the men and women who brought this about. Here and there we see evidences of these earlier days but the log house, the stump fence, the corduroy road and other landmarks are rapidly sinking into oblivion.*

*"Many of the men who performed these miracles are still with us. Their hands, twisted and calloused, bear silent testimony to their superhuman efforts and long days of ceaseless toil. The beautiful farm homes which they have left behind are a monument to them. They came here empty-handed but with courageous and hopeful hearts, and the work which they have done will endure."*

In accepting the office of Grand Master, and acknowledging the confidence placed in him, his chief thought and hope was "... *that I may faithfully discharge the great responsibility which you have placed upon me and that, during my term of office, I may be of real service to the Craft. I am particularly anxious that the Craft should have a strong appeal for those who follow the same occupation as myself that of farming. Since the first Grand Master was elected, this office has been held by many talented men of various professions and callings but until my election at the last meeting of Grand Lodge no farmer had ever been elected Grand Master. Therefore, I feel that, in electing me to this office, you have honoured agriculture and the thousands of worthy and devoted members of our order who follow that calling.*

*"In the past we have had differences between residents of city and country and many of our rural people have felt that, although they toiled long and faithfully, they were not getting their fair share in the prosperity which they saw all around them. Our urban people, not understanding or appreciating the difficulties of rural life, were apt to feel that our rural people complaining without cause. In the interests of our Province and our Country it is most undesirable that these differences and misunderstandings should exist. Masonry, recognizing neither race, creed nor occupation, is doing wonderful work in uniting all classes of men in the interests of good citizenship. No other organization has so great an opportunity of developing good citizenship and creating a bond of understanding and sympathy among all classes of our People."*



During his first year as Grand Master, fraternal visits were made to our daughter Jurisdictions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan; the Provincial Grand Lodge of Manitoba having received its Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Canada in Ontario, and Saskatchewan from Manitoba. The visit to Saskatchewan marked the first time that a Grand Master from the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario had attended any of their Annual Communications. This 22nd Communication held in the City of Saskatoon was a most enjoyable experience and provided an opportunity to renew an old friendship with the Grand Master the Honourable Mr. W.M. Martin, Chief Justice and formerly Premier of Saskatchewan.

From the TORONTO GLOBE, June 9, 1928, we read: ". . . *the Hon. W.M. Martin was born at Norwich, near the present Port Dover home of Hon. John S. Martin. The two men, as boys, went to school together, to university together where they were close friends, and both, at first, took up teaching as a profession.*"

From the EVENING TELEGRAM, June 27, 1928, we learn J.S. Martin graduated from the University of Toronto in 1897 and W.M. Martin the following year. ". . . *Not only had they attained similar rank in the Masons and were equally well known in public life, they are similar in appearance, tall, broad-shouldered and robust. But they do not spring from the same family tree . . . Incidentally, the Ontario Mr. Martin is known to Geo. A. Cruise, K.C., of this city (Saskatoon), and their meeting here proved an enjoyable one. It was 28 years ago that Mr. Cruise attended the Port Dover High School, where Mr. John Martin was one of the teachers. For his services there Mr. Martin received the princely stipend of \$550 a year. Mr. Cruise recalled that on Saturdays and holidays Mr. Martin sold pianos, his father being engaged in the piano business.*"

In recalling his visit to the Grand Lodge of Michigan at Detroit, the Grand Master said:<sup>33</sup> "*Nothing could have been more cordial than was the reception accorded us. The Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack were displayed side by side on the floor of Grand Lodge. As we ascended the dais we were greeted with the strains of 'The Maple Leaf and O Canada'.*"

The sessions of Grand Lodge were held in the beautiful Scottish Rite Cathedral of the new Masonic Temple. This magnificent temple, erected at a cost of over \$8,000,000, surpasses anything that I have ever seen and is no doubt the finest Masonic Temple in the world. I have no words to describe this wonderful structure but it is well worth a trip to Detroit to see it.

However, after all, the spirit of Masonry is found not in magnificent temples and beautiful appointments but rather in the hearts of its members and in this respect the Grand Lodge of Michigan is in no wise lacking.





It should be noted that on Friday evening, November 2, 1855, on the corner of James and Main in the City of Hamilton, M.W. Bro. the Hon. H.T. Backus, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan (Our Mother Grand Lodge), performed the ceremonies of consecrating the Grand Lodge of Canada, and installed the Grand Master, M.W. Bro. William Mercer Wilson, and invested and installed the Grand Officers in due and ancient form. Therefore a strong Masonic bond of friendship exists between the State of Michigan and the Provinces of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan as Mother, Daughter, Grand Daughter and Great Grand Daughter in the Grand Design of Freemasonry.

In responding to the criticism that the Grand Lodge of Canada in Ontario is self-centred and that it does not take a friendly interest in other jurisdictions, M.W. Bro. Martin said:<sup>34</sup> ". . . *I think, Brethren, that this criticism is quite unwarranted. From personal knowledge, I have found that the Brethren of our Grand Lodge are following with keen interest and pride the progress of our sister Grand Lodges. However, this is a large Jurisdiction and a busy one. Distances in Canada are great, while time and money are important considerations. The difficulty is further increased by conflicts in the dates of meeting of the various Grand Lodges, which make it impossible for a Grand Master to visit as many of them as he could wish during his term of office . . . I was unable to attend more than two of the Grand Lodges in that section (Western Canada) of our great country. A similar condition prevails in the Eastern Provinces, where the Grand Lodges meet at almost the same times as those in the West. It seems to me that it would be in the interest, not only of Masonry but of a closer understanding among the various parts of our far-flung Dominion, if something could be done to facilitate and encourage a regular exchange of visits among all of our Canadian Grand Lodges.*"

The Grand Master went on to quote, in part, from a letter he had recently received from R.W. Bro. Sir Alfred Robbins, President of the Board of General Purposes of the United Grand Lodge of England:

". . . *I am particularly glad to know that you are following the practice of attending meetings of Grand Lodges of other jurisdictions not only in the Canadian Provinces but in the United States. I think it is an excellent idea, for it carries forward the notion I have long been advocating of a more full, free and frequent intercourse between the leading representatives of the various jurisdictions so as to remove any possible cause for misapprehension or misunderstanding.*"

From the Grand Lodge Publication *WHENCE COME WE?*<sup>35</sup> ". . . He (M.W. Bro. J.S. Martin) advocated forging closer ties with other Canadian jurisdictions. In a sense then he was the father of an idea that finally came to fruition in 1947 with the first All-Canada Biennial Conference of Grand Masters."

From THE MAIL AND EMPIRE, dated July 19, 1928, "*London, July 18 - An interesting high light of tonight's dinner tendered by Hon. John S. Martin, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge to the 125 veteran past masters of his jurisdiction was the attendance of Dr. G. Sherk of Port Dover, who first met the Grand Master when he entered the world. Dr. Sherk is now 86 years of age. In reply, Dr. Sherk declared that he was proud to be present and was loud in his praise of Hon. J.S. Martin, who he described as: My Honourable Bonny Boy*".

Each of the Past Masters, all of whom are more than 70 years of age, was presented with a jewel specially struck to commemorate the occasion. From *WHENCE COME WE*<sup>36</sup> "... *They were introduced by the Grand Director of Ceremonies, cordially greeted by the Grand Master, eloquently addressed by M.W. Bro. Wardrope, and accorded the Grand Honours.*" And from page 186 W.C.W., "*Over the next few years the Grand Secretary was asked to supply similar jewels for other Past Masters who had subsequently reached the age of seventy. When the supply of medals was exhausted the award lapsed*".

However, the outstanding event during our Grand Master's first year in office took place in the beautiful surroundings of historic old St. John's Church, Woodhouse, three miles southeast of Simcoe, on Sunday afternoon, June 24, 1928. The Simcoe REFORMER dated June 28, 1928, reports the following: "*... under the canopy of an azure sky, a ceremony unique in Masonic annals of Ontario was enacted last Sunday afternoon, when more than two thousand Masons from all parts of Western and Central Ontario united in a solemn and impressive tribute to the memory of Wm. Mercer Wilson, First Grand Master of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Ontario, and one of the leading figures of his day in the public life of the Dominion.*"

It is now some eight years since this annual ceremony was inaugurated by Norfolk Lodge No. 10, Simcoe, but the occasion this year far surpassed that of preceding years. It was rendered doubly notable by reason of the fact that its moving figure was Hon. John S. Martin, present Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in Ontario, who was accompanied by practically all the Grand Lodge Officers. In addition there were Masonic dignitaries, past and present, from many parts of the province, and a great host of Masons representing nearly every lodge in this part of Ontario. "*Following the service a wreath was placed by Hon. John S. Martin beside the monument erected by Grand Lodge in June, 1922, to the memory of William Mercer Wilson. The Grand Master paid a brief though glowing tribute to the Masonic and public life of the first Grand Master. He believed that all Masons could well strive to emulate him who had performed a service of such distinctive value to the Craft.*"

"*Following the ceremony at St. John's, the huge assembly repaired to the beautiful home of Hon. John S. Martin at Port Dover, where refreshments were served.*



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*Naturally the generous host and hostess had not anticipated a throng of such proportions so that they could only regret that the larder was emptied before the end of the line was reached."*

The minutes of Erie Lodge (Emergent Meeting, June 24, 1928) record that "*About 1500 people from all Ontario accepted John S. and Mrs. Martin's invitation to afternoon tea, Prospect Hill was 'eaten out'.*"

The minutes of Erie Lodge (Regular Meeting, Dec. 27, 1927) show that even though Erie Lodge was the host lodge, several committees made up of members from both Erie Lodge No. 149 and Norfolk Lodge No. 10, were appointed to make the necessary arrangements, including the erection of a platform with seats, police escort, details of the ceremony, selection of hymns, speakers, and assistance for the afternoon tea at "Lakeview".

The following is taken from the D.D.G.M.'s report for Wilson District: "*After a full week of wet, sodden weather; on this eventful morning, the sun broke forth from the heavy clouds, as if to join with us, in paying a tribute to the memory of our First Grand Master, William Mercer Wilson. Long before the appointed hour, autos from every part of the country began to arrive, and when the beautiful service of the Anglican Church opened the ceremony, fully twenty-five hundred people had assembled, and while it was quite true that the brethren had come to revere the memory of our First Grand Master, it was also true, that in doing so, they paid a greater tribute to the present Grand Master, the Hon. John S. Martin, who was present to welcome them. Other prominent members of Grand Lodge, in the persons of M.W. Bro. John A. Rowland, P.G.M., R.W. Bro. R.B. Dargavel, Deputy Grand Master, R.W. Bro. William M. Logan, Grand Secretary; R. W. Bros W.J. Moore, Chas S. Hamilton, and W. J. Dunlop, District Deputy Grand Masters of Toronto Districts, R.W. Bro. the Rev. A.M. McLennen also D.D.G.M. of Toronto; R.W. Bro. J.L. Mitchener D.D.G.M. of Brant District, and all the Past District Deputy Grand Masters of Wilson District were present. Most Worshipful Bro. W.H. Wardrope of Hamilton delivered a very eloquent address, which was most reverently listened to, and deeply appreciated. The Most Worshipful the Grand Master, took charge of the service at the graveside, assisted by M.W. Bro. John A. Rowland and R.W. Bro. A.M. McLennen. The whole comprised a solemn and reverent tribute to the memory of William Mercer Wilson, and well worthy of the splendid traditions of our district.*"<sup>37</sup>

During the year, the Grand Master presided at the Cornerstone Ceremonies of the new Masonic Temple at North Bay, May 29, 1928. Constitutions and Consecrations were conducted at Beach Lodge No. 639, Hamilton Beach; Anthony Sayer Lodge No. 640, Mimico; Garden Lodge No. 641 and St. Andrew's Lodge No. 642, Windsor; Cathedral Lodge No. 643, Toronto; Simcoe Lodge No. 644, Toronto; and Lake Shore Lodge No. 645, Mimico. The following Lodges were dedicated: Beach Lodge No. 639,

Hamilton; Macnab Lodge No. 169, Port Colborne; Coronation Lodge No. 502, Smithville; Enniskillen Lodge No. 185, York; Florence Lodge No. 390, Florence; and Percy Lodge No. 161, Warkworth. Dispensations for new lodges were issued to Rowland Lodge at Mount Albert; Todmorden Lodge, at Todmorden; Spruce Falls Lodge at Kapuskasing; and Temple Lodge at Oshawa.

In the conclusion of his address<sup>38</sup> the Grand Master made three important observations, 1) The movement for the abolition of war, 2) Masonic Libraries, and 3) Membership.

1. ABOLITION OF WAR: "*War has its roots in human greed, in human jealousies, nurtured sometimes through centuries of growth and fostered by those animated by the most remorseless selfishness. War generates the lowest and vilest of human passions just as truly as it calls forth the finest of chivalry and the noblest of self-sacrifice. Out of the Great War there came a new and more widespread appreciation of these facts and from them a greater desire to end war for all time, but this desire, however nobly conceived, would end in a beautiful theory unless concrete steps were taken to give it effect.... Hence I submit that this ideal should receive the thought and support of the great body of which we form a part. If war is finally abolished it will be abolished because of the force of public opinion ... There are today, I believe, over four million Masons speaking the English tongue and would it were possible for us to visualize the power which this great concourse could exercise on the trend of world events, if it could be directed towards a unified and practical objective.*"

2. MASONIC LIBRARIES: "*We are enjoined to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. We have a duty to all our members, particularly the newly initiated members, to give them an opportunity to receive the necessary instruction and education in our history, our traditions and our symbolism. We are possibly losing the active interest of some of our most promising members because there has not been available the sources of Masonic knowledge. Such knowledge may be secured from various Masonic books and publications which can be obtained at prices within the reach of every lodge within our Jurisdiction. No lodge should be without a small library and every library should have a copy of each year's proceedings of Grand Lodge. Each Mason should be encouraged to learn of the work and influence of Masonry in this Province and throughout the whole masonic world It will provide and stimulate an interest in the student for further light in Masonry.*"

3. MEMBERSHIP: "*I desire to reiterate the warnings and teachings of my predecessors that mere numerical strength is not in itself a true standard of masonic progress and advancement. Masonry does not deprecate the increase in numbers but it does discourage material growth when it means a lowering of the standard of its membership. The prestige and strength of Masonry depend upon the character of its members, and the admission of undesirable candidates cannot fail to reflect on the*



*honour and the high importance of the whole masonic fabric. The thorough investigation of candidates for admission is vital to the welfare of every lodge . . . There is no more important duty than the work of the Committee of Investigation . . . In submitting a report it is not sufficient to depend on a casual interview . . . We must establish his moral and intellectual fitness by those, preferably Masons, with whom he associates in his daily vocation . . . It is not a work for the young and inexperienced Mason but rather for the skill and mature judgement of the senior members and officers of the lodge. Let us remember that Freemasonry requires today, as never before, an increasing high standard of excellence in its membership, and this can only be achieved by admitting men who will maintain its dignity, be receptive to its teachings and loyal to its traditional precepts and ideals."*

From GRAND LODGE PROCEEDINGS:<sup>39</sup> Report of the Board on the Grand Master's Address (reported by M.W. Bro. J.A. Rowland): ". . . *The Grand Master (J.S. Martin) modestly expresses the hope that he might be able to discharge the responsibilities of his office and be of real service to the Craft. May we assure him that the hope so modestly expressed has been amply realized. No man has done more than he has to promote a more complete understanding between our rural and urban populations, while by his sincerity and directness of purpose, his sane and well regulated enthusiasm, and his loftiness of ideal he has set a high standard in the public life of our Province and has secured for himself a lasting place in the gratitude and affections, not only of his Masonic brethren but of our whole citizenship.*

*". . . Your Committee are in thorough accord with the remarks of the Grand Master regarding the establishment of Masonic Libraries and commend to the Grand Lodge the suggestion that he be authorized to name a committee to consider and report to Grand Lodge on this very important question."*

The first major public event following the July meeting of the Grand Lodge in London was the Cornerstone Laying Ceremony for the new \$50,000 Masonic Temple in Oshawa, as reported by The Globe dated August 16, 1928. On the same day The Evening Telegram reported the cost at \$80,000 and the Toronto Daily Star at \$100,000. The ceremony, with more than 600 Masons present in full regalia, was the most impressive held in the city for some months. The Masons from Ontario District No. 12 and many visitors from other Districts paraded from the lodge rooms to the site of the new temple, on the northeast corner of Centre Street and Metcalf Street, headed by the 34th Regimental Band of Oshawa, which played throughout the ceremony.

R.W. Bro. Ambrose Henry, the oldest active Mason in the community, placed a fragment of stone from the original temple of King Solomon which was brought from Jerusalem by the Hon. I.S. Diehl of New York. The fragment of stone was presented to the late Brother Edward Carswell in 1873 and was donated to the Oshawa Lodge to be



placed in the cavity of the cornerstone by his daughter, Miss Florence Carswell. The stone was laid with due ceremony by M.W. Bro. Hon. John S. Martin, who was presented with a silver trowel by the building committee (where is the trowel today?). In concluding his address, the Grand Master congratulated the Masons of Oshawa on their enterprise and initiative in undertaking the erection of such a splendid edifice. He declared that not only would this temple provide accommodation for the three existing lodges, but for others that would in all probability be formed in the future.

The Port Dover MAPLE LEAF of August 24, 1928, reports that John S. Martin sustained two broken ribs as a result of an automobile mishap near Hagersville. A tire blow-out on a sharp curve on the road caused the car in which he was being driven home from Toronto to swerve into a ditch.

The accident caused a week's delay in his most memorable tour of Northern Ontario. He was accompanied by the Grand Senior Deacon, V.W. Bro. George W. Lee, Chairman of the T.&N.O. Railway Commission. This was a 2,000-mile journey which commenced at Kapuskasing, September 24, 1928, with the Constitution and Consecration of the new Spruce Falls Lodge and the Dedication of the Masonic Hall. One of the chief assets of the model town of Kapuskasing was the \$28,000,000 Pulp and Paper plant.

The following morning in Cochrane, the Grand Master met with Masons from the surrounding district and saw the schools, hospital and the business section of the progressive town. In the afternoon George Lee drove the Grand Master to the model town of Iroquois Falls, where all the property of the municipality is owned and directly controlled by the Abitibi Paper Company. The Grand Master called it one of the beauty spots of the Northern Lands, with its lovely park, its wealth of flowers, its velvet lawns, and its neat and well-paved roads. A well attended meeting was held at the Lodge in the evening, followed by a supper and a presentation, to the Grand Master, of a pair of silver candlesticks.

The next day, September 26, 1928, they went on to Timmins, a city of 17,000. One hundred and twenty members of Porcupine Lodge No. 506, and Beaver Lodge No. 528, met in the Masonic Hall. In opening his remarks M.W. Bro. Martin expressed his appreciation of the honour conferred on him on election to the highest post in the Grand Lodge. *"I would sooner be Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in Ontario than premier of this province"*, a declaration he would repeat the following year at an Eastern District Reception in Cornwall, June, 1929. He then went on to outline the mission of Freemasonry, and the duty of Masons to keep the old landmarks. A memento was being made for the Grand Master for a remembrance of his visit to the Freemasons of the Porcupine Gold Camp.

THE NORTHERN NEWS, Kirkland Lake, Oct. 4, 1928, describes one of the most enjoyable gatherings ever held by Doric Lodge No. 623, on the occasion of the visit of M.W. Bro. Hon. John S. Martin, Grand Master and V.W. Bro. George Lee. The two distinguished visitors were given a very hearty welcome. The Grand Master complimented Doric Lodge on their lodge rooms, the size of which, in a town which is still comparatively new, impressed him very favourably. Speaking at the banquet he dwelt on "... *the fine influence that Masonry has in the lives of its members, especially those who take it up early in life. Its fine precepts prove the strongest possible material for the building of useful, moral lives.*" In his report to Grand Lodge, the Grand Master explained that "... *Kirkland Lake was found, in the heart of the rocks, to be a town of 6,000 people living in fine homes, with churches, schools, hospitals, and all the fittings of a coming city.*"

Coming out of the rock country the following morning, and approaching New Liskeard, an entirely different picture unfolded. There in the clay belt was viewed the oldest and richest farming district of Northern Ontario, with fine farm homes and healthy crops. The Grand Master concluded his fraternal visit to the Temiskaming and Cochrane District Masonic Lodges by attending a meeting of Temiskaming Masons held at Cobalt. The gathering was the largest assemblage of Masons ever seen in the District. The general feeling voiced by many ... "never has Grand Lodge had a more popular head than the present Grand Master". Not only was the attendance large, but the enthusiasm exhibited goes a long way to show that the Masonic organization has a wonderful hold on the Northland.

Making up the 180 Masons at the banquet were members from Lodges of Cobalt, Haileybury, New Liskeard, Englehart, Elk Lake and Kirkland Lake. In his address, the Grand Master expressed amazement at the rapid progress in northern development. Special mention was made of the wonderful and rapid growth at Kapuskasing the newest link in the North Country Masonic chain. Following his address, he was presented with a token emblematic of Masonic ideals and manufactured from the product of the Cobalt mining camp. In making the presentation, Bro. Smith of Cobalt Lodge described how the specimens of ore had been chosen and prepared to show the origin and formation as it related to the history of mining in Cobalt. He then very cleverly showed a close connection between the gradual development of the treasures of the earth and the development of the spirit of Masonry in the hearts of men.

The final stop of the memorable Northern Tour was Sudbury, home of nickel, where Masons from Sudbury, Copper Cliff, Capreol and Sturgeon Falls gathered together to welcome their Grand Master. His visit to Northern Ontario in the month of September left an indelible impression of rugged beauty, courageous development, remarkable progress, and a promising future.

On Friday May 10, 1929, the Grand Master returned to Oshawa, where just nine months earlier he had officiated at the Cornerstone Laying Ceremony for the new Masonic Temple, to dedicate the magnificent new edifice, the future home of Freemasonry in the city. According to the OSHAWA DAILY TIMES, May 11, 1929, 450 brethren sat down to a sumptuous repast, held in the beautiful and spacious auditorium of the Temple. In response to the toast to Grand Lodge, the Grand Master remarked "... *Your new Temple is a wonderful piece of work . . . Masons are craftsmen, and everything here gives indication of skilled craftsmanship. The plans of the architect are most happy, and the great thought behind the plans, the whole big idea, is the success of Masonry in Oshawa. I realize the pride you must feel in the successful conclusion of your efforts, for this is a noble monument to Masonry, and Masons everywhere will rejoice that in Oshawa you have men of vision.*"

The Wellington District Reception for the Grand Master was held at Georgetown, May 21, 1929. About 500 Masons attended the banquet held in honour of M.W. Bro. John S. Martin, who was presented with a grandfather's clock. Some years later at an auction sale at the John S. Martin Estate, the clock was purchased by Wm. Parkinson and is now in possession of Mr. Parkinson's brother in New Jersey.

Carrying on the tradition initiated by his predecessor of attending District Receptions, where the lodges of the district combine their resources, thereby reducing the heavy demands formerly placed on visiting Masonic Officials, M.W. Bro. Martin attended a number of Receptions never failing to inspire the brethren to hold the banner of Masonry high and to live by its teachings. One occasion of special note was his reception in Cornwall, June 6, 1929, when he took the opportunity to combine Masonry with his views on Immigration.

THE CORNWALL STANDARD dated June 6, 1929, reports in part "... *Touching on the development of Canada, the Grand Master stated that immigrants were coming here in thousands, many from the coal mining districts of Wales, others from Europe, and not a few of these are young men from 16 to 19, mere lads who have not been affected by the ideas of Socialism, and to them Canada presents a wonderful opportunity. Their future, however, and to a certain degree the future of the Dominion, rests on the treatment accorded these newcomers. Let us as Masons treat them cordially. Masonry is world-wide and when we find a man who presents himself to us and he measures up to our standard whether he be English or European, it is our duty to accept him in our Order. In this way we can do our part towards building a larger and greater Dominion. These newcomers to the Dominion many of whom, as I have said, are mere lads, will suffer from homesickness, and let us, as members of the Craft and as true Canadians, assist them in passing through that period of depression as easily as possible. In that way we will be doing our part, to some extent, in building for Canada. We as Masons are building, not with brick and mortar, but in extending the right hand to our new settlers, and instilling into them the spirit of Canada, a spirit*



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*under which they will be glad to live and become, if not already so, true, loyal subjects of the British Empire."*

This would be his last Official Visit as he approached the end of his second year as Grand Master. THE GLOBE, dated June 15, 1929, reported: "*Hon. Dr. Forbes Godfrey, Minister of Health, paid a visit to Hon. John S. Martin at his Port Dover home on Thursday (June 13, 1929), and while there made a thorough diagnosis of the Minister of Agriculture's condition. 'It's just a matter of rest with Mr. Martin, . . . He's been overworking, and he must take it easy. A month or so should fix him up.'*" THE MAIL & EMPIRE of the same date reported: "*... and is declared by his physicians to be in need of a prolonged rest. It is said that he may not return to his official duties at Queen's Park for a considerable period, if at all*". These were to be prophetic words.

In all his addresses throughout the jurisdiction he never failed to espouse the ideals of Freemasonry and the place of Masonry in the community. He stressed the necessity of maintaining the high standards of the Order by thorough examination of all its applicants. He exhibited respect and appreciation for Masonic Veterans and distinguished Brethren at every opportunity. He encouraged beneficence and charity for the less fortunate of Society and encouraged contributions to the Memorial Benefit Fund to mark the Seventy-fifth anniversary of the formation of the Grand Lodge.

From THE EVENING TELEGRAM, and THE MAIL & EMPIRE, both dated June 15, 1929, we learn that one of the City's most brilliant social events, and an affair that will go down in history as one of the greatest in the annals of Toronto Masonic history, was the first function held in the Royal York Hotel, the city's newest hostelry. The 108 Worshipful Masters of 1928, representing the Toronto Districts, were hosts to nearly 1,000 prominent Masons, their friends and ladies. This newly created organization known as "The Masters of '28" held its first annual dance in the spacious ballroom - the largest in the British Empire - "*it was a scintillating mass of vari-coloured hues as the ladies in gay array accompanied their escorts to the strains of Watson's dance orchestra. It was a picture beyond mere words - a gala collection of Dame Fashion's most modern creations, and young and old alike had turned out.*" There was but one regret, and it was voiced by all, especially the speakers at the banquet which followed the dance. That was the absence, through serious illness, of Hon. J.S. Martin, Grand Master, and Mrs. Martin. During the evening however, the assembled brethren arranged to forward to Mr. Martin's home in Port Dover a beautiful bouquet of roses. Following the opening of the 74th Annual Communication, held in Ottawa, July 17, 1929, a letter was read from the Grand Master expressing his disappointment in not being able to attend. He said:<sup>40</sup> "*. . . 'Man proposes but God disposes' and I find myself the second week of July on my back with strict orders from my doctors, that I must stay here for some time. They do say however, that they have found nothing organically wrong with me, and if I will have my method of living slowed down a bit there is no reason why I should not be restored to good health again.*" The Grand

Master's Address was read by R.W. Bro. Roderick B. Dargavel, the Deputy Grand Master.

One of the more important suggestions in the Grand Master's address, was the appointment of a strong committee to consider **Masonic Education** and the means and methods by which it is to reach thousands of the younger men of the Craft. The time has come, the Grand Master said, when something has to be done. He agreed with Albert Pike, the great apostle of Freemasonry, that "a few rudimentary lessons in architecture, a few elementary instructions in Symbolism, imperfectly prepared and understood, a few casual hints on moral dogma, are no longer enough to satisfy the earnest inquirer after Masonic truth." The Grand Master continued:<sup>41</sup> *"We lead the young enthusiast through the triple gates of our tiled and guarded courtyards into the sacred inner temple and we wonder perhaps as he surveys with eager eyes all the riches of our treasure house, but when he seeks from us the answers to the thousand questions which spring from the fullness of his desire to learn more about this great heritage which he now shares with us, we discourage him and blunt the keenness of his longing by our lack of means to answer"*. It was as a result of this recommendation that, after two years of study, the Standing Committee on Masonic Education was established.<sup>17</sup>

He did attend two more functions, one in St. Andrew's Lodge at their Annual Installation, December, 1929, at 888 Yonge Street, Toronto, when he and J.A. Rowland, both Past Grand Masters were made Life Members of St. Andrew's Lodge; and in the same building at the semi-annual session of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Canada, October 7, 1930, with Dr. A.F. Webster as Sovereign Grand Commander, M.W.ro. John S. Martin was made an Honorary Inspector General 33 Degrees.

John Strickler Martin died 8:45 a.m., May 13, 1931, in his 56th year. The headlines in local and Toronto newspapers read as follows: *"Ontario Mourns Loss of Much-Beloved Son "*, *"Thousands Pay Last Tribute of Respect to Late John S. Martin "*, *"PRESS OF PROVINCE PAYS TRIBUTE TO LIFE AND WORK OF JOHN S. MARTIN"*, *"He Served His Fellow Men"*.

Tributes poured in from Premier George S. Henry, from Hon. Thomas L. Kennedy his successor to the portfolio of Ministry of Agriculture, from Hon. Wm. H. Price, and from Hon. Howard Ferguson, Canadian High Commissioner to London, England, and former Premier of Ontario who said: *"He was an old personal friend and colleague. I knew him intimately for many years. His great sense of public duty persuaded him to accept the portfolio of agriculture in my Government. His personal training as well as practical experience gave him an outstanding position in the work in which he was engaged, and enabled him to give splendid leadership to the agricultural industry of the province, as well as lending great prestige to the Government. Mr. Martin will be*





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*mourned not only by his former colleagues and fellow members of the Legislature regardless of party position, but by all the people of the province amongst whom he was so widely known and highly regarded."*

From THE LONDON FREE PRESS, May 14, 1931: "*Ontario never had a minister of agriculture who devoted himself so earnestly and so sincerely to the improvement of agricultural conditions in the province . . . If ever a man was a sacrifice to public service it was Mr. Martin. A prominent Mason, he was appointed Grand Master for 1928 and 1929. He conscientiously endeavoured to fill this onerous position to the utmost of his ability, at the same time keeping up his work at the department of agriculture. The result was a breakdown in health which resulted finally in his death and the loss to Ontario of a public servant of the highest type.*"

The minutes of an Emergent Meeting of Erie Lodge No. 149, May 16, 1931, for the purpose of attending the funeral service for the late M.W. Bro. John S. Martin, P.G.M., show that 84 members were present, 300 visitors had registered but a large number more were present at the Home, at the Church, and also at the Cemetery, who did not get near the Lodge Room.

Port Dover. Great throngs lined the route as the cortege proceeded from his late residence on Prospect Hill and proceeded by way of Main and Chapman Streets to St. Paul's Church. Citizens of Norfolk County and far beyond turned out en masse to pay a last tribute of respect to a great man; a man who had grown up amongst them and a man who had achieved outstanding success in his private life and in his public duties and was beloved and respected by all. The active pallbearers were James R. Waddle, W.H. Barrett, S.J. Waddell, F.M. Bond, James Vokes, W. J. Thompson, J.C. King, and Dr. Stevens. The honorary pallbearers included four members of the cabinet and four close personal friends. Also present was a large contingent of distinguished Masonic officials including the Grand Master M.W. Bro. Dargavel, Grand Lodge Officers, District Deputy Grand Masters and also Dr. Sherk who was the attending physician at the birth of John S. Martin, and who had been presented, at the hands of M.W. Bro. Martin, with the Veteran's Jewel of 1928 (Past Masters over Seventy Years of Age).

Canon Cody of Toronto spoke as a friend: "*His was a life of deeds, and words are superfluous to express our appreciation of him, but the fitness of things will pardon a friend for speaking words in praise of a friend.*"

*"What does a man take with him when he departs from this world? He takes nothing of a material nature; he takes his character and a capacity to serve. He enters not into a state of inanition but one of service. He leaves behind him his loved ones, his friends and acquaintances, who inevitably feel the poorer for his passing. He leaves his concrete achievements which carry on after his death, and he leaves his ideals . . . Finally we must recognize the singularly attractive personality of the man, his infinite*

*capacity for making friends. After all character is a man's most important asset. People admire and will follow downright honesty and goodness in a man. These words run through my mind as I think of him: 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever and ever.'*

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am particularly indebted to the following for their kindly assistance in allowing me access to their historical records which proved invaluable in the preparation of this paper. V.W. Bro. Brian Varey, former Secretary of Erie Lodge No. 149. R.W. Bro. Wallace E. McLeod, for searching into the records of the University of Toronto. R.W. Bro. Balfour LeGresley, for faxing material taken from material prepared by Lawrence Runnals on our Grand Masters. Mrs. Kenneth (Morris) Painter, for her personal files of the archives of the *Port Dover Maple Leaf*. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Parkinson, for personal conversation. Mrs. Harold Nye for providing historical information about the cemetery at St. John's Anglican Church, Cheapside. And my wife Daisy for her patience while I was deeply engrossed in this pleasant assignment and her time in helping me in the proofreading.

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**Review #1****JOHN STRICKLER MARTIN – Our 33rd Grand Master****by W. Bro. Harry B. Barrett**

I have only praise and admiration for the very detailed and carefully researched paper presented by R.W. Bro. Jack Pos, on the life and career of John Strickler Martin of Port Dover.

My Grandfather's farm, where I spent a great deal of time as a youngster was directly across Mill Road from John S. Martin's poultry farm and though not yet ten years old when he died, I remembered him fondly as a very friendly man who always had time to speak to me, and to treat me as a grown person with his questions to me about our farm and the crops and stock.

Everyone respected and admired "John S." as he was affectionately known, and my grandfather, W.H. Barrett, a farmer and veterinary surgeon neighbour, was a close friend. I remember his once commenting to Harry Marlatt, our local grocer, about the phenomenal reputation John S. had brought to the White Wyandotte, admired worldwide as the "Bird of Curves". Mr. Marlatt's comment was "Harry, John S. would have done the very same thing if he had chosen crows". They were a truly beautiful bird and I never ceased to admire the many fine Wyandotte roosters with their harems of a dozen or so hens that strutted proudly around the individual pens and attached chicken houses across from our home.

I am very pleased to be able to show you a pen and ink drawing by the famous poultry artist, A.O. Shilling of "White Rose". She was the 1st prize pullet over all breeds at the 1904 Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. The sketch was later a gift by John S. to my Grandfather.

The second picture, a copy of the original large oil on canvas by Shilling, was presented to the farm manager W. Bro. Christopher Quanbury by Mrs. Martin after her husband's death, as a token of their appreciation to him for his loyalty and expertise. Chris was second to none as a showman and breeder of fine poultry.

Two other poultry breeders, showmen and experienced judges of Port Dover were Hambleton and Bert Thompson. All four of these men cultivated a long-lasting respect for one another, through their love for the breeding and showing of poultry. This second picture was later owned by Bert Thompson and some seven years ago, as it badly needed restorative work, he asked me to take it to Ross Butler of Woodstock. Ross carefully restored it and for my part as go-between he presented me with this photograph of the refurbished work.



In reading back through my father's diaries I found his personal record of John S. Martin's death and subsequent funeral. Wednesday, May 13th, 1931 (T.B. Barrett's Diary entry) - Picked Dad (W.H. Barrett, Master of Erie Lodge, A.F. & A.M. #149.) up and drove him over to the Martin's this afternoon. Jack died this morning about 9 o'clock.

Friday, May 15th, 1931 - I drove over to Dad's. He was very busy making arrangements for Jack Martin's funeral tomorrow, and wanted me to drive him around.

Saturday, May 16th, 1931 - As expected there were throngs of Masons (at the Lodge Rooms) from all over, but only the officers and Grand Lodge Officers went to the house. Dad did not come down as he had a lot of Grand Lodge Officers at his house for dinner and the Grand Master told him it was not necessary for him to go to the Lodge. McGaw MacDonald opened up.

Premier Henry and his cabinet and a large number of friends, besides Lodge Officers, were at the (Martin) house. Canon Cody and Bishop Williams were there and the Bishop took part in the Masonic service. From there we went to the church, around the hill and down Main St. The Officers of Erie Lodge walked in procession with the rest of the Masons from the Lodge to the Anglican Church.

Only a small percentage of the crowd could get inside . . . The rest of us waited outside until the service was over ... It had stopped raining before we got to the cemetery. There, another mass of people was waiting. Captain Robinson and Jack Fenton were posted there to keep the people outside the gates until after the procession entered. It got very black as we were forming up again in the cemetery and just as the bearers were walking from the hearse to the grave the rain came down by the bucketful and continued while the service was in progress. A good many top hats and frock coats got a good soaking for the rain fell more on the great men who were clustered around the grave than it did on the rest of us, who sought shelter under the trees.

It helped to abbreviate the ceremony and very shortly the largest funeral service that I suppose ever assembled near here, was dispersed.

Jack Martin was known and respected, even loved from one end of Ontario to the other, by high and low alike and it would be hard to say that the crowd was not drawn as much out of respect as curiosity.

His popularity was easily accounted for as he was so friendly, and so interested in everybody, but that didn't account for his great success, which must have been due to some remarkable qualities not so apparent and hard to define.

It seems tragic that he should pass out at the age of fifty-five; but he lived a large life while he was here.

## **Review #2**

### **JOHN STRICKLER MARTIN – Our 33rd Grand Master by W. Bro. Nelson King FPS**

What can I say about a paper written by the Dean of the Past Masters and former Editor of the Proceedings of the Heritage Lodge No. 730 G.R.C. We are thankful to R. W. Bro. Pos for completely detailing the life of John Strickler Martin our 33rd Grand Master.

From this paper we deduce that Most Worshipful Brother John Strickler Martin was a most remarkable man, educator, fanner, politician and Mason. A man who became synonymous with poultry breeding, a man who they would call the American Wyandotte King. A man who was respected as a politician and a Grand Master. A Grand Master who fathered the idea of the all-Canadian Conference of Grand Masters. A Conference which would eventually bring all nine Grand Lodges of Canada together in order that they could discuss common problems and ideas. A man who accomplished so much in such a short time, a man who died at such a young age (55 years). A man and a Mason who we should be proud to call our 33rd Grand Master.

Sincerely and fraternally, Nelson King

## **AUTHORS REBUTTAL**

I sincerely thank R.W. Bro. Nelson King and W. Bro. Harry Barrett for their kind words, but more especially for their willingness to review my paper. I apologize for not presenting the complete paper which they have reviewed, but anyone reading their reviews in the published Proceedings will have had the opportunity to read the original paper in its entirety.

As the new Editor of the Journal of Masonic Research and Letters of the Philalethes Society, Brother King, along with his many other commitments will be a very busy person, and I thank him for his time and effort in accepting this assignment. Many Masons have commented favourably, not only on the quality of papers published in the Philalethes, but also on the format and quality of paper in the published Journal.

I was especially pleased that W. Bro. Harry Barrett accepted the task to review my paper even though it came at a time when he was very much involved with his own wedding plans. Since we both graduated from the University of Guelph and have shared several College Reunions, I thought he might enjoy the references in the paper that deal with the political intrigue associated with the Provincial Government and the

Ontario Agricultural College. But perhaps of even greater interest would be the exploits of the subject of this paper in Bro. Barrett's home town, where he has so many fond memories of his own.

Perhaps we might persuade Bro. Barrett, who is a renowned Historian in his own right, to prepare a paper on the Barrett dynasty in Erie Lodge, since more than five generations of Barretts have contributed to the history of Freemasonry in Port Dover.

***ADDENDA prepared by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern***

**Personal Life**

Business success also came from the poultry feed which John S. Martin developed for his flocks. It was in developing feed that John and his friend, Charles G. Ivey, formed the Regal Poultry Feed Company. Bro. Charles Ivey was also a member of Erie Lodge No. 149.

On September 18, 1909, John Strickler Martin married Lillian M. Else (1886 – 1967). They acquired the residence on Prospect Hill, Port Dover, where they lived for their lifetimes. They had no children.

John Strickler Martin died on May 13, 1931, at age 56, in Port Dover. The monument marking his grave includes his role as Minister of Agriculture, as well as Grand Master. Engraved on the monument is a representation of a collar and jewel of a Grand Master. There is great similarity between the monuments marking the graves of M.W. Bro. William Mercer Wilson, and M.W. Bro. John S. Martin.

In September of 2023, nine decades after his death, The Hon. John S. Martin was named to the Norfolk County Agricultural Hall of Fame. Poultry production in Norfolk County was unquestionably put on the map thanks to Martin's overwhelming accomplishments.

**Masonic Career**

M.W. Bro. John S. Martin was appointed to the role of representative to the Grand Lodge of Indiana.

Members of Erie Lodge No. 149 have served two Grand Lodges as Grand Masters. The first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia (1871 – 1874), Dr. Israel Wood Powell, MD, had been the charter Worshipful Master of Erie Lodge No. 149. The thirty-third Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario (1927 – 1929), M.W. Bro. John Strickler Martin, was a member of Erie Lodge No. 149.

## **As Grand Master**

As Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Martin had to issue rulings regarding the jurisdiction of a lodge (each lodge has an acknowledged territory); that no change, addition or alteration is permissible in our ritual; that all members present at a meeting must vote when balloting on applications for initiation; and rulings to reinforce residency requirements for applicants.

During the second year of his term as Grand Master, M.W. Bro. Martin had the sad duty of honouring the passing of two Past Grand Masters: M.W. Bro. John Morison Gibson, K.C.M.G., Grand Master in 1892 and 1893, and M.W. Bro. William David McPherson, Grand Master in 1913 through 1915.

The administration of Grand Lodge came to the fore as he was concerned about the number of demits and suspensions for non-payment of dues. “What I desire to impress upon you My Brethren is, that this is a time for action not for words. All the advice and admonitions may be condensed in one brief sentence – That our losses come from the wholly inadequate attention that is given in keeping our membership interested in Freemasonry.” He continued: “My appeal therefore is first to our Worshipful Masters, that we give more time to the making of Masons than to the securing of members. Let us return to the old idea of a lodge, as a place where Masons assemble for intensive Masonic study and teaching, that we may assist our brethren to learn of our history and our traditions, to master our symbolism, to become familiar with the work of the Craft in this and other jurisdictions, that we may appreciate Freemasonry as a living, a vital force in the Community and nation in which we live.”

A further point of administration was the urgent need for a list of “recognized” Grand Lodge jurisdictions be produced and shared with every lodge in our jurisdiction. This has become an annual report from Grand Lodge to all lodges so that visitors from outside Ontario may be properly examined before being admitted to a lodge.

M.W. Bro. Martin emphasized that his successor as Grand Master would lead the celebrations as our Grand Lodge marked 75 years since institution. While assured that plans were proceeding under the leadership of chairman R.W. Bro. A.J. Anderson (later to be Grand Master in 1935 – 1937), he made two particular appeals. First, that M.W. Bro. Elias T. Malone, be recognized for 28 years of service as the Grand Treasurer. And second, that donations to the Memorial Benefit Fund (benevolence fund) reach \$250,000. At that time, benevolence was an important function and action of the Grand Lodge. A year later, M.W. Bro. Dargavel announced that the Fund stood at \$327,000.

In 1929, Erie Lodge No. 149 completed construction of a new lodge hall at Port Dover and dedicated the building to Grand Master John S. Martin. Two portraits of Grand Master John S. Martin are displayed in the lodge room.

## Sources of Research for Addenda:

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- (2) *Annual Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge A.F.& A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario: 1928, 1929, 1931
- (3) *Commemoration of the Graves of the Grand Masters*, December 2018. A project of the Museum and Archives Team.
- (4) Herrington, W.S., and Foley, R.S., editor Dunlop, Wm. J. 'A History of the Grand Lodge A.F.&A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario' (1955) McCallum Press Ltd., Toronto.
- (5) McLeod, Wallace editor, *Whence Come We?* (Hamilton, Grand Lodge of A.F.&A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario, 1980)
- (6) 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
- (7) Runnalls, J. Lawrence (1979) *Our Past Grand Masters* privately published.
- (8) The Jarvis Record (newspaper) Jarvis, ON Thursday Sept 14th, 1967.
- (9) Jenkyns, M. "History of Erie Lodge No. 149"
- (10) Norfolk County news release September 8, 2023 "Agricultural Hall of Fame welcomes 2023 inductees"
- (11) Family information confirmed on Ancestry.com, and Find-a-Grave.com
- (12) Legislative Assembly of Ontario, biographies and records of members
- (13) Waterford Heritage and Agricultural Museum; Agricultural Hall of Fame:  
<https://waterfordmuseum.ca/member/john-strickler-martin-2023/>
- (14) Wikipedia.org entry: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Strickler\\_Martin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Strickler_Martin)