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**Civilised men ... members of the craft:
Freemasonry in Auckland to the formation of
the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in 1890.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in History
at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

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INTRODUCTION

The public's fascination with freemasonry seems endless. Freemasons are variously believed to be members of a mysterious brotherhood of enormous influence, a secret society believed to have its roots in the order of the Knights Templar or the Egyptian pyramids and a sect involved in sacrilegious rites. Most will know of the periodic attacks upon freemasonry – claims that it is a secret society of men who conspire to help each other against the rest of the world, that they recognise each other by secret signs and then extend favours, even though this may be in conflict with their public duties – and the response of freemasons that their overriding duty is to obey the law. Their meetings, at which the rich symbolism of freemasonry is displayed in the course of the ceremonies, which are inspiring rituals to their members, may seem to be silly nonsense and play-acting to laymen. Freemasonry was one of the earliest social institutions to appear in Auckland and its members were active and influential. Whenever freemasons are mentioned in Auckland today, almost everyone claims to have had a predecessor who was a freemason. Many people recall seeing a father, grandfather or uncle going to lodge meetings carrying a thin case and wearing a dark suit and wondering what happened when the door of the lodge building closed behind them.

On 7th October 1769 Sir Joseph Banks, who paid for his passage on Captain Cook's first voyage, was the first freemason to sight New Zealand. It was inevitable that those who chose to seek a new life in the colony would include a number of masonic brethren who saw themselves as enlightened, peace-loving and the practitioners of social equity, whose purpose was to exert the influence of freemasonry in this new colony which had been claimed for civilisation. As one of the first organised social institutions in the new colony, freemasonry had the benefit of being an already established fraternity with a tried and tested constitution. While the instigators of the first masonic lodges in New Zealand were men of means and influence (early members included lawyers, engineers, architects, civil servants and merchants) they struggled in the first fifteen years to

attract members to their fraternity as men used their energy to build homes and businesses. From about 1850, freemasonry enjoyed a period of rapid expansion, and they attracted a new type of membership. Occupations were then recorded as shopkeeper, school teacher, shipping clerk, butcher, carrier and gardener. In the 1870s occupational changes of political or economic origin saw less of the workforce involved in defence and a rising proportion concerned with commerce, transport, trades and services. Local activities began to provide private rather than public services in the processing and distribution of food and clothing and businesses were started by people with very little capital.¹

Lodges welcomed men of all stations. However, members needed to be able to pay lodge dues – the first recorded receipt of money appears in the minutes of the Ara Lodge of 16th May 1843 “The sum of £2.2s.6d. was received from Brother Harding for initiation fee.”² Similarly, punctuality and regularity of attendance were qualities of significance to a lodge and difficult to enforce in a new colony with a shifting population. Offences were punishable by censure, fine and expulsion. Early minutes reveal that a great deal of lodge time was spent dealing with the exercise of discipline in this regard.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the development of freemasonry in Auckland. By viewing early Auckland through the first freemasons and masonic lodges some insight can be gained into those who arrived here and their hopes and aspirations. It is also possible to look at power relationships within the community, those who had influence and how they used it. Changes and developments in local government were paralleled by freemasonry, probably through the influence of those politicians who were also members of lodges.

For the freemasons, their lodges were a powerful tool in creating social bonds that bound not only the masons but their wives and families. At a time when there was increasing concern throughout the western world that mothers were having too much influence upon their sons’ lives, men were taking a more active role in the lives of masculine relatives. Freemasonry was a leisure activity to be shared

¹ R. C. J. Stone, *Makers of Fortune: A Colonial Business Community And its Fall*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, Oxford University Press, 1973, p.32

² G. A. Gribbin, *The History of the Ara Lodges*, Auckland: Geddis and Blomfield, 1909, p. 96

by men of all ages. Early lodge records show families with several members belonging to the same lodge. Freemasons were not 'atomised' as described by Fairburn but rather were part of a world in which kin, neighbours and associates worked together to develop and maintain their order. Because freemasonry does not allow soliciting for new members, membership is expanded through family, friends and acquaintances of the existing members. In particular, it is traditional for sons to follow fathers but also brothers, uncles and cousins. Freemasons banded together in a spirit of co-operation and hard work in their endeavours which included the building of their lodge rooms, support for the community by providing charity where they saw a need and assisting with education. This type of community has been dismissed by Fairburn as he rejects the idea of men bound together by shared experiences and kinship and friendship being used to build a voluntary and leisure organisation. The masonic ethos of brotherly love, charity and truth was strong and in early Auckland there was ample opportunity to pursue these ideals as freemasons were drawn together in community service through masonic initiatives.

The period covered in this thesis is from 1841 to 1890. The first recorded assembly of freemasons was an informal gathering on board a ship at Banks Peninsula in 1837. There were four whaling ships at anchor there and the captain of one of them, a freemason under the Grand Orient of France, took the opportunity of gathering freemasons from all four ships for "fraternal converse".³

The first chapter will look at the heritage and ethos that those first freemasons brought with them from Great Britain and what it was that set the early operative stonemasons of medieval times apart and destined them for a future that was unique as compared to other trades and crafts. It looks at why the form of the craft guilds of most trades was inappropriate for the stonemasons and the evolution of their own form of guild which came to be known as lodges. It also looks at the move from a trade union of working masons to an organisation

³ R. C. G. Weston, *Centennial History of the New Zealand Pacific Lodge No. 2*, Wellington: Ferguson & Osborn, Ltd, 1942, p. 8. In 1880, in the first issue of *The New Zealand Freemason*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Tuesday, January 6, 1880, p.6, it was reported that neither the English, Irish or Scottish lodges in New Zealand acknowledged the Grand Orient of France because the constitution of that organisation allowed for the initiation of atheists.

claiming intellectual status in which ‘operative masons’ were replaced by ‘admitted masons’ or ‘speculative masons’. Jasper Ridley’s book *The Freemasons: A History of the World’s Most Powerful Secret Society* traces the development of freemasonry from the guilds of freestone masons of the Middle Ages to the formation of the Grand Lodge in London in 1717 and has provided a helpful insight into the myths and legends surrounding the order, as did David Stevenson’s book *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland’s Century 1590–1710*.

Chapter Two will investigate the setting and background for the development of freemasonry that followed in Auckland. In 1840 Auckland was seen by many as a struggling seaport occupied largely by undesirables brought here by overseas ships and traders. Law and order were doubtful and the more respectable citizens joined together in tight social groups. Poverty and excesses went hand in hand and there was no method of civic benevolence. For those in the town with masonic backgrounds it seemed imperative to instigate masonic activity. The ruling custom for the formation of lodges in the colonies was to seek a dispensation from an existing lodge, usually for a limited time, until a warrant was issued by a Grand Lodge. Early freemasons in Auckland were active in seeking the necessary dispensation and locating and developing suitable premises for their purposes. In Auckland, and throughout the country, an early priority was to erect buildings deemed to be a credit to their fraternity. Initially most lodges met in hotel rooms, sometimes specifically designed for the purpose, but the provision of appropriate buildings was thought to be essential if they were to achieve the required standards in behavior and for the performance of their impressive ceremonies. No doubt, the temperance movement caused some new members to feel disinclined to attend meetings in public houses and many members felt that meeting in hotels did not reflect the high character of the brotherhood, may put members in a position of temptation and was not conducive to the development and practice of every moral and social virtue.

Chapter Three covering the period 1849 to 1881 looks at the first lodge in Auckland and those that followed prior to the formation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand and the countries and constitutions to which they belonged. Although freemasons were among the earliest voluntary organisations to meet,

they made slow progress until the 1850s when, within the respectable classes, concern for the moral future of the colony⁴ resulted in the reproduction of the social institutions of the homeland. By 1860, as well as two masonic lodges, Auckland had the following public institutions or societies: Mechanics' Institute, Choral Society, Chamber of Commerce, British and Foreign Bible Society, Auckland Museum, Auckland Dispensary, Young Man's Christian Association, St. Andrew's Society, Hibernian Benevolent Society, Auckland Land Association, Auckland Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Auckland Homeopathic Hospital and Dispensary, and Auckland Bethel Union.⁵ G. A. Gribbin's *The History of the Ara Lodges* and R. C. G. Weston's *Centennial History of the New Zealand Pacific Lodge No. 2*, give a masonic perspective to the early years of freemasonry and make an interesting comparison with Una Platts *The Lively Capital* when looking for the flavour of life in early Auckland. This chapter looks at how freemasons fitted into colonial life and their impact on it, why the early brethren acted they way they did, the way they lived and the influences to which they were subjected. At a time when there were little in the way of legal controls over drinking, refreshments at lodge meetings could provide some of the social control missing in society generally. Banquets, balls and feasting were an important part of masonic activity and, in later years, questions were raised about the funds expended in this way. The minutes of the Ara Lodge dated 7th August 1843 record "that only half the receipts for each night be available for refreshments".⁶ On 1st April 1844 the minutes note that members are to pay for their refreshments personally if they choose to remain when lodge adjourns so that lodge funds are not used for refreshments and bearing in mind that no brother is obliged to remain.⁷ In 1880 the freemasons of Napier, on their festival day, elected to march to church and the money which would have been expended on festivities was donated to the local hospital.⁸ Charity is pivotal to freemasonry and in the young colony there were many cases of distress which the freemasons felt obliged to

⁴ Jock Phillips, *A Mans Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male: A History*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 48.

⁵ B. Duder, J. Winstone and T. J. Warren, *Auckland's Historical Background: Its Relation to Central City Planning*. Report, City Development Section, Town Planning Division April, 1969, Auckland: Auckland City Council, Department of Works and Services, p. 34.

⁶ Gribbin, p. 82.

⁷ Gribbin, p. 84

⁸ *The New Zealand Freemason, Vol. 1 No. 1*, p.5

address. The principles of freemasonry are presented in symbolic form in the visible ornamentation of the lodge buildings and such symbols as the three pillars of wisdom, strength and beauty representing divine omniscience and omnipotence, displayed in material form as Ionic, Doric and Corinthian columns,⁹ serve to remind members of the masonic ideals of brotherly love, charity and truth. In the young colony there were many opportunities for the freemasons to carry out their masonic duty, particularly as regards charity and this chapter will explore both the general charity schemes promoted by the lodges as well as particular cases addressed by the various lodges. While it is forbidden to discuss either politics or religion at lodge, it is interesting to note that such matters were taken up outside the lodge and *The New Zealand Freemason* documents opinions on such subjects as the Vagrant Act¹⁰ and the ever present discussion about the Roman Catholic Church.

Chapter Four looks at the formation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand. In the almost half a century since the freemasons of Auckland first gathered at St Paul's Church, the changes from provincial to national government were influential in the changes in masonic organisation from the control of British and provincial grand lodges to the creation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand. Freemasonry had grown with the population of New Zealand and at the end of 1889 one hundred and seventy lodges had been established throughout the colony. The economic climate of the time had resulted in twenty of those becoming extinct and another ten were dormant and eventually disappeared. The formation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand was a natural progression for an organisation that had become over-governed with ten District and Provincial Grand Lodges of three Constitutions.¹¹

Chapter Five investigates the links early freemasons in the colony perceived to exist between their fraternity and Maori lore. They believed in a common origin which gave Maori access to stories of Eve and the Serpent and the Deluge. They also saw a link with the Maori custom of transmitting their sacred and secret

⁹ Hamill, Gilbert, p. 57

¹⁰ *New Zealand Freemason*, 6 April 1880, p. 7

¹¹ R. C. Groves, 'The Foundation and Brief Early History of the Founding of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand', *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge, No. 167*, Vol. 28, p. 148

teachings, to those who proved they were worthy, by verbal ritual and rote. This understanding of Maori tradition has not resulted in a large number of Maori becoming freemasons but those who have are celebrated as fine ritualists and orators.

The development of freemasonry in Auckland reveals a small group of settlers who were not part of the frontier culture of early New Zealand. The colonies were seen to provide opportunities that were not available to all in Britain and where settlers could attain the Victorian middle-class ideal of self-improvement.¹² As with the majority of settlers, freemasons saw an opportunity for material independence through their own industry and diligence. They believed in hard work, economic prudence and self-discipline. Unlike the churches, their purpose was not to 'convert' men to freemasonry but their organisation was open to any who had an interest in joining. Freemasonry does not advertise or solicit for new members and those interested in joining must approach a freemason with an expression of interest so early freemasons were able to devote their energies to the physical requirements of their organisation, such as acquiring land and buildings, rather than attracting members.

¹² Stone, *Makers of Fortune*, p.39

CHAPTER ONE

ORIGINS

In 1840 when Captain Hobson made his decision that Auckland should be the capital of New Zealand, freemasonry was growing at great speed in the United Kingdom and around the world in the wake of settlers, merchants and the military.

In the ranks of the Fraternity are included men of every clime and every station in life, who believe in God and the Immortality of the Soul, and who respect these fundamental principles of Masonry as articles of their faith. The exigencies of circumstances, or other causes, may have the effect of sending men forth to found new settlements, in lands far distant from the country of their birth, and in every community thus formed, however small it may be, there are some Freemasons.¹³

The settlement on the Waitemata Harbour was no exception.

This chapter will look at the traditions and ethos of the freemasons that arrived in Auckland, from the Middle Ages through to the beginnings of organised freemasonry in 1717 and the efforts made by the early grand masters to formulate regulations, resulting in the first official *Constitutions of the Freemasons* in 1723, and a history of the fraternity based largely on the *Old Charges*. These are manuscripts – the majority of which are dated after 1600, although some date from the end of the fourteenth century – which set out a series of regulations for the social behavior of masons and include a largely legendary history of geometry, architecture and the craft of masonry and a description of the seven liberal arts and sciences.¹⁴

¹³ Gribbin, p. 7.

¹⁴ John Hamill and Robert Gilbert (Eds), *Freemasonry: A Celebration of the Craft*, London: Greenwich Editions, 1998, p. 13.

The Middle Ages when the workers in 'freestone' became the elite of the labour force.

By the Middle Ages there was a general feeling that the stonemasons were different from other craftsmen. When most of the people were serfs, working on the estates of their feudal lords and never travelling much further than the nearest market town, and only a few ventured on a pilgrimage or to fight in France, the masons were traveling the country building cathedrals, castles and abbeys. They worked in stone when few buildings were built in stone. Only the king, some noblemen and the church had buildings made of stone so they were the masons' employers. They were skilled workers who were invited by the nobles, bishops and deans to work on buildings and sometimes received offers from other parts of England and even France or Germany to work on other projects for greater reward.¹⁵

As with other medieval trades, the masons had their craft organisations or guilds and their mythical histories closely linked with religious and moral concepts and emphasising the importance of their craft. As with all crafts they had secrets related to their work practices and techniques. Most craftsmen had a settled life producing goods for sale locally or for distant markets. But the stonemason's trade frequently entailed moving from town to town and he led a life of movement and unpredictability.

The usual form of craft organisation was the town craft guild, an intensely local institution and part of the structure of a town. A guild controlled entry to a trade and training for it, organisation and conditions of work and wages. It also had a social function helping those who fell on hard times, providing burials and supporting widows and orphans. Not only was it an economic organisation but it encouraged the development of social solidarity with regular events such as banquets. It became an artificial family or kin group bound by common interests. It may have had a religious aspect, employed a priest and supported an altar in a town church dedicated to the patron saint of the craft. Guild members attended

¹⁵ Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons: A History of the World's Most Powerful Secret Society*, New York: Arcade Publishing, 2001, p. 1

special masses and processions on their saint's day and joined with other guilds for religious festivals and civic occasions. As an institution the guild was the centre of the lives of town craftsmen. Membership of a guild did not just affect their working lives but defined their position in society and gave shape and meaning to their everyday life.

The conventional guild was not completely suited to the purposes of the stonemasons and their concentration at the sites of a particular building. Parallel organisations, which adapted to the mobility of masons, became known as lodges. In the early stages a lodge was simply a temporary construction on a building site where masons could find shelter. There they could shape and carve stone out of the weather. But it developed beyond a lean-to against the side of a building into a place where masons could be found eating and resting and even sleeping there if they were in a town that was not their home.

These circumstances caused stonemasons to become exclusive in their attitudes. Entry to their trade was limited to those who were properly trained in its skills and techniques. In order to limit numbers and maintain the reputation of the craft, this knowledge was secret and guarded from outsiders, often only passed from father to son. Other crafts in a static location could easily control admission to their guilds as intruders not properly trained were easily identified. This identification was not so easy for the stonemasons in various locations where their families and backgrounds were unknown. Intensive periods of work on construction sites and the presence of lodge buildings encouraged informal assemblies of masons, which set them apart from other crafts and made them unique.

The permanence of the materials used and the great skill used to create castles, cathedrals and palaces must have seemed awesome to the masses and helped to give these craftsmen a special status. Masonic legend tells of skills in the manipulation of stone being handed down through the ages, including the Greek, Byzantine and Roman eras, from the masons who worked on the construction of King Solomon's Temple. Athelstan assembled skilled masons and established York Rite Masonry in 926 A.D. with a Royal Charter to enable them to meet annually and then construct abbeys, castles and fortresses. The identification of

geometry with masonry was used by the masons to claim intellectual respectability. It was the depicting of architecture as the practical application of geometry by classical authors that led the masons to identify themselves with the science of architecture. This may have been justified in that medieval masons were not simply hewers of stone but displayed skills of measurement, mathematical calculation, design and geometrical drawing. The *Old Charges* told them that, not only was geometry one of the seven liberal arts or sciences, it was the discipline underlying all the others.

The move from trade union to an organisation of intellectual gentlemen.

It was Scotland in the seventeenth century that saw the emergence of a brotherhood identified by secret initiations, rituals and modes of identification which was organised in groups known as lodges. The function of these lodges was to regulate the working lives of stonemasons but they were already beginning to show a preference for social and ritual functions and by the mid seventeenth century were beginning to resemble freemasonry as we know it. Around 1600 the medieval craft organisation and legend were combined with aspects of Renaissance thought to create the beginnings of modern freemasonry.

Men of all levels of society were becoming intrigued by the secrets of stonemasons and the special intellectual status they claimed. Outsiders were attracted to lodges. From the early eighteenth century England took the lead. The Renaissance contribution in Scotland was succeeded by a new phase, both in Scotland and England, in which Enlightenment values were incorporated into the movement and freemasonry adapted to fit the Age of Reason. Medieval, Renaissance and Enlightenment influences combined in an institution that sought to reflect the progressive spirit of the age.

While most historians agree that freemasonry in its present form probably developed from medieval stonemasons and the “operative” stone masons’ guilds,

it is not clear when the transition took place from “operative” to “speculative” intellectual freemasonry, using stonemasons’ tools, clothes and customs as aids to teach their precepts. It has been established that guilds of operative masons were in existence in Scotland in 1057 and possibly in England from 1220. These guilds were conscripted to ensure there were sufficient skilled masons to meet the requirements of the monarch and the church and their building programmes.

At a time when travel and communication were severely restricted, except for those in the service of King and church, it was necessary for the guilds to develop specific means of introduction and recognition for those working on various projects around the country, for example, to distinguish between skilled craftsman and novices. While these guilds were law-abiding, they were able to increase their sphere of influence by making welcome wealthy, educated and well-connected members of society for whom a degree of privacy from state or church was attractive.

Elias Ashmole on 16 October 1646 noted in his diary that he had been initiated into a non-operative lodge. As an author and scholar, Elias Ashmole was a contemporary of Robert Boyle, Sir Robert Moray and Dr John Wilkins, joint founders of the Royal Society. However, some members of the lodge into which Elias Ashmole was initiated were practicing masons who had worked with Christopher Wren and it would seem that freemasonry was, at this time, in transition from purely operative masonry to speculative freemasonry.

The Great Fire of London in 1666 gave operative masons an opportunity to demonstrate their skills. The reconstruction of London included architectural masterpieces such as St Paul’s Cathedral, the buildings of Piccadilly and the Royal Exchange, earning operative masons a certain prestige, which would make their fraternity attractive to speculative masons.

Masonic historians have long accepted the theory that modern freemasonry descended from medieval masonry in three stages: operative, transitional and speculative.¹⁶ First were the lodges that regulated the trade of the stonemasons employed in building the great cathedrals, abbeys and castles of England. Early

¹⁶ Hamill and Gilbert, p. 22

in the seventeenth century these operative lodges began to accept non-operative masons – called Accepted Masons. Accepted masons came to form the majority, transforming operative lodges into speculative lodges, the forerunners of today's masonic lodges.

This raises questions about why the most famous accepted mason, antiquarian Elias Ashmole and others were admitted into masonic lodges and why they sought admission. In other words, why did freemasonry appear when it did? Masonic historians now recognise the significance of the religious and political turmoil of the times. Ashmole fought for Charles I in the Civil War and it was while he was a prisoner of the Roundheads in Lancashire that he was initiated as a Freemason on 16th October 1646.¹⁷ In a time of growing intolerance in both politics and religion there was now a forum in which men of differing opinions could meet. Despite the turbulent times there were still men who believed in tolerance and a free exchange of views and it was these men who founded a fraternal order that avoided sectarianism in both religion and politics but held firmly to a belief in God and loyalty to the three principles of brotherly love, charity and truth. In these times it was common for philosophical and moral ideas to be taught through allegory and symbolism and the building of King Solomon's Temple was seen as an appropriate allegory. Similarly, the working tools of the stonemason became symbols of the moral aspirations of the brotherhood.

Another theory is that freemasonry was still a trade-orientated society at the time Grand Lodge was founded. It has been argued that the original medieval lodge system, which had declined by the time of the Reformation, was restored by artisans adapting to new working conditions. Lodges may have offered assistance to itinerant masons using secret signs of recognition to ensure the system was not abused and funds were properly disbursed. If this is the case, seventeenth century freemasonry may be seen as a trade club into which speculative masons were increasingly admitted.

¹⁷ Ridley, p. 22

Whether freemasonry is seen as a charitable trade-based entity or a body for the promotion of religious and political tolerance, secrecy, allegory and symbolism are functions of both.

At a time when London club life was becoming very popular, that First Grand Lodge was formed. These formative years were critical. Freemasonry captured the imagination and attention of people who were able to ensure that it was not doomed to fade from existence as did so many clubs and societies of the times. Its founding leaders carefully examined the *Old Charges* and sought to establish a permanent basis upon which freemasonry could stand. They were only too well aware of the bitter hatred and malice that sprang from religious and political intolerance but believed that all peoples over the face of the earth worshipped a creator and that for their brotherhood to survive it must be all embracing. Anything short of a universal basis would lead to its destruction.

The beginning of freemasonry as we know it today.

In 1717 four London lodges met at the Goose and Gridiron and agreed, if not on a constitution, at least on a concerted course of action and the formation of the first Grand Lodge of England. While it is often claimed that modern freemasonry dates from this time, in fact, it was not a propitious moment in the long process of development of the movement in that it merely brought together four lodges and became an organised body. Before that time its existence was spasmodic and sporadic, practised by scattered lodges meeting irregularly and without any coherence or purpose. Nevertheless, while the formation of Grand Lodge was of minor importance in the development of freemasonry, it does mean that England can claim the first move towards a national organisation, copied subsequently by Ireland and Scotland, and has led many English masonic historians to take for granted that freemasonry originated in England.

Early Grand Masters George Payne and the Rev. Dr Theophilus Desaguliers, together with the Rev. Dr James Anderson, formalised the movement. In 1723 Anderson compiled the first *Constitutions of the Freemasons* setting out regulations established by Payne in 1720 and a history drawn and expanded by Anderson from the *Old Charges*. Dr Desaguliers, the archetypal speculative mason, who among his many achievements invented the planetarium, was a friend and associate of Isaac Newton. As a natural philosopher, committed to the ideal of tolerance, there seems little doubt he influenced the many Fellows of the Royal Society, the pre-eminent scientific body of the time, who became freemasons.

In tracing the descent of modern freemasonry, the starting point in England is in the documents known as the '*Old Charges*'. At a time when society was highly disciplined and regulated, directives from controlling guilds were known as 'Charges'. "There is no direct evidence of the use to which the Old Charges were put by masons in the later Middle Ages, but internal evidence indicates that they were intended to be read out or recited at meetings, especially when initiates were admitted to the craft. Thus it may be that at almost any gathering of masons in connection with their craft, whether in guild, lodge or otherwise the craft's lore would be solemnly rehearsed at greater or lesser length."¹⁸

According to the *Old Charges*, all the crafts in the world were founded by the sons of Lamech, who is mentioned in Genesis, and it was Lamech's eldest son, Jabal, who founded geometry. The story develops in Egypt, where Abraham and his wife Sarah went and taught the seven sciences to the Egyptians. Abraham had a scholar called Euclid who became a master of all the sciences. The great men of Egypt had a problem. Because of the hot climate their wives produced a very large number of sons – too many to be maintained on their fathers' lands. The king called for any man with a solution to come forward. Euclid offered to teach the children one of the seven sciences whereby they could live as gentlemen. He taught them the science of geometry so they could work in stone on all manner of churches, temples, castles, towers and manors, they could call each other brother or fellow and not knave or servant or any other derogatory name.

¹⁸ David Stevenson, *The origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century 1590–1710*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 5.

The story moves back to the Holy Land where King David, aware of the teachings of Euclid, began building the temple in Jerusalem. This work was continued under his son Solomon who sent for masons from many countries. 80,000 in all worked on the temple and these masons spread the craft to other countries. The craft's lore and charges were first brought across the English Channel by St Alban and embraced by King Athelstan, a great supporter of masons. His son Edwin gathered information about masonry, which he brought together in a book to be read and told to all entrants to the craft, the *Old Charges* themselves.

The lore of the *Old Charges*, through its emphasis on morality, its linking of the mason craft with geometry and the significance it gave to Solomon's Temple and ancient Egypt, is fundamental to freemasonry.

Within ten years of the forming of Grand Lodge some members, fearing unwarranted interference, united with a group of Irish masons who had been denied membership of the London lodges because they were artisans and their ritual did not conform to English usage. In 1751 this group became a wholly independent Grand Lodge. This 'Antients' Grand Lodge became a rival of the earlier paradoxically named 'Moderns' Grand Lodge and, such was their strength, they were recognised by the Grand Lodges of both Ireland and Scotland as the legitimate masonic authority in England.

The non-political aims of the freemasonry meant the American Revolution had little effect on the institution but the effects of the French Revolution were very different. The similarity between the revolutionary slogan 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' and the basic tenets of freemasonry were used by critics to connect the two. In England this led to a desire to heal the rift in their own ranks between Ancients and Moderns and in 1813 the United Grand Lodge of England was born.

The first Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England was Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex and son of King George III. As a student of theology and Hebrew, he displayed unusual religious and political tolerance, supporting both Catholic emancipation and a number of Jewish causes. It was his intention that freemasonry should become truly universal and open to men of all faiths and as a result all overt Christian references were removed from rituals, demonstrating

that while freemasonry supported religion in general it did not wish to replace any particular form. This belief in the centrality of God in human existence differentiated freemasonry from the myriad of clubs emerging at the time whose purpose was largely social. As Britain became a major industrial power there was an explosion of new ideas, particularly in the scientific field and many fundamental truths began to be questioned. Freemasonry expanded on an unimagined scale in this time of social and intellectual ferment as men from all sections of society came together as equals.

At the time Auckland was being claimed by the British, Queen Victoria was beginning her long reign over the empire which, by the time of her death, was the largest, wealthiest and most aggressively powerful the world had ever known.¹⁹ The passing of the Reform Bill in 1832 had fundamentally changed the British political system, the first stage in a movement of political power from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie. It was a time of the most radical transformation the world has ever seen. Railways and factories spread across Britain with the rise and spread of technology. The major problems of the Victorian era included how to control the rapidly expanding population, how to provide enough food, how to keep people occupied and how to avoid rebellion of the type experienced in Ireland and France. This era saw the introduction of a police force, tight controls over the poor and the introduction of workhouses for those incapable of providing for themselves. It was a time of unprecedented energy, growth and expansion. Observers were astounded by the British production figures for iron, coal, steamships and machine produced cotton and woollen goods. Though life was tough in the industrial towns where this wealth was created the majority of the people benefited, the fortunes of some were built on the suffering of others and there was a growing gap between the rich and the poor.

In rural England, unlike the bulk of the world where the rural population owned or occupied the land they farmed, land was owned by the gentry, rented by the farmers and worked by landless labourers. Massive agricultural growth brought

¹⁹ Wilson, A. N., *The Victorians*, London: Arrow Books, 2003, p 27.

little benefit to farm workers whose lot deteriorated until at least the 1850s.²⁰ Many of these village labourers became pauperised and demoralised men. The protest movement known as the ‘Swing’ riots of 1830–31, when distress turned to the use of force against farmers and land owners, led colonial reformers to view planned emigration as the solution to the discontent in rural England. By the 1850s when the rise in population in the cities created an unprecedented demand for food, squires and farmers prospered but labourers’ conditions declined. The New Zealand authorities viewed the English farm labourers as potential immigrants. New Zealand could offer men of energy and determination an opportunity to better themselves and secure a stake in a new land.²¹

Victorians had a desire to put injustice, ignorance and disease behind them. The notion of benevolence was admired and promoted. While history exposes their “failure to better the lives of the urban wage-slaves in factories and mills; their genocidal neglect of the Irish famine; their brutality in India and Africa,” not all Victorians were unaware of the plight of others.²² They contributed to all manner of charities, perhaps as a means of salving their consciences. In the mid 1860s it is estimated that the private charities in London disbursed at least as much as the Poor Law over the whole country. With the charity dispensed came the expectation that recipients might mend their ways and become responsible and respectable citizens.²³

It was a time of ‘new intellectual ideas’. Charles Darwin, a naturalist, when aboard the ‘*H.M.S.*’ *Beagle* in 1834, first considered the evolution of life on this planet. As a grandson of Josiah Wedgwood, the famous master potter, he had family wealth to support his intellectual endeavours. Another of the most distinctive voices of the age could hardly have come from a more different background. Charles Dickens, “the son of a government clerk imprisoned in the Marshalsea Prison for debt, had only rudimentary schooling and next to no

²⁰ Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783–1870*, London: Longman, 1996, p. 147.

²¹ Rollo Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land*, Wellington: Victoria University Press with Price Milburn, 1981, pp 18–35

²² Wilson, p. 22

²³ Evans, p. 298

money”²⁴ gave us a different picture of Victorian England. This radical liberal resented paternalistic interfering Toryism. In Dickens’ books the ethics of characters such as Scrooge and Mr Pickwick, who achieved what all Victorians desired – financial independence, are tempered by the notion of benevolence or Christian charity and kindness. Religious controversy caused many to lose faith, partially or totally. Dissenters were at the forefront of the expansion of scientific knowledge as the links between science and technology became closer. The work of the Royal Society in London and leading provincial organisations such as Birmingham’s Lunar Society, which attracted Wedgwood, encouraged manufacturers to take a keen interest in applied science and use the knowledge gained to perfect new techniques.²⁵ New discoveries in science raised questions about the existence of a Creator – the age of rocks, the evolution of the species and the phenomenon of humanity itself. New philosophies were questioning all facets of life.

Those pioneers arriving in Auckland who were freemasons brought with them, along with British Victorian attitudes, the traditions of English freemasonry. The Continental freemasons saw themselves as engaged in a political struggle against the enemies of knowledge, freedom of conscience and the rights of man, but English freemasons had lodges in which political discussions were banned and men of strongly differing political beliefs could meet in friendship.²⁶ Their history, particularly the privileged position stonemasons had in the building trade in medieval Britain when they associated with the king and nobility, the move to an organisation of intellectual gentlemen and well connected members of society who showed a preference for ritual and social functions and the general masonic influence on all aspects of western life, made them believe their order was honourable and respectable and much needed in the new colony.

The traditions and ethos the freemasons brought with them came from a long history. From the stonemasons of the Middle Ages who achieved special status for their fine work they derived their exclusive attitude and from the early

²⁴ Wilson p. 16

²⁵ Evans, p. 115.

²⁶ Ridley, p. 257.

speculative freemasons they claimed intellectual respectability and prestige. These attitudes were to shape the organisation of freemasonry in the early years in Auckland, which at that time had a reputation in the colony for snobbishness and elitism as a result of the strong military and official presence in its membership.²⁷

²⁷ Jeanine Graham, 'Settler Society' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Ed. Geoffrey W. Rice, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 120

CHAPTER TWO

THE 1840s

On the 16th September 1840 the British flag was unfurled on the shores of the Waitemata Harbour, described by Lieutenant Governor William Hobson as the best harbour on the western coast of New Zealand. Despite severe criticism both from England and the Wakefield settlement in Wellington, he considered his choice of site advantageous. The official party present that day, having only arrived on the *Anna Watson* the day before, included the Surveyor General, Felton Mathew, the Colonial Surgeon Dr Johnson, the Superintendent of Works Mr. William Mason, Mr. Edward Marsh Williams, the eldest son of missionary Henry Williams who was to act as interpreter and postmaster, Captain Rough, the new harbourmaster and Captain William Cornwallis Symonds.²⁸ William Mason procured a spar for a flagstaff from the upper reaches of the harbour, at that time referred to as the river, and this was set up on a promontory which was later called Point Britomart. Also present that day were almost one hundred Maori protesting at the sale of their land by the chief Rewiti Tamaki the previous day. After the firing of salutes of guns and the drinking of toasts there was an impromptu regatta which went some way towards appeasing the natives who won a prize of half a pound of tobacco each.²⁹

The strongly defined ridge and valley of the chosen site caused Felton Mathew to modify the strictly rectilinear town plan layouts which were in vogue at the time in the colonies, resulting in much criticism. Streets were surveyed to follow the ridge top and valley floor. Two neighbourhoods were soon established – the settlers at Commercial or ‘Store’ Bay, at the foot of Queen and Shortland Streets,

²⁸ R. C. J. Stone, *From Tamaki-Makau-Rau to Auckland*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001, p. 250.

²⁹ John Stacpoole, *William Mason: The First New Zealand Architect*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1971, p. 29.

and officers at Official or 'Exclusion' Bay, so named because it was where government officials first pitched their tents. Sir John Logan Campbell noted that it came to be called Exclusion Bay by the less well placed members of the community who resented this overt example of class discrimination. Government employed mechanics were put in the next bay – Mechanics Bay. Pit-sawing was an early and necessary industry in order to supply planks for the construction of buildings. Soon there was a ropewalk and flourmill driven by water from a dam in the Domain and then boatbuilders and shipwrights set up business.

St Pauls

The positioning of St Paul's Anglican Church on the Britomart promontory emphasised its important position in the community. To its south were located the Post Office, the Magistrate's Court, Government House, Auckland's first banks and the Royal Hotel, erected in 1842 and which today houses the Northern Club. The only other public building to have survived from this time is the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at the corner of Symonds Street and Alten Road built in 1847. Further to the south Princes Street housed the elite of the community. In 1842 it contained the residences of twenty-seven landowners, merchants, bankers and other professionals. Auckland's geographical features of ridges and gullies led to early social stratification as the rich settled on the ridges and the poor in the gullies.

It is against this background that the presence of freemasons in Auckland is first recorded. The *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*, dated 31st July 1841, reported the attendance of Masonic brethren, wearing the decorations and insignia of their order, at the laying of the foundation stone of St Paul's Church on the 24th July.

It is not known who suggested that the freemasons present in Auckland should attend the laying of the foundation stone of St Paul's Church. A committee called

to Government House to discuss the question of the building of a Metropolitan Church contained two freemasons, Magistrate E. S. Halswell and Master Mariner Captain G. T. Clayton and the appointed architect, William Mason, was also a freemason. Any one of them could have made the suggestion, as could freemason James Coates, the Sheriff of Auckland,³⁰ in his capacity as Private Secretary to Captain Hobson. The freemasons present must have felt greatly honoured at the recognition given to them on such an auspicious occasion. The name of Captain William Hobson, the Governor of the colony, headed the subscription list for the church and it was he who had chosen the site near the waterfront calling it “Emily Place” after his wife, and naming the church after the famous London cathedral. The occasion was one of great ceremony for Aucklanders and was attended by military, naval and civil officers. The procession from the gates of Government House was led by the Master of Ceremonies followed by Captain Best, leading a detachment of soldiers, the Reverend J. F. Churton, the Colonial Chaplain, leading a group of trustees and then the freemasons, among them William Mason, the architect of the church, carrying ‘The Plans’. At the chosen site in Emily Place the ladies of Auckland were already assembled on platforms specially erected for the occasion.³¹ The report in the *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette* of 31st July 1841 names only seven of those present – Bros. Whitaker, Clayton, Leech, Peile, Mason, Halswell and Fisher – although there were probably another five or six in attendance.³² A meeting held on 20th July to arrange the procession and a dinner the following evening at Wood’s Royal Hotel, attended by more than fifty gentlemen and honoured by the presence of Captain Hobson, were probably the first large occasions held in Auckland. The form of the evening was not unlike the dinners held by English masonic lodges and, as the gentlemen present became known to each other as freemasons and discussed their procedure for the ceremony the following week, the idea of forming a lodge may have been born.

³⁰ *New Zealand Government Gazette*, No. 7, Auckland, Wednesday, August 18th 1841

³¹ Una Platts, *The Lively Capital: Auckland 1840–1865*, Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints Ltd, 1971, p. 81

³² Howard Wyatt, ‘Freemasons in Auckland, July 1841’, *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge*, No. 167, Vol. 15, p. 71

Those three occasions resulted in the formation of Auckland's first masonic lodge and another seventeen lodges were formed before the formation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in 1890.

The laying of the foundation stone of St Paul's Church on 28th July 1841³³ was the catalyst for the founding of Auckland's first masonic lodge. This convivial occasion would have caused the freemasons present to consider the possibility of bringing the institution of freemasonry from the Old World to the new settlement on the Waitemata Harbour.

Application to form a Lodge

By this time Mr. William Mason had resigned from his position as Superintendent of Works and was appointed architect by the church trustees. He was a founder of freemasonry in Auckland and one of three signatories to a request for a dispensation from Sydney, although later he was to take little part in the affairs of the order. No doubt the meeting of the brethren initiated a desire to form a lodge through which to promulgate the teachings of freemasonry.

In the eighteen months between the event at St Paul's and the first lodge meeting there was much to be done. In 1841 communication with England was most irregular and long intervals passed between the arrivals of ships. For this reason it was not appropriate to apply to Grand Lodge direct for a warrant to constitute a lodge. An alternative was to apply to an existing lodge for a dispensation until such time as a warrant could be obtained from Grand Lodge in England. The Social Lodge No. 260, Irish Constitution, in New South Wales, then in the twentieth year of its existence, was approached for the necessary authority. The Sydney brethren did not trust the postal services, however, and waited until such time as a brother was visiting Auckland to deliver the document. The first

³³ *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*, 31st July 1841

masonic lodge meeting was held in Auckland on 9th February 1843 when Brother Frederick Whitaker was appointed by vote to act as Worshipful Master and the dispensation granted by Lodge No. 260 was presented. The first two years of the lodge's existence were prosperous ones. Twenty-six meetings were held, in addition to the original members twenty new brethren were initiated and six were affiliated. In view of the size of the settlement and the few inhabitants this was a highly satisfactory outcome.

While operating under the dispensation from Lodge No. 260, Sydney, the brethren arranged for a warrant to be issued by the Grand Lodge of Ireland and this was signed on 12th June 1844. As a striking example of the irregularity of communication, this warrant did not reach New Zealand until three years later. In 1845 only six meetings were held and although five brethren were affiliated, no members were initiated and in 1846 and 1847 only three meetings were held. This is indicative of the transient lives of people in the town at this time. With only two members of the lodge having authority to occupy the chair it seems likely that these men were frequently away from the town thereby creating a bar to the opening of the lodge.

Furniture and chattels are items of great importance in a masonic lodge and this is another area where a degree of adaptation was essential. It is impossible to practise freemasonry without its material symbols and the minutes of the first meeting of the Ara Lodge state that Lodge 260, Sydney, lent jewels and a printed code of by-laws. A Lodge of Emergency was called for Saturday evening the 11th February 1843 at which Bros. Lardner, Lewis and Clark were appointed to a committee to decide upon which implements should be procured from Sydney and which could be procured in Auckland. An early acquisition by the lodge was a chair for the master and Bro. Clark presented a trowel.³⁴ An early seal, while unique in character being made from a thick penny issued in the reign of George IV, gave blurred and imperfect prints as "the limited resources of the early

³⁴ Gribbin, p. 35

township of Auckland did not afford the members the opportunity of obtaining an ink or pigment suitable for the purposes.”³⁵

First meeting places

In Auckland, from the outset, the provision of lodgings for travellers, inns and hostelries was a priority and often such places were the only ones in the community where meetings and gatherings could be held. They provided a central location, stabling for horses, catering, and lodges were not the only community groups to make use of their facilities. The Exchange Hotel was the first to advertise in Auckland – “The Exchange Family Hotel and Coffee Room, conducted by the proprietor, Mr. J. Watson, will be opened on Monday, 10th September 1841. Choice stock of wines, etc. ...”³⁶ Later that year – “Subscriptions for the Auckland Races will be received at Watson’s Exchange Hotel where betting rooms are established.”³⁷ A betting dinner took place on Tuesday, 4th January 1842 with tickets costing thirty shillings each (wine included). In April 1842, “A meeting will be held at 12 p.m. on Thursday, 7th April, at Watson’s Hotel for the purpose of making arrangements to form a Mutual Insurance Co. to which all members of the public are invited.”³⁸ The *Auckland Times* advertised later that year “Coffee and Lunch are served for the benefit of teetotalers at the Exchange Hotel 11. a.m. to 2 p.m.”³⁹ and “At Mr. Hart’s Public Room, Exchange Hotel, a lecture on Botany was given by Henry Falwasser.”⁴⁰

The Royal Hotel, built in 1841 provided another venue for social intercourse but seemed to lack the style of the Exchange. Proprietor Samuel Wood, who had

³⁵ Gribbin, p. 38

³⁶ *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*, 28th August 1841

³⁷ *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*, 22nd December 1841

³⁸ *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*, 6th April 1842

³⁹ *Auckland Times*, 15th September 1842

⁴⁰ *Auckland Times*, 8th November 1842

come from Sydney, was familiar with the demands of the maritime and military occupants of the town and well as visitors from the European ships that called. He had first established an inn at Russell but had followed the general trend to Auckland. The Royal was a modest building but provided superior catering arrangements, making it a popular place for banquets, seating up to fifty guests to a sumptuous meal in the English manner. It enjoyed generous patronage from the military and political fraternity in Princes Street, even at a time when there was serious competition from Shortland Crescent where there was a choice of many drinking establishments – for example, billiards at the Exchange, skittles at the Shamrock, etc. The ballroom at the Royal was used for many important events. In 1843, probably in the room in which Ara held its meetings, the Fitzroy Theatre had many successful productions. “No Smoking” and “No Bonnets in the Dress Circle” were the rules. When refugees were brought to Auckland following a native uprising at Russell in 1845 the Royal accommodated its share, along with the barracks, churches and inns, and was the centre of military and government activity. Within two years Samuel Wood went bankrupt, the inn and stables were sold by auction and his licence cancelled.⁴¹

The first meetings of the lodge were held in the Exchange Hotel in Shortland Street. In most lodges in New Zealand early meetings were held in hotel rooms as there was often no suitable hall in which to hold meetings. The first hall in Auckland was the Mechanic’s Institute which was erected late in 1843 and some months after the first lodge meeting. Late in 1843, seeking more suitable premises, the lodge elected to meet in the ballroom of the Royal Hotel on the site of what is now the Northern Club in Princes Street, the proprietor of which was Samuel A. Wood. The first meeting in the new premises was on 5th February 1844 and the minutes of that date show Samuel Allen Wood was balloted and passed for initiation into freemasonry.

In 1842 Shortland Crescent, later known as Shortland Street, appeared to be the principal street. At the top of this steep hill were the church, the customhouse, a bank and public buildings and the adjacent barracks. Shortland Street was the

⁴¹ A. S. Oldham, ‘Some Notes on Early Auckland Meeting Places’, *Transactions of United Masters Lodge, No. 167*, Vol. 12, p. 213

main connection between the centre of economic and public activity at Commercial Bay, where stores and settlers were landed from ships, and the seat of government and defence on Britomart Point. In the area between this governmental core and the landing place were shops, taverns and small workshops for baking, bookbinding, saddlemaking, clothing and mineral water manufacture, and in the area of O'Connell, High, Chancery, Queen and Albert Streets were housed mechanics and artisans, within walking distance of their workplaces.⁴²

Princes Street

Princes Street was not formed until after Captain Fitzroy, Governor from 26th December 1843, appointed Captain David Rough to address complaints about the state of the roads. He used immigrant labour to form and metal Princes Street and Queen Street 'formerly impassable in wet weather'.⁴³ They also connected Shortland Crescent to Princes Street to the ultimate benefit of property owners in the area. In 1853 Princes Street was described as one of the principal streets of Auckland – "a broad, straight, spacious, well-made street, on a gentle slope; St. Paul's Church, the Treasury and the Bank, and the Masonic Hotel. are its principal buildings."⁴⁴ It was the astute financial dealings of the founders of the Ara Lodge, particularly in purchasing land in Princes Street, together with sound stewardship displayed by subsequent lodge officers, that have made that lodge one of the most financially secure in the Auckland district to this day, when it is still a substantial property owner in Auckland city.

The geographical boundaries and distinctive landscape of the area shaped the way it was used. From the beginning the ridge with its beautiful views of the harbour defined what people did in Princes Street and how they interacted. People who lived and worked in the area were affluent and community leaders and the area

⁴² Duder, Winstone, and Warren, p 17.

⁴³ Platts, 83

⁴⁴ W. Swainson, *Auckland, The Capital of New Zealand and the Country Adjacent*, London: Smith, Edler and Co., 1853

soon developed its own social life and identity. Immediately after the completion of the government store in Commercial Bay in September 1841, the first wooden building to be built by Europeans in Auckland, Felton Mathew sited the government offices on the ridge of today's lower Princes Street and officials had the exclusive right to reside in this choice location. His wife described the landscape as a "gem" with its view of the harbour and the islands beyond.⁴⁵ From the beginning, when the area was given the nickname "Exclusion Bay" by the private settlers who were forced to squat in tents or shanties at Commercial Bay, this area was prime real estate.

In 1845 the lodge made the decision to purchase land in Princes Street on which the Masonic Hotel was subsequently erected. The project of purchasing the land was undertaken after much deliberation and entered into with great enthusiasm. The lodge purchased land in Princes Street from Mr. Patrick Dignan for £150, £50 to be paid in cash and the balance in six months. The lodge did not have funds for this purchase and the £50 was made up of donations from members – the master Bro. Ligar, £17, Bro. Wood, £5, Bro. Cretney, £2, Bro. Rooney, £15, Bro. Wright, £10 and Bro. Clark, £1. With the payment of the £50 an agreement was signed between Mr. Dignan and Bros. Ligar, Rooney and Elliott, as trustees for the lodge. Lodge minutes reveal that meetings were then held at the premises of Bro. Cretney and for the year of 1846, presumably saving the £30 a year paid as rent to the Royal Hotel.

The decision to purchase land in Princes Street was a wise one on the part of the members of Ara Lodge. Surveyor-General Felton Mathew was disliked as much for his pomposity as for subsequent mishandling of land sales. His planned layout of the city, which earned him the nickname "Cobweb", was the subject of much criticism but may not have been as bad as has been claimed. He was required to come up with a plan in a very short time with little in the way of surveying equipment and assistance. He was influenced by the strictly formal and geometric approach to town design in vogue at the time. Felton Mathew adopted the crescent form in response to the strongly defined ridge and valley topography of

⁴⁵ Stone, *From Tamaki-Makau-Rau to Auckland*, p. 271

the site and it was his departure from the grid form of the day that made him the subject of much criticism. The Princes Street area at the top of Shortland Crescent was, from the beginning, a centre of culture, government and justice as well as a prestigious residential location.⁴⁶

On 7th October 1850, for the first time the lodge is referred to in the minutes as “Ara Lodge”.⁴⁷ There is no record of when the name was adopted or the origin of the word. Suggestions as to the meaning are: that it is taken from the constellation Ara consisting of twenty stars about forty degrees from the South Pole and, therefore, visible in New Zealand; that it is derived from the Latin “Ara” signifying an altar, a necessary item of furniture in an Irish Lodge, or that it is the Maori word meaning “to arise” or “to awaken” as a verb and “road” or “pathway” as a noun.⁴⁸

Ara Lodge, the first lodge in Auckland, was appropriately the first lodge to build its own meeting place, having met at the Exchange Hotel, the Royal Hotel (where its owner Samuel Wood was initiated into the lodge, perhaps as a way of securing its tenancy), Bro. Cretney’s house and then the Exchange Hotel again. The only meeting in 1847 was held at the Exchange Hotel. The purpose of this meeting was to open the lodge under the Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The minutes dated 14th July 1846 show that Bro. Wood suggested that Bro. Rooney take commodious rooms in Moffit’s new house and the meeting decided unanimously to rent the rooms for twelve months from 1st August at a rental of £25⁴⁹. The next entry in the minute book is on 8th January 1849 recording a meeting held at the Masonic Lodge Room, Masonic Hotel.⁵⁰ This hotel was erected by the lodge and let to a tenant with a particular room being set aside for the exclusive use of the lodge. Meetings that were to be held in Mr. Moffit’s new house do not appear to have eventuated.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Duder, Winstone, and Warren, pp 11–16

⁴⁷ Ara typescript, 7th October 1850

⁴⁸ Gribbin, p. 24

⁴⁹ Ara typescript 14th July 1846

⁵⁰ Ara typescript 8th January 1849

⁵¹ M. A. Allen, ‘A Tour of Inner Auckland Lodge Buildings’, *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167*, Vol. 24, p. 154

Mr. Patrick Dignan, from whom the members of Ara Lodge purchased the land in Princes Street in 1845, came from County Galway and was a close friend of Sir George Grey. In 1851 he was elected to the Auckland Borough Council when he was a publican in Albert Street. He was a director of the Auckland Gas Company, an Auckland Savings Bank Trustee and a major shareholder in the Bank of New Zealand. The land he sold to Ara was only one of several town allotments he bought and sold in the area. The members of Ara Lodge, with a view to financial prudence, proceeded to build a hotel. The hotel, known as "the Masonic" was let to an hotelier with one room reserved for the exclusive use of the lodge.

When the land was purchased in 1845 the population of Auckland was 3,700 though by 1848 it had dropped to 2,813, owing to the exodus to the goldfields of California. The first hotelier was Samuel Wood. *The New Zealander* of 6th September 1848 published an advertisement by "the Masonic Lodge" for a public dinner at 6.00 p.m. on 11th September to open the new Masonic Hall at Wood's Hotel. At the dinner the band of H.M. 58th Regiment played, by kind permission of Lieutenant Colonel Wynyard, and the masons of Auckland, together with their friends, opened the new masonic hall.

Bro. Wood was not the only licensee of the Masonic Hotel to be a member of Ara Lodge. At least two other lodge members held the position as well as several non-lodge licensees. Frederick Ward Merriman, a solicitor of Parnell and initiated into Ara Lodge on 12th February 1849, was prominent as counsel for applicants for issue or transfer of licences at Licensing Commission hearings. Until 1873 there was little in the way of legal controls over drinking in New Zealand. Justices of the Peace were free to issue licences to anyone they deemed to be of good character and the hours for drinking were long and, in most places, included Sundays. Under a licensing authority established in 1873 local prohibition was possible and this was extended under the country's first licensing act in 1881.⁵²

⁵² Phillips, p. 65

Participants of the first Lodge

This early process of social organisation in Auckland was probably intended to be in imitation of the masonic experience in the Mother Country but, perhaps inevitably, freemasonry in New Zealand developed its own distinctive characteristics. The early freemasons in Auckland were certainly among the “colonising elite” referred to by Jock Phillips⁵³, the small minority comprising a more gentlemanly middle class, who were confident of the ability of their order “to exert its influence in shaping and improving the moral character of the scattered little communities in the new land which had been claimed for civilisation”.⁵⁴ They drew inspiration from the Grand Lodge of England and when the seed of their order was sown in New Zealand, believed that the science of freemasonry now spanned the globe. Freemasonry was, by that time, strong in Australia and when the lodges opened in the new colony it reached its farthest geographical limit. Edward Jerningham Wakefield, a member of the first masonic lodge in Wellington,⁵⁵ supported the schemes of his uncle which envisaged “colonisation by families, not single men, and the transplanting of class hierarchies to preserve order and civilisation”.⁵⁶

Unlike the churches, the masonic ethic does not allow soliciting for new members and those wishing to join must approach an existing member acting on their own uninfluenced convictions. All are welcome to become freemasons provided they meet certain prerequisites. To qualify to become a candidate for admission to freemasonry a man must meet three requirements – mental, moral and physical. The mental qualifications relate to the security of the order and require that a man is of sane mind, responsible for his actions, able to understand the obligations and instructions to perform the duties of a mason. The moral qualifications are that he is an obeyer of the moral law, virtuous in conduct and respectable in character. He must not be an atheist but a believer in the wisdom, power and goodness of God. The moral qualifications are to ensure the respectability of the order. The physical qualifications, which refer to the utility of the order, require that a

⁵³ Phillips, 47

⁵⁴ Weston, p. 7

⁵⁵ Weston, p. 9

⁵⁶ Phillips, p. 47

candidate be twenty-one years of age, able bodied and “with limbs whole as a man ought to be.” This link with the operative masons is a peculiarity that distinguishes freemasonry from other orders. Those desiring admission, therefore, were men of mature age and good report with an estate, office, trade, occupation or some visible way of acquiring a livelihood who ought not only to earn what is sufficient for themselves and their families but with something to spare for charity, who are recommended by a member of the lodge who is a master mason.⁵⁷

William Mason arrived in Auckland on the *Anna Watson* on 15th September 1840 as the Superintendent of Works but gave up that appointment from 31st July 1841 so that he could “make his fortune independently”, hopefully by architecture.⁵⁸ No doubt his appointment by the trustees of St Paul’s Church as their architect played a part in his decision to go into partnership with Thomas Paton as Auctioneers and Architects. Apart from being one of the three signatories to a request for dispensation from the Sydney lodge he took little further part in this lodge at that time. It may be that his interest lay in making contact as much as possible as in the same year, he was also one of twelve members to form the Auckland Book Society, later to become the Auckland Library and Museum.⁵⁹ In 1855, after some years farming at Epsom, East Tamaki and Howick, and when the threat of Heke’s war in the north caused many of the settlers in outlying districts to move back into town, he returned to Auckland. Mason used the move to become affiliated to the lodge and to become vice-president of the Farmers Club.

William Leech, another of the three signatories to the request for dispensation from the Australian Social Lodge No. 260, stands out as the notable promoter of the lodge. William Leech and William Mason obviously had a common interest. A correspondent of the *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette* towards the end of 1841 commented on the fine gardens at the homes of each of them.⁶⁰ Amongst lodge members he was obviously recognised a leader as Brother Whitaker’s appointment was only until such time as Brother Leech returned to

⁵⁷ *The New Zealand Freemason*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 7

⁵⁸ Stacpoole, p. 35

⁵⁹ Stacpoole, p. 37.

⁶⁰ Stacpoole, p. 37.

Auckland. His name also appears on the Grand Lodge Warrant and he was again installed as master when the lodge opened under that Warrant on 8th January 1849.⁶¹ Unfortunately for the lodge, William Leech was appointed Postmaster and Collector of Customs at New Plymouth soon after this installation. As might be expected from such an enthusiastic freemason, upon his arrival in New Plymouth, he set about founding an Irish lodge there and it was to the Auckland lodge that he applied for a dispensation to open a lodge in New Plymouth. The minutes dated 1st August 1853 record a communication from Bro. Leech in New Plymouth forwarding an application for a warrant to open a lodge and requesting Ara Lodge to recommend it to Grand Lodge.⁶² Prior to the granting of a warrant, Ara Lodge granted a dispensation to enable the lodge to open. Lodge Egmont was duly constituted under the Irish constitution although it did not retain its allegiance to the Grand Lodge of Ireland and later became an English lodge.

Frederick Whitaker was the business partner of the influential lawyer, Thomas Russell, a man noted for his entrepreneurial skills. These men, along with other business leaders in Auckland, were conspicuous as promoters and directors of mining companies. Their reputation as astute investors in and directors of mining companies, as well as company promotion and control, attracted a much larger group prepared to follow their lead. They made enormous profits from investments in the Thames goldfields. The feverish excitement for the gold fields created a passion for speculation which, along with the inflationary effects of the Vogel years of the 1870s created a reckless attitude to investment throughout the community.⁶³

Tom Russell was the leader of this powerful group of businessmen who, because of the shortage of men with the expertise and shareholding to serve on the boards of large companies and the expansionist policies of the new settlement, had almost total control of the town's directorates. Tom Russell, Frederick Whitaker and D. L. Murdoch were the financial leaders at the heart of this group of directors. As a prime mover in the creation of the New Zealand Insurance Company and then, two years later in 1861, the Bank of New Zealand, and in

⁶¹ Gribbin, p. 174.

⁶² Ara typescript 1st August 1853

⁶³ Stone, *Makers of Fortune*, p 14.

1865 the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency, Russell was a dominating figure in the financial affairs of Auckland. The success of these companies reinforced the power of Russell's financial circle in Auckland. It may have been the financial expertise of Frederick Whitaker that led the founders of the first lodge in Auckland to make the prudent purchase of land in Princes Street that was to set that lodge on a sound footing for the future.

Several other freemasons played a prominent part in early Auckland. David Graham was already in New Zealand when his more influential brother Robert arrived on the *Jane Gifford* and together they set up the R. and D. Graham⁶⁴ General merchants at Kororareka and in Auckland on the corner of Queen Street and Shortland Crescent.⁶⁵ Robert and David Graham were among those settlers who arrived in the colony with capital to start off with. Robert Graham used his money for land development and speculation, eventually creating the thriving settlement of Grahamstown during the rush to the Thames goldfields.

"No industrial activities seem to have been more profitable in nineteenth-century Auckland than publishing and brewing."⁶⁶ The *Herald* newspaper was started in 1863 by W. C. Wilson.⁶⁷ Henry Brett, born in the south of England, and Mayor of Auckland for 1878, was brought up to the printing business in the office of his uncle, the proprietor of the "Hastings and St. Leonard's Gazette". On arrival in Auckland he joined the staff of the *Daily Southern Cross* and then the *New Zealand Herald*. Later he became associated with G. M. Reed in the proprietorship of the *Auckland Star*. He was chairman of the Choral Society, president of the Mechanics Institute, had a seat on the Board of Governors of the Auckland College and Grammar School and vice-president of the Home for Neglected and Destitute Children.⁶⁸

Moss Davis, originally a Nelson merchant, was one of Auckland's most popular and highly-esteemed citizens. He became a partner of the Hancock family,

⁶⁴ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, Christchurch: Cyclopedia Company, Limited, 1902, p. 41.

⁶⁵ W. H. Oliver (Ed.) *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography Vol. 1 1769-1869*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990, pp. 156-7.

⁶⁶ Stone, *Makers of Fortune*, p. 47.

⁶⁷ *Cyclopedia* p.269

⁶⁸ *Cyclopedia* p.125-6

brewers, adding his financial connections and experience. He was a prominent figure in business circles, but took no active part in public life. One of his successes was to improve hotels in Auckland and raise the status of the trade by getting good class victuallers and securing a close observance of the licensing laws. He was assisted by sons Ernest and Eliot Davis.⁶⁹ Eliot Davis became a generous benefactor of the Roskill Masonic Village with the Eliot and Stella Davis Memorial Hospital bearing his name.

James Buchanan was originally a member of the firm of Woodhouse and Buchanan, wine and spirit merchants, but subsequently became the agent in Auckland of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company. He was also involved in some farming.⁷⁰

Charles Wybrow Ligar joined Ara Lodge at its first meeting on 9th February 1843 and was installed as Master on the 4th December of that year.⁷¹ He too played a significant role in the early days of Auckland. In the 1860s the 8,000 inhabitants of Auckland were mostly in the Queen Street valley and on the ridges nearby, roads were unformed and an effective municipal water supply was in the future. "The Ligar Canal, in effect the main Queen Street drain, was a perennial scandal. Hailed with ponderous irony in local papers by names such as 'that aromatic stream' it was notorious for its offensive odors, almost unbearable in the summer as its point of discharge in the harbour."⁷² In Britain also many Victorians lived in squalor, ignorant of the fact that cholera, typhoid and typhus were water-borne diseases. In 1858 when the Queen and Prince Albert attempted a short trip on the Thames they had to turn back because of the offensive odours. Parliament had to rise early because the smell was unendurable on the terraces outside the Palace of Westminster. It was Edwin Chadwick who drew public attention to the need for proper drainage in the large and filthy manufacturing towns and, amidst heated debate, Dr John Snow demonstrated the fact that disease was water-borne.⁷³ These views influenced Auckland's concern with water supply.

⁶⁹ *Cyclopedia* p.334

⁷⁰ Gribbin, p. 179

⁷¹ Ara typescript 9th February 1843, 4th December 1843

⁷² Stone, *Makers of Fortune*, p. 112.

⁷³ Wilson, pp 155,156

Freemasons in early Auckland had an influence and prominence disproportionate to their numbers and their spheres of influence were many.

Those involved in politics included Frederick Whitaker, Speaker of the Legislative Council 1855 and 1856, Premier of New Zealand 1863 and 1882, Hugh Morrow, represented the Northern Division of the Auckland Provincial Council in 1867. R. C. Barstow was called to the Legislative Council by Sir George Grey on 9th December 1848, took a position as Resident Magistrate for the Bay of Islands in January 1859 and in May 1872 became Resident Magistrate for the districts of Onehunga, Papakura and Waiuku. He took a special interest in the establishment of a reformatory for youthful criminals and was for many years a member of the committee of the Howe Street Industrial Home.⁷⁴ Charles Heaphy, member for Parnell in the New Zealand House of Representatives in 1867, was studying at the Royal Academy for the profession of an artist when he was offered the position of draughtsman to the New Zealand Company and sailed for New Zealand on the "Tory" in 1839. His first years in the colony were spent exploring with Sir William Fox and was variously Commissioner of Native Reserves and, at the time of his death, one of the judges of the Native Land Court.⁷⁵ He was awarded the Victoria Cross at a parade in Auckland on 11th May 1867. His enduring legacy is the body of watercolours, portraits, charts and coastal profiles which he produced.⁷⁶

Members of the legal profession were Frederick Whitaker and F. W. Merriman. Andrew Beveridge was in partnership in Thames and Auckland, was Chairman of the Auckland City Board and law adviser to the Auckland Provincial Executive, Frederic M. P. Brookfield was for many years a Crown Prosecutor and then a Judge of the Native Land Court.

Freemasons involved in commercial activity included James Buchanan and George Patrick Pierce, General Manager of the New Zealand Insurance Company, Thomas Scott was a store keeper in Queen Street, John C. McDowell was a merchant.

⁷⁴ *Cyclopedia* p.425

⁷⁵ *Cyclopedia* p.105

⁷⁶ Oliver, pp 181–83

Those involved in architecture and Public Works were William Mason, C. W. Ligar, John Lambert Tole surveyor and Murdoch McLean who left Auckland to go to Otira “to bore a tunnel about six miles long through the New Zealand Alps”.⁷⁷

Medical Practitioners were John Henry Hooper and Charles Field Goldsbro.

In the field of education Robert Kidd, initially editor of the newspaper “New Zealander”, went on to open a collegiate school for boys which eventually merged in the Auckland College Grammar School of which he was Head Master.

Other freemasons became prominent as a result of their creative activity. John Varty was noted for his culture and refinement. His literary talents were “cheerfully employed in any undertaking of a benevolent character”. He had a local column in one of the early daily papers in the colony and a business (probably art and literature) in Queen Street “that in entering that establishment you were going into a beautiful garden where all kinds of lovely fruits and flowers, and perfumes too, were spread out in luxurious profusion”. He later took up a position with the government. He was always ready to give a lecture or one of his readings from Dickens in the interests of charity, spent more on fostering the game of cricket than any other man in the province and served as a volunteer under Colonel Balneavis.⁷⁸ W. C. Wilson who started the Herald newspaper in 1863.⁷⁹ Henry Brett. Thomas Henry Webb was the organist of the Epiphany Church in Grey Lynn and carried on business as a pianoforte importer and tuner in Hobson Street.⁸⁰

Government Officials: James Coates, one of Auckland’s earliest sheriffs (After his sudden death in 1854 he was followed in Ara Lodge by his son J. H. B. Coates who was General Manager of the National Bank.), Henry de Burgh Adams, purveyor to the forces, J. Naughton, Commissioner of Police.

⁷⁷ Gribbin, p. 169

⁷⁸ Gribbin, pp 187–9

⁷⁹ *Cyclopedia* p.269

⁸⁰ *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, Christchurch: Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1902 p. 218

A split down the middle of the settlement occurred almost from the outset with the Governor and his officials on one side and the settlers, many of them wealthy, on the other. The early influential members of the settler faction were Scots led by William Brown and Logan Campbell. Their position was challenged in the late 1860s by an Irish/Wesleyan faction and the mouthpiece of this group was the newspaper *The New-Zealander*⁸¹. In 1863 an initiate to freemasonry in Auckland's first lodge was the Rev. Robert Kidd, LL.D, a distinguished scholar and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. Unable to accept the Chair of Logic in Queen's College because of ill health, he emigrated to New Zealand. On his arrival at Auckland he was the editor of *The New-Zealander* but gave up the position to open a collegiate school for boys. This school became merged in the Auckland College and Grammar School of which he was Head Master for several years.

Activities of the Lodge

As indicated by Phillips,⁸² those involved in the setting up of this lodge appear ambivalent to the frontier male culture of nineteenth century New Zealand, perhaps certain in the knowledge that freemasonry would be a civilising influence on those who joined their ranks. In the city, the frontier habits of the colony were reinforced by similar customs brought by working class immigrants from some of the seamier parts of Europe. Many of the characteristics that made New Zealand a "man's country" were reflected in freemasonry.⁸³ Like the emerging culture of the frontier male, membership of lodges involved many single men – the soldiers who were stationed here, those that came to New Zealand in search of gold and other forms of work – and it would seem that the lodge may have imposed

⁸¹ R. C. J. Stone, 'Sinister' Auckland Business Cliques 1840–1940' *New Zealand Journal of History*, 21/2 (1987) p. 30

⁸² Phillips, p. 47

⁸³ Phillips, p. 4

restrictions upon behaviour not dissimilar to those imposed by women in any community.

Adaptation was the key to success in the new colony and freemasonry in New Zealand had to relax the strict laws and regulations of their order if they were to succeed. In Wellington, the notorious raids of Te Rauparaha and Rangihaeata meant the district was in a 'disturbed state'. Warships were frequent visitors to the port and the army and navy were active in and about the town.⁸⁴ Irregularities in the procedure of admitting and advancing candidates were a necessity at this time if lodges were to attract members.

Minutes record that a ballot, election and initiation were often conducted at the same meeting and even the Second and Third Degrees of learning were completed on the same date. These unusual steps were taken in response to the mobility of its membership as men were moved around the colony as a result of their work, particularly in the case of the military and government officials, or in search of a more successful way of life or business. Many of the new initiates were master mariners and seafaring brethren who never again entered the New Zealand lodge and many came to pass to a higher degree in New Zealand as it would be a considerable time before they could attend their own lodges. As early as 16th May 1843 the minutes record the initiation of Jas. Harding, seafarer and about to sail for Sydney, when the Lodge determined that circumstances were sufficient to justify a departure from the regular by-laws.⁸⁵ The meeting on 6th November of the same year proposed supplements to the by-laws to accommodate temporary residents. These supplements allowed any temporary resident of Auckland to be proposed as an honorary member with an exemption from dues but a requirement that they pay a proportion of refreshment expenses after his first visit when he could be a guest of the master.⁸⁶ One of Ara Lodge's most significant members, F. W. Merriman, was balloted and admitted after the by-laws were suspended on 12th February 1849 as he "was known to the brethren for more than eight days."⁸⁷ The minutes of 8th June 1853 record that two brothers were passed to the second

⁸⁴ Weston, p. 29

⁸⁵ Ara typescript 16th May 1843

⁸⁶ Ara typescript 6th November 1843

⁸⁷ Ara typescript 12th February 1849

degree because of the uncertainty of the Pandora being in harbour on the next monthly meeting night⁸⁸ and another seven passed the chair on 7th August 1854.⁸⁹

The constant movement of the population is reflected in minutes of lodges around the colony by the irregularity of meetings and fluctuating lodge memberships. Another reason for these fluctuations was an enthusiasm for growing their memberships which caused a lack of the traditional cautious enquiry into the suitability of a candidate and some brethren were admitted who had only a fleeting interest and quickly ceased to attend meetings. The minutes of the lodge dated 2nd December 1844 record the complaint of a member that three lodge members had represented him as having escaped from Paramatta Gaol in 1834. This he denied and begged the lodge to present him with his certificate and to accept his resignation.⁹⁰ He was summoned to appear personally at the next monthly meeting but failed to do so and on 3rd March 1845 his resignation was accepted.⁹¹

The operative masons engaged in the building of churches, cathedrals, castles and monasteries extended hospitality to fellow masons and visitors in the “lodges” attached to the buildings on which they were working. As villages sprang up in the shadow of these buildings, an inn would eventually be built and this became the common meeting ground. This history of meeting in inns, hotels and taverns was brought to New Zealand, as was the practice of initiating the landlords into a lodge. The payment of a rental was usually a flexible arrangement, the landlord often being satisfied with the extra custom he received by accommodating the brethren.

Imagine the early days of speculative masonry where “the meeting is being held in the upper room of some hospitable inn, with most likely the innkeeper as Tyler. The meeting is just over ... and the Lodge appurtenances have been locked up in the Lodge chest. The initiate ... is assisting in setting up the trestle tables down the middle of the Lodge room, and then mine host brings in a large bowl of punch

⁸⁸ Ara typescript 8th June 1853

⁸⁹ Ara typescript 7th August 1854

⁹⁰ Ara typescript 2nd December 1844

⁹¹ Ara typescript 3rd March 1845

and places it before the Master, whilst screws of tobacco and churchwarden pipes are placed on the table for the brethren. The rafters soon begin to ring with chorus upon chorus, the snuff box begins its peregrinations around the room, and such delicacies as jellied eels, pigs' trotters, or other succulent dishes are placed before the brethren. Some gifted brother sings the Master's Song, the Warden's Song, and, as it is an initiation, the Entered Apprentice's Song, while everyone joins in the choruses. So the evening passes in good companionship and cheerfulness until the time of departure arrives, when with hearty choruses on their lips they wend their way to their homes, looking forward to another happy reunion in a fortnight's time."⁹²

"Social intercourse" is a time-honoured masonic institution much appreciated by freemasons after the performance of their solemn ceremonies and a time when hospitality is extended to visiting brethren. In the early years, before a lodge was on a sound financial footing and at a time when the moveable nature of the population meant that there were many temporary residents in Auckland who might only attend lodge meetings for a short time, it was necessary to find a satisfactory means of funding refreshments. Considerable importance was also attached to the six monthly festivals which were celebrated in a variety of ways – a ball, a dinner or perhaps a "cold collation". The term "festival" has now become obsolete in freemasonry and, more recently, the annual installation of the new Worshipful Master has become the principal celebration of the masonic year.

At Ara Lodge also in 1843 the matter of refreshments after the "labours of the evening" was a matter for discussion. The meeting of 7th August 1843 decided "that only half the receipts for each night be available for refreshments"⁹³ and on 6th November resolved that; any temporary resident of Auckland who was a member of any other lodge could be exempt from monthly dues but should pay a proportion of refreshment expenses; that the master could invite any visitor to join him at refreshment but on a second visit he should pay a proportion of the expenses; no brother to be received as a guest at half-yearly festivals; and that

⁹² R. F. Newton, 'From Labour to Refreshment', *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge, No. 167, Selected Papers, Vol. 1, 1957*

⁹³ Ara typescript 7th August 1843

refreshments should be charged at 7/6 at ordinary meetings and 15/- at festivals.⁹⁴ At the end of the first year of Ara's existence, the members were finding it difficult to pay their way and the minutes of 1st April 1844 resolve that members should pay for their refreshments personally if they chose to remain, with Bro. Wood collecting the appropriate amount from each brother and no lodge funds should be spent on refreshments.⁹⁵ After further attempts to solve the problem that year, it was resolved "that the refreshment bill be paid Bro. Wood out of Lodge funds till further notice, Bro. Wood agreeing to relinquish the amount paid him of £2.10s.0d. per month, as rent of Lodge room, the same amount of £2.10s.0d. being guaranteed him to be expended at the monthly meetings in twenty suppers being provided for the members, whether present or absent, at 2s 6d each."⁹⁶ There were many systems for the payment of refreshment expenses until 1st August 1849 when it was agreed that expenses would be met out of lodge funds and this practice was in place for many years to come.⁹⁷

Ara Lodge members were able to adapt their proceedings to allow them to accommodate the transient as well as the stable members of the community in their established fraternity.

⁹⁴ Ara typescript 6th November 1843

⁹⁵ Ara typescript 4th April 1844

⁹⁶ Gibbin, p. 84

⁹⁷ Ara typescript 1st August 1849

CHAPTER THREE

1849 to 1881

Buildings

In light of their long history of building impressive meeting places, it was only natural that the first freemasons in New Zealand should continue the tradition of their predecessors and make the erection of buildings a priority. The early erection of buildings was a significant demonstration of the “community” of freemasons and a sign that they were a permanent part of an area. Not only were they important places for freemasons to carry out their ceremonies and rituals but they provided a place in which they could socialize and connect with like-minded men. In colonial New Zealand this took on further importance as they realised that meeting in hotels was not the best way to represent their fraternity to wider society. In this country, lodge rooms generally tend to be wooden rather than masonry but the decoration and furnishing are all that is required in order to carry out the ceremonies and rites of the order and to symbolise the high masonic ideals.

The first building erected for masonic purposes was used by Ara Lodge from 8th January 1849, some four months after it was officially opened, to December 1881. The majority of the freemasons who arrived in Auckland, like other settlers, were looking for the opportunity to improve themselves but their attitudes still reflected the societies from which they had come and building a lodge room in the traditional and familiar form was important to them. Building a masonic home in which they could meet like minded men in appropriate surroundings helped them to adjust and become accustomed to this southern hemisphere land. From 1858 Waitemata Lodge met at the Masonic Hotel, having previously met at the William

Denny Hotel, and in 1864 the newly formed United Service Lodge also met there. Lodge St Andrew used the hotel lodge room from 1875, having used many other premises since its inception in 1861, as did the Prince of Wales Lodge. Gribbin states that the lodge-room was reserved solely for masonic purposes but Platts says the Masonic filled the role played by the old Royal Hotel as a venue for dinners after public events and that dances were held in the large assembly room, as was instruction in ballroom dancing by a Mr. Hilliard.⁹⁸ It would seem the St Andrew Society used the room on 1st December 1851 to celebrate St Andrew's Day and the Northern Club was allowed to use the room free of rent.⁹⁹ Meetings at the Masonic Hotel stopped in 1881 and the hotel was demolished in 1887 to make room for the Grand Hotel.

The credit for the first true lodge building in Auckland must go to the Eden Lodge. After their formation on 17th July 1878, the Eden Lodge met at the Rising Sun Hotel in Karangahape Road. This lodge quickly addressed the business of planning a lodge building of their own and by 1879 had agreed to purchase a 35ft frontage section on Karangahape Road for a price of £165. The neat and elegant two-storied wooden building costing £423 featured a heavily moulded coved ceiling, two centre pieces containing the principal emblems of the order and from which were suspended glass pendants containing twelve gas burners, the generous work of a member. Alfred Simmons in his book published in 1879 comparing the institutions of New Zealand with the institutions of the mother country,¹⁰⁰ claims that the prevalence of wooden building was because early settlers heard of the shocks of earthquakes as a result of New Zealand's volcanic origin. The building, which required an outstanding effort on the part of the lodge, was consecrated on 3rd December 1879 and the Eden Lodge used this building, together with Lodge Ponsonby from 1900, until 1911 when the building was sold and the proceeds used as part of the funds necessary to build new premises in Upper Queen Street. By February 1885 the debt on the hall had been reduced to £150 and in May of that year a special meeting declined a proposal to dispose of the property for

⁹⁸ Platts, p. 149

⁹⁹ M. A. Allen, 'Princes Street Lodge Rooms', *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167, Vol. 26*, p. 163

¹⁰⁰ Alfred Simmons, *Old England and New Zealand: The Government, Laws, Churches, Public Institutions, and the Resources of New Zealand*, London: Edward Stanford, 1879, p. 52

£2,500. The building was still in use in 1958, partly as a milk bar and partly as a bank, its magnificent ceiling still recognisable, but was subsequently pulled down to make way for a motorway.

Meanwhile, in Princes Street the owner of the Masonic Hotel and its tenant lodges maintained their plan for a building for masonic use exclusively. The minutes of Waitemata, St Andrew, Ara and the Prince of Wales Lodges all have references to building funds and building schemes. Meetings of lodge representatives were held, offers of property were made and proposals to build were considered and rejected. On 7th June 1869 a proposal was put to Ara by the Masonic Hall Committee that the trustees of Ara have the property in Princes Street valued, accept the amount of that valuation in paid-up scrip and the committee would then erect a suitable and substantial building at the rear of the Masonic Hotel, the whole to become the property of the Masonic body in Auckland. It would seem that this proposal was too preposterous to be considered as the minutes of Ara simply record that it was received. In 1872 the freemasons of Auckland appointed a committee to look at a second scheme but it was not until 18th November 1874 that a proposal was submitted to Ara. This involved an offer by Mr. William Aitken of buildings in Shortland Street occupied by the Provincial Government. Ara rejected this offer, its minutes recording 'That Ara Lodge will be happy to join the other lodges, in building a Masonic Hall, on a suitable site, and that a committee consisting of the P.G.M., W.M., Senior Warden, and Treasurer, be appointed to confer with the other delegates on this subject' Because of Ara's superior financial position, it was expected it would make a greater contribution to the project and, without its support, the scheme had to be abandoned as did a third scheme regarding land in Upper Queen Street.

The scheme that was ultimately accepted involved a piece of land in Princes Street to the north of the Masonic Hotel which was purchased by Ara in 1877 for £632. This proposal was brought before Ara on 7th June 1880 and the resolution "That the Lodge convey to the proposed Masonic Hall Trust, portion of the allotment northwards of the hotel, not exceeding 44 feet, and that payment for the same be taken in so much of the capital of the said Masonic Hall."¹⁰¹ The

¹⁰¹ Gribbin, pp 30–32

proposed two-storey building with a large hall above and a smaller one beneath and several ante-rooms to be available to the lodges was estimated to cost at least £1,500, £1,300 of which was guaranteed by the various lodges.¹⁰² Plans were drawn up by Bro. W. H. Skinner of the Prince of Wales Lodge and a contract was let to Bro. Thomas Colebrook of Eden Lodge for £2,630 for the building described as “brick faced with cement in imitation of stone and handsomely embellished; it has a width of 36ft 8in. and a depth of 77ft; the edifice is constructed after the Corinthian style of Architecture, with the entrance porch supported by Corinthian pillars each surmounted by a spherical ball.”¹⁰³ It was consecrated in December 1881 at a final cost, including furniture and chattels, of £3,972.

These decorative and embellished buildings with a sense of mystery about them were to become attractive to preservationists. More than one hundred years after they were built freemasonry was not attracting members in the numbers it had in the past and many lodge rooms were unable to be maintained economically. Lodges began to combine as memberships fell and their lodge rooms were at risk unless some viable use could be found for them. This occurred at a time when more and more individuals were taking an interest in historic sites and buildings. “From the early 1970s when Auckland’s Parnell Village capitalised on old buildings to create a point of differentiation for its retail tenants”¹⁰⁴ it became fashionable to make use of historic buildings for commercial purposes. In what David Hamer refers to as the “age of survival”¹⁰⁵ many of Auckland’s lodge rooms found a new usefulness. The lodge room owned by Remuera Lodge became the home and studio of a noted photographer and lodge rooms in Devonport were converted into apartments. As part of the 2004 Fashion Week the

¹⁰² *New Zealand Freemason*, 6th July 1880 –

Waitemata	£300
Prince of Wales	£200
Ara	£200
United Service	£200
St Andrew’s	£300
Union Lodge of Mark Masters	£100

¹⁰³ H. J. Hulse, ‘The Birth and Progress of Freemasonry in the Auckland District, Part 11, *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge, No. 167*, Vol. 14, p. 148

¹⁰⁴ Gavin McLean, ‘Where sheep may not safely graze: A Brief History of New Zealand’s Heritage Movement 1890–2000’ in *Common Ground? Heritage and Public Places in New Zealand*, Alexander Trapeznik (Ed.) Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000, p. 40

¹⁰⁵ David Hamer, ‘Historic Preservation in Urban New Zealand’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp 253–5

Ara Lodgerooms were used by a leading fashion house as the venue for their parade and the hireage fee, matched with a donation from Ara Lodge, was donated to the Breast Cancer Foundation.¹⁰⁶ The erection of significant buildings is fundamental to the ethos of freemasonry but the costs involved in maintaining the lodgerooms of uneconomic lodges have become unmanageable. Masonic historians put their efforts into the preservation of records, archives and memorabilia that reflect the changes that have occurred in their order. New Zealand has not yet reached the stage where masonic temples, libraries and museums are a tourist attraction as they are in Sydney and London but plans are well underway in Auckland to achieve this goal.

Discipline

The strict discipline required of its members by masonic lodges is in stark contrast to the “middle class paradise” referred to by Fairburn.¹⁰⁷ The lack of social pressures in New Zealand with regard to refinements such as fashion, taste and etiquette were evidenced by informal social gatherings, acquaintances more readily made and houses open to friends and travelers. Informal visiting may well have been the norm but the freemasons brought with them traditions of morality, duty and service. A new colony would seem the ideal place to promulgate the principals of freemasonry, particularly a place of “natural abundance” where all men could succeed and acquire sufficient capital to invest in land or business. Many of the characteristics of New Zealand society referred to by Fairburn would have been extremely attractive to the mostly middle class freemasons arriving here – the lack of a social hierarchy, the opportunities to better oneself (to which the lodge could add opportunities to make contacts, self-confidence achieved through the successful working of masonic ceremonies and the development of an individual’s talents).

¹⁰⁶ The New Zealand Herald, 20th October 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Fairburn, p. 61

One of the traditions of freemasonry that changed in the new colony was the custom of “blackballing”. It had always been the prerogative of every freemason to “blackball” any candidate seeking admission to his Lodge. This right was rarely exercised, the proposer usually taking the opportunity of withdrawing any candidate against whom there was an objection. However, during the first twenty-five years of Ara Lodge’s existence, candidates were put to the ballot and many were rejected. While the Lodge members were prepared to adapt their procedures to accommodate the more transient members of the community, they were not prepared to compromise their standards regarding admission and the tradition of “blackballing” was vigorously exercised.

The minutes record some peculiar instances. A candidate rejected on 24th June 1843 was accepted for initiation on 7th August of the same year. A few months later he moved the following resolution in the Lodge:—

That the balloting for candidates commence on their being proposed and seconded, without the delay of a month, as is now the order for enquiry into character and suitability.

Unsurprisingly, this was not acceptable to the members of the Lodge. The member’s later exit from the Lodge provided an explanation for his unusual resolution. The minutes of 2nd December 1844 record: —

Bro. X.Y. having complained to the Lodge that three of its members have represented him as being a prisoner of the Crown, having escaped from Paramatta Gaol in 1834, and denying the assertion, begs the Lodge to present him with his certificate and to accept his resignation. Moved by the W.M., seconded by Bro. Rooney, that Bro. X.Y. be summoned to appear personally at our next monthly meeting, and answer such questions as may be put by Bro. Fulton and Bro. Clark, that the Lodge may know how to decide, and whom to censure.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Ara typescript 2nd December 1844

Bro. X.Y. did not answer the summons and on 3rd March 1845 it was decided his resignation be accepted. A further application by him for his certificate was refused.

On 16th April 1849 there was serious disturbance as the result of a rejection of a candidate. Language “more forcible than polite” was used by both proposer and seconder requiring the secretary to record that “the Lodge was closed” rather than the usual formula “the Lodge was closed in peace, love and harmony.”¹⁰⁹

The minutes record many instances of ‘blackballing’ being used to prevent a man being nominated for membership. Ara Lodge minutes chronicle the unusual situation of a gentleman with a high official position in Auckland who was proposed for initiation and blackballed. He was proposed and initiated in another Lodge but again tried to gain membership of Ara Lodge, with the same result as his first attempt. He remained a member of his mother Lodge, eventually becoming master. As Master of this Lodge he attended a meeting of Ara Lodge as a visitor and, as no officer of Ara Lodge was available to take the chair, he assumed that position and transacted the business of the evening. This highly unusual incident was just one of the ways freemasonry had to adapt their customs to suit the circumstances.

It does seem that a great deal of lodge time in the early years was spent dealing with regularity of attendance. Article IV of the first by-laws states:

For all regular meetings the brethren shall assemble at seven o'clock upon the evening of the appointed day, and if any member be absent at such fixed hour, or during the whole time of business, unless it be signified that the absentee be sick, or such other cause assigned as the Lodge shall deem sufficient, he shall be admonished from the chair for his first non-attendance, and a note thereof made in the proceedings; his second shall be punished at the discretion of the Lodge, and for his third

¹⁰⁹ Gribbin, pp 72–74

successive absence his name shall be struck off the list of the brethren of the Lodge.¹¹⁰

Minutes dated 7th April 1851 reflect the concern expressed regarding members being absent without tendering an apology. The need to put apologies in writing was recorded. Bro. Heaphy confided that he had forgotten the last meeting and he was admonished from the chair to be more careful in future.¹¹¹

Many members received “severe censure” but only one was expelled in 1857. In general, the officers of the lodge carried out their duties in the proper manner with the minutes recording only one instance where the secretary had to be fined £1 after prolonged investigations regarding attendance.

Apart from offences regarding attendance, there are few instances where the lodge had to deal with more serious matters but the minutes of 1st July 1844¹¹² record that one of the brethren used offensive language towards another brother. The offending mason refused to apologise to the lodge and was suspended as a mason for unbecoming behaviour.¹¹³ However, on 4th August he appeared before the lodge committee and fully apologised for his conduct and the committee recorded that he should continue to be entitled to all the benefits of freemasonry.¹¹⁴

Lapses in behaviour, however, were not confined to the freemasons. In June 1850 at the Masonic Ball held in the Masonic Hotel in Princes Street, Major Cyprian Bridge, Captain Marlow R. E. and “young Brathwaite”, Assistant Commissary General, had a “kicking of shins” and Johnston and Mitford a “pulling of noses”.¹¹⁵ Of these gentlemen, only Mitford was a member of the lodge in Auckland, having been initiated on 5th March 1849.¹¹⁶

A letter to the editor of the *New Zealand Freemason* headed “A serious indiscretion” told of the indiscreet action of Bro. J. Finlay at an Orange banquet.

¹¹⁰ Gribbin, pp 208–209

¹¹¹ Ara typescript 7th April 1851

¹¹² Gribbin, p. 58

¹¹³ Ara typescript 1st July 1844

¹¹⁴ Ara typescript 4th August 1844

¹¹⁵ Platts, p. 149

¹¹⁶ Gibbin p. 226

Bro. Finlay, in reply to the toast "Kindred Societies", responded on behalf of the Caledonian Lodge, No. 534, S.C. The concern was that the Roman Catholic portion of the community might see such action as support for the Protestant cause and, consequently, as against them, when freemasonry sees no difference between Protestant and Catholic.¹¹⁷ An article in the same paper attributes his misdirected zeal to an exuberance of feeling and acknowledges that Bro. Finlay had not knowingly committed an act prejudicial to freemasonry. Nevertheless, his unwise action led to calls for severe censure and the writer pointed out to the less informed brethren that freemasonry had nothing in common with the objects of any political or secret religious society. Bro. Finlay was advised to apologise to his lodge and acknowledge that his conduct was most unjustified. In the issue dated 1st February 1881 Bro. Finlay angrily responded questioning the method used by the writer of the earlier letter in rushing into print rather than taking up the matter with Lodge Caledonian and pointing out the similarities between freemasonry and Orangeism. Bro. Finlay did not feel that he had violated any masonic law and was not prepared to apologise until his transgressions were more fully explained. A letter to the editor in the issue of 1st March 1881 from the Secretary of Lodge Caledonian No. 534 S.C. called the attack on Bro. Finlay through the columns of the *New Zealand Freemason*, "unjustifiable". He deplored the abuse heaped upon a worthy brother and said "Freemasonry does not teach us to expose a brother's faults to the world, or subject him to personal ridicule, but it does teach us, to unite with the virtuous of *every persuasion*, in the firm and pleasing bond of fraternal love, to view the errors of mankind *with compassion*, and to strive by the purity of our own conduct, to demonstrate the superior excellence of the faith we possess."¹¹⁸ He stated that Bro. Finlay, through unavoidable circumstances and living a long distance in the country, had been unable to be regular in attendance at lodge meetings, thereby losing many of his masonic privileges and teachings, but as a man and a mason his character was unimpeachable. His letter finished by stating that he was not a supporter of the "social or drinking customs of society" and clearly blamed this custom for the situation in which Bro. Finlay found himself.

¹¹⁷ *New Zealand Freemason*, 7th December 1880

¹¹⁸ *New Zealand Freemason*, 1st March 1881.

As Jock Phillips points out, the urban elite, which included the initiators of freemasonry in Auckland, may not have approved of the “frontier” behaviour but they never felt the need to reform it. They enjoyed partaking in social drinking themselves after lodge meetings as well as at annual balls, picnics and other social occasions with their families and dealt with indiscretions amongst themselves. The minutes dated 4th November 1844 question whether a member should receive the fellowship of the lodge as on the night of his initiation he appeared in a state of intoxication and was, therefore, deemed unfit to receive the sublime degree of Entered Apprentice. The minutes of 18th August 1852 drew attention to the fact that the acting tyler was intoxicated. Additionally, many prospective members had dubious beginnings in the new colony but, provided they could meet the criteria laid down, they were welcome to become members. It was thirteen years before the next lodge was opened in the district and this began a period of rapid expansion with lodges being opened throughout the country. By this time lodge membership records include occupations such as gardener, bushman, barman, cadet, railway ganger.¹¹⁹ Colonial New Zealand had become overwhelmingly a working settlers’ society and with the rapid increase in immigration by the lower middle classes, who were what Clyde Griffen describes as ‘socially central’¹²⁰, the membership of lodges broadened to include these workers along with the parliamentarians, government officials, lawyers and businessmen of earlier years.

¹¹⁹ Barclay, *The Extinct Lodges of New Zealand*, Wellington: Blundell Bros. Ltd, 1935.

¹²⁰ Griffen, Clyde, ‘Towards an Urban Social History for New Zealand’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 20:2 (1986), p 125

The Sister Constitutions

It was 1855 before an English Constitution lodge was formed in Auckland and 1861 before a Scottish lodge came into being. Progress was difficult in an unstable environment. In the years 1846 and 1847 only three meetings were held and only one initiate added to the list of members.¹²¹ Existing members were energetic and enthusiastic but frequently away from Auckland and if those with the authority to occupy the chair were absent the lodge could not operate. In the decade from 8th January 1849, when the warrant from Grand Lodge was received, meetings averaged nineteen each year and seventy-four members were admitted by initiation and twenty-nine by affiliation.¹²² As illustrated by Fairburn¹²³, in the land of “natural abundance” a man did not need the advantages of middle-class origin to achieve success nor did he need social connections or associations to improve himself. By the 1860s, when there was a rapid increase in the number of lodges, they attracted a new type of member.

Ara Lodge, No. 348 under Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland, was, therefore, the first of many masonic lodges in Auckland. Up to about 1860 a large part of the Irish inflow into New Zealand was directed towards Auckland Province.¹²⁴ The first sizeable group of Irish immigrants to arrive in Auckland, between 1847 and 1852, were the Royal New Zealand Fencibles, intended to augment the province’s defenses and its labour force. They were settled in the four garrison towns of Otahuhu, Onehunga, Howick and Panmure.¹²⁵ By 1890 one out of every five in New Zealand was Irish.¹²⁶ The blight which had first struck the Irish potato crops in 1845 was largely over by 1850 but not before killing hundreds of thousands of people and forcing others to emigrate. The tragic story of famine in Ireland revealed the real plight of the Irish; the extent of the

¹²¹ Gribbin, p. 14

¹²² Gribbin, p. 16

¹²³ Fairburn, p. 51

¹²⁴ Terry Hearn, ‘The Origins of New Zealand’s Irish Settlers, 1840–1945’ in *The Irish in New Zealand: Historical Contexts and Perspective*, Brad Patterson (Ed.) Wellington: Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 2002, p. 28.

¹²⁵ Terry Hearn, ‘Irish Migration to New Zealand to 1915’ in *A Distant Shore: Irish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Lyndon Fraser (Ed.) Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000, p. 57.

¹²⁶ Steven Eldred-Grigg, *New Zealand Working People 1890–1990*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1990, p. 83

peasant farmers' dependency on the potato crop, the lack of railway lines, non-existent ports on the west coast and almost no harbours where a grain-ship could enter. Ireland had not shared in the development being experienced by England where the economy was based on industry and investment and therefore stronger and richer than Ireland. Famine was followed by an outbreak of disease. Cholera swept through Belfast in 1848 and in workhouses, already overcrowded, disease was endemic.¹²⁷ This period in Ireland saw considerable political unrest with Fenian agitation and the Irish Home Rule League, leading to the passing of the Land Act in 1881 which finally gave tenants some security of tenure.¹²⁸ While America was the first choice for many Irish, some were prepared to come further afield to New Zealand. New Zealand seemed far away when America could be reached in little over a week and was a more affordable proposition. The long journey to New Zealand had a high price costing the equivalent of five months earnings for a British agricultural farm labourer and almost one in five infant children died on the voyage. Even after the financial crash of 1874, America received three times as many immigrants from the United Kingdom as did New Zealand.¹²⁹ More people emigrated from Ireland than from Scotland and England, because of the density of the population and the lack of economic opportunities in Ireland.

Because of their poverty the Irish were able to accept emigration as a means of survival but poverty also caused them to be considered less desirable as immigrants.

The large numbers of Irish immigrants meant they could easily replicate the social institutions of home. A large settlement of Ulster Irish was established at Katikati on the western shore of Tauranga Harbour as a result of publicity specifically aimed at members of the Loyal Orange Order.¹³⁰ The entrepreneur behind the Katikati settlement, George Vesey Stewart, was able to call upon the Grand

¹²⁷ Wilson, pp 77–83

¹²⁸ Tony Simpson, *The Immigrants: The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand 1930–1890*, Auckland: Godwit Publishing, 1997, p. 180.

¹²⁹ McKinnon, Malcolm, *New Zealand Historical Atlas*, Auckland: David Bateman Limited, 1997, Plate 49.

¹³⁰ Anna Rogers, *A Lucky Landing: The Story of the Irish in New Zealand*, Auckland: Random House, 1996, p. 75.

Master of the Orange Lodge of New Zealand to assist him with the necessary approval for his land development. This was another Irishman who made his mark in and around Auckland. J. M. Dargaville left his name on the map of his adopted country and also founded the Masonic Lodge of St George in 1878.¹³¹

It was only a matter of time before members of Ara Lodge who were masons of the English and Scottish Constitutions wanted to form lodges under their own Constitutions. A meeting held on 6th September 1855, under a dispensation from the Provincial Grand Lodge of New South Wales, English Constitution, was attended by thirty-five brethren, twenty-seven of whom were members of Ara Lodge. The purpose of the meeting was to constitute the Waitemata Lodge No. 689 under the English Constitution.¹³² This new lodge was formed with the blessing of Ara Lodge and, in fact, at a meeting of Ara Lodge on 3rd September it was decided that their lodge room and their jewels be lent to Waitemata Lodge and that all their brethren be requested to attend.¹³³ Waitemata Lodge held its first meetings at the William Denny Hotel on the corner of Queen and Swanson Streets and then in 1858 became the tenants of Ara Lodge at the Masonic Hotel until 1881 when the Freemason's Hall in Princes Street was built.¹³⁴ While tenants of Ara Lodge, Waitemata Lodge experienced some financial difficulties during years of depression in Auckland and, as a result of the strong bond between the two lodges, an arrangement was made to assist Waitemata Lodge.

On 9th December 1861 Lodge St Andrew No. 418 of the Scottish Constitution was opened, with brethren from the Ara and Waitemata Lodges present.¹³⁵ Like Ireland, Scotland in the 1840s was a grim place for those whose income was small. The largest group of Scots to emigrate to Auckland did not come under a privately organized scheme but were brought out by the Government which paid their passage but there was no promise of employment or support. For the 500 who arrived on the *Jane Gifford* and the *Duchess of Argyle* in October 1842, life

¹³¹ Donald Harman Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860–1950*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990, p. 129.

¹³² Ara typescript 6th September 1855

¹³³ Ara typescript 3rd September 1855

¹³⁴ H. J. Hulse, 'The Birth and Progress of Freemasonry in the Auckland District', *The Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167, Vol. 14*, p. 104

¹³⁵ Ibid.

in Auckland was a stern test.¹³⁶ Some found work with tradesmen in the town and others worked on public works and road construction. Pay was low and the government was desperately short of funds. Other Scottish settlers were in a position to make an impressive economic contribution and they were over-represented amongst bankers and entrepreneurs. John Logan Campbell and William Brown were Scottish settlers who were influential in the development of Auckland.¹³⁷ So there were many potential members for the Scottish constitution lodges.

The next lodge to be formed in the Auckland district in 1863 was Lodge Onehunga No. 420 of the Irish Constitution. This lodge was instituted by Henry De Burgh Adams, at the time Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland¹³⁸ who was instrumental in promoting Irish freemasonry in the colony. The existence of the Provincial Grand Lodge meant there was no delay in getting a warrant or dispensation to establish the lodge. Onehunga, established by Sir George Grey as a military pensioner settlement, was the home to a thriving shipping business with vessels carrying munitions and stores between that port and Taranaki. The lodge was prosperous during the early years of its existence. Brother De Burgh Adams was Principal Purveyor to the Army and other occupations recorded in lodge membership records are: Captain in the Imperial Army, Collector of Customs, ships' chandler, shipping clerk, storekeeper, butcher, sawmill proprietor, ship builder. Clearly, this was a lodge that developed as a response to the military forces engaged in Maori wars and the sudden departure of troops on the cessation of hostilities caused the withdrawal of a good many members. The departure of soldiers meant many of the businesses involved in supplying the troops were no longer viable. The situation was compounded by the ensuing period of stagnation and depression and resulted in Lodge Onehunga only being active for about five years.

Otahuhu was another of the pensioner villages established by Sir George Grey and was later set up by the government as a military station. A considerable number

¹³⁶ G. L. Pearce, *The Scots of New Zealand*, Auckland: Collins, 1976, p. 45.

¹³⁷ Brooking, Tom, and Coleman, Jennie, *The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2003, pp. 50–51

¹³⁸ Barclay, p. 35

of troops were stationed there plus the usual civilian following – shops of all kinds, hotels and restaurants. A list published by the Grand Lodge of Scotland records “No. 464, St John, Otahuhu, N. Z. Charter issued 1866”.¹³⁹ As with Lodge Onehunga, the dismantling of the camps and the departure of shopkeepers and other residents caused the collapse of the lodge after only about four years.

Miles Fairburn¹⁴⁰ contends that it was rules demanding regular and frequent payment of subscriptions that forced one third of members over the late century to relinquish membership of lodges and friendly societies but Barclay’s *The Extinct Lodges of New Zealand*, indicates that lodges ceased to exist because of changing circumstances. In Auckland it was lodges formed around the military that went out of existence as men of the militia left at the end of their postings and never returned while those supporting the military in small manufacturing and service industries had to move on in order to make a living. In the Otago and West Coast areas, as well as Thames, lodges ceased to exist when the gold fields emptied. It is also apparent that the membership of lodges changed as members left the main towns in order to take up work in smaller towns and, invariably, joined a lodge in that place or took steps to start a lodge. Freemasons doubtless regarded this as an asset of their fraternity for, with the basic organisational structure in place, it is relatively simple to start a new lodge.

Social intercourse

Feasts and celebrations were enjoyed in England by guilds, companies and societies of merchants and skilled craftsmen. An ordinance in 1481 directed that the operative masons should attend mass once a year and this would be followed by a feast to which wives were invited. The patron saints for what was believed to be the greatest craft of all time, architecture, were the two Saints John – the Baptist, whose day was the 24th June, and the Evangelist, whose day was the 27th December. As speculative masonry evolved, those special festivals were

¹³⁹ Barclay, p. 73

¹⁴⁰ Fairburn, p. 185

continued and Ara Lodge followed this practice until 1870, when the December event was discontinued. As might be expected in a new colony, traditions had to be adapted to suit the circumstances. By 1850 Ara was able to celebrate the June festival with a ball to which officers of the garrison were invited. Until their departure after the Maori wars, soldiers joined Ara Lodge until the United Service Lodge was formed in 1864.

In 1855 Auckland was the capital and the seat of government and in December the first parliament had just completed its year's work. Attending Parliament in Auckland was an onerous undertaking for members from the south. Some were away from their farms and businesses for months. A lack of regular shipping made travel difficult. In 1854 Southern members were stranded in Auckland over Christmas and, as five of the eighteen Auckland M.H.R.s were members of Ara, the brethren invited them to their St John's Day Feast.¹⁴¹ The minute book of Ara Lodge gives the menu for the St John's Day Banquet in 1890 as "Oysters, Chicken and Ham Pies, Roast Ducks, Chickens and Turkeys, Roast Beef, Roast Lamb. Cold Viands: Corned Beef, Ox Tongues, and York Hams; Salad; Sweets – Trifles, Topsy Cake, Cherry Tarts, Mince Pies, Blanc Mange and Pears, Jellies and Custard in glasses; Fruits in season, Cheese, Celery; Tea and Coffee, etc., etc".¹⁴² However, in such depressed times, festivities on this scale became too great a burden on the lodge and were gradually discontinued. When Grand Lodge established its Widows' and Orphans' and Aged Masons' Fund in the early 1900s, Ara abolished the banquet and donated an equivalent sum to the fund.

As a freemason proceeds through the ceremonies of the masonic degrees he is taught the importance of understanding God's creation, unlocking the 'hidden mysteries of nature and science' by the study of the seven liberal arts and sciences. As one of the most prominent of these, music played a part in the life of masonic lodges, particularly on the social side. Sir Walter Scott Lodge at Thames invited ladies and friends to a soiree which began with tea at 6.30 and then a string band played between six short masonic lectures and the evening concluded

¹⁴¹ W. H. V. Taine, 'Celebrations of the Craft', *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge, No. 167*, Vol. XIX, No. 10, April 1972, p. 153

¹⁴² Taine, p. 154

with twelve dances. Celebrations at Thames were often attended by Auckland brethren requiring a four hour trip by steamer.

The discovery of gold at Thames saved Auckland from the depression it was experiencing when it was at its worst. As well as clearing Auckland of its unemployed and creating prosperity for the whole of the North Island, it also brought gold diggers and their families from the south. With a population of 5,792, as recorded in the census of 1871, Thames was the fifth largest town in the colony after Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Trade boomed and Thames became a speculative outpost of Auckland when the machinery and capital requirements to reach the quartz reefs proved to be beyond the means of the average prospector.¹⁴³

St Andrew Lodge joined Sir Walter Scott Lodge for a picnic to celebrate St Andrew's Day and in 1872 a party of fifty lodge members from Auckland attended the opening of Sir Walter Scott's new lodge room with 200 others. The banquet after began at 9.00 p.m. and there were 23 toasts, 18 responses and 12 items of entertainment. After the 11th toast the party adjourned to the wharf to farewell the Auckland visitors and "Auld Lang Syne" was sung as the steamer left. In later years Ara was to form its own orchestra. Bro. Frederick Prime, one of Auckland's leading violinists, and who had been connected with the principal orchestras of the city, combined with the lodge organist to produce an orchestra of lodge members. Its music gave a new dimension to lodge proceedings and was widely appreciated by other lodges.

G. C. Beale, in his book *Seventy Years In and Around Auckland* tells how the circumstances of the land wars and the consequent trials and adversities caused the colonists to take responsibility for their own prosperity and entertainment resulting in stirring and romantic times. He describes Auckland in the sixties as a "gay and jolly place to live" with naval and military reviews, regattas, cricket and football matches and race meetings for sport and band performances in Albert Barracks, Government House grounds or the Domain. On a more sombre note there were impressive and stately funerals for officers and men who fell in action

¹⁴³ Stone, *Makers of Fortune* pp 10-12,

which attracted large crowds. But Auckland was hit badly by the depression that followed the war when land settlement and agricultural development were almost at a standstill. The timely discovery of gold at Thames was Auckland's salvation and interaction with the township was frequent and pleasant. In the early days of the Thames' goldfields, miners would come by their thousands to horse races at Epsom¹⁴⁴

Church parades and the laying of foundation stones were public occasions at which freemasons had the opportunity to appear in full regalia and they occurred with great frequency. Because the 9th November 1865 was the birthday of the Grand Master, the Prince of Wales, it was the day when the Provincial Grand Lodge of New Zealand (Irish Constitution) was inaugurated and it was the day of the laying of the foundation stone of the Supreme Court building in Auckland. The anniversary of this important masonic event was a holiday in honour of the Prince of Wales when papers reported "all business in the city was suspended, flags and banners were flying in all directions, pleasure parties were coming in from the country, and that the little Waitemata steamer was busy transporting living freights from the North Shore".¹⁴⁵ The Provincial Grand Lodge officers and the brethren of five lodges took part in the procession. Because the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Irish Constitution had just been established it was necessary to adapt the customary formula so that office bearers not strictly entitled to the honour were appointed from the next in masonic rank to complete the procession. A full page of the *Herald* the following day was devoted to these auspicious events and noted that "the members of the fraternity wore aprons, collars, jewels, and other insignia of the Order, and emblems indicative of their Masonic rank. The absence of the Provincial Grand Lodge regalia which had not arrived from Ireland, rendered the higher officers much less imposing than they would otherwise have been."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ G. C. Beale, *Seventy Years In and Around Auckland*, Dunedin: A. H. & A. W. Reed, p. 41

¹⁴⁵ H. Wyatt, 'Auckland Supreme Courthouse: Laying the Foundation Stone, November, 1865', *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167*, Vol. XIX, No. 5, p. 59.

¹⁴⁶ I. J. Nathan, 'Freemasonry and the New Zealand Herald: 1863-1893', *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167*, No. 26, p. 268

Freemasons were to realise that in a new country they were unable to sustain the level of festivities to which they were accustomed and the subject of refreshments was a source of considerable trouble to the early lodges. The lavishness of the occasion, the cost and manner of payment and the frequency and type of celebration have all diminished over the years as the lodges struggled to make their fraternity appropriate to a developing colony.

Charity

Those that left Britain to settle in New Zealand left behind a land that was changing more than any other country in the world. Colossal expansion both in terms of population and wealth created a growing gap between rich and poor. Millionaire land and mine owners, engineers and speculative builders, made their fortunes on the suffering of others. There was poverty and starvation both in towns and cities as the more horrifying effects of the industrial revolution impacted on thousands of human lives. The New Poor Laws in 1834 had taken away from local parishes the choice of to whom charitable aid should be extended and centralised the provision of poor relief, resulting in a chain of workhouses across the country.¹⁴⁷ Able-bodied paupers were sent to workhouses for relief rather than receiving it in their own homes resulting in considerable hardship for the elderly and others unable to work.¹⁴⁸ But not all landlords, mill-owners and other employers were self-serving. The notion of benevolence found favour with some and many social leaders felt that the gross and obvious unfairness visible in the lives of so many should be alleviated by acts of charity.

Today the wider public may see freemasonry as an activity carried out in private by an elite group but the freemason sees his duty as to his family, his country and his fellow men. The needs of brethren in distress are always a priority but masonic charity is never restricted to freemasons alone. Like the churches, lodges had welfare functions throughout the nineteenth century, particularly during the

¹⁴⁷ Wilson, p. 32

¹⁴⁸ Arnold, p. 29

gold rush period. Destitute women and children were of special concern as were members of their fraternity who had fallen on hard times. As early as 1st January 1844 Ara collected £1.17s.6d. for a brother on his sick bed but on 7th October of the same year there were insufficient funds to meet the request of another brother. On 6th May 1850 a donation was made to the wife of a distressed mason and on the 4th November the lodge room was made available for a benefit concert for the same woman and members were called upon to patronize the event. Grants were made as lodge funds permitted and were often accompanied by a request that members support a voluntary subscription list. In 1855, with reference to the Crimean War, Ara voted that £30 be subscribed from lodge funds to the Patriotic Fund and encouraged members to subscribe individually. Likewise in 1860 an emergency meeting was called to discuss the position of the wives and children of the freemasons of Taranaki and to start a subscription list from which to assist them.¹⁴⁹ Gibbin does not record individual cases of charity dispensed by Ara but does address the attempts that were made to establish a general scheme of masonic charity. In 1851 the members instituted the Auckland Masonic Benevolent Fund and Ara Lodge subscribed £10 to the fund. It appears it was intended that the fund should be inter-colonial and, perhaps due to the lack of participation by other lodges, it was not successful. A similar attempt in 1865 was equally unsuccessful as was a third scheme promoted in 1872 by lodges other than Ara. Ara Lodge continued to offer relief when the opportunity arose and the occasion required. About this time they instituted a fund to support the orphan child of a mason as a result of a bequest by Bro. Hoop of £10. Thereafter, an annual amount was paid to the Masonic Orphan Fund at the Auckland Savings Bank and allowed "that the Ara Lodge can nominate any child for admission (to the Orphan Home, Parnell,) subject to the rules of the institution as to age etc."¹⁵⁰

In the first issue of the *New Zealand Freemason* of 6th January 1880 the subject of a benevolent fund was addressed. The writer questioned the way in which the various lodges carried out their charitable duties and promoted the benefits of the general benevolent fund as a more sensitive way of affording relief to needy persons than application to a particular lodge. The article acknowledged that

¹⁴⁹ Gribbin, pp. 121,122

¹⁵⁰ Gribbin, p. 90

lodges may not have been in a position to make grants to the fund out of receipts but suggested that a donation of say one shilling a month from lodge members (except those in poor circumstances) might result in a great amount of good being done. As a consequence of the depressed state of trade and the tide of immigration, a great deal of distress was anticipated during the winter months and the masonic fraternity were called upon to fulfill their sacred duty. The same year the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution had 150 male and 155 female annuitants receiving £10,960 plus twenty widows receiving £20 each per annum, a total of £11,360, plus expenses.¹⁵¹

A further article commended the masons of Napier for celebrating St John the Evangelist's Day with a procession to church, instead of the usual ball or banquet, where the offertory amounting to £75 was devoted to the funds of the hospital. While not wanting to curtail the usual amusements, the writer suggested that lodges dispense with a few luxuries and confine their enjoyments to occasions in which the ladies could participate. The money saved could be used for charitable purposes.¹⁵²

The *New Zealand Freemason* of 5th October 1880 drew attention to the plight of two young children of a freemason who were orphaned and for whom no provision had been made. It reminded the freemasons of their duty and anticipated the rapid filling of subscription lists. Regular reminders kept the matter in the news and the subscription list published on 1st February 1881 shows donations of £262.0s.2d. (eight donations from Australia) with two lodges contributing an extra £5 each and agreeing to bear the expenses of burial, printing, etc. A following article severely reprimanded the fraternity pointing out that some lodges subscribed less than was spent on refreshments after each meeting and warning that gatherings in the colony would degenerate into mere convivial clubs if members did not bestir themselves and impress on the less-informed brethren the grand principles of freemasonry.

Freemasons have served the cause of education in many different ways. Operative masons were familiar with the benefits of education and the Old

¹⁵¹ *New Zealand Freemason*, Vol. II, No. 3, 7th September 1880

¹⁵² *New Zealand Freemason*, Vol. I, No. 1, 6th January 1880

Charges placed great emphasis on the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. As part of their work they were in closer contact with the centres of learning than other workers. The liberal arts and sciences were used by them to elevate their position from a mere operative art to where they could assimilate with the scholars who were above them rather than with the workmen who were below them. Many of the freemasons who were active in Auckland between 1840 and 1870 were members of the Mechanics Institute – mechanics being the terms generally applied to craftsmen, skilled workers and those who used tools in their trade. Mechanics Bay was the home in Auckland of workmen and artisans. The formation of Mechanics Institutes in Britain was a response to two social needs that have become almost inseparable, the need for what came to be known as adult education and the need for books to satisfy the thirst for knowledge. Men who had the courage to venture to an unknown land were also often desirous of improving themselves through educational facilities and so there was a proliferation of mechanics institutes, libraries, Athenaeums and self-improvement societies in New Zealand. In Auckland the Mechanics Institute and Library was established in Chancery Street in 1842 and fulfilled a social and educational role until 1869 when the New Zealand Assembly gave local authorities the power to levy for library purposes. The Auckland City Council purchased the stock of books held by the Mechanics Institute and the library was renamed the Free Public Library. There is little doubt that freemasons made avid use of the facilities offered by Mechanics Institutes and were solid supporters of educational opportunities for the underprivileged. In 1878 Ara resolved “That the Ara Lodge pledges itself to join the other Lodges in Auckland to carry out the proposed Hall and Athenaeum” (the recognised term for an organisation or a building devoted to the promotion of science and literature).¹⁵³ Many were members of, or held office in, institutes that were the forerunners of the Royal Society of New Zealand, which still carries on the work of propagating scientific knowledge, and in this way followed in the footsteps of the early speculative masons in the Eighteenth Century who were members of the Royal Society in England. As well as serving their community in this way, many lodges assisted with the education of young

¹⁵³ A. E. Rogers, ‘Freemasons and the Mechanics Institutes in Early New Zealand’, *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167*, Vol. 22, p. 53

people. Again like the churches, freemasonry was quick to become established in gold towns. Some schools were sponsored by churches and, likewise, the freemasons were willing to assist with education. Corinthian Lodge, established at Thames in 1876, on 10th August 1880 awarded to the daughter of one of its members a three years' scholarship at Thames High School.¹⁵⁴ The 1877 Education Act replaced a provincial education system with a colony-wide one from which the churches were excluded but secondary education remained the preserve of the wealthy until the end of the century.¹⁵⁵

From the earliest days of the speculative masons, political and religious discussion in the lodge-room has been forbidden and partisan attitudes, to either politics or religion, discouraged. However, the publication *New Zealand Freemason*, in its opening remarks stating its duty as "watching over the interests of Masonry in this Colony"¹⁵⁶, was not afraid to publish the opinions of freemasons on a variety of topics. The issue of 3rd February 1880 drew attention to the Irish famine and, in acknowledging and encouraging the efforts of freemasons in extending a helping hand to the starving working classes, it severely criticised the English for not doing more for their unfortunate neighbours. In the issue of 6th April the motives of committees of management of some benevolent institutions in the colony were questioned. An example was given of a woman with two children in want of food who was declined help by a benevolent institution because she was unable to obtain employment. The article deplores the fact that, in a city where the "Christian" religion flourishes, the woman was held under the Vagrant Act "for having no lawful visible means of support" and her children committed to an Industrial School. It acknowledged that the framers of the Vagrant Act did not intend it for the oppression of the poor and destitute and urges its amendment. The Vagrant Act 1869, passed in conjunction with the Contagious Diseases Act and aimed at curtailing prostitution, was widened to allow for the imprisonment of anyone who 'shall not give a good account of his means of support'¹⁵⁷ Alfred Simmons has a similar criticism of the compulsory education scheme of England

¹⁵⁴ *New Zealand Freemason*, 7th September 1880

¹⁵⁵ Graham, p. 132

¹⁵⁶ *New Zealand Freemason*, 6 January 1880

¹⁵⁷ Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850–1900*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989, p. 245

and the incredible hardship it creates. Agricultural workers in particular, denied the money their children earn in the fields and being unable to feed and dress them adequately for school, are then accused by philanthropists and “Christians” of being extravagant and improvident. “The ... hardships and eccentricities of law and reason find no place in the colony of New Zealand”¹⁵⁸ and Simmons notes that a levy is paid by rich and poor alike and the expenditure of public schools is charged upon this general rate. Any province or district requiring assistance is granted aid from a national fund. All children who reside in a school district are required and encouraged to attend school, including Maori, and he is lavish in his praise of the condition of the children.

A letter to the *New Zealand Freemason* dated 21st August 1880 from Bro. W. E. Whitcombe drew the readers’ attention to Bro. Kelleher and the efforts made by Roman Catholic clergy in trying to persuade him to renounce freemasonry in his final hours. (Bro. Kelleher was the father of the two children who were later the subject of an extensive campaign to raise funds for their benefit.) Brother Whitcombe and Bro. Turnbull, having been told by John Kelleher of the unwanted visits by members of the Roman Catholic clergy and their efforts to shake his fidelity, resolved that no interview would take place without their presence. Upon his death Bros Whitcombe and Turnbull were satisfied they had protected him from the attentions of the clergy, as was his wish.

So freemasonry was a very important part of the social life of many men, and it also contributed to the stability of the community.

¹⁵⁸ Simmons p. 45

CHAPTER FOUR

GRAND LODGE

In Auckland on 17th July 1841 the New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette advertised “To the Freemasons of Auckland. It being suggested that Freemasons should on the occasion of laying the first stone of the church, appear in their robes. I beg to request the attendance of all the Brotherhood at Wood’s Hotel, on Tuesday July 20th at ten o’clock, to make necessary arrangements. Signed W. Mason G.S.P.W.C.S.”¹⁵⁹ In the ensuing half century the changes from provincial to national government were influential in the changes in masonic organisation from British and Provincial Grand Lodges’ control up to the creation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in 1890.

As an Irish Lodge, Ara Lodge faced a further difficulty requiring some degree of adaptation in that the Grand Lodge of Ireland had a rule that no portion of the Irish working of a lodge can be written or printed. In Ireland masons have the benefit of the Grand Lodge of Instruction in the practice of rites and ceremonies. The brethren of Ara Lodge were forced to adopt their own form of ceremonial and by 1849 had developed a Lodge of Instruction. Over the next ten years they devised their own form of ritual and, at the same time, the organisation of the lodge was evolving. The forms of ritual and organisation adopted by Ara Lodge became a combination of that part of masonic ceremonial that could be utilised in a new colony far away from the homeland and what could be achieved without the benefit of a lodge room built exclusively for masonic purposes, appropriately furnished and with the material symbols necessary for the conduct of a masonic

¹⁵⁹ *New Zealand Herald & Auckland Gazette*, 17th July 1841

meeting. As the years passed laws and regulations were adapted to reflect colonial conditions and freemasonry developed a uniquely New Zealand flavour.

The basic unit of their organisation is the lodge and a Grand Lodge is formed when several lodges form such a body for their overall governance. The three British Grand Lodges of the English, Irish and Scottish constitutions, in areas outside Britain, had lodges operating either separately or under the guidance of District Grand Lodges. As new territories gained independence from the civil government of Britain, so the freemasons sought masonic self-government, an independent Grand Lodge, and in 1890 the Grand Lodge of New Zealand was formed amidst great controversy.

The changes and developments occurring in local government in New Zealand provided impetus for like changes in freemasonry, no doubt influenced by the fact that many parliamentarians were freemasons. As the country moved from provincial to national government, so freemasonry changed from the control of British and Provincial Grand Lodges to a national New Zealand body. Vincent Pike, one of the instigators of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand was a member of the parliament which abolished the provincial councils.¹⁶⁰

At the inaugural meeting of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand on 30th April 1890 in Christchurch the unanimity that had been hoped for was not achieved. Only ninety-one of the one hundred and forty-eight lodges in the country were interested in joining, the remainder preferring to stay with the older constitutions.¹⁶¹ As well as being a difficult time for freemasonry, the colony was

¹⁶⁰ Alan B. Bevins, *A History of Freemasonry in North Island New Zealand*, Auckland: Coastal Promotional Print, 2001, p. 21.

¹⁶¹ At the time of the formation of New Zealand Grand Lodge there were the following lodges in the Auckland District each constitution governed by its own District Grand Lodge:

Irish Constitution	Scottish Constitution	English Constitution
Ara (1842)	St Andrew (1861)	Waitemata (1855)
Onehunga (1863)	St John (1866)	Prince of Wales (1869)
United Services (1864)	Manukau (1876)	Remuera (1877)
	Ponsonby (1844)	Rodney (1877)
	Wairoa (1884)	Eden (1878)
	Star in the Far South (1885)	Albion (1883)
		Duke of Albany (1884)
		Franklin (1885)
		Harmony (1886)

also experiencing difficulties. Financial troubles were the result of a severe world-wide depression and a maritime strike made commerce difficult. At the end of 1889 one hundred and seventy lodges has been established throughout the colony, twenty had become extinct and another ten were dormant and eventually disappeared but one hundred and forty remained active with a total membership of approximately 7,000.¹⁶² Those lodges were governed by ten District and Provincial Grand Lodges of the English, Irish and Scottish Constitutions. This situation led brethren to believe that freemasonry was over-governed, that there was unseemly competition for candidates, that new lodges were founded in districts unnecessarily and that too much money was spent on administration.

In 1876, Bro. Vincent Pyke of Otago, well known as an enlightened politician and District Grand Master of the Scottish Constitution for ten years from 1864, convened a meeting in Wellington of Scottish Past Masters to consider a sovereign Grand Lodge. In attendance was an equally visionary freemason, Bro. Edward Thomas Gillon, who came to be acknowledged as the father of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand. By 1889 the position had deteriorated. Bro. Sir Robert Stout, a well known freethinker, had been granted a charter by the Grand Orient of France, which the English Irish and Scottish Constitutions did not recognise, and it was believed that Italians had applied to the Grand Orient of Italy for a charter and Scandinavians were thinking of opening a lodge under the Swedish Constitution. Spurred on by the successful establishment of United Grand Lodges in Australia there was "a masonic meeting called to discuss an independent Grand Lodge for New Zealand".¹⁶³

The promoters of the movement for masonic union set up a strong executive committee which campaigned throughout the country and ninety-two of the one hundred and forty-seven active lodges pledged their support in March 1890.¹⁶⁴ At a convention in September 1889, the representatives of seventy-four lodges signed a declaration and agreement to unite in constituting the Grand Lodge of New Zealand. A particular feature of this historic document, to which there were one hundred and forty-two signatories, is that, not only were many of the signatories

¹⁶² Groves, p. 148.

¹⁶³ *New Zealand Herald*, 11th April 1889

¹⁶⁴ Weston, p. 210

masonic leaders but at least ten were members of Parliament from all parts of New Zealand. Three were to become Premiers – Bros. John Ballance, Thomas Mackenzie and Richard John Seddon. Bros. Pyke and Lawry and Bro. Cadman, who became Seddon's Minister of Railways, were amongst those whose names were household words. Once the agreement to unite had been executed it was decided to make a determined effort to bring in the remaining lodges before the establishment of the Grand Lodge.

While many were in favour of the move, there was strong and bitter opposition from some quarters and this element stood in the way of New Zealand having a United Grand Lodge. The main argument in favour of union was the good government of freemasonry but another issue of major significance was the question of charity. There is no doubt that, during the first fifty years of freemasonry in New Zealand, the subject of charity and benevolence was continually being addressed by the brethren. The charity dispensed through the district administrations was minimal and this created doubts "as to whether the Masonic body in New Zealand was yet large enough to enable a substantial benevolent fund to be established."¹⁶⁵ A Grand Lodge of New Zealand would mean a large saving of the fees paid to the United Grand Lodge of England but a loss of prestige was feared by many.

The campaign for union, which continued for sixteen months, was described as a 'severe struggle' and when the time came to constitute the Grand Lodge it must have been disappointing to the leaders that only forty-one lodges were represented and those lodges with a total membership of only 1236. Many of those lodges must have been small. A further forty-four eventually joined, having waited until their members were unanimous in their desire to join.

In Auckland, Ara Lodge No. 348, Irish Constitution, met on 2nd June 1890 and the minutes record "Ara Lodge under Dispensation from the Grand Lodge of New Zealand".¹⁶⁶ All brethren wishing to continue their allegiance to the Grand Lodge of Ireland left the room and those that remained established Lodge Ara No. 1,

¹⁶⁵ Weston, p.204

¹⁶⁶ Gribben, p. 156

New Zealand Constitution. The meeting recorded its thanks to the Irish Constitution for its control for the past twenty years. In spite of this division within the lodge, the two lodges continued to grow both numerically and financially and, true to the principles of freemasonry, worked together in a spirit of goodwill and friendship.

The Eden Lodge too experienced some difficulties when the Grand Lodge of New Zealand was constituted. The Eden Lodge No. 1530 English Constitution worked for a brief period as Eden Lodge No. 20 New Zealand Constitution. On 23rd June 1891 the lodge was opened under the New Zealand warrant. It became necessary for them to return to their original charter of the Lodge Eden No. 1530 E.C. after queries were raised regarding a property in Karangahape Road held in trust for the Eden Lodge No. 1530 E.C. Should that lodge cease to exist, the property was to pass to The District Grand Lodge of Auckland, E.C. to be used for charitable purposes. To secure possession of their property, the members elected to return to the English Constitution.

CHAPTER FIVE

Freemasonry and the Maori

Freemasons' confidence in the ability of their order to act as a civilising agent in the new land to which they had come was little different to the civilising mission of the churches. The Reverend Samuel Marsden, the founder of the Anglican mission to New Zealand, used agriculture and trade as the first steps towards the civilising of the Maori before exposing them to the benefits of Christianity. Later, under the leadership of the Reverend Henry Williams, missionaries used their endeavours to convert the Maori before addressing the question of civilisation. The proposals of the New Zealand Company to purchase Maori land at a low price, emphasising that the real benefits of the proposal would be in the gift of civilisation, would have been compatible with Bro. Jerningham Wakefield's masonic beliefs, as would the proposal to offer every eleventh allotment to a Maori chief in the hope of creating a Maori gentry among the European gentry and thereby preserving the chief in his high station among his own people. Freemasonry recognises a hierarchical system and would view this system as a noble way to assimilate the two peoples. As the chief land purchase commissioner, Bro. Donald McLean stressed upon Maori that the opportunity to live among civilised colonists was the real benefit to Maori from the sale of their land.¹⁶⁷

In *Like Them that Dream*, Bronwyn Elsmore¹⁶⁸ tells of the theory promoted by the early missionaries that there was a connection between the Maori and the early civilisations of the ancient world. Evangelical missionaries who entered the

¹⁶⁷ Sorrenson, M. P. K., 'How to Civilize Savages: Some 'Answers' from Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 9:2 (1975) pp 97-108.

¹⁶⁸ Bronwyn Elsmore, *Like Them That Dream: The Maori and the Old Testament*, Tauranga: The Tauranga Moana Press, 1985, p. 64

Pacific from the beginning of the nineteenth century promoted the story that all people could be traced back to Adam and Eve with various races classified according to their moral worth. More primitive civilizations, beneath the commercially and technically developed European societies, were in need of the evangelical vocation to rescue them.¹⁶⁹ Thomas Kendal became convinced that the Maori were descendants of the Egyptians and found in their beliefs and carvings remnants of Old Testament ideas, Bishop Pompallier saw links between the Biblical story of Adam and Eve and the Maori tradition of Maui and Kina and Octavius Hadfield identified linguistic connections between the Maori language and Greek and Sanskrit. Samuel Marsden seems to have been the first to advance the argument that Maori had Semitic origins and until the 1870s it was believed that Maori belonged to one of the Lost Tribes of Israel.¹⁷⁰

The Masonic historian, Bro. Chas. H. Holland, in his paper 'Freemasonry and the Maori' suggests also that at some point the Maori obtained insight into ancient mysteries of the Babylonians, the Phoenicians, the Hebrews and the Persians. Holland was of the opinion that neolithic Maori had left the fatherland before the temple of King Solomon was built but, nevertheless, had a knowledge of pre-temple freemasonry and were familiar with the rules of conduct and practices of the freemasons. As evidence of this he cited the Maori tradition of teaching the stories of the creation, the Garden of Eden, of Eve and the serpent and of the deluge.¹⁷¹

Other freemasons saw similarities between the Maori cult of Io and the Great Architect of the Universe, in the esoteric or restricted knowledge which was transmitted by verbal ritual and rote and only passed on to the sons of chiefs and tohunga in sacred institutions of learning. Whether the supremacy of Io is a traditional concept or only existed from Pakeha times,¹⁷² the Maori embraced the idea of a cosmology headed by a supreme figure as opposed to the father figure of the Christian scriptures and the freemasons identified with this concept. The central tenet of freemasonry that each member must believe in a Supreme Being

¹⁶⁹ K. R. Howe, *The Quest for Origins Who First Discovered and Settled New Zealand and the Pacific Islands?* Auckland: Penguin Press, 2003, p. 37.

¹⁷⁰ Howe, p. 38

¹⁷¹ Charles H. Holland, 'Freemasonry and the Maori', Alexander Turnbull Library, Pq 572.9931

¹⁷² Elsmore, p. 73

means the fraternity is not structured on the Christian ethic but is open to any man who believes in a monotheistic Supreme Being and rejects only the atheist.

Like the missionaries, freemasons could accept the theory of degeneration which confirmed the utter depravity and general childlikeness of the Polynesians while acknowledging their fundamental humanity by virtue of their Mediterranean heritage. Freemasons also saw themselves as superior beings who could play a part in human development in this new land.¹⁷³

It was many years before Maori were initiated into freemasonry and many freemasons believed this was because their own culture already contained a secret men's society and, therefore, they had no need for such an institution. Perhaps the most famous of the Pakeha-Maori, F. E. Maning, arrived in the Hokianga in 1833 and entered into a partnership as a storekeeper. Pakeha-Maoris also had an influential role in the civilising of Maori in a way that was more practical than that of the missionaries. Whereas the missionaries retained a distinct social separation from the Maoris, living in neat cottages and gardens and observing a prim morality, Pakeha-Maoris lived and worked among them encouraging industry and teaching them to trust Pakeha without trying to turn them into brown-skinned Pakeha. Though he had enjoyed an unconventional life, Maning gained respectability when, in 1865, he was made a judge of the Native Lands Court where he was a favourite with and had the confidence of the Maori. Judge Maning was one of the first to be initiated into the mysteries of the *whare wananga*.¹⁷⁴ This ancient Maori college was said to have existed from the Beginning and the first *whare wananga* is the residence of the Supreme God Io and situated in the uppermost of the twelve heavens. Tradition is valued by Maori as an inheritance, seen as a gift from their ancestors which may be passed on to their descendants¹⁷⁵ and is comparable to the signs and secrets of freemasonry which may be passed on to appropriate and prepared initiates. John White, who arrived with his family from England in 1835, settled in the Hokianga, in his *The Ancient History of the Maori* spoke of "the hereditary 'office of the priesthood',

¹⁷³ Howe, p. 40

¹⁷⁴ Charles H. Holland, 'Freemasonry and the Maori'

¹⁷⁵ Michael Reilly, 'John White: Seeking the Elusive Mohio', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 24:1 (1990) p. 55

men who preserved the orally transmitted history in their memories by means of 'the most severe religious care' and rehearsal 'from age to age in the presence of the most select circle of youths'.¹⁷⁶ The importance Maori attached to remembering traditions and recalling them accurately was of significance to early freemasons in New Zealand who were familiar with the process of teaching moral lessons and self-knowledge through participation in a progression of allegorical dramas which were learnt by heart and performed within each lodge.

For Holland, the antiquity of the *whare wananga* was unquestionable because its knowledge was unaltered and unalterable. The *whare wananga* faces the east, as does the masonic temple and special clothing is worn inside. The first step for a candidate entering the *whare wananga* shows him that the foundation on which the institution rests is the belief and acknowledgement of a Supreme Being. The secrets and knowledge of the *whare wananga* were only available to the sons of chiefs and priests, and then only after a period of probation. Like freemasonry, in the *whare wananga* ritual and analogy are used as a means of passing on knowledge, the reciting of lectures is approached with great seriousness and at the end an elaborate ceremonial function closes proceedings.

In 1936 masonic historian Brookes pointed out the similarities between the Ancient Rites of the freemasons and heathen ceremonies of the Maori citing likenesses in the building in which the ceremonies are performed and its layout and seating, the opening *karakia* compared with tiling, the three degrees of learning and the fact that no women are allowed in the temple.¹⁷⁷ By this time there were still few Maori freemasons but the freemasons that were Maori were feted as outstanding ritualists who performed to a very high standard and were acknowledged for their gifted oratory in the refectory.

From the first, the protestant missionaries who came to New Zealand lacked understanding or were intolerant of the traditional beliefs of the Maori. As they imposed their view of religion upon a culture that was so different from their own, they were unaware of the belief system that regulated the life of Maori. Among

¹⁷⁶ Michael Reilly, 'John White' *New Zealand Journal of History*, 23:2 (1989) p. 160

¹⁷⁷ R. Brookes, 'An Introduction to the Secret Mysteries of the Ancient Maori,' *The Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167*, 28th May 1936, pp. 6-16.

the settlers that followed, many were unsympathetic to Christianity, often because the missionaries tried to negotiate fair dealings in land transactions on behalf of Maori and their interference was the cause of resentment. Unlike the missionaries who sought to convert Maori to Christianity and the settlers who used Maori for the purchase of land and trading purposes, freemasonry as an institution seemed to show some acceptance and understanding of Maori traditions and teachings. The missionaries used the force of the Christian doctrine to close Maori schools of learning and dismissed the traditional beliefs of Maori as mere superstitions. Where the missionaries challenged traditional Maori society with its classified structure, the nature of freemasonry meant that those settlers who were freemasons were familiar with the belief in the mana of the 'rangitira' class which may have been earned in the same way that progression through the series of degrees of freemasonry was determined by personal attributes and advancement through the various stages of learning.

In 1972 Bro. E. Reweti and Bro K. Smith sought an explanation of the fact that fewer than one hundred lodges had Maori members, concluding: "a distrust of secrecy and, through a natural shyness, a waiting to be asked to join."¹⁷⁸ Once they became members, however, they were active in their lodges and always impressed with their high standard of delivery of ritual on the floor of the Lodge. In the 1960s, under the leadership of Bro. W. Te Awe Awe, a team of outstanding Maori ritualists known as the "Masonic All Blacks" were often called upon when a Maori member was being initiated or raised. For those who witnessed these ceremonies, it was a memorable occasion. It is possible that the first Maori freemason was Sir Peter Buck who was initiated in Lodge Ara, No. 1 in 1908. Because of his many other duties he was only able to act in several minor masonic offices but he was a foundation member of Lodge Arawhaiti. The name of the lodge was chosen from a list drawn up by Bro. Buck containing names all commencing with the letters "Ara" as a connection with his mother Lodge.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ E. Reweti and K. Smith, 'Maoris in Masonry', *The Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167, Vol. XIX*, p. 171

¹⁷⁹ *Transactions of the United Masters Lodge No. 167, Vol. XIX*, p. 199

Freemasonry, which arose from western civilization on the other side of the world and became a universal society where men of all cultures, colours and creeds can know one another better, embraced Maori culture and traditions as they recognised similarities in the Maori ceremonies and traditions to their Ancient Rites. This acceptance does not appear to be matched by membership numbers but for those Maori who did join it became a highly satisfactory experience for all concerned.

CONCLUSION

In medieval times a lodge was a hut or lean-to set up by stonemasons as their base whilst working on a building in which they worked, stored their tools, had their meals and rested. Over the years the term has come to mean a group of freemasons who meet regularly as part of a democratic fraternity, said to be the largest fraternal organisation in the world. All members have an equal vote and all votes are by majority. The Master and treasurer are elected annually and all other officers are appointed by the Master. Appointment to a position as a lodge officer and promotion from one position to another is by merit and the Master, who has sole responsibility for choosing the officers, selects a member who is seen to have potential for office, taking into account the advice of the predecessor of the Master and other senior members of his lodge.

The traditions and ethos brought by the early settlers in Auckland who were freemasons were those of Irish, English and Scottish freemasonry. In the 17th century it was common for philosophical and moral ideas to be taught through allegory and symbolism and there could be no more appropriate allegory than the building of King Solomon's temple. The working tools of the stonemason became the symbols of the fraternity and freemasonry and these tools were evident in Auckland from the beginning at the laying of the foundation stone of St Paul's church on 28th July 1841. While not needing to disguise its activities in a way that had been necessary in earlier years under the threat of religious persecution, freemasonry in early Auckland, and indeed today, used secret signs of recognition as did the stonemasons of the medieval lodge system when offering work or providing assistance to itinerant masons to ensure the system was not abused and that charity was properly disbursed. But the freemasons who came to early Auckland had the Masonic ethic that evolved with the Grand Lodge in 1717. They reflected a new way of thinking brought on by the Age of Enlightenment which used the practices of the old operative masons and translated them into a new way of thinking then unique to the world's ethical systems. They sought a

positive relationship with the community and the teachings of freemasonry were relevant to many who held positions of leadership in early society. Motives were not entirely altruistic and freemasonry was used to create bonds of friendship, as a tool to get noticed and as a social centre, as well as for commercial and professional reasons.

The principles of English freemasonry were well suited to the “middle-class paradise” described by Fairburn where natural abundance and minimal social organisation resulted in a lack of social conflict and status anxiety.¹⁸⁰ Ideas of brotherhood, equality and solidarity were useful tools to counteract social isolation in the new colony, and to break down class distinctions as hard work and diligence resulted in material success. An employer could be fair and respectful to his employees, the lack of crime ensured the safety of lives and property and self improvement and wealth could be achieved by the development of the virtues of any individual. But the goodwill displayed by the colonists towards each other, together with their preoccupation with clearing sections, making roads and building houses and businesses, may well have made it difficult in the early years for the masonic pioneers in their endeavours to replicate this social institution from the homeland.

The freemasons who arrived at that time were drawn together by the principles of their order and confident its democratic ideals could make a significant contribution to the new colony. The fact that they wasted no time in gathering together demonstrates their desire for “masonic companionship” and “fraternal converse”¹⁸¹ and, as a well established social institution, they were quickly able to begin the procedure whereby a lodge could be opened. This was in contrast to the churches that were struggling with a shortage of clergy in the towns and finding it difficult to establish a presence in colonial society. Jeanine Graham¹⁸² points out the difficulties experienced by much of the immigrant population in that the religious presence in New Zealand was directed towards the indigenous population and ordained clergy were not available to the settlers. Settlers were

¹⁸⁰ Fairburn, p. 61

¹⁸¹ Weston, p. 8.

¹⁸² Graham, pp 126, 127

unable to participate in regular formal worship and some religious rituals such as baptisms were only held when a member of the regular clergy could be present.

Freemasons were not atomised as defined by Fairburn, but rather used their fraternity to connect with like minded men for companionship. The strength of freemasonry was that its members could come together anywhere in the world and subscribe to the basic principles of brotherly love, charity and truth. These connections allowed them to engage the support of like minded men as they sought work or set up businesses and, even as they moved around the country, they were assured of the support of their masonic brothers. The histories of individual lodges record the wavering fortunes of lodge officers in their early years in New Zealand. Not all who started new businesses were successful, particularly those with no experience in their chosen field, requiring a fresh start, often in another part of the country. Many men were involved in several businesses and jobs before finally achieving the success they sought in New Zealand, and many left, unable to achieve that success. But their lodge membership was constant and they enjoyed the support of their masonic brethren, not only on social terms but in commerce and business as well. The bonds that tied them were fraternal and, while their institution had a hierarchical structure with promotion earned by personal development, membership was open to any man of good character who acknowledged a belief in God. The client/patron relationship of a hierarchical society had no place in the masonic ethos and, while freemasonry may have been class-exclusive in the first years of its existence in the colony, by 1860 this was not the case. Fairburn's claim that voluntary organisations of the colonial era were precarious¹⁸³ is used to dismiss the 'local community' model of society. Freemasonry was a community bound together by common ties and social activity which prided itself on the acts of reciprocity shown by freemasons to each other, sister lodges and the wider community. While involving only a small section of male society, masonic lodges were far from precarious with most surviving until the present day, with the exception of those formed around the military. It would seem Fairburn's use of the term 'lodge' may not apply to masonic lodges. He mentions six lodges founded in the

¹⁸³ Fairburn, p. 181

Auckland province over the 1870s and indicates that only two lasted the century. In the English Constitution alone eight masonic lodges were formed in the 1870s and all are still operative today.¹⁸⁴

Caroline Daley concluded about Taradale

The masculine domesticity of the family man saw fathers, uncles and grandfathers keep a watchful eye over their sons, nephews and grandsons. In work and leisure alike, they made sure that the boys and young men of the area were exposed to, and became part of, a certain set of masculine values and behaviours. This inclusiveness crossed generational lines; it also encompassed men of different classes and religions. The new settler and the old timer were both part of the same masculine world. At times even ethnicity was ignored. Males were already the most powerful group in the area in terms of the economic resources and physical strength. They built on this as they gathered together in work and play.¹⁸⁵

Similarly, freemasonry was a community in which men gathered; fathers, sons and grandsons, brothers and nephews; business associates, employers and employees and where ethnicity and religion were not an issue. It was a forum where men, who believed in God and the immortality of the soul and respected these principles as articles of their faith, could foster the virtues of brotherly love, charity and truth. Of equal importance in a new colony was the sociable interaction that saw men form business alliances, provide employment and offer services and to develop skills and relationships that helped to build Auckland. Freemasonry was an inclusive organisation that could bring together Catholic and Protestant, temperance crusader and social drinker, judge and railway worker. It was a leisure-time activity noted for its respectability and carried out away from the home and the influence of women. Men were able to make the time and money available for leisure in a way that women were not at this time. With women specifically excluded from freemasonry, men could enjoy the company of their fellow freemasons and to trust them and this strengthened the bonds between

¹⁸⁴ Bevins, pp. 14–16.

¹⁸⁵ Caroline Daley, *Girls and Women, Men and Boys: Gender in Taradale 1886–1930*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999, p. 162.

the men. While only a small number of men were freemasons, the fraternity was in line with the masculine culture of the time. The masculine rituals and ceremonies they engaged in could allow any man to aspire to the title of 'Master' at this masculine institution run by men, for men.

In Auckland this organisation developed with its own traditions and differences but subscribed to the basic principles of brotherly love, charity and truth. Just as in the early days of modern freemasonry when lodge meetings were held in taverns or coffee houses because there were no permanent masonic halls or temples, in Auckland the first lodge meetings were held in hotels, often the only buildings available with suitable rooms in a new town and where refreshments could be provided at the close of meetings. At these meetings a form of ceremonial was enacted, called ritual, in which self-improvement through the practice of moral behavior is taught using the symbolism of the tools of the stonemason's trade. An equally important purpose of freemasonry, charity, was extended in the first instance to needy brothers, then the wives and children of brother freemasons and then to non-masonic beneficiaries. These masonic elements of morality and charity are what govern the order today when a lodge is "a vehicle for; – management of charity to members and others; – members to meet and form friendships; – learning basic ethics and good conduct; – being good members of the local community; – developing personality and self-improvement; – opportunities to help others; – relaxation and enjoyment."¹⁸⁶ In early Auckland, before the days of government assistance for those in need, masonic benevolence was mostly extended to freemasons and their families but today a large proportion of the benevolent fund can be utilised for medical research and education. In 1990, to mark the centennial of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, the Professorial Chair of Geriatric Medicine (now Gerontology) was endowed to the University of Auckland through a \$2 million capital fund.¹⁸⁷ The Grand Lodge of New Zealand university scholarships, granted annually, enable many students to embark upon more advanced study in a wide range of fields.

¹⁸⁶ Bevins, p. 9

¹⁸⁷ The New Zealand Herald, 12th November 2004

Freemasonry generally followed the pattern of population in New Zealand. Wellington, colonised by the New Zealand Company began with mostly English constitution lodges as did Christchurch, a Church of England sponsored settlement. The initial growth of Irish lodges in Auckland reflects the large number of Irish who came to Auckland. The unsettled years of the 1850s and 1860s meant that lodge membership was very fluid with military personnel joining lodges, only to leave at the end of their postings. Emergency meetings to carry out ceremonies before members left town or returned to Europe, were not unusual. The infrastructure of the country was still being formed and agriculture and industries were in their infancy. Necessities needed to be imported. As settlers moved away from the main towns to set up smaller towns, so city lodge membership changed and lodges sprang up throughout the country. Membership rolls reflected the development of small manufacturing and service businesses and the departure of the troops. Auckland in particular suffered economic depression, not only as a result of the loss of the imperial troops but also when the government moved to Wellington. Slumps and booms were perhaps inevitable and in 1867 the discovery of gold in Thames gave new cause for optimism and, of course, lodges were formed in that area. These times of depression and war gave freemasons the opportunity to put into practise their masonic ideals of brotherly love and charity and they responded by assisting in individual cases where they could and attempting to set up their own benevolent fund.

An address by the Rev. Robert Kidd, LL.D., who arrived in Auckland in 1863, gives an appreciation of the way early freemasons felt about their order.

If we were asked why we adhered to Freemasonry, we might, according to Masonic custom, sum up what we had to say in four key words – venerate, approve, admire, enjoy. We venerate that august origin of Freemasonry; our consciences approve; the principles which it uniformly inculcates; we admire the symbolic system of instruction, and we enjoy the opportunities of being emancipated from restrictions of prejudice and joining in social re-union. Our institution does not pretend to be a sufficient substitute for ecclesiastical, or any other religion, but it is based

upon those deep principles from which all that is valuable ultimately derives its vitality.¹⁸⁸

As members of the fraternity, they felt their contribution to the new country, society and self-development was greater than it might have been had they not had the opportunity to extend capacity and capabilities through membership of the order.

¹⁸⁸ Gribbin, p. 199

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