

# **A View of the Origins of Bytown Lodge 721**

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Read in honour of the 55th Anniversary of Bytown Lodge

This is not a history. Rather, it is a 5-minute snapshot of how Bytown Lodge came to be.

In the beginning there was a void, and that void was recognized by a small group of Canadian Veterans who happened to be Freemasons.

In 1966 – 1967, RW Bro Colin Lillico, D.D.G.M. of the Ottawa District, devised a Project in honour of the coming Centennial of Canada.

It would be to organize a new Craft Lodge to be a mother Lodge for a number of unattached Masonic Veterans in the Ottawa area.

Forming a new Lodge would have a positive influence on Masonry in the Ottawa area because it would increase the number of local Lodges to 30 which would allow the Ottawa District to be separated into two separate Districts. This would make the job of being a D.D.G.M. easier and would allow more Masons to be involved in District activities.

Working with a Veterans' group called the Travellers' Club, they decided that if a new Lodge was to be formed, it should be vigorous and friendly, and be dedicated to the basic principles of the Masonic Order. It should also be kept small enough that the members would be able to know and to work well with each other. The name Bytown was chosen as it was the original name of what is now the City of Ottawa.

Traditionally, each new Lodge has a sponsoring Lodge, so, as the Charter Master and a number of the brethren were associated with Acacia Lodge No. 561, the brethren of that Lodge agreed to act as the sponsoring Lodge for Bytown.

The Charter members were all Canadians but were members from 9 Grand Lodges (including those in Germany, France, England & various American States) and 27 different Lodges.

The Institution of Bytown Lodge was held on 11th October, 1969 using Officers from Acacia Lodge. The new DDGM, R.W. Brother W.R. Rowsome, presented the Lodge with a W.M.'s Collar and then read the Grand Lodge Dispensation. He then Installed R.W. Bro Colin Lillico as the first W.M. of Bytown Lodge U.D.

A Bible and a set of Markers were presented to the Lodge after which, Wor Bro Joe Johnson presented a unique gavel to the Lodge. It had been machined from parts of an F86 Sabre fighter to be a reminder of the military background of a large number of the charter members. It was actually made by a French Canadian member of the Knights of Columbus.

At the November meeting, several applications for Initiation and Affiliation were received. At the April meeting, the Lodge was presented with a set of Collars and Jewels from the 1969-70 Masters of Ottawa District. These had been hand-crafted in England and had been shipped from Canada House in England via Lahr, Germany and then to Canada with the assistance of a number of Masonic Brethren.

An emergent meeting was called for 2nd October 1970 for the purpose of

constituting and consecrating Bytown Lodge. The Tyler's register showed 31 members and 107 visitors including the Deputy G.M., Rt Worshipful Brother W.K. Balley and many notable Grand Lodge officers.

Bytown Lodge was opened in the first degree in the Lodge room while Grand Lodge was assembled in due form in the banquet hall of Westboro Temple. Worshipful Brothers George Nobes and Alfred Harrington were instructed to proceed to the portals of Grand Lodge and announce that Bytown Lodge was assembled under the dispensation granted to them, and were desirous that their Lodge be constituted and consecrated, and that the Worshipful Master be installed and other officers invested in conformity with the ancient usages and customs of the Craft.

W.B. George Nobes and Worshipful Bro Alfred Harrington returned to the Lodge and conveyed the message from the Deputy G.M. that Grand Lodge was now assembled and would, in due course, attend and constitute and consecrate this Lodge.

Grand Lodge were received in due form, after receiving Grand Honours, the Deputy G.M. assumed the gavel and proceeded with the very impressive ceremony of constituting and consecrating this Lodge in conformity with the ancient usages and customs of the Craft. After the ceremony had been completed, the Deputy G.M. returned the gavel to the Worshipful Master and Grand Lodge retired.

Bytown Lodge No. 721 was then closed in peace and harmony. It was now a fully formed Lodge.