



## Richmond Lodge #23 and the Rose

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

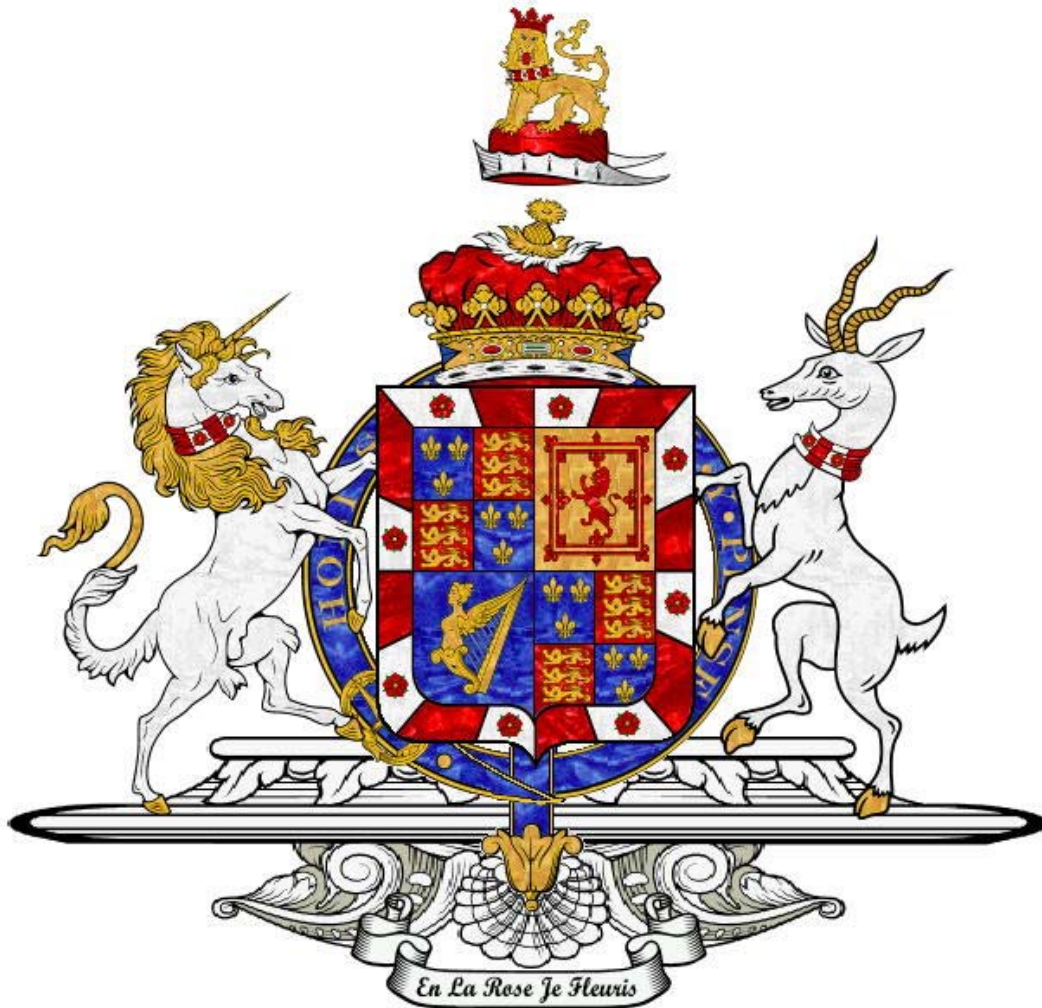
Freemasons hold true to a set of timeless values. The enduring tenants of brotherly love, relief and truth help to guide men in their daily conduct. By practicing the cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice, freemasons become better fathers, better professionals and better citizens. In earlier times, this code of conduct was called Chivalry. In the face of adversity, soldiers need a fraternal bond in order to work as a cohesive force. Knowing that your brothers in arms will do all that is possible to protect each other on the battlefield is critical. To that end, Freemasonry cements the bond between brothers in arms. We still see commissioned and non-commissioned officers meeting on the level. The last military incursion for the Canadian military was Kandahar, Afghanistan. During their stay in Afghanistan, the Canadian military formed a Masonic lodge.<sup>1</sup>

In 1819, Brother Charles Lennox, the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond, visited the area now called Richmond Hill, Ontario. As the leader of the British military, his Grace was serving as Governor General of British North America. Like his father and many of his peers, the Duke of Richmond was a Freemason. This commitment to the fundamental tenants and principles of Freemasonry is emphasized in the motto on the coat of arms of the Duke of Richmond:

*En La Rose Je Fleuris*

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<sup>1</sup> SEE: [http://www.grandchapter-bc-yukon.ca/news\\_articles/canadalodge2.pdf](http://www.grandchapter-bc-yukon.ca/news_articles/canadalodge2.pdf)



The coat of arms of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond displays twelve roses.<sup>2</sup> In the Victorian era, a dozen roses became symbolic of love because it represents a complete cycle, such as the twelve months in the year, the twelve hours on the clock, the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twelve Apostles. The coat of arms for the Town of Richmond Hill bears both a dozen roses and this motto.

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

Brother Charles Lennox died in the Town of Richmond which is located near Ottawa, Ontario. This Town of Richmond began as a military settlement.<sup>3</sup> One of Richmond's earliest buildings was *The Masonic Arms* inn.<sup>4</sup> The keeper of this hostelry was our brother in arms, Sergeant Major Hill, who fought with the 100<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot during the War of 1812. In August of 1819, Brother Charles Lennox, while staying at *The Masonic Arms* died. His Grace had

<sup>2</sup> SEE: <http://www.europeanheraldry.org/united-kingdom/families/families-e-g/house-gordon-lennox/>

<sup>3</sup> SEE: [http://goulbournmuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/goulbmus\\_duke.pdf](http://goulbournmuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/goulbmus_duke.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> SEE: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Lennox,\\_4th\\_Duke\\_of\\_Richmond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lennox,_4th_Duke_of_Richmond)

generated a lot of respect, even affection, while the Canadas were under his command. The General's tragic passing was deeply felt on both sides of the Atlantic. To mark this tragedy and to remember Brother Lennox's good deeds, seven townships and counties in Upper and Lower Canada are named after the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond.<sup>5</sup> The citizenry of Richmond Hill chose to name their town after the two freemasons most affected in this tragedy - the Duke of Richmond and Sergeant Major Hill.

In large part, Freemasonry was spread across the planet by military lodges. "Travelling Warrants" from the Grand Lodges of Ireland, Scotland and England were granted to regiments to permit lodges to travel from place to place.<sup>6</sup> After the American War of 1812, many in the British militia remained in Upper and Lower Canada. To keep our brethren in arms connected, freemasons built inns and other public buildings to hold lodge meetings. In the Richmond Hill area, many inns, including *The Masonic Arms* existed along Yonge Street.<sup>7</sup> In the absence of a formal lodge building, local inns, private homes and other buildings were used for the meetings of freemasons. Richmond Lodge began with members of the militia. Our first Worshipful Master, Colonel David Bridgeport carried on the business of Richmond Lodge from 1824 to 1831. Very Worshipful Bro. David Bridgeport served as the first Master of Richmond Lodge and did so for twelve years between 1846 and 1861. Richmond Lodge's namesake and its beginning under Colonel Bridgeport's leadership underscore our lodge's military ties.

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



Looking west from the Canadian National Railway tracks towards Yonge Street, one can see the H.J. Mills greenhouses at the top centre.<sup>8</sup> During the day, Mr. Mills grew roses. In the evening, Brother H.J Mills cultivated our Masonic Rose. He served as worshipful master of Richmond Lodge in 1929. In this picture, one can see Crosby Avenue running East and West on the northern border of this rose nursery.

<sup>5</sup> SEE: IBID

<sup>6</sup> SEE: <http://www.algomadistrict.ca/articles/the%20rifle%20and%20the%20apron.htm>

<sup>7</sup> SEE: <http://edrh.rhpl.richmondhill.on.ca/default.asp?ID=s6.4>

<sup>8</sup> SEE: <http://edrh.rhpl.richmondhill.on.ca/figures.asp?ID=f11-13>

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

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

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