

ORIGINS OF CARIBOO FREEMASONRY

It was quite likely that some steps were taken in the early days of the rush to form a Masonic Lodge. By 1866 miner masons realized that Barkerville had taken on an air of permanency and that the separation of the gold from the gravel of the creeks was going to be much longer than had been estimated. History records that among the first to realize this were on Williams Creek. Jonathan Nutt was credited with the movement to form a Masonic Lodge in Barkerville. He called a meeting 13 October 1866 that was attended by 13 masons. Nutt was the foreman of the Aurora Claim on Conklin's Gulch, a tributary of Williams Creek. Nutt was an Englishman who had been a miner in California, and while there, in 1854, had become a freemason in Tehama Lodge No. 3 in Sacramento. He later affiliated with Western Star Lodge No. 2 at Shasta, California, he then being 34 years of age.

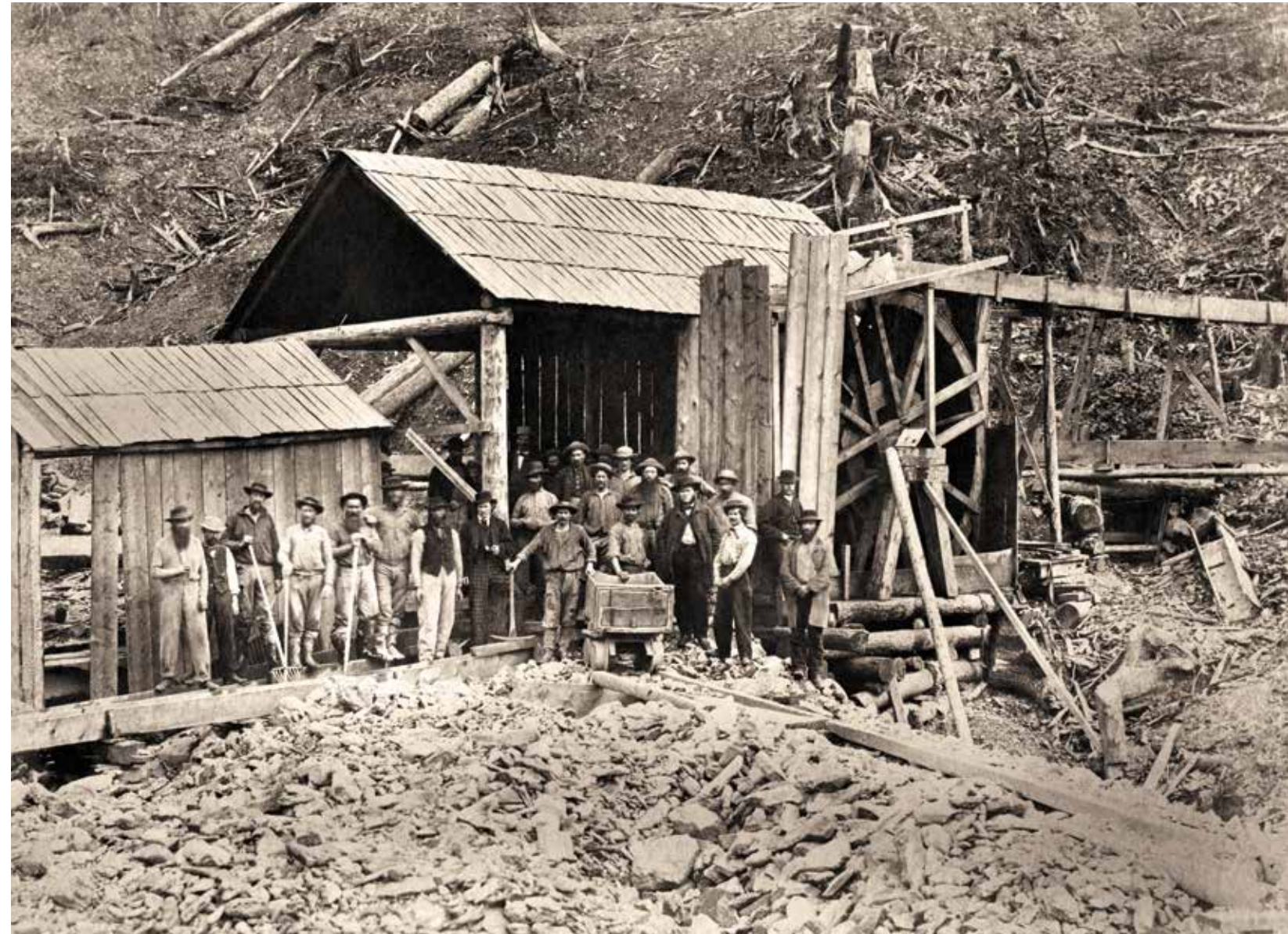
No mention was made of where the original meeting took place but Nutt chaired the meeting. The others were: W.W. Hill, George Grant, Joshua Spencer Thompson, Alexander C. Campbell, W.M. Cochrane, John R. Price, George Duff, Carl Strouss, John Patterson, John B. Lovell, W.E. Boone and William Bennett.

The 13 men decided to establish a Masonic Lodge in Cariboo and to build a Masonic Hall. Each person pledged so much a week towards this end—the amounts ranging from .50 cents to \$1.00. To the names of these 13 mem were shortly afterwards added 20 others.

W.M. Cochrane, referred to as “An Irish Gentleman”, was apparently a man of money and loaned the lodge a considerable sum of cash. Alexander C. Campbell, a cousin of John Angus (Cariboo) Cameron was the owner of the Foster-Campbell Claim on Williams Creek. He was also a blacksmith.

It quickly becomes apparent that many of the Cariboo masons had participated in the California gold rush. Joshua Spencer Thompson had been a member of San Francisco Lodge, No. 7 in California.

The minutes of Vancouver Lodge record that on 16 January 1867 Brother Jonathan Nutt attended that lodge and presented a petition to the Grand Lodge of Scotland praying for the establishment of a Masonic Lodge at Barkerville, Williams Creek, to be named “Cariboo Lodge”.



THE AURORA GOLD MINING CLAIM ON CONKLIN'S GULCH, A TRIBUTARY OF WILLIAMS CREEK

15 June 1867, near Barkerville. The day this photo was taken the mine had a washup of 485 ounces of gold. Named after the Roman goddess of dawn—Aurora—the foreman of the claim was Jonathan Nutt, an Englishman that had been a miner in California. On reaching the goldfields of Cariboo, Nutt initiated a movement to form a Masonic Lodge at Barkerville. On 13 October 1866 Nutt called a meeting that was attended by thirteen masons. Those present were Nutt—who presided—and W.W.Hill, George Grant, J. Spencer Thompson, Alexander C. Campbell, W.M. Cochrane, John R. Price, George Duff, Carl Strouss,

John Patterson, John B. Lovell, W.E. Boone and William Bennett.

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CARIBOO LODGE NO. 4 ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS AT THE AURORA GOLD MINING CLAIM ON WILLIAMS CREEK

- 1 John Weill 2 Paul Manetta 3 John Williams 4 Edward Pearson 5 Edwin Johns 6 Joseph F. Clarridge 7 Charles J. Paulson 8 Robert Patterson
- 9 August Hoffman 10 David T. Price 11 Joseph H. St. Laurent 12 William Fraser 13 James Amm 14 William Rennie 15 John L. Muir 16 James Carson
- 17 Ninian F. Foster 18 Joshua Spencer Thompson 19 William H. Hill 20 William Mckenzie 21 Jonathan Nutt 22 James S. McMillan 23 George Grant
- 24 Alexander C.M. Campbell 25 John McLaren 26 John Bruce 27 Samuel Kahn

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