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FILIBUSTERS AND FREEMASONS: THE SWORN OBLIGATION

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From 1848 to 1851, Cuban separatists residing in the United States established organizations, released publications, and mustered four filibuster invasions to overthrow the Spanish colonial government and establish a Cuban republic. They were following the Texas model by using American funds, volunteers, and weapons to achieve independence. The islanders would later decide the question of statehood through a referendum. Filibuster expeditions led by disgruntled former Spanish Army General Narciso López and his aide-de-camp Ambrosio José Gonzales, violated the Neutrality Law of 1818, which prohibited armed enterprises against nations at peace with the United States. López's attempts to liberate Cuba had profound consequences for United States-Spanish relations and the course of Cuban history. López, Gonzales, and most of the filibuster leadership were Freemasons who relied extensively on the international fraternity to accomplish their plans.

There had been a similar precedent in the creation of the Republic of West Florida in 1810 and the Republic of Texas in 1836. Louisiana Freemasons led the revolt against Spain that proclaimed the seventy-two-day Republic of West Florida, an area that was later annexed to their state. In Texas, revolutionary leaders Stephen F. Austin, Samuel Houston, David G. Burnet, Mirabeau Bounaparte Lamar, William B. Travis, David Crockett, James Fannin, and

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Thomas J. Rusk were Freemasons. Twenty-two of the fifty-nine delegates to the Texas independence convention were Freemasons, as were all four presidents and four vice presidents of the Texas Republic. Austin had met in the fall of 1835 with thirty-five prominent New Orleans Freemasons who planned the liberation of Texas and established a local committee to raise funds and volunteers.¹ The Cuban revolutionaries tried to emulate this pattern fifteen years later. Unfortunately, Masonic secrecy has clouded the fraternity's instrumentality in filibustering.

There is a considerable amount of literature on the sectional, political, and diplomatic implications of Cuban filibustering. Cuban historians produced many of the earliest historical accounts. The first such work, by José Ignacio Rodríguez, appeared in Havana in 1900. The next year, Vidal Morales Morales, director of the Cuban National Archives, wrote a three-volume account of the Cuban independence movement. It depicted López as trying to separate Cuba from Spain, by any means, without concern for the future. Herminio Portell Vilá then published a three-volume biography of López, portraying him as a pragmatic nationalist fighting for Cuban and Puerto Rican independence, conspiring with former military subordinates in Cuba to stage a *pronunciamiento*, or garrison revolt, coinciding with his disembarkment.² Recent Cuban history of the filibuster era is deficient, and such works rarely include notes or cite new sources.

American expeditionaries J. C. Davis and Richardson Hardy penned personal accounts of their experiences in 1850, but serious

¹ William R. Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons* (4 vols., Independence, MO, 1957); Allen E. Roberts, *Freemasonry in American History* (Richmond, 1985), 249-51; H. Glenn Jordan, *Let There Be Light: A History of Freemasonry in Louisiana 1763-1989* (Baton Rouge, 1990), 78, 87.

² José Ignacio Rodríguez, *Estudio Histórico Sobre el Origen, Desarrollo y Manifestaciones Prácticas de la Idea de la Anexión de la Isla de Cuba a los Estados Unidos de América* (Havana, 1900); Vidal Morales y Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros mártires de la revolución cubana* (3 vols. Havana, 1931), II, 56; Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su Época* (3 vols., Havana, 1930-1958). Portell Vilá reprinted four López proclamations in Spanish: two entitled "To the Spanish Army in Cuba," one "To the Lovers of Liberty in Cuba," and one "To the Spanish Peninsulars." All denounce Spanish despotism and affirm his "only object is independence and political liberty." The only López document alluding to possible future Cuban annexation to the United States was an English-language broadside to the "Soldiers of the Liberating Expedition of Cuba!" Portell Vilá indicated that it was written by a collaborator, since López did not read or speak English.

U.S. scholarship on Cuban filibustering awaited Anderson C. Quisenberry's *Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba 1850-1851*, which appeared in 1906. It heavily relied on the accounts of Davis and Hardy, mainly focusing on the participation of the Kentuckians. Nine years later, Robert G. Caldwell, utilizing Cuban and American primary sources, demonstrated how the filibuster movement influenced the sectional crisis. Caldwell described López as embittered against Spain, opposing abolition and desiring Cuban independence. Chester Stanley Urban later examined the support given by New Orleans residents to the López movement, and in 1948 Basil Rauch described the diplomatic implications of filibuster activities. Robert E. May later analyzed the sectional and diplomatic implications of the filibuster era. Most recently, an article by Tom Chaffin in the *Journal of the Early Republic* described the López expeditions as strictly an annexationist movement, overlooking Cuban historiography and the role of Spanish military conspirators on the island.³

Despite this accumulation of scholarship, little attention has been given to one of filibustering's most important components: its Masonic connection. Some studies allude to this link; none provide a sus-

³ O.D.D.O. (J. C. Davis), *The History of the Late Expedition to Cuba* (New Orleans, 1850); Richardson Hardy, *The History and Adventures of the Cuban Expedition* (Cincinnati, 1850); Anderson C. Quisenberry, *Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba 1850-1851* (Louisville, 1906); Robert Granville Caldwell, *The Lopez Expeditions to Cuba 1848-1851* (Princeton, 1915), 45; Chester Stanley Urban, "New Orleans and the Cuban Question During the Lopez Expeditions of 1849-1851: A Local Study in 'Manifest Destiny,'" *The Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 22 (October 1939), 1095-1167; Basil Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba: 1848-1855* (New York, 1948); Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire 1854-1861* (Baton Rouge, 1973); May, *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge, 1985); Tom Chaffin, "'Sons of Washington': Narciso López, Filibustering, and U.S. Nationalism, 1848-1851," *Journal of the Early Republic* (Spring 1995), 79-108. Though Charles H. Brown's 1980 study of filibustering dealt mostly with William Walker's Nicaraguan expeditions, he dedicated several chapters to Cuban matters which lacked new primary sources. Brown's reliance on the prior works of others was reflected in his repetition of errors found in previous secondary publications. The latest book on this subject, *U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s*, by Czech historian Josef Opatrny, is seriously flawed; Opatrny used eight Cuban manuscript sources and only one limited American collection. A good historiographical introduction is marred by a bad translation, many misspellings, no index, and a disturbing number of factual errors concerning names, dates, and events. Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill, 1980); Opatrny, *U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s* (Lewiston, 1993).

tained analysis. Portell Vilá noted that López joined the fraternity in Spain and later belonged to Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, in Savannah. He mentioned that filibuster leaders Cirilo Villaverde and Henry Theodore Titus were members of a lodge in Jacksonville, Florida. Yet, Portell Vilá omitted that Gonzales and Juan Manuel Macías were initiated in Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, and that Quitman and other conspirators were also Freemasons. Rauch dedicated half a paragraph to the Masonic connection, citing three sources.⁴ Masonic participation in the Cuban filibuster movement played an important role that needs further scholarly analysis.

This essay contends that Freemasons dominated the filibuster leadership. Secret Masonic identification facilitated joining the organization. It also provided protection from federal authorities who would suppress their activities and rendered aid and comfort to distressed filibusters. The fraternity espoused the intellectual rationale justifying the invasion of Cuba. Masonic doctrine emphasized that a member "owed it to his country to seek to give her freedom, or maintain her in that possession. It made Tyranny and Usurpation the enemies of the Human Race. It created a general outlawry of Despots and Despotisms, temporal and spiritual."⁵

Masonic history traced its origins to the building of King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. It credited European stone masons of the Middle Ages who built castles, cathedrals, and abbeys, with reviving the fraternity. Freemasonry surfaced publicly in London, England, on June 24, 1717, when four secret lodges openly banded together to create the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. Recent studies indicate that many of the Masonic rituals, titles, symbols, and traditions evolved from those practiced by the Knights Templar of the Crusades, after the Inquisition forced them underground in the fourteenth century.⁶

⁴ Rauch, *American Interest in Cuba*, 154.

⁵ Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (Richmond, 1920), 24.

⁶ Robert Ingham Clegg, *Mackey's History of Freemasonry* (Chicago, 1921), I, 22-23, 66; *ibid.*, III, 925-26, 952; Albert G. Mackey, *The Symbolism of Freemasonry: Illustrating and Explaining Its Science and Philosophy, its Legends, Myths and Symbols* (New York 1869), 59; Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge* (New York, 1989); John J. Robinson, *Born In Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry* (New York, 1989).

The Grand Lodge of England began issuing charters for the creation of new lodges. Then and now, the hierarchy of each lodge contain the elected positions of Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, and Tyler. A candidate must petition a lodge on his own free will, since the fraternity does not recruit. Admission requirements are being free-born, a belief in God and a disposition toward truth, morality, tolerance, and charitable works.⁷ Applicants are rejected if they are motivated by curiosity, personal gain, or social advancement. A Petition Committee investigates the candidate, who is then approved by the unanimous secret balloting of the lodge members. The newcomer is then subjected during the next few months to the ritual three-degree dramas of Blue Lodge Masonry.

The initial degree of Entered Apprentice teaches the tenets of brotherly love, relief to the distressed and to be good and true. It also emphasizes the virtues of morality, fortitude, prudence, temperance and justice—principles that are to apply to all humanity. The candidate is told, “In whatever country you travel, when you meet a Mason, you will find a brother and a friend, who will do all in his power to serve you; and who will relieve you, should you be poor or in distress, to the utmost of his ability, and with a ready cheerfulness.” The second degree of Fellow-Craft represents the attainment of knowledge and science. A candidate learns the symbols of the fraternity and the virtues of silence, secrecy, and fidelity. His studies guide him by reason, love, and faith. The third degree of Master Mason emphasizes intellectual cultivation, moral control of passions, and serenity of mind.⁸ According to *Duncan’s Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, a Master Mason swears on the Bible a lengthy obligation, which includes to “always aid and assist all poor, distressed, worthy Master Masons,” and to “fly to his relief” upon seeing the Grand Hailing Sign of Distress.⁹ After the completion of the three Blue Lodge de-

⁷ Daniel Sickles, *The General Ahiman Rezon and Freemason’s Guide: Containing Monitorial Instructions in the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow-Craft and Master Mason* (New York, 1888), 17; W. Kirk MacNulty, *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol* (London, 1991), 6.

⁸ Supreme Council, *Morals and Dogma*, 28; Sickles, *The General Ahiman Rezon and Freemason’s Guide*, 102, 119, 170.

⁹ Malcom C. Duncan, *Duncan’s Masonic Ritual and Monitor; or, Guide to the Three Symbolic Degrees of the Ancient York Rite and to the Degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and the Royal Arch* (New York, 1885), 25-26.

grees, Freemasonry divides into two branches, the 32-degree York Rite, with its Chapter of Royal Arch, and the 33-degree Scottish Rite.¹⁰ In the ninth and tenth degrees of Scottish Rite, a Mason takes an oath to assist those who struggle against oppression. In the twenty-ninth and thirtieth degrees he vows to wage war against tyranny and despotism. In the thirty-second degree, a Scottish-Rite Mason swears an obligation as “a soldier of freedom.” The true Mason is described as an ardent seeker of knowledge who strives “To attain the truth, and to serve our fellows, our country, and mankind.”¹¹

Freemasonry reached America in 1730, when the Grand Lodge of England appointed Daniel Coxe of New Jersey as Provincial Grand Master of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, with authorization to charter lodges. Three years later, as settlers moved into Georgia, they founded Solomon’s Lodge, No. 1. Freemasonry quickly flourished in the thirteen colonies among an upper class attracted to the ideas of the European Enlightenment. It had a profound influence on the founding generation. Freemasons organized the Boston Tea Party. A total of twenty-one Freemasons signed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. George Washington and thirty-two generals of the Continental Army were Freemasons. The Great Seal of the United States, depicted on the dollar, contains Masonic symbols, including the All-Seeing Eye. During the presidency of George Washington, himself a former Worshipful Master of the Alexandria Lodge in Virginia, the Grand Lodge system appeared in the United States. It emphasized individual state jurisdiction, instead of a national governing body.¹² A Grand Lodge could charter lodges in another state or country lacking its own Grand

¹⁰ Robert Macoy, *A Dictionary of Freemasonry* (New York, 1989), 343-45, 395.

¹¹ Rex R. Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light* (Anderson, SC, 1992), 61, 64, 270, 289, 310; Supreme Council, *Morals and Dogma*, 107, 109.

¹² Clegg, *Mackey’s History of Freemasonry*, IV, 1325; *ibid.*, V, 1519, 1538; Ronald E. Heaton, *Masonic Membership of the Founding Fathers* (Silver Spring, MD, 1974), xvi; Allen E. Roberts, *G. Washington: Master Mason* (Richmond, 1976), 89; Lewis C. Cook, ed., *Colonial Freemasonry* (Transactions of the Missouri Lodge of Research, 1973-1974), 209-14; *Sword and Trowel: The Story of Traveling and Military Lodges* (Fulton, MO, 1964), 18-23; Bernard Faÿ, *Revolution and Freemasonry 1680-1800* (Boston, 1935), 237-50; MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, 88; Robert Freke Gould *et al.*, *The History of Freemasonry its Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, Customs, etc. Derived from Official Sources throughout the World* (New York, 1889), IV, 315.

Lodge, and hold jurisdiction until the establishment there of a Grand Lodge.

The fraternity grew rapidly until the William Morgan affair of 1826. Morgan was a Freemason whose questionable reputation excluded him from joining a new lodge in Batavia, New York. In retaliation, he announced his intention to publish an exposé of Freemasonry. Provocative articles began appearing in the local *Republican Advocate*, and were later compiled into a book. Morgan's subsequent disappearance stirred a public outcry against Masonry. A handful of Freemasons were tried and convicted for Morgan's abduction, but his murder or banishment was never ascertained.¹³ Many persons involved in Whiggery, evangelical crusades, and reform movements also railed against Freemasonry. Abolitionists John Brown and Charles G. Finney, both former Freemasons, joined Anti-Masonic ranks. So did New York Whig editors Horace Greeley and Thurlow Weed and Whig politicians William H. Seward, Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, Francis Granger, Daniel Webster, and John Quincy Adams—a onetime Mason. Future Whig presidents William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, and Millard Fillmore were also anti-Masons. The latter characterized the fraternity as “organized treason.”¹⁴

The excitement that spread nationwide against secret societies, fueled by the rise of 150 anti-Masonic newspapers in sixteen states, gave birth to the Anti-Masonic Party. It ran presidential candidate William Wirt in the 1832 elections, who carried only Vermont. The Anti-Masonic Party, attracting mostly farmers and limited by its narrow focus, dissolved by 1836. Attacks against the fraternity continued for another decade, dividing families, churches, schools, and commu-

¹³ Gould *et al.*, *History of Freemasonry*, 316-18; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, III, 230-31; William Morgan, *Illustrations of Masonry by one of the Fraternity Who has devoted Thirty Years to the Subject* (1827; rep., Chicago, 1872); and William Preston Vaughn, *The Antimasonic Party in the United States 1826-1843* (Lexington, 1983), 7-9.

¹⁴ Lorman Ratner, ed., *Antimasonry: The Crusade and the Party* (Englewood Cliffs, 1969), 10; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, I, 139; II, 47, 50, 137, 192; IV, 123, 190, 208, 223, 304, 306; William L. Cummings, *A Bibliography of Anti-Masonry* (New York, 1963), 30; Charles C. Cole, Jr., “Finney’s Fight Against the Masons,” *The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, 59 (July 1950), 270-86; Boyd B. Stutler, “John Brown and the Masonic Order,” *Ohio History*, 71 (Jan. 1962), 24-32; Ratner, *Antimasonry*, 16.

nities. Thousands of Freemasons publicly disavowed their affiliation. The five hundred lodges in New York shriveled to forty-nine. Although Mississippi Grand Master John Quitman erroneously assumed that northern Anti-Masonic sentiment would not reach the South, half of the sixteen lodges in his state were extinct by 1833. Six years later, there were only six lodges left in Georgia, with a total of 430 members.¹⁵

Freemasonry also languished in the Spanish colony of Cuba but for different reasons. The 1738 Papal Bull of Clement XII denounced Freemasons as heretics and rebels. For much of a century, some monarchs and the Inquisition of the Catholic Church persecuted their activities. There was a brief respite in 1767, when the Count of Aranda, Pedro Abarca, prime minister of Charles III, was elected Masonic Grand Master of Spain and proceeded to banish the Jesuits. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1804 chartered the first Masonic lodge in Havana, Theological Virtues Lodge No. 103. The Masonic doctrine of liberty, equality, and fraternity for the free-born quickly spread among the upper class. There was further Masonic expansion after Freemason Napoleon Buonaparte gave the Spanish throne to his brother Joseph in 1807. The Grand Lodges of Louisiana and South Carolina then sponsored new lodges in Cuba. These transferred their allegiance in 1821 to the first Grand Lodge of Cuba. Two years later, sixty-six Masonic lodges were active in Cuba.¹⁶

The first conspiracy for Cuban independence occurred in 1810 in the Theological Virtues Lodge No. 103 in Havana. Three members, Román de la Luz, Luis F. Bassave, and Joaquín Infante, were charged with "attempted insurrection" and deported to Spain. In 1823, Cuban Freemasons created the clandestine independence

¹⁵ Cummings, *A Bibliography of Anti-Masonry*, 12-15; Gould et al., *The History of Freemasonry*, IV, 490; William Henry Rosier and Fred Lamar Pearson, Jr., *The Grand Lodge of Georgia Free and Accepted Masons* (Macon, 1983), 70.

¹⁶ Francisco J. Ponte Domínguez, *La Masonería en la Independencia de Cuba* (Havana, 1954), 15; Ray V. Denslow, *Freemasonry in Cuba: Queen of the Antilles* (n.p., 1944), 5-6; Gould et al., *History of Freemasonry*, IV, 119; Warren H. Murphy, "A History of Freemasonry in Cuba," Walter F. Meir Lodge of Research, No. 281, *Masonic Papers*, IV, 1974, 69; Ray V. Denslow, *Freemasonry in the Western Hemisphere* (n.p., 1953), 328, 330; Aurelio Miranda Alvarez, *Historia documentada de la Masonería en Cuba* (Havana, 1933), 21, 86-87; Clegg, *Mackey's History of Freemasonry*, VII, 2202; Scot, *Outline of the Rise and Progress of Freemasonry in Louisiana*, 26; Jordan, *Let There Be Light*, 77.

movement *Soles y Rayos de Bolívar*. They sent a delegation of six brethren to meet with Liberator and Freemason Simón Bolívar in Colombia and with Mexican independence leaders who belonged to the fraternity, requesting help to overthrow the colonial government. The group included twenty-year-old Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, who figured prominently in the later filibuster movement. Bolívar told the Cuban delegation that the moment was not “ripe” for their plans.¹⁷ The following year, King Ferdinand VII, who had been deposed by Masonic military officers in 1820, returned to power in Spain and ordered Freemasons to abjure or be summarily hung for treason. The fraternity went underground in Spain and Cuba. It was subjected to new persecutions in 1848, entailing property confiscations and exile. A decade later, all lodges in Cuba had closed except two. Their members met infrequently under fictitious names at various locations.¹⁸

A group of Cuban Freemasons and former independence conspirators created the Havana Club in the spring of 1848. Its members were mainly aristocrats and sugar planters, some of whom feared that the abolitionist policies being pressured on Spain by England and France would ruin Cuba's sugar economy. The organization agreed to hire 5,000 American Mexican War veterans to invade the island and overthrow the colonial regime. Meanwhile, another separatist conspiracy, led by General Narciso López, had been brewing in the central Trinidad region of Cuba for over a year. López had risen to prominence in Spain during the Carlist War and then in the revolt of Liberal and Masonic army officers led by General Baldomero Espartero, in 1840. Under Espartero, López was appointed president of the executive and permanent military commission in Cuba and also gov-

¹⁷ Miranda Alvarez, *Historia documentada de la Masonería en Cuba*, 97-98, 107-08; Herminio Portell Vilá, *Historia de Cuba en sus Relaciones con Estados Unidos y España* (4 vols., 1938-1941; rep., Miami, 1969), I, 217; Ponte Domínguez, *La Masonería en la Independencia de Cuba*, 37; Federico Córdova, *Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros: El Lugareño* (Havana, 1938), 39; Fermin Peraza Sarausa, *Diccionario Biográfico Cubano* (Havana, 1951), I, 42; Emeterio S. Santovenia, *Huellas de Gloria* (Havana, 1944), 27; Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York, 1971), 101.

¹⁸ Jorge Plantada y Aznar, *Fernando VII y la Masonería* (Madrid, 1970), 68-73; Gould *et al.*, *History of Freemasonry*, 119-21, 152-53; “Masonry's Tortured Ups and Downs Under Various Rulers in Cuba,” *Masonic Standard* (New York), Aug. 5, 1916, 1; Charles A. Brockaway, “Freemasonry in Cuba,” *The American Lodge of Research, Transactions*, January 30, 1933, 205.

ernor of Trinidad province. After the fall of Espartero, López was quickly cashiered, which motivated him to plot against the new government. His conspiracy was discovered on July 4, 1848, after the arrests of some of his followers. López fled to the United States three days later.¹⁹

The following month, the Havana Club sent Ambrosio José Gonzales, a twenty-nine-year-old college professor educated in New York City, to propose its invasion plan to U. S. general and Mexican War hero William Jenkins Worth. Gonzales found Worth in Newport, Rhode Island, and used international ritualistic signs, code words, and a secret-grip handshake to identify himself as a brother Freemason. On behalf of the Havana Club, Gonzales offered Worth \$3 million, of which one hundred thousand would be for himself, to invade Cuba with five thousand American volunteers. Gonzales claimed that Worth gave him "perfect credence at the outset" and accepted his proposition. The general then invited the Cuban to accompany him to his hometown of Hudson, New York. Worth afterward took Gonzales to West Point, and introduced him to Professor Gustavus Woodson Smith, a Freemason, and other army officers. Worth identified with the plight of persecuted Cuban Masons, recalling the anti-Masonic era in his native state. Later, in New York City, Gonzales presented Worth to General López and Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros. Before the plot hatched, however, the War Department transferred Worth to Texas, where he died of cholera shortly after his arrival. The Washington correspondent of the *New York Journal of Commerce* later alleged that Worth and others "refused to go into the enterprise unless the people of Cuba should encourage it" by first revolting.²⁰

¹⁹ Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, I, 298; *Vidas de la Unidad Americana: Veinte y Cinco Biografías de Americanos Ilustres* (Havana, 1944), 298-99; *Narciso López*, II, 20-21; Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros mártires*, II, 19; "Arrival of an Insurrectionary Fugitive," *Picayune* (New Orleans), August 8, 1848, 2. Espartero was Regent until overthrown in 1843.

²⁰ Ambrosio José Gonzales, "On To Cuba," *Times Democrat* (New Orleans), Mar. 30, 1884, 9; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, IV, 152; Edward S. Wallace, *General William Jenkins Worth: Monterey's Forgotten Hero* (Dallas, 1953), 187; "Death of Major Gen. Worth," *Daily Argus* (Baltimore), May 24, 1849; "The Cuba Expedition in Washington," *Evening Picayune* (New Orleans), Sept. 5, 1849. General William Jenkins Worth is identified as a Freemason who received a masonic burial rite, in Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, IV, 351; George W. Baird, "Memorials to

The Cubans then offered the leadership of the expedition to Mexican War volunteer general Caleb Cushing, a Freemason and former Massachusetts Whig representative. In December 1848, Cushing introduced Gonzales to outgoing president James K. Polk and members of his cabinet.²¹ Freemasonry provided a common link not only among Gonzales, Cushing, and Polk, but also other members of the administration, namely Vice President George M. Dallas, Secretary of State James Buchanan, and Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason. Cushing was forced to return to Massachusetts due to his father's terminal illness, and declined the Cuban expedition offer. Gonzales remained in Washington, where he met politicians sympathetic to the Cuban cause including, not surprisingly, Democratic Senators Stephen Douglas of Illinois and Daniel Dickinson of New York. Dickinson and Douglas were prominent Freemasons.²²

Gonzales returned to New York City, where in June 1849 he participated in a Cuban conspiratorial meeting in a boarding house with López and his followers. They incorporated Masonic emblems in the design of their flag and agreed to use the red, white, and blue tricolor of liberty. Master Mason Miguel Teurbe Tolón drew three oblong horizontal blue stripes, separated by two white stripes, to represent the three regions into which Spain divided Cuba. López superimposed on the banner's left an equilateral triangle, resembling a Master Mason's apron, "for besides its Masonic significance it is also a striking geometrical figure." He rejected placing the Masonic All-

Great Men Who Were Masons: William Jenkins Worth," *The Builder*, July 1927, 210; and "Master and Apprentice: Where General William Jenkins, Worthy Mexican War Hero, Learned His Masonry," *Outlook*, Nov. 1929. After his death, Worth Lodge No. 210 was formed in New York City on Dec. 27, 1850.

²¹ Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, I, 275; George W. Sargent, Essex Lodge Committee of Arrangements, to Caleb Cushing, June 16, 1851 [*sic*], Caleb Cushing Papers (Library of Congress, Washington, DC); Congress of the United States, Joint Committee on Printing, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989* (Washington, DC, 1989), 861; Ambrosio José Gonzales to James K. Polk, Mar. 4, 1849, James K. Polk Papers (Library of Congress); "On To Cuba," 9.

²² George W. Baird, *Great American Masons* (Washington, DC, 1924), 70-72; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, I, 150, 275, and III, 149, 353-54; Claude M. Fuess, *The Life of Caleb Cushing* (2 vols., New York, 1923), II, 96; "From Havana-Cuba," *Daily Republican* (Springfield, Mass.), May 22, 1850; J. M. Storms to Daniel Dickinson, Jan. 4, 1849, Polk Papers; Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su época (1848-1850)* (Havana, 1952), II, 168; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, I, 315, 325.

Seeing Eye in the center of the triangle, as it was difficult to embroider. Instead, they used "the Five-pointed Star of the Texas flag because it also carries a symbolic meaning," representing the Masonic five points of fellowship.²³

In early July 1849, recruitment for the invasion of Cuba was promoted openly in New York, Boston, Baltimore and New Orleans. Some 400 unarmed filibusters, including many Mexican War veterans, departed New Orleans and assembled on Round Island, three miles south of Pascagoula, Mississippi. When President Zachary Taylor learned of these events, he issued a proclamation on August 11 against the "criminal" invasion of Cuba and ordered the Navy to blockade the island. During the next two months, the expeditionaries were allowed to disperse without being arrested.²⁴

Two months later, Gonzales met John Henderson at a White House levee on December 21, 1849. Henderson, a former Mississippi Whig senator, brigadier general of the state militia, and Freemason, was a political ally of Mississippi Governor John Quitman and had played a major role in Texas annexation. At Henderson's invitation, the Cuban revolutionaries moved their base of operations to New Orleans, where Henderson kept a law office. López went to reside in the home of attorney Laurent Sigur, editor of the New Orleans *Delta*, whose father had been the founding Worshipful Master of Perfect Union Lodge, No. 1, the first Masonic temple established in Louisiana in 1794.²⁵

²³ Charles A. Brockaway, "Masonic Symbolism in Cuba's Flag," *Masonic Outlook*, Mar. 1931, 216; Eugene E. Atkinson, "History of the Cuban Flag," The American Lodge of Research, *Transactions*, Jan. 29, 1962, 449; "Homenaje a Nuestra Bandera," III Conferencia Inter-Americana de la Masonería Simbólica, *Boletín Informativo* (Havana), Feb. 27, 1955, 6; and Enrique Gay-Calbó, *El Centenario de la Bandera Cubana (1849-1949)* (Havana, 1949), 8-9.

²⁴ T. Ewing to John Clayton, August 7, 1849, John Middleton Clayton Papers (Library of Congress); United States Senate, Executive Document 57, *Message of the President of the United States, Transmitting Reports from the several Heads of Department relative to the subject of the Resolution of the Senate of the 23d of May, as to alleged revolutionary movements in Cuba*, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 8, 67-70, 101; "The President's Proclamation," *Daily Union* (Washington, DC), Aug. 15, 1849; "The Round Island Outrage," *Daily Delta* (New Orleans), Aug. 30, 1849; Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, II, 176-77.

²⁵ Congress, *Biographical Directory*, 1171; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, II, 214; Jeanne Hand Henry, *1819-1849 Abstradex of Annual Returns Mississippi Free and*

Henderson introduced López and Gonzales to Quitman at the Executive Mansion in Jackson, Mississippi, on March 15, 1850. The visitors exchanged the Masonic greeting with their hosts.²⁶ Also attending the meeting with the Cubans were the three justices of the Mississippi High Court of Errors and Appeals, Chief Justice William L. Sharkey, Judge Cotesworth Pinckney Smith, and Judge Samuel S. Boyd. The first two were Freemasons. Sharkey was made a Master Mason in 1825 in Washington Lodge, No. 3, where Henderson was affiliated. The judges provided legal opinions on circumventing the federal Neutrality Law. Quitman decided that after the Cuban people revolted for independence, he would resign as governor and lead an

Accepted Masons (New Market, 1969), 39; Dunbar Rowland, *Mississippi* (Atlanta, 1907), I, 858; Ray Thompson, "The Man After Whom Henderson Point Was Named," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), June 2, 1958; May, *Quitman*, 65; *By-Laws Perfect Union Lodge No. 1, F. & A. M. with List of Members and Statistical Table* (New Orleans, 1923), 20-23; James B. Scot, *Outline of the Rise and Progress of Freemasonry in Louisiana, from its Introduction to the Re-Organization of the Grand Lodge in 1850* (New Orleans, 1923), 6-7.

²⁶ The governor, regarded as the "Father of Mississippi Masonry," became a Master Mason in Hiram Lodge, No. 18, in Delaware, Ohio, in 1820. When Quitman left Delaware, Ohio, Hiram Lodge, No. 18, gave him a certificate of good standing on Nov. 3, 1821, recommending him "to the confidence and protection of the Masonic Fraternity, *throughout the world*, wheresoever he may be found or *they* dispersed." (emphasis added) He was Grand Sovereign of South West, Grand Inspector General of the 33rd Degree of the Southern Division of the United States, for the State of Mississippi, and a founder of the Supreme Council. He was also an honorary member of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina and the Grand Lodge of his native New York. Quitman had been elected Grand Master of his state from 1826 to 1838, guiding the fraternity through the turbulent anti-Masonic era. Masonry expanded rapidly when Quitman was again reelected Grand Master in 1840, 1845, and 1846, when he departed for the Mexican War. In his honor, American troops established Quitman U.D. Lodge in Veracruz, Mexico, in 1847. There were also a Quitman Lodge, No. 76, in New Orleans and a Quitman Lodge, No. 106, in Ringgold, Georgia. By 1850, Masonic lodges had increased in Mississippi to almost 100. Membership in the fraternity had also regained a similar increase throughout the nation. Papers of Major General John Anthony Quitman (University of Virginia, Charlottesville); William M. Stuart, *Masonic Soldiers of Fortune* (New York, 1928), 199-206; Ray Baker Harris, *History of the Supreme Council 33 1801-1861* (Washington, DC, 1964), 236-37; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, IV, 3; Gould *et al.*, *History of Freemasonry*, IV, 489-90; Albert Pike, "John Anthony Quitman," *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons* (Jackson, 1882), x-xvi, 626; Jordan, *Let There Be Light*, 85; Vicksburg Council No. 2, to John A. Quitman, Feb. 27, 1850, John A. Quitman Papers, (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson); and Francis Gildart, *et al.*, to John A. Quitman, Sept. 7, 1850, *ibid.*

expedition to reinforce López. He agreed to meet the Cubans in New Orleans in a fortnight for a secret purpose.²⁷

Freemasons occupied the highest positions in the expedition's military command structure, starting with López, Gonzales, and Quitman. Chatham Roberdeau Wheat, a New Orleans attorney and Mexican War veteran, organized and commanded the Louisiana regiment. His reason for joining, according to his father, was "not only from universal feelings of philanthropy, but for the patriotic purpose of aggrandizing the South. This latter consideration was pressed by several prominent Southern Statesmen, his Mason personal friends. . . ." Colonel Peter Smith, a Freemason and the son of Judge Cotesworth Pinckney Smith, and Major William J. Bunch, a Mexican War veteran, raised the Mississippi regiment. Colonels Theodore O'Hara and Thomas Theodore Hawkins, both Mexican War veterans, headed the Kentucky Regiment. The latter was a member of Mount Moriah Lodge, No. 106, in Louisville.²⁸

General Jean Baptiste Donatien Augustin, commander of the Louisiana Legion, a state militia regiment, provided most of the weapons for the expedition. Augustin requisitioned the arms from the state arsenal in exchange for a \$7,500 surety bond. Contributors to the bond included attorney John Henderson, notary public A. A.

²⁷ Gonzales, "On To Cuba," 9; John Ray Skates, Jr., *A History of the Mississippi Supreme Court, 1817-1948* (Jackson, 1973), 88-91, 94; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, IV, 125; Henry, *1819-1849 Abstradex of Annual Returns Mississippi Free and Accepted Masons*, 428, 430; *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, of the State of Mississippi, 1826* (Natchez, 1826), 22-23; Ambrosio José Gonzales to John Quitman, Mar. 20 and 23, 1850, Quitman Papers (Mississippi Department of Archives and History); John F. H. Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman, major-general, U.S.A., and governor of the state of Mississippi* (New York, 1860), 383-85; May, *John A. Quitman*, 238.

²⁸ Biographical sketch of Chatham Roberdeau Wheat by his father John Thomas Wheat, John Thomas Wheat Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); Ambrosio José Gonzales to John A. Quitman, Apr. 5, 1850, Quitman Papers (Mississippi Department of Archives and History); Gonzales, "On To Cuba," 9; Henry, *1819-1849 Abstradex of Annual Returns Mississippi Free and Accepted Masons*, 431; Rob Morris, *The History of Freemasonry in Kentucky, in its Relations to the Symbolic Degrees* (Louisville, 1859), 562. Wheat's biographer, while citing some of these motivations for joining the Cuban expedition, erroneously attributed this account to his brother Leo, and omitted mention of masonic inducement. Charles L. Dufour, *Gentle Tiger: The Gallant Life of Roberdeau Wheat* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 37.

Baudoin and Albert F. Fabre, superintendent of the French Quarter public schools. Henderson was a Mississippi Freemason, while Augustin, Baudoin and Fabre were members of Perfect Union Lodge, No. 1, in New Orleans, which had been founded by the elder Sigur. Quitman arrived in the Crescent City on April 26, and worked covertly with his political contacts and Masonic brethren to help the filibusters. The State of Mississippi provided fifty Yager model "Mississippi" rifles, loaded on board the expedition vessels before they sailed out of New Orleans.²⁹

López and 521 expeditionaries landed in Cárdenas, Cuba, in the early hours of May 19. They captured the town after a skirmish with Spanish troops. Three filibusters were killed and nine wounded, including Gonzales. The towns people, however, failed to join the mainly English-speaking invaders. An enemy counterattack that afternoon resulted in fifteen expeditionaries killed and nineteen wounded. Faced with massive Spanish reinforcements and depleted by mounting casualties, López retreated to Key West that evening. Gonzales, shot twice in the thigh, gave the secret Masonic Grand Hailing Sign of Distress as he was being lowered to the Key West dock. The Collector of Customs, attorney Stephen R. Mallory, ordered four of his servants to carry the Cuban home on their shoulders, where he received great care and attention. While recuperating, Gonzales was introduced to influential Key West merchant Asa F. Tift, who reserved an escape boat for him. Tift belonged to Masonic Dade Lodge, No. 14, in Key West, and had been its Junior Warden.³⁰

²⁹ "Examination of Gen. Lopez," *Evening Picayune* (New Orleans), June 17, 1850; *Cohen's New Orleans and Lafayette Directory*, 1851 (New Orleans, 1851); *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Louisiana, from 22d June 5850, to February 25th, 5851* (New Orleans, 1851), 5; "Arrivals at the Principal Hotels," *Picayune* (New Orleans), Apr. 27, 1850; "United States Circuit Court," *Daily Delta* (New Orleans), Jan. 14, 1851.

³⁰ O.D.D.O., *The History of the Late Expedition to Cuba*, 50, 65, 71, 76; *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Florida, 1846* (Tallahassee, 1846), 54; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of the State of Florida, 1849* (Tallahassee, 1849), vi; Gonzales, "On To Cuba," 9. Stephen R. Mallory was probably a Freemason but it is difficult to prove after an 1873 fire in the Grand Lodge of Florida destroyed all the annual return records. It is highly unlikely that he would otherwise risk losing his job as Customs Collector by assisting, instead of arresting, the transgressors of the Neutrality Law.

A New Orleans Federal Grand Jury indicted Gonzales, López, Quitman, Henderson, O'Hara, Wheat, Hawkins, Augustin, Judge Smith and his son, and six other filibuster leaders on June 21, 1850, for violation of the Neutrality Law. The following day, López, Gonzales and two other filibusters were feted at a Masonic anniversary in Gainsville, Mississippi.³¹ López wanted to launch another expedition before the start of the trial in December and went on a recruitment drive with Gonzales through Georgia.

The Cubans visited Macon in July and found many sympathizers. They reached Savannah by railroad on July 21 and lodged at the Pulaski House. Both petitioned membership in Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, Georgia's oldest and most historic Masonic temple. The fraternity balloted favorably for López on September 5. Four days later, he quickly passed the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees. During a special session the next evening, López was "Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason with the proper Masonic Instructions from the Worshipful Master." According to *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, the lengthy ritual that a candidate has to memorize normally would have made it impossible for López, who did not speak English, to receive all three degrees in two days. He advanced quickly because of his prior Cuban Masonic affiliation. Among the visiting brethren at the ceremony was John E. Davis of Columbus, Georgia, who figured prominently in the filibuster movement. Other lodge members active in the cause were physician and Savannah Mayor Richard Wayne, merchant John Lama, and cigar maker Antonio Ponce. Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, approved the Gonzales initiation petition on October 17. The following month, Gonzales passed the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees in one day. Former Masonic participation in Cuba hastened the initiation process. Gonzales received his Master Mason certificate on December 10, 1850, one week before the filibuster trial started.³²

³¹ General Case Files (E 121), cases 1965-1970, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana, New Orleans Circuit Court, Record Group 21 (National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC); Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman*, II, 59-60; Morales, *Iniciadores y primeros mártires*, II, 121.

³² Ida Young, Julius Gholson and Clara Nell Hargrove, *History of Macon, Georgia* (Macon, 1950), 146; *Savannah Georgian*, July 22, 1850, 2; *Savannah Morning News*, July 22, 1850, 2; Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, Minutes Book, 1849 to 1869 (Georgia

The judicial proceeding began with John Henderson, who had demanded a speedy trial. Three trials ended in hung juries (the last being eleven to one for acquittal) before the Justice Department dismissed charges against all the defendants. Throughout the trial Freemason journalists supported the accused. After the second trial ended, one article claimed that "seven-eighths of the citizens of New Orleans and the U. States, generally, believe it right to sympathize *actively* with these who struggle to put down monarchical governments, whether it be *legal* or not, and will not play into the hands of tyrants by convicting their intended victims. So mote it be—forever!" The last phrase is part of Masonic ritual and some Freemason authors use it to conclude their works. Perhaps aware of Freemason support, the prosecution seemed to attempt to keep them off the three juries. Only one Freemason, M. J. Zunts, whose verdict was unreported, served in the second panel.³³

Before the second trial concluded, former Texas president Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar arrived in New Orleans on January 13, 1851. Lamar had been a Georgia state legislator, attorney, and publisher of the Columbus *Enquirer*, and a Texan revolutionary. Lamar belonged to Columbian Lodge No. 7 in Columbus, whose Worshipful Master, James Fannin, was executed in the Goliad Massacre in Texas.³⁴ Lamar provided Gonzales with letters of recommendation

Historical Society, Savannah); Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, 7-148; *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia, at its Annual Communication for the Year 5850* (Macon, 1851), 41-42; David H. Galloway, *Directory of the City of Savannah, for the Year, 1850* (Savannah, 1849).

³³ "U.S. Circuit Court," *Picayune* (New Orleans) Jan. 22, 1851; "U.S. Circuit Court," *Bee* (New Orleans), Feb. 12, 1851; "The Cuban Prosecutions Abandoned," *Evening Picayune* (New Orleans) Mar. 7, 1851; "The Late Cuba State Trials," *Democratic Review*, Apr. 1852, 307; "The Vexed Trial," *The Louisiana Courier* (New Orleans), Feb. 12, 1851; (quotation); Allen E. Roberts, *House Undivided: The Story of Freemasonry and the Civil War* (Richmond, 1990), 326; and *Freemasonry in American History*, 426; *Proceedings of the M. G. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Louisiana, 1851*, 20; "United States Circuit Court," *Daily Delta* (New Orleans), Jan. 31, 1851.

³⁴ "Arrivals at the Principal Hotels," *Evening Picayune* (New Orleans) Jan. 14, 1851; Lucian Lamar Knight, *A Standard History of Georgia and Georgians*, III (Chicago, 1917), 1340-42; David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman, Eds., *The Encyclopedia of Southern History* (Baton Rouge, 1979), 705; Asa Kyrus Christian, *Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar* (Austin, 1922), 194-97; Rosier and Pearson, *The Grand Lodge of Georgia*, 216; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, III, 49.

for Georgia Governor George W. Towns, officers of the state militia, and other Masonic contacts. Gonzales immediately departed for Georgia to organize the next Cuba expedition. There he established a network of collaborators in Columbus, Macon and Savannah. Most of the leading conspirators were Freemasons, trained in their lodges in the art of secret work. They included thirty-four-year-old bar-keeper Alonzo B. Luce, of Zerubbabel Lodge, No. 15 in Savannah.³⁵

Gonzales wrote to Cuban revolutionary Cirilo Villaverde on February 20 that Governor Towns had given him two cannons, four hundred muskets, pistols and sabers. When Lamar reached Macon the following month, Gonzales told him that thanks to his letter of introduction the Governor had been “very friendly & *liberal*” toward him. This influence allowed Gonzales to sell many Cuban bonds and to receive ten pieces of brass artillery. Several state militia cavalry and infantry companies promised to provide their armaments, and Gonzales “made arrangements to collect one thousand men and from 200 to 300 horses.” Several prominent Georgians provided support, including militia captain John Forsyth, editor of the *Columbus Times*, involved “to a very great extent” in the secret operations.³⁶

Freemasons were also prominent in the support group established by Gonzales in Jacksonville, Florida, with the help of Henry Titus, a member of Solomon’s Lodge No. 20 in that city. Lodge members active in the filibuster movement included the founding Worshipful Master James W. Bryant, Thomas E. Buckman, Samuel Buffington, Isidore V. Garnie, John C. Heming, Benjamin Hopkins, George Mooney, Henry R. Saddler, and John Thompson. Company commander Samuel St. George Rogers was a member of Marion Lodge No. 19 in Ocala.³⁷

³⁵ Ambrosio José Gonzales to Mirabeau B. Lamar, Mar. 14, 1851, Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar Papers (Texas State Library, Austin); 1850 Georgia Free Census, Chatham County; and *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia (1850)*, 52.

³⁶ Ambrosio José Gonzales to Mirabeau B. Lamar, Mar. 14, 1851, Lamar Papers; Herminio Portell Vilá, *Narciso López y su Época* (Havana, 1958), III, 114-15.

³⁷ *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, of the State of Florida; at its Several Grand Communications, from its Organization, A.D. 1830, to 1859, inclusive.* (New York, 1859), 854-55; “Cuban Meeting,” *News* (Jacksonville), Aug. 30, 1851.

When the expedition was ready in Jacksonville, Savannah, and New York, López went to Macon and met with Gonzales and a company of Georgians. As they waited on April 25 to take the train to Savannah, Freemason John Lama telegraphed that the Collector of Customs and the U.S. Deputy Marshal were waiting at the railroad depot to arrest them. Gonzales requested in reply that a carriage await them at the train station ten miles outside Savannah. The Cubans were picked up by George A. McCleskey, a Freemason who visited Solomon's Lodge, No. 1. (His father Thomas Jeff McCleskey was the Senior Warden of Masonic Clinton Lodge, No. 54, in Savannah.) They were taken to the plantation of Elias Butts Barstow on Wilmington Island. Barstow was married to a cousin of George A. McCleskey's wife. The Massachusetts-born planter was a Freemason and his fraternal vows prohibited denying aid to his brethren in distress. Barstow told the visitors that he was a Whig, and although opposed to the expedition, "as my guests you are welcome, and my house is yours."³⁸

After the federal authorities neutralized the expedition, López returned to New Orleans. He told Cirilo Villaverde that because he had "Masonic protection," the Savannah City Marshal refused to enforce the federal arrest warrant against him. Indeed, the city marshal was Daniel H. Stewart, Junior Warden of Clinton Lodge, No. 54.³⁹ Meanwhile, Barstow left Gonzales in care of another Freemason, Samuel Prioleau Hamilton, the future Worshipful Master of Solo-

³⁸ Ambrosio José Gonzales, "The Cuban Crusade: A Full History of the Georgian and Lopez Expeditions," *Times Democrat* (New Orleans), Apr. 6, 1884, 9; Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, Minutes Book, 1849 to 1869 (Georgia Historical Society); *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia* (1850), 79; and Terri Bray Shad, *The Genealogy of The Shad Family of Georgia* (Baltimore, 1990), 38, 43, 65. The U.S. Deputy Marshal, however did manage to arrest Captain Samuel Kooockogey and twenty-eight filibusters. Kooockogey, the leader of the Columbus, Georgia contingent, was a member of Masonic Columbian Lodge No. 7, in that city. *United States of America vs Narciso Lopez, Ambrosio Jose Gonzales, Capt. Samuel J. Cooockygy [sic] et al.*, Warrant to Arrest, May 2, 1851, U.S. District Court, Southern District of Georgia, Savannah, Case File D-15, RG 21 (National Archives); "Arrest of Supposed Cuban Officers," *Savannah Morning News*, May 13, 1851, 2; *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia* (1850), 46.

³⁹ Portell Vilá, *Narciso López*, III, 211; Galloway, *Directory of the City of Savannah, 1850*, 37; and *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia, at its Annual Communication, for the Year 5849* (Macon, 1849), 96.

mon's Lodge, No. 1. Hamilton hid Gonzales for a month on his father's cotton plantation on Callawassie Island, South Carolina. Gonzales was also assisted by William Elliott, a sixty-three-year-old planter, politician and writer from Beaufort, South Carolina. Elliott and his sons Ralph and Thomas were members of Harmony Lodge, No. 22, in Beaufort.⁴⁰ Five years later, Gonzales married Elliott's youngest daughter, Harriett.

After the third debacle, the Cuban revolutionaries immediately renewed their conspiratorial activities under the sheltering cloak of Masonry. Gonzales went to inspect the armament he left hidden on the Woodbine plantation, near St. Mary's, Georgia. He hired a buggy with an African-American driver for the twenty-five-mile journey. Halfway there, a midday thunderstorm drenched them and their horse gave out in the mud. The guide suggested seeking help at the nearby Laurel Isle plantation. Gonzales apparently flashed the Masonic Grand Hailing Sign of Distress as he approached the tall gentleman on the mansion's piazza. When the Cuban introduced himself and described his situation, the stranger said, "It so happens that I have an order for your arrest from the President of the United States." It was John Hardee Dilworth, the Collector of St. Mary's, who was a Freemason. He then assured his surprised visitor, "I am most happy to make your acquaintance and to welcome you to my house. I sympathize deeply with your cause; had I seen you at St. Mary's I would certainly have arrested you." Gonzales was invited to dine with the Dilworth family and received lodging for the night. He departed the next day with his driver and a fresh horse to complete military preparations at the Woodbine plantation.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, Minutes Book, 1849 to 1869 (Georgia Historical Society); "Solomon's Lodge No. 1, F.A.M.," *Savannah Morning News*, Sept. 6, 1877, 3; Gonzales, "The Cuban Crusade," 9; *Abstract of the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free-Masons of So. Ca. during the year 1825* (Charleston, 1826), 45; *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free-masons of South Carolina, at the Annual Communication, November, 5859* (Charleston, 1859), 68.

⁴¹ Gonzales, "The Cuban Crusade," 9; Folks Huxford, *Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia* (7 vols., Waycross, 1967), V, 118; *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia, at its Annual Communication for the Year 5852* (Macon, 1852), 140. Dilworth died on June 16, 1853, and a Masonic square and compass emblem is etched on his monument at Oak Grove Cemetery in St. Mary's, Georgia. At the time of Gonzalez's trip, Cárdenas veteran Juan Manuel Macías petitioned membership in Solo-

Meanwhile, an uprising occurred in Camagüey, Cuba, on July 4, 1851. Thirty-four-year-old attorney Joaquín de Agüero, accompanied by forty-four men, many of them members of his Masonic lodge, issued a proclamation of independence and took to the hills. After various skirmishes with Spanish troops, Agüero and his remaining followers were captured on July 22. That same day, news of the uprising reached the United States.⁴²

Responding immediately, López gathered some 430 volunteers in New Orleans and sailed for Cuba on August 2. In his hasty departure, he left behind Gonzales and many veterans of the Cárdenas expedition. Public meetings throughout the United States raised volunteers, funds and passed resolutions on behalf of the Cuban cause. Not surprisingly, influential Masons were key participants in these events. In Baton Rouge, Mayor J. R. Dufrocq, of St. James Lodge No. 17, addressed a Cuban rally. New Orleans auctioneer Dennis Israel Ricardo, of George Washington Lodge, No. 65, was secretary of a collections committee to aid the Cuban cause. In Farmerville, Louisiana, a torchlight procession around the town square honored the Cuban revolution, culminating in a courthouse rally. Sympathetic resolutions were adopted, and M. D. Mays, of Union Fraternal Lodge, No. 53, read the Cuban declaration of independence. In Jackson, Mississippi, the friends of Cuban independence held a large and enthusiastic meeting at City Hall. The organizers included A. Hutchinson, E. P. Russell, Worshipful Master David N. Barrows of Silas Brown Lodge No. 65, and Cárdenas veteran A. Mizell, of Pearl Lodge No. 23. In Tallahassee, Florida, George M. T. Brinson, secretary of Madison Lodge, No. 11, acted as secretary during a public meeting that drafted resolutions on behalf of the Cuban patriots. In Savannah, Freemasons John Lama and J. T. Mitch-

mon's Lodge, No. 1, on June 5, 1851. Two weeks later he received the Entered Apprentice degree. The following month, Macías achieved the degrees of Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, Minutes Book, 1849 to 1869 (Georgia Historical Society).

⁴² Ponte Domínguez, *La Masonería en la Independencia de Cuba*, 51; Jorge Juárez Cano, *Hombres del 51* (Havana, 1930), 7, 58; Francisco Agüero y Estrada, *Biografía de Joaquín de Agüero* (Havana, 1935), 39. Information of the rebel defeat was not published until a month later, because the colonial government suspended postal service in the region. "Further Cuban News," *Evening Picayune* (New Orleans), Aug. 18, 1851; "From Our Correspondent," *ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1851.

ell, of Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, and Richard D. Arnold, George L. Cope, Jr., Thomas Holcombe, Alonzo B. Luce, Thomas Purse and F. A. Tupper, of Zerubbabel Lodge, No. 15, participated in organizing a massive Cuban rally in Monument Square.⁴³

Nashville's Cuban rally, "one of the largest meetings which ever gathered together" in that city, included three Masonic organizers, Mexican War volunteer colonel Samuel R. Anderson, attorney Ewing Pike McGinty, editor of the *Nashville Whig* and former State representative, and James Irwin. The Memphis Cuban meeting, with over fifteen hundred citizens, was presided by the Honorable Edmund Hickman, with William Houston as one of the Vice Presidents and Colonel J. H. McMahan organized the committee of resolutions and the committee of correspondence. All three were members of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee.⁴⁴

Masonic support in the Upper South was no less warm. In Louisville there were three mass meetings within two days. Its sponsors included Coleman Daniel, John H. Harney, William Riddle, William W. Ross and Robert Story, of Clarke Lodge, No. 51; Edmund A. Graves, and Aroon Pennington of Mount Moriah Lodge, No. 106; and L. V. White of Antiquity Lodge, No. 113. In Baltimore, Cuban

⁴³ "Cuban Meeting at Baton Rouge," *Picayune* (New Orleans), Sept. 2, 1851; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Louisiana, 1851*, 10; "Notice," *Picayune*, Aug. 24, 1851; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Louisiana, 1851*; "Sympathy with Cuba," *Picayune*, Aug. 20, 1851; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Louisiana, 1851*, 14; "Cuban Freedom and Independence," *Jackson Mississippian*, Aug. 1, 1851; Henry, *1819-1849 Abstracts of Annual Returns Mississippi Free and Accepted Masons*, 87, 233-35; "A Voice in Behalf of Cuba," *Florida Sentinel* (Tallahassee), Aug. 26, 1851; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of the State of Florida, at its Annual Communication* (Tallahassee, 1849), iv; "Cuba Meeting," *Savannah Morning News*, Aug. 23, 1851; *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Georgia, at an Annual Communication, Held at Milledgeville, From the 7th to the 10th Nov. A.L. 5843, A.D. 1843* (Macon, 1843), 26-27; *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia, 1850*, 42, 51-52.

⁴⁴ "The Cuba Demonstration," *Nashville Daily American*, Aug. 26, 1851; "Cuba Meeting," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, Aug. 28, 1851; "Cuban Independence!! Public Meeting," *ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1851; William S. Speer, *Sketches of Prominent Tennesseans* (Nashville, 1888), 360, 482; Robert M. McBride, *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly 1796-1861*, Vol. I (Nashville, 1975), 479; John Frizzell, *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge, F. & A. M., of the State of Tennessee, From its Organization 1813-1847*, Vol. I (Nashville, 1873), 51, 247, 368, 386, 395, 483, 622; Charles Albert Snodgrass, *The History of Freemasonry in Tennessee 1789-1943* (Nashville, 1944), 438.

sympathizers held a large meeting in Monument Square. A leading organizer was General Sheppard C. Leakin, a veteran of the War of 1812, and the Past Worshipful Master of Washington Lodge, No. 3, in Baltimore. In Washington, a huge rally was held in front of the Patent Office, which approved resolutions on behalf of Cuban liberty. General John M. McCalla presided the assembly and addressed the people. McCalla was Past Grand Master of the District of Columbia and Worshipful Master of National Lodge, No. 12.⁴⁵

Within seventeen days of disembarking, the invaders were routed, killed or captured, after a series of clashes with superior Spanish forces. The first fifty American prisoners were summarily executed on August 16. One victim, thirty-year-old R. C. Stanford of New Orleans, enclosed his Masonic medal in his last letter to a friend. López was captured on the 29th and publicly garrotted in Havana two days later. The news did not reach New Orleans until September 4.⁴⁶

The next day, the New Orleans *Daily Delta* reported that Joseph Gunst was among the ninety-five filibusters captured. The seventeen-year-old prisoner was the son of “zealous Mason” L. A. Gunst, Grand Steward of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana. This prompted John George, Grand Master of Louisiana, who had known the youth since birth, to write to Benjamin B. French, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia and member of National Lodge, No. 12. French had been chief clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, commissioner of public buildings and grounds, and had laid the cornerstones of the Smithsonian Institution and the Washington Monument.⁴⁷ George suggested that “intercession with

⁴⁵ “Meeting in Favor of Cuba,” *Courier* (Louisville), Aug. 29, 1851; “Cuba Meetings,” *Democrat* (Louisville), Aug. 29, 1851; “Cuba Meetings,” *Journal* (Louisville), Aug. 29, 1851; “Cuba Meeting,” *Courier*, Aug. 30, 1851; “Cuba Meeting,” *Democrat*, Aug. 30, 1851; and *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky 1850* (Frankfort, 1850), 62-63, 80, 83; “Cuba Meeting-Sympathy for the Patriots,” *Daily Union* (Washington, DC), Aug. 29, 1851; and Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, III, 65; “Cuban Meeting,” *Daily Union*, Sept. 3, 1851; *Proceedings of the M. W. Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia* (Washington DC, 1850), 82.

⁴⁶ “Letter from Adjutant R. C. Stanford,” *Daily Delta* (New Orleans), Aug. 23, 1851; “Destruction of the Lopez Expedition,” *Evening Picayune* (New Orleans), Sept. 4, 1851.

⁴⁷ “Names of the Prisoners,” *Daily Delta* (New Orleans), Sept. 5, 1851; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, II, 82.

the Spanish Minister at Washington might produce his liberation.” The suppliant, however, cautioned that the influential people he recommended to Gunst were “not Masons, and will not feel that deep interest we feel in the brother & the brother’s child.” French wrote to President Fillmore asking advice on what course to take and enclosed George’s letter. Fillmore, who abhorred the fraternity, washed his hands of the matter by recommending on the letter’s margin that “application be made through the State Department & the Spanish Minister.”⁴⁸

The following month, French received a letter from Charles Tilden, the Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. The family and friends of the imprisoned expeditionary Robert H. Breckenridge had asked him to write to “some person of influence” in Washington on his behalf. Breckenridge and Tilden were both members of Mount Moriah Lodge No. 106 in Louisville. The letter contained various masonic ritualistic words, such as “aid and assist” and “distressed,” appealing to French’s Masonic obligation. After being snubbed by Fillmore, French wrote to Attorney General John J. Crittenden, a Kentuckian and Freemason. French recognized that he lacked influence with the anti-Masonic Whig Administration and the Spanish Crown, but asked Crittenden to do anything in his power to obtain the release of Breckenridge. Fulfilling his sworn Masonic obligation, Crittenden managed to win Breckenridge’s freedom within a month.⁴⁹

Mourning ceremonies were held in Masonic lodges that lost members in the expedition. Solomon’s Lodge, No. 1, in Savannah, on September 18 unanimously adopted a resolution that “the Jewells [*sic*] of this Lodge be cloathed [*sic*] in Mourning for thirty days, in token of respect, and the Masonic feelings of its members, in memory of our late Brother Genl. Narciso Lopez.” Among the visiting brethren present was George A. McCleskey, who five months earlier hid

⁴⁸ John George to B. B. French, Sept. 17, 1851, R.G. 59, Miscellaneous Letters of the Department of State (National Archives). B. B. French to Millard Fillmore, Sept. 26, 1851, *ibid*.

⁴⁹ Charles Tilden to B. B. French, Oct. 16, 1851, *ibid*; Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, I, 266-67; *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky 1803* (Lexington, 1803), 45; B. B. French to J. J. Crittenden, Oct. 23, 1851, Miscellaneous Letters, RG59; “Later from Havana: Another Prisoner Released,” *Daily Delta*, Nov. 18, 1851.

López and Gonzales from the authorities. Members of Halo Lodge, No. 5, in Cahaba, Alabama, wore a badge of mourning for thirty days for their former Worshipful Master, Robert L. Downman, killed in the expedition. The lodge sent a letter of condolence to his widow.⁵⁰

The following month, responding to rumors that General Quitman would lead an avenging expedition to liberate Cuba, the former Mississippi Governor received a letter from a C. G. F. Bell. He claimed to have found during his recent travels from Alabama to Texas, "thousands in Favor of the Revolution in Cuba and all wish you to lead them." To inspire confidence, Bell used cryptic symbols identifying himself as a Master Mason, Royal Arch degree. Quitman toyed with the idea of invading the island for the next three-and-a-half years, but gave it up in April 1855.⁵¹

Fifty-two years and one day after López first unfurled his Masonic banner in Cárdenas, the flag became the national symbol of an independent Cuban Republic. The lengthy struggle against the Catholic Crown was carried out by another group of Freemasons that included Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Ignacio Agramonte, Calixto García, Máximo Gómez, Antonio Maceo and Cuban Apostle José Martí. Honoring their efforts, the First National Congress of History of the Cuban Republic proclaimed, "Cuban Masonry has been at all times, since its foundation, the institution which has furnished more elements to the independence, the liberty, the culture and the progress of Cuba."⁵²

What individually motivated diverse Freemasons to assist the Cuban independence movement it is still open to speculation. Being a secret society, the fraternity did not publicly take issue on Cuba or other political matters. Some Freemasons, recalling the twenty-year anti-Masonic era in the United States, were probably desirous of as-

⁵⁰ Solomon's Lodge, No. 1, Minutes Book, 1849 to 1869 (Georgia Historical Society); Robert J. Travers to Mrs. R. L. Downman, Sept. 24, 1851, Robert L. Downman Papers (Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery).

⁵¹ C. G. F. Bell to Genl. J. A. Quitman, Oct. 27, 1851, Quitman Papers (Mississippi Department of Archives and History); Duncan, *Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor*, 247; Antonio Rafael de la Cova, "Ambrosio José Gonzales: A Cuban Confederate Colonel" (Ph.D. diss., West Virginia University, 1994), 244.

⁵² Havana, Oficina de Historiador de la Ciudad, *Homenaje a los Mártires de 1851* (Havana, 1951), 74.

sisting their oppressed brethren in Cuba. They were also motivated by their fraternal doctrine against tyranny, regarding themselves in a similar patriotic role as the Masonic Founding Fathers. Others, like Chatham Wheat, were motivated by multiple factors, including their Masonic brethren, Southern expansionism, military adventure, and personal aggrandizement.

Whatever their motives, Freemasons were undeniably a main ingredient of the filibuster movement. Their assistance transcended sectional issues, political parties, and national boundaries. Freemasonry served as an intermediary between the Cuban revolutionaries and northern and southern politicians and military figures who supported their cause. The brotherhood connection provided the Cuban revolutionaries with weapons, funds, and recruits, just as it had done earlier in the independence movements of West Florida and Texas. Masonic international secret identification through handshakes, code words, and the sign of distress, caused strangers to help López, even though he did not speak English. The sworn Masonic obligation to grant relief to a worthy distressed brother enabled filibuster fugitives to evade federal authorities and receive assistance even from political opponents. Public officials John Hardee Dilworth and Daniel H. Stewart clearly placed fraternal loyalty above considerations of oath of office. Without Masonic participation, the Cuban independence movement would have been impaired, and the Cuban national flag would have a different design today. Freemasonry alone did not create the American, Texas, and Cuban revolutions, but it did prepare and accomplish them.