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4612 VETERANS MEMORIAL BLVD.
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PHONE 889-0277

May 30, 1978

La Parfaite Union Lodge
c/o Bro. Jacques Hanania -
Lecturer of the Lodge
Super Rouviere Bt 1
83 Boulevard Deredon - 13009
Marseilles, France

*Bro. Hanania:
This represents the
work I have completed
to date*

Brethren:

Let me first humbly apologize for not responding to your correspondence of many months passed; however as of the date of your request, which was communicated to me by the Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana, I was myself attempting to gather the reference material for a history of Perfect Union Lodge No. 1, our Lodge here in Louisiana.

The earliest records of Perfect Union Lodge, as well as the other Lodges constituted under its legal credentials, are missing primarily through destruction by fire. However, what remains is in French, and although our roots are very much French, our mastery of the language is limited. And therefore, proper research into our ancient records is at times hampered.

I am very much interested in your comment relative to your findings that Masonry in Louisiana "seems to have had its origin from the Lodge of La Parfaite Union in Marseilles", but that you have no concrete proof. This is of extreme interest to me because of the fact that on April 28, 1793, Laurent Sigur, a French refugee residing in New Orleans, gathered together twelve Masons, all purported to be refugees from the island of San Domingo. Our history records that their presence here was the result of the Negro insurrections or revolutions which broke out on the islands at that point in time. It is our understanding that the Lodges which existed in the islands were working under the authority of the Grand Orient of France. Our records also reveal that Laurent Sigur held a patent of the grade of Rose Croix from a Lodge in Nancy, France; and acting upon the authority granted in said patent, began Masonic communications on the aforementioned date.

Subsequent thereto, it has been confirmed that the brethren assembled by Laurent Sigur later petitioned for a charter from a Lodge in South Carolina. Prior to the receipt of said charter from the Lodge in South Carolina, he organized a Lodge under the name Parfaite Union, May 19, 1793. And on the subsequent communication, the Lodge elected officers and received two petitions for candidates, said meeting date being June 9, 1793.

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On March 30, 1794 the charter arrived from the Grand Lodge of South Carolina.

As to your questions relative to other early Lodges in Louisiana having their origin in France, in 1794 the brethren residing in New Orleans of the French Rite applied to the Grand Orient of France for a charter. Our records disclose that the Grand Orient had suspended its labors at said time because of the political turmoils existing in France. Therefore, application was made then to the Provincial Grand Lodge in Marseilles, which granted a provisional charter under which the lodge was constituted on December 27, 1798, under the name Etoile Polaire (Polar Star).

The Grand Orient of France having resumed labor in 1803, acted on the petition forwarded them in 1794, and in 1804 granted a charter Etoile Polaire No. 4263, and the Lodge was reconstituted and its officers installed on November 11, 1804.

Any information that you could possibly forward as a result of your further research would be greatly appreciated, especially your findings relative to early records of La Parfaite Union in and about the 1750's. I would be especially grateful if any information is available relative to the patent which was issued to Bro. Laurent Sigur. Should we be able to establish by documentation that the authority that you state you were able to find in 1750 was the same used by Bro. Sigur in 1793 to begin Masonic communications in Louisiana, we would indeed have a link which would enhance both of our histories.

Also among the refugees which immigrated to the Louisiana Territory from the islands, namely San Domingo, were the officers and members of the Lodge "la Reunion Desiree No. 301", which Lodge operated under the auspices of the Grand Orient of France at Port au Prince, April 16, 1783. Its re-establishment in Louisiana was under a duplicate charter from the Grand Orient of France received July 20, 1807, and bore the date February 17, 1806, and the number 3829.

Until the year 1812, it can be established that twelve Lodges held Masonic Communications in Louisiana. Five of those are gone out of existence, thereby leaving seven active lodges as of the time Louisiana was admitted into the Union on April 30, 1812.

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Following the "Louisiana Purchase" from France on April 30, 1803, meetings no longer needed to be held in secret (as a result of the Papal Ecclesiastical of 1783 known as Bullam In Eminenti Masonic communications held while Louisiana was under Spanish rule were officially held in secret).

Perfect Union Lodge purchased for its building Lots #162 and #163 (120 ft. x 120 ft.) on the southwest corner of what is now Camp and Gravier in Faubourg St. Mary, known as Perfect Union Lodge Hall. It then relocated to its new lodge hall on Rampart Street on May 13, 1927.

Perfect Union Lodge, acutely aware of the problems existing amongst the craft, both political and sociological, and in an anticipation of further problems as a result of the different lodges obtaining their charters from different authorities, and owing their allegiance to different bodies, attempted to bring unity to Masonry in Louisiana. And on April 18, 1812, a meeting was called by Perfect Union Lodge, at which time all lodges were represented. And on June 13, 1812, following a summons to discuss the question of the Grand Lodge, the five French speaking lodges met and agreed to elect grand officers and form a Grand Lodge for the state. And in furtherance of their intentions, perfected the same on June 20, 1812. The five French speaking lodges, namely Perfect Union No. 29, chartered by the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, March 30, 1794, Polar Star No. 4293, chartered by Lodge Sincerite, Marseilles, December 27, 1798, reconstituted by the Grand Orient of France on November 11, 1804, Charity Lodge, constituted by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania March 1, 1802, Concorde Lodge No. 117, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania October 29, 1810, Perseverance Lodge, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania October 27, 1810, responded to the summons. The two English speaking lodges, namely Harmony Lodge No. 122 chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania November 19, 1810, and Louisiana Lodge No. 1 chartered by the Grand Lodge of New York September 2, 1807, chose to remain loyal to their previous jurisdictions and thereby withdrew from the convention.

Perfect Union Lodge had the pleasure of hosting the first convention and the first Grand Lodge meeting was held in the Perfect Union Lodge Hall building situated on the southwest corner of Camp and Gravier Streets. The Perfect Union delegates to the convention were P. F. Dubourg, Worshipful Master of Perfect Union Lodge, P. Pedesclaux, Thos. Urguhart. Perfect Union Lodge had the distinction of having its Worshipful Master

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elected as the first Grand Master of Masons of the State of Louisiana, P. F. Dubourg, Grand Master. Others elected were L. C. E. Moreau Lislet, Polar Star Lodge No. 129, Deputy Grand Master, Jean Blangue, W.M. of Concord Lodge No. 93, S. Grand Warden, Francois Pernot, W.M. of Concord Lodge No. 117, J. Grand Warden, J. B. Pinta, W.M. of Perseverence Lodge No. 118, Grand Treasurer; J. B. Vernon, S.W. of Perseverence Lodge No. 118, Grand Secretary; Mathurin Picaud, P.M. of Polar Star Lodge No. 129, Grand Orator; Augustin Macarty, J.W. of Perseverence Lodge No. 118, Grand Steward; and Yves Lemonnier, J.W. of Charity Lodge No. 93, Grand Pursuivant.

The constitution which was enacted granted to and assured the Grand Lodge full, complete and exclusive jurisdiction within the State of Louisiana.

Because of the unification of the French speaking lodges into the Grand Lodge, and the demise of the English speaking lodges along with the geographical phenomenon of massive emigrations from France, the influence of the system established by the Grand Orient of France grew.

Of the lodges which originally had their origin from the Grand Orient, there was a re-establishment of communications under the guise of the lodges established prior to the Grand Lodge of Louisiana. This emphasis was to create serious problems for Masonry in Louisiana in the years to come.

It was shown that Perfect Union Lodge once again, in the fact that they were a very influential lodge, being French speaking yet practicing the York Rite, was to, after many skirmishes with both camps, namely the brethren of Etoile Polaire in the allegiance to their previous authority, and the brethren of the English speaking lodges, who felt that the York Rite traditions were being violated, show that peace and harmony could in fact prevail. And that it was possible to retain the French history of its origin yet practice Masonry under the authority of its charter, namely the York Rite.

The early Tableaus of Perfect Union Lodge show that several of its members were 32nd and 33rd Degree Masons, further evidencing the proof of the stabilizing force exhibited by Perfect Union Lodge. No other jurisdiction found appears to be confronted with the uniqueness of multirights being practiced within one jurisdiction.

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The history of Perfect Union Lodge exemplifies the ability to have unity amidst distinct cultural roots. The history of the Lodge of necessity includes the history of several other lodges which have left their mark and have either become members of Perfect Union through consolidation or affiliation of its members, or by merger into it. In addition thereto, Perfect Union Lodge is responsible for the creation and obtaining of Charters for several very active lodges within the State of Louisiana.

Members of the Lodge "Reunion des Coeurs" chartered by the Grand Orient of France, Concord Lodge No. 88 chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, Bienfaisance Lodge, chartered by the Grand Consistory of Jamaica, were merged into Concord Lodge No. 117, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and subsequently became Concord Lodge No. 3 of Louisiana. And in the year 1878 consolidated with Perfect Union Lodge #1.

Orus Lodge, chartered in 1863 merged into Perfect Union Lodge in 1879. The first Louisiana Lodge went almost bodily into Harmony Lodge No. 122 (the other English speaking Lodge in existence at the creation of the Grand Lodge) and those two lodges in turn merged into Harmony Lodge No. 26, and subsequently into Louisiana Lodge No. 32, and then into Poinsett Lodge. And from this unity, Marion Lodge No. 4 was created, and also Orient Lodge No. 173; and from these unions Marion Lodge No. 68 was created. And in 1886 these lodges were consolidated with Perfect Union Lodge. And subsequently thereto, Dudley Lodge No. 47 was merged into Perfect Union Lodge on November 28, 1887.

In 1918 the membership of Perfect Union Lodge has swelled to such large numbers that the decision was made by the membership for the creation of a new lodge to more effectively carry out more Masonic work, and thereupon Perfect Union Lodge No. 1 divided to form Ionic Lodge No. 374.

Perfect Union Lodge practiced the York Rite in French until the early 1900's. As the Louisiana jurisdiction has always been of interest to Masons worldwide because of the different rites practiced therein, it has always been viewed with awe, and admired, due to the fact that in spite of the difference in rites, the essentials, or the pillars of Masonry practiced in the various rites through our history are exactly as they exist in the York rite, and in complete consistency with Masonic regulations.

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Because of Lodges in our history, such as Perfect Union, and the examples set by the brethren therein, there is living proof that peace and harmony can prevail no matter what the circumstances, and that free Masonry is in fact universal in nature. And that the principles on which our fraternity are founded are in fact cherished by all brethren.

The history of Perfect Union Lodge in Louisiana becomes more meaningful when we realize that there was but a short time span between the creation of our fraternity to the creation of our Lodge. Our history is one in which we can all in Louisiana take immeasurable pride.

Our lodge has the honor to include in its numbers leaders of our nation and state. Included therein were President Andrew Jackson, Governor C. C. Claiborne. Other family names instrumental in the early development of our state and nation include Pedesclauz and Broutin (Notaries); the Fortiers, Wiltz; Debuys, Darcantel and Sigur (Plantation Owners); August Macarty, Mayor of the City of New Orleans; others include Gayarre (Historian) Prieur, Roche, Sarpys, Peree, Bonnabel, Beauregards, Labat, Lenusse, Barron, Livaudais, Tricou, Dousseau, Duplantier, Mayronne, Gentilly, Dreaux, Christoval, DeArmas, Caselard, Jourdain, Castinedo, Barthe, Dubourg, Ducros, Morgan, Urquharts, Plauche.

The Acadian settlement of Donaldsonville was founded in 1806 by William Donaldson, also a very active member of Perfect Union Lodge.

A charter was issued from Perfect Union Lodge on February 10, 1818 to La Verite Lodge No. 12, and L'Etoile Flamboyante #10 in 1817.

and the commencement of freemasonry in Louisiana, made under difficulties impossible to fully appreciate today, as the law of Spain, under whose dominion Louisiana then was, both civil and ecclesiastical, both forbidding the practice of freemasonry. In spite of this, a number of freemasons then living in New Orleans met for the purpose of organizing a Lodge for the practice of the Rites of freemasonry. This meeting was called by Brother Laurent Sigur, who held a diploma from a lodge at Nancy, France. He examined the credentials of the others and found eight of them to be Master Masons; the other five to be apprentices.

They agreed to form a Lodge and to petition the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons of South Carolina for a charter. To this petition was added the names of five others. In all, nineteen Masons.

History records that the Brethren who formed this first Lodge were white refugees from the Island of Santo Domingo in the West Indies who had taken refuge in New Orleans after they were driven out by the negro revolution of 1791, when the negroes revolted against the French Government.

A meeting was held on the 19th. of May 1793 and Brother Laurent Sigur, acting under Powers supposed to be conferred upon him by his rank as Knight of the Rose Croix, organized the Lodge and elected officers. Two petitions were received and at the next meeting held on the 9th. day of June 1793, they were initiated. The Lodge continued to work unofficially until the arrival of the Charter signed by F. B. Bowen, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, and at a meeting duly called La Re'gulier Loge Parfaite Union # 29 was constituted by Brother Jason Laurente, especially deputed for this purpose. This meeting was held on the 30 day of March 1794, when the following officers were duly elected and installed: Laurent Sigur, W.M., Laurent Chauriac, S.W., Andrew Wak ernie, J. W.

On December 8, 1794, a small fire was started in a house on Royal Street. It soon got out of control and destroyed 212 houses and all records of the Lodge. A meeting was held of the 6th. day of January 1795 and a committee appointed to report on the work and proceedings of the Lodge from its inception to the time of the fire. This report, which appears spread on the minutes and signed by all of the members present, would indicate that they had received into the lodge from the date of origin until the date of the fire, 41 members by initiation of affiliation.

Ben. Lee: This is a summary history which is novel & unique. Those mine and may fit the need, please review and advise. C. Lee

In those days, the Lodge was opened in the Apprentice degree for the transaction of all business other than the conferring of higher degrees. This practice was followed until the adoption of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana in 1850.

In the year 1800, Louisiana was ceded back to France: under the French regime, conditions did not improve as the Roman Catholic Church was extremely bitter and active in the suppression of Freemasonry. This feeling extended back many years to a time when on April 28, 1738, Pope Clement XII, after consultation with three Cardinals and the Grand Inquisitor, denounced Freemasonry in the Papal Encyclical known as the Bulla In Eminenti. The faithful were notified that the penalty of membership in our Order meant excommunication, ostracism, imprisonment and even death.

All meetings of the Lodge during its early existence had to be held in secret at different places, wherever a Brother had rooms suitable for that purpose, and finally the meetings were suspended entirely. This suspension, however, was happily for only two months when the protection of Governor Carondelet was obtained, after which the Lodge met regularly the first Sunday of each month. On the retirement of Governor Carondelet, his influence was successfully sought and as like protection was granted by his successor, Governor Gayoso de Lemos. With the Louisiana Purchase on the 30th. of April 1803, meetings did not have to be held in secret any longer and in 1810 an appropriation was made to build a Lodge on the land owned by Gravier in the Faubourg St. Mary outside the city limits and on the 1st. day of June 1810 title was passed to the Lodge for lots # 162 and # 163 each measuring 60 foot (French measure) by 120 feet in depth, located on the southwest corner of what is now Camp and Gravier Streets. And at this location, the Lodge held its meetings until the Lodge purchased the property on Rampart Street on the 13th. day of May 1827. This was known, as Perfect Union Lodge Hall at which the meetings were held until sold by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana to whom it had been transferred after which the Lodge moved to the old Masonic Temple Building, corner of St. Charles and Perdido Streets, the same site as our present Masonic Temple. Refreshments were served in the anterooms on tables set up on wooded horses. All meetings were well attended, as the places of amusement were few in those days. A single elevator served as a means of ascent to the Lodge Room. The attendant was a member of our Lodge, Brother Sam Lovett. He also served as Tyler of the Lodge. The lodge room was furnished with very comfortable, cane-bottom chairs.

In the year 1812 after Louisiana had been admitted as a State, this Lodge instituted the movement for the formation of a Grand Lodge and a preliminary meeting was held on the 18th. day of April, 1812.

Nothing permanent grew out of this first meeting nor the second held on the 16th. day of May, 1812. However, on the 13th. day of June, 1812, the organization was complete and the officers elected and installed and the grand Lodge of Louisiana Ancient York Masons sprang into existence, composed entirely of the five French speaking Lodges - LaParfaite Union No. 29, Charity No. 93, Concorde No. 117, Perverserance No. 119, L'Etoile Polaire No. 4263 - as the two English speaking Lodges - Harmony No. 122 and Louisiana No. 1, refused to participate therein.

Piere Francois D. bourg, Worshipful Master of LaRe'gulier Loge Parfaite Union No. 29 became the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana and he served for three consecutive terms.

Under the new Charter issued by the Grand Lodge, the Lodge became LaRe'gulier Loge Parfaite Union No. 1.

In the year 1878 Concorde Lodge No. 3, and in 1879 Orus Lodge No. 170 merged with Parfaite Union No. 1, after which the Lodge continued to an almost dormant state. In the year 1886, our Lodge, with only sixteen members, was on the verge of dissolution when Marion Lodge no. 68 merged itself into La - Re'gulier Loge Parfaite Union No. 1, assuming its name and number thus perpetuating the first formed Lodge of Freemasonry in Louisiana. It would appear that after this merger the name of the Lodge was translated into English and became Perfect Union Lodge No. 1, an English speaking Lodge.

The following year, 1887, Dudley Lodge No. 66, and in 1888, the two Orleans Lodges No. 73 and No. 76, merged with Perfect Union Lodge No. 1, giving it a total of 230 members, the oldest, largest and most influential Lodge in the State, and having among its members the two celebrated Notaries, Pedesclauz and Broutin; the surveyor Lafon; and planters like the Fortiers, Wiltz, Debuys, Darcantel and Sigur, who owned the plantation next below Esplanade Street, August Macarty who was, at that time, Mayer of New Orleans; and Charles (W.C.C.) Claiborne, Governor of the State of Louisiana, Carlos Gayarre father of our historian of the same name; Prieur, Roche, the two Sarpys, Peree, Bonnabel, the two Beauregards, Labat, Lenusse, Barron, Livaudais, Tricou, Dousseau, Duplantier, Mayronne, Gentilly, Dreaux, Christoval, DeArmas, Cazelard, Jourdain, Castinedo, the two Barthes, Dubourg, the Ducros, the

Foretalls, Morgan the two Urquharts, Plauche, the Miltonbergers, and many others, all active members of the Lodge, and prominent in the affairs of New Orleans and Louisiana. Our Lodge has furnished the Grand Lodge with fourteen Grand Masters, the last being John Paul Heller who died on the 27th day of January, 1937 and was buried by the Grand Lodge.

The Lodge suffered a severe loss of members during the first half of the century. In addition to deaths and suspensions, 153 members departed in 1913 one; 1914 three; 1915 fourteen; 1920 one hundred and thirty-three; 1923 two. Most of these went as Charter members of Ionic # 373 and Euclid #394.

In addition to this loss of members in 1924 when the assessment for the New Temple was made, we lost approximately one hundred members who refused to pay this assessment. Very few of these have ever applied for reinstatement.

A large part of the past history of the Lodge will never be known as many of the records were lost or destroyed and the few in the possession of the Lodge are in French and very incomplete.

Perfect Union Lodge No. 1, may consider itself established by the Grand Lodge (of Ancient York Masons of *) South Carolina, and the successor of the following Lodges: LeParfaite Union Lodge #29 (South Carolina registry) Reunion des Coeurs No. 68, Concorde No. 117, Concorde No. 3, Bienfaisance No. 1, Louisiana No. 1, Harmony No. 26, Louisiana No. 32, Poinsette No. 39, Marion No. 4, Marion No. 68, Orus No. 170, Orient No. 173, Dudley No. 66, Orleans No. 73, Orleans No. 76. In all, eighteen Lodges which merged to form Perfect Union No. 1 first in rank and age. (At the time Grand Lodge was formed in 1812, Perfect Union was No. 1 and Polar Star was No. 5)*

In 1915, the Lodge took part in the Jackson Day Parade in celebration of the 100 anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans; and in 1960, the unveiling and presentation of the George Washington Monument (in Duncan Plaza)*.

I feel sure that we were represented at the laying of the cornerstone of the New Masonic Temple in the mid twenties. (Henry B. Conner laid the cornerston at the end of his term as Grand Master, term 1926, laying of corner stone January 1927 and J. Paul Daller his Deputy Grand Master followed as Grand Master in 1927. Haller is last Grand Master from Perfect Union, he was Master of Perfect Union for two terms, 1910 and 1911, Underwood in 1913)*.

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Our members should be very proud of this record and try to emulate the example set by our historic Brothers who never let anything stand in the way of helping one another and have made it so easy for us to be masons today.

This brief history of our lodge has been compiled from existing records and completely revised. I submit it for your approval.

Tobin Underwood 32

Senior Past Master
Perfect Union Lodge No. 1 F. & A.M.

This anniversary Program of Perfect Union #1 (178 th.) was started when Harry Rodick was Master in 1936. The instigators were J. Bart Davis Master 1909 and Thomas Green Master in 1940. The silver and gold keys were an original design by the Maltry Bros Jewelers on Carondelet Street. There were four or five brothers (Check all members of the Lodge, their father was also a member and the son of one of the brothers Dr. Eugene Maltry was also a member three generations added by Thomas Green.)

**** Items marked * have been inserted by Thomas Green. It is important to use the name as I have indicated because there were TWO Grand Lodges in South Carolina at this time. This statement is made in "AA Brief Summary of Symbolic Masonry in South Carolina", by Harry Collins, P.G.M. and Past Grand Secretary.