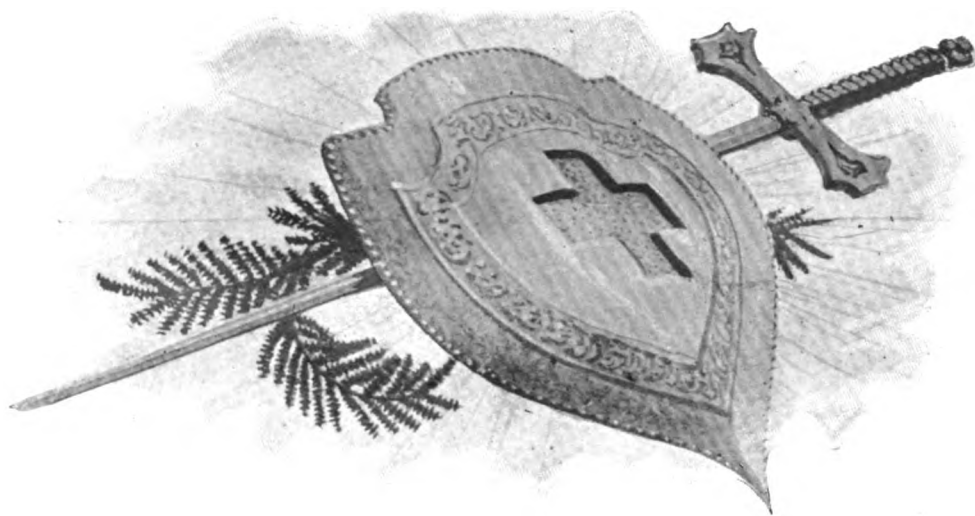


FIFTY YEARS  
of MASONRY  
in CALIFORNIA

VOLUME II.



Compiled and Edited by Edwin A. SHERMAN, 33°

Venerable Grand Secretary Masonic Veteran Association of the Pacific Coast.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.:

GEORGE SPAULDING & CO., : : : : Publishers.

1898.

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## JOHN HANCOCK GIHON,

FIRST GRAND SECRETARY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF CALIFORNIA.

[We are indebted to his son, Commodore and Bro. ALBERT L. GIHON, Medical Director of the United States Navy (retired), President of the Military Surgeons of the United States, for the picture and a portion of this biographical sketch of his father, our late Bro. JOHN HANCOCK GIHON.]

"He was born April 21, 1811, in the city of Philadelphia, Pa. Early in his career he taught school at Milford near Hightstown, N. J. He was a graduate in medicine but never practiced his profession. He took his degree of M. D. at the Philadelphia College of Medicine and Surgery some time in the forties. After that he established an extensive printing office at the northeast corner of Sixth and Chestnut streets, Philadelphia, and was there when he was seized with the California fever and shipped his entire plant I believe on the *Gray Eagle*, to go around the Horn, in January, 1849, and he following upon another vessel. When he arrived he found the remains of his plant scattered over the beach. He pitched his tent where the Marine Hospital (Sailors' Home) now stands. He was a personal friend of Col. JOHN W. GEARY, the last Alcalde of Yerba Buena, the first Mayor and afterward Postmaster of San Francisco, and was associated with him. Afterward my father was proprietor and editor of the *Evening Picayune*. He was one of the three authors of 'The Annals of San Francisco,' which he edited with JOHN WRIGHT and FRANK SOULE. I believe my father received his degrees in Masonry in the *Eastern Star* Lodge in Philadelphia. I am only an humble blue ribbon member of the fraternity, having received my degrees during the War of the Rebellion in the *Tolerantia Quarta* Lodge of Lisbon, Portugal. An American Lodge was about being organized in Lisbon, of which I was to have been made Worthy Master when the capture of the *Alabama* carried me off without a letter of dimit. The Lodge has since gone out of existence, so that I am left in the position of an unfrocked priest.

"My father's venture in the publishing of 'The Annals of San Francisco' never paid its cost. He sank a fortune at Gold Bluff. He opened an extravagant bookstore under the Masonic Hall in San Francisco, etc. You are probably familiar with his California experience. Like other forty-niners, he made money and lost it. During the war he was in Louisiana and died there, the fact not reaching us until long after, and then with no positive information as to date or place."

## MASONIC RECORD.

R.: W.: Bro. JOHN HANCOCK GIHON was initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason, passed to the degree of Fellow Craft and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in *Eastern Star* Lodge, No. 186, F. & A. M., at Philadelphia, Pa. He was subsequently appointed to various subordinate offices, elected Junior and Senior Warden and Worshipful Master of the same in turn, and was a Past Master of that Lodge when he left for California in January, 1849. He dimitted therefrom and visited *California* Lodge at San Francisco at its third meeting held on December 20, 1849, and at the same time petitioned to affiliate. He was elected a member on December 27th, one week afterward, and at the meeting held on the following evening, December 28, 1849, he was elected Secretary of *California* Lodge, which he held until December 27, 1850, when he declined re-election on account of soon leaving the State. He was one of the three representatives of *California* Lodge to the convention which met at Sacramento on April 17, 1850, to organize the Grand Lodge of California, and at its organization two days afterward, on April 19, 1850, he was elected Grand Secretary for the Masonic year ending May 8, 1851. Having on April 15, 1851, sent a communication to the

Grand Lodge that he was about leaving to return to Philadelphia and that it would be necessary to elect some one else in his place, R.: W.: Bro. LEVI STOWELL, Grand Treasurer, was elected Grand Secretary to succeed him.

Bro. GIHON was a most faithful officer, a true and tried Mason of the old school, whose square, level and plumb were accurate, and while he could wield the gavel as the Master of a Lodge should, he preferred to use the pen, while his trowel was ever active in spreading the cement of Brotherly love and affection, and there was no one more liberal to dispense Masonic charity than he. Honored and respected while upon the soil of California, the Grand Lodge and *California* Lodge deeply regretted his departure, for he was ever active in the discharge of his duties, of the strictest integrity of character and loved for his fraternal good-fellowship. We who knew him here, among the old pioneers, lament his demise, far away from his home and his last resting-place unknown. The Craft of the Golden State of California fully sympathize with his son and our Brother, Com. ALBERT H. GIHON, Medical Director of the United States Navy, and return our sincere thanks to him for sending us his likeness, that the fraternity may view the semblance of the first Secretary of *California* Lodge, No. 1, and the first R.: W.: Grand Secretary of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of California.



BRO. CHARLES EGBERT DELONG,

UNITED STATES MINISTER TO JAPAN, 1869-1873,

**A**S born at Beckmansville, Dutchess County, N. Y., August 13, 1832. He came overland to California, arriving June 5, 1850, settling in Yuba County. He was raised a farmer, and it was his father's wish that he should become a farmer, but the exciting reports from the Pacific Coast were sufficient to persuade him away from his family homestead. He was no stranger to manual exertion, he had been taught the true nobility of labor and his childish form was daily seen bending in arduous toil, and after being engaged in a variety of occupations, in 1856 he turned his attention to the practice of law, and was admitted to the bar as attorney and counsellor at law in the District Court, Tenth Judicial District, Yuba County, Cal., September 14, 1857. He was elected to the State Legislature in the fall of 1857, re-elected in 1858, and was elected to the State Senate 1860-2.

About 1863 he removed to Virginia City, Nev., and became a leader in his profession. He was one of the Presidential Electors from the State of Nevada in the first election of President GRANT, and was selected by his associates as messenger to carry the vote of that State to Washington. In 1869 President GRANT appointed Mr. DELONG Minister to Japan, and he departed on his mission, accompanied by his family, in September, 1869.

In 1862 Mr. DELONG was married to ELIDA FIELD VINEYARD, daughter of Col. J. R. VINEYARD, Senator from Los Angeles. After his return from Japan in 1873 he resumed the practice of law in Virginia City, where he died October 26, 1876. His body was laid to rest in Marysville, Cal., the scene of his early labors and triumphs. His friends were legion, and he left a bright and glorious memory of a truly noble life.