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Mackey's
History of Freemasonry

BY

ROBERT INGHAM CLEGG, 33°

WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MANY
EMINENT AUTHORITIES
INCLUDING

WILLIAM JAMES HUGHAN
PAST SENIOR GRAND DEACON, GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND;
PAST SENIOR GRAND WARDEN, EGYPT;
PAST SENIOR GRAND WARDEN, IOWA, ETC.

*And ye shall know the truth, and the
truth shall make you free.*

The Gospel according to
SAINT JOHN, VIII: 32

*Without knowledge there can be no sure
progress.*

CHARLES SUMNER



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CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN

FREEMASONRY IN CUBA AND PORTO RICO

Cuba



ON December 17, 1804, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania chartered at Havana the Lodge named "Le Temple des Vertus Theologiques," or "Las Virtudes Teologales," No. 103, Joseph Cerneau being the first Master. Under the same sanction other Lodges were erected—in 1818, Nos. 157, 161; in 1819, Nos. 166, 167; in 1820, No. 175 (at Santiago de Cuba), and in 1822, No. 181. They existed up to 1826, at which time the Charters of Nos. 175 and 181 had been revoked for failure of meeting for more than a year, and the others had died out. The Grand Lodges of Louisiana and South Carolina next assumed the warranting of Lodges on the island. Under the former Grand Lodge, bodies sprang up, in 1815, No. 7, in 1818, Nos. 11 and 14, and under the latter Grand Lodge in 1818, No. 50, and in 1819, No. 52. The Grand Orient of France in 1819 established a Lodge and Consistory (Thirty-second Degree), and two further Lodges in 1821.

The Grand Lodge of South Carolina received from the Grand Lodge of Ancient Freemasons at Havana in 1821, a communication stating that a Grand Lodge had been organized there, to which the Lodge "La Amenidad," No. 52, desired permission to transfer. A favorable answer was returned, but "La Constancia," Lodge No. 50, was retained on the roll of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina for some years, after which the Warrant was surrendered by the members "in consequence of the religious and political persecutions to which they were subjected."

Freemasonry was for many years quietly hidden in the "Pearl of the Antilles," its followers practicing their rites in secret, but not daring to indulge in any public acts, which might entail not

only exile from the country, but also loss of property. At length, however, a faint revival set in, and a Warrant was granted, on November 17, 1859, by the Grand Lodge of South Carolina to St. Andrew's Lodge, No. 93, "for the purpose of establishing, with the coöperation of two other Lodges¹ already existing on the island, a Grand Lodge," which was accomplished on December 5th of the same year.

Thus an independent "Grand Lodge of Colon" was established at Santiago de Cuba, and—December 27, 1859—a Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite 33° was founded in the same city by Andres Cassard.²

Nevertheless, at this time the practice of assembling as Freemasons was forbidden by the Spanish laws. These laws, moreover, though destined to become—after the dethronement of Queen Isabella in 1886—harmless in the Peninsula of Spain, remained for a long time in full force in Cuba.

Some of the Captains General and other officers who ruled the islands were Freemasons, and therefore from time to time the Craft was tolerated. But its members, compelled to work to a great extent in the dark, found it necessary to observe the greatest secrecy, and even to shield themselves under "Masonic names," their names confidentially known to very few and "substitutes" adopted for Lodge records, lest by the discovery of their own, they might incur the most severe penalties.

Even the Supreme Council and the Grand Lodge, which soon after united in forming a Grand Orient, found a convenient title for the united body in the name of "Colon"—the Spanish for Columbus. Above all things was it desirable to conceal from the public eye the location of the "Grand East" of the Society.

A Constitution published at Naples in 1820 was adopted as that of the new Grand Orient of Colon. By this provision the Supreme Council necessarily became a part of the Grand Orient. In 1865 a new Constitution was prepared and issued. The Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council became

¹ Brothers Albert Pike and Josiah H. Drummond agree that these were Spanish Lodges, having Warrants from Spain. But for many years Spain had been masonically in great turmoil and the facts are puzzling because records were dangerous. Usually leaders of thought met king and pope with short intervals of victory, then death without trial for Freemasons, or the torture, as the choice might be. These were the days when Freemasonry meant much indeed to the initiate.

² This was approved by the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction.

by virtue of his office the Grand Master of the Grand Orient, but the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge was still required to submit himself for election. All Charters for Lodges were issued by the Grand Lodge, but had to be confirmed and signed by the Supreme Council.

The Grand Lodge issued a Constitution of its own in 1867. While recognizing its continued membership of the Grand Orient, the Grand Lodge claimed the *exclusive* power to enact its own By-laws, issue Charters, constitute and regulate Lodges. The right to do this was denied by the Supreme Council. The Grand Lodge *suspended* its Constitution on September 30, 1868, until a meeting took place of the Grand Orient, convoked for November 30.

Before that time the revolution broke out, and Freemasons, being regarded by the Spanish Government as revolutionists, the Grand Orient could not meet. The Grand Lodge, so far as it was possible, resumed labor. But the times were very unfavorable to Freemasonry. In the winter of 1869, at Santiago de Cuba, by order of Gonzales Bret, an officer of the Government, eighteen persons were seized without warrant, and immediately shot, without trial, for being Freemasons—one of them the Grand Master of Colon. Many others were arrested and committed to prison for the same offence.

Cuban Lodges, in 1868 amounted in number to about thirty, had fallen in 1870 to about seven.

The Supreme Council organized a Provincial Mother Lodge in 1870 at Havana, against which the Grand Lodge very naturally protested. The Warrant to this "Mother Lodge" was soon after recalled, but the dispute between the Supreme Council and the Grand Lodge continued. On April 11, 1873, the Grand Lodge resumed work openly. In the following year it entered into a compact with the Supreme Council, whereby an agreement was made that the Grand Lodge should have exclusive jurisdiction over Symbolic Freemasonry, with the sole right of chartering Lodges, and that it should establish a Provincial Mother Lodge in the western section of the Island to govern the Lodges there, but in submission to the laws of the Grand Lodge. Evidently, the Grand Lodge, though still in name a part only in the Grand Orient, planned to have full jurisdiction

over Symbolic Freemasonry. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that there was a divided authority, and apparently great Masonic confusion on the Island.

The Grand Lodge of Colon held five meetings in August, 1876, and at the last of these, on August 26, declared itself free from all other authority, a sovereign body, with full powers over its subordinates. This action was hastened by an event on August 1. On that day the representatives of nine chartered Lodges, and of four under Dispensation, met at Havana, and formed the Grand Lodge of Cuba. This body from the very first was without the supplementary or "higher" Degrees. These it willingly consented—December 31, 1876—should be ruled in Cuba by the Grand Orient of Spain.

By a circular of September 4, 1876, the Grand Lodge of Colon claimed to have thirty-six Lodges and 8,000 members. The Grand Lodge of Cuba in 1877 was reported as having seventeen Lodges. On June 3 of that year, 1877, a second Grand Lodge of Colon (or Columbus) at Havana was added to the two existing Grand Bodies of the Craft. Each of the three claimed to be the regular Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge of Cuba announced that in 1879 the three Lodges which formed the Grand Lodge of Colon, at Santiago de Cuba in 1859, and four others, adhered to that body; but that the remaining Lodges, except those under the Grand Lodge of Cuba, were subject to the control of the Grand Lodge of Colon at Havana. The representatives of some of the Havana Lodges who seceded from the first Grand Lodge of Colon at Santiago de Cuba, met as the Grand Lodge and ordered its removal to Havana. But in course of time the Grand Lodges of Colon (at Havana) and Cuba united. On March 28, 1880, the Grand Master of one of the bodies became Grand Master of the union organization, and the Grand Master of the other body became Deputy Grand Master.

The title assumed by the new organization was the United Grand Lodge of Colon and the Island of Cuba, and it entered upon its career with a roll of fifty-seven Lodges, and between 5,000 and 6,000 Freemasons. In 1885 the number of Lodges under the United Grand Lodge had apparently increased to eighty-two, with Provincial Grand Lodges at Santiago de Cuba

and Porto Rico; but on the official list there were only fifty-eight Lodges, thirty in the capital, or in its vicinity, and twenty-eight elsewhere.

Brother Gould found that there would appear to have been in existence on the island thirteen Lodges under the National Grand Orient, and twenty-seven under the Grand Lodge of Spain. The latter were subject to a Provincial Grand Master whose jurisdiction also extended to Porto Rico.

After the war of the United States with Spain ended, the several bodies of the Fraternity resumed their labors. The Gran Logia de la Isla de Cuba became active and the 1919-1920 report showed six Provinces or Districts, Pinar del Rio, Havana, Matanzas, Santa Clara, Camaguey, and Oriente, with a total of 123 Lodges and 10,933 members. The Province of Porto Rico had become an independent Grand Lodge.

Porto Rico

The early Masonic history of this island is very difficult to trace and clear up, as are all questions relating to the problem of Spanish Freemasonry. In 1860, at Mayaguez, there was in existence a Lodge "Restauracion" under the Grand Orient of Colon. The disturbances in Cuba during the struggle for existence of the Grand Lodges there, had their influence through all the Spanish islands.

The Provincial Superintendent of Cuba and Porto Rico under the Grand Lodge of Spain (of which Becera was the Grand Master) was Don Manuel Romeno. The Lodges were not named but five were on the roll of the Grand Orient of Spain, without a Provincial Superintendent. "Le Phenix," No. 230, constituted in 1874, was the only Lodge representing the Supreme Council of France.

At one time the United Grand Lodge of Colon in Cuba had under its jurisdiction fourteen Lodges in the island. These were formed into an Independent Grand Lodge, September 20, 1885. The greatest centres of Masonic activity have been San Juan, Ponce, and Mayaguez, the last-named town having two Lodges, a Consistory of 32°, a Council of 30°, and a Chapter of 18°.

While the Lodges of Porto Rico severed their connection with the United Grand Lodge of Colon in the island of Cuba, the