

# *Beginnings of Manila Lodge No. 1*

(Formerly Manila Lodge No. 342, F. and A. M.  
Under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California)

Early in the American occupation of the Philippine Islands the advisability of organizing a Lodge was discussed among the brethren, but no attempt at organization was made until early in 1900 when, pursuant to a call published in one of our daily papers by Brother Manley B. Curry, a meeting was held, which resulted in the organization of the society known as the "Sojourners' Club."

The Sojourners' Club was composed of men who were believed to be Masons in good standing. Its object was to promote good fellowship among the brethren and to assist such of the brothers as might be overtaken by adversity or affliction. Aid was rendered to a number of distressed brethren and at least one funeral attended, at which such of the ceremonies as could be, were used. Meetings were held twice each month, in the Manila Times Office, the Oriente Hotel, the home of Brother H. E. Stafford, and in the office of Brother W. G. Skidmore. The earliest record of the Club that can be found is of the meeting of April 2, 1900.

The active membership of the Club was at one time quite large, but grew less and less, when many brothers lost interest because it seemed, for a time, impossible to secure a dispensation for the Lodge, until finally there were but few more than the sixteen charter members of the Lodge.

The meetings of this Club were purely of a social nature, but the deep-seated object and desire of the members was to organize a Lodge, and many earnest conversations were held, and many suggestions made, touching upon this subject. The great difficulty was in securing the neces-

sary twelve brothers who would dimit from their Lodges to assist in forming a Lodge in Manila.

The Sojourners' Club observed the days of St. John the Baptist by a banquet at the Oriente Hotel on June 26, 1900, and St. John the Evangelist by a banquet in the Paris Restaurant on December 27, 1900.

After some delay, the necessary dimitts were secured and the first preliminary meeting for the purpose of organizing the Lodge was held in Worshipful Brother H. E. Stafford's home, 73 Calle General Solano, San Miguel, Manila, May 22, 1901.

From the date of the first preliminary meeting, the matter of organization did not lag: the brethren were in earnest, and much hard work had to be done to satisfy the requirements of the Grand Lodge of California, to whom it had been determined to apply for a dispensation. The conditions in Manila at that time were not as ideal as could be wished, there being open hatred and opposition to the movement. The difficulty was made greater by the fact that we had no one among us who was familiar with the organization of Lodges in the jurisdiction of California.

On the 27th day of May, 1901, a petition for Dispensation was signed by the charter members and forwarded to Very Worshipful Brother Grand Secretary George Johnson, at San Francisco, and on the 4th day of July, 1901, Most Wor. James A. Foshay, Grand Master, signed a Dispensation authorizing this Lodge to meet, initiate, pass, and raise all good men and true, who might apply and who were found worthy.

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This Dispensation arrived in Manila late in August, 1901, and by the terms thereof had to be returned to the Grand Lodge at its next session with a report of the work done thereunder, together with a statement of the resources and liabilities of the Lodge. The Grand Lodge session being held early in October, did not permit any delay in the returning of the Dispensation.

The first meeting under Dispensation was held on the 28th day of August, 1901, at which meeting the by-laws were adopted. The first stated meeting was held on September 2, 1901, and within three days thereafter the Dispensation and all necessary reports were mailed to the Grand Secretary for submission to the Grand Lodge. With these papers went the petition for a Charter.

On the 10th day of October, 1901, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of California granted the Charter prayed for, and the first meeting under Charter, the institution of the Lodge, and the installation of its officers was held on the 14th day of November, 1901.

The first stated meeting of the Lodge was held on December 2, 1901, at which meeting the Sojourners' Club presented the Lodge with furniture and jewels to the value of about \$275.

The preliminary meetings, the meetings under Dispensation, and the meetings under Charter up to April, 1902, were held in the home of Worshipful Brother H. Eugene Stafford. △

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*Doing an injury puts you below your enemy; revenging one makes you even with him; forgiving one sets you above him.*

*Benjamin Franklin*

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### CAMARINES NORTE #107 From page 14

*ing Lodge* for that year throughout the Grand Lodge of the Philippines including lodges in Okinawa, Japan, the Marianas Islands, Korea and Guam. It was truly a signal honor. The previous awardees were *Lincoln Lodge No. 34, Olongapo, Zambales, 1962-63; Leonard Wood Lodge No. 105, Clark Air Base, 1964; Coral Lodge, No. 142 in 1965.*

In the same year WB Primo C. Ong donated to the Lodge almost a hectare of land for her use as cemetery. Papers were approved by the town council and the Health Dept. and forthwith the cement walls surrounding the area were erected. Unfortunately, he was summoned to the bosom of the Great Architect of the Universe before he could be installed Worshipful Master for the second term. The unfinished walls had to be completed by the succeeding Worshipful Master, WB Cenon Dizon. △