

CHAPTER V

LODGES, TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

MIAMI'S numerous fraternal organizations have in a large measure contributed to the high moral standard of the community. Their tenets being non-sectarian, their disciples find a common source of moral inspiration. The lodge influence is conducive to church affiliation. It binds heterogeneous groups into common brotherhoods. Their neophytes are not required to renounce their cherished religious ideals. They are taught the golden rule, the universal adoption of which will banish bigotry, racial antagonism and intolerance.

These fraternal orders, like the community churches, stand as a bulwark to civilization. The doctrines inculcated in their adherents tend to self-repression and to mutual benevolence. However, like all human institutions the lodge is often profaned through the careless admission of those whose motives in joining are questionable. Such members not infrequently abuse their privilege

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of passing upon the eligibility of worthy applicants by causing their rejection. These offenders are in a large measure responsible for the gradual withdrawal from active service in the lodges of tried and conservative members whose fidelity to their tenets is unimpeachable, as a result of which some secret societies are becoming discredited and remain unsought by those who are too sensitive to risk being "blackballed." In spite of these imperfections, however, the fraternal order, like the church, will continue to contribute to the moral uplift of mankind.

Miami became noted for its secret society propensities even prior to its incorporation as a municipality. The initial agitation in this direction emanated from a small but active group of Knights of Pythias. The next order prominently spoken of was the Odd Fellows. These were followed by efforts to organize Trade Unions, Woodmen of the World, and finally a Masonic Lodge was organized.

While this agitation was fomenting, an A.P.A. society (American Protective Association) was unobtrusively formed; but it failed to take root in a community which was destined to develop on broad American principles under which big-

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otry and intolerance could not thrive. It was fortunate for the community that the membership roll of that radical organization included some true patriotic American citizens who joined without knowledge as to its true objective. After taking the oath of the order, however, they continued their affiliation and served as a deterrent force against drastic and un-American methods, which were attempted to be employed by the organizer of Miami's first but short-lived secret society in the execution of his questionable designs.

The Carpenters' Union was the first trade organization in Miami. Among its leaders were the late B. Sutton, the late Arthur Weaver, W. E. Glenn, J. F. Coleman, Charles Brady, W. A. Mitchel, Charles Mann, Bill Thorn, the late Pete Ryan, R. L. Osborn, W. E. Collins, John Whitney and M. J. Ryan. This was followed by other trade organizations and their influence soon made itself felt in the life of our little community.

The prevailing wage scale for mechanics had been materially raised and the hours of labor shortened. Our merchants were warned against carrying articles not made in union shops. This

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intensive activity excited unfavorable comment among those who were directly affected by the new régime. However, this condition was soon accepted as inevitable and things ran along smoothly, until the zeal of the professional labor agitators carried them to excesses, which resulted in temporary suspension of building operations.

In this, too, Miami was fortunate. The true union leaders, having made this town their permanent home, became imbued with the town's boosting spirit and refrained from joining the radical element in attempted unjustifiable strikes or other labor disturbances. Some of the pioneer labor leaders eventually became employers of labor and were instrumental in the propagation of friendly relations between employers and employees. This feeling of mutual consideration proved a highly efficacious aid to the conservative element of organized labor in keeping the town free from destructive strikes.

In the summer of 1896 a small group of Masons had assembled in a loft above a hardware store, which was located in the center of the block on South Miami Avenue between First and Second streets, and proceeded to organize a lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. The leaders in this

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movement were Rev. W. W. Faris, the late Dr. J. M. Jackson, the late Dr. W. S. Graham and the late George C. Friar.

This lodge was operated under dispensation until January 19, 1898, when it received its charter from the Florida grand lodge. Upon the receipt of the charter the late Dr. J. M. Jackson, who acted as Master under the dispensation, was the unanimous choice for Worshipful Master; the late Geo. C. Friar, Senior Warden; the late Dr. W. S. Graham, Junior Warden. The lodge was named Biscayne Bay Lodge, No. 124. This lodge has been functioning continuously until the present day. Its successive Masters are as follows: the late Dr. J. M. Jackson, 1898; Rev. W. W. Faris, 1899-1900; Dr. Gillespie Enloe, 1901-1902; Z. T. Merritt, 1902-1903; F. B. Stoneman, 1904-1909; the late F. G. Erfert, 1910-1911; W. H. McDonald, 1912; the late C. F. Filer, 1913; the late James T. Sanders, 1914; G. H. Clopton, 1915; W. Cecil Watson, 1916; J. P. Knight, 1917; R. M. Dillon, 1918-1919; DeVyr Freeman, 1920; W. F. DeLaney, 1921; Russell Hand, 1922; J. D. Frazier, 1923; and William Strahn, 1924 (the writer attended the organization meeting).

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The following is a complete list of the charter members of Biscayne Bay Lodge, No. 124: the late Dr. J. M. Jackson, the late Geo. C. Friar, the late Dr. W. S. Graham, Isidor Cohen, William D. Archer, Smiley A. Baker, Robert M. Brown, Cornelius C. Cutrell, the late Adam Corell, Joseph S. Chase, the late John Douglas, Rev. W. W. Faris, Alexander L. Gravelle, J. M. Grayson, the late Jas. W. Jackson, Jacob T. Johnson, Frank M. Kushe, Thomas D. Newman, John Omweg, the late Samuel H. Pollock, the late J. I. Turnage, William Varnadoe, H. A. Braddock (entered apprentice), the late Geo. W. Woodall (fellow craft), the late J. H. Hays (fellow craft), J. W. Johnson (entered apprentice), and John Dewey (entered apprentice).

"Masonic charity," which is the corner stone of the Masonic fraternity, has been exemplified in this city, not only for the benefit of the elect, but for the general community whenever an opportunity presented itself. True to Masonic traditions, Biscayne Bay Lodge steered clear from politics and from all other activities not germane to Masonic aspirations. This, also, applies to the several offsprings of the mother lodge now functioning in this city and adjacent territory.

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The year 1904 marks the beginning of the transition period of Miami's first Masonic Lodge. In that year Frank B. Stoneman was elected Worshipful Master and served with distinction for six consecutive terms. During his administration the membership had shown a remarkably rapid increase, and the lodge became an important factor in the progress of the city. There appeared a decided improvement in the social relations of its numerous members who had been given frequent opportunity to cultivate mutual friendships at the social sessions which followed the convocations of the lodge. Mr. Stoneman, through his influence with his brethren, has been instrumental in the rehabilitation of many families and the preservation of the integrity of many individuals.

Another fraternal order which has contributed to the city's social progress is the Miami Lodge of Elks. This lodge was instituted in 1905. For a number of years its club room was located in the Townley building. In 1910 the lodge acquired its present valuable location (corner Flagler Street and Northeast Third Avenue) where a modern club building was erected. In 1923 the edifice was remodeled and the ground

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floor commercialized, making it yield sufficient revenue, with the accretion of membership dues, to take care of its bonded indebtedness and provide a sinking fund for the lodge's ministrations to the needy.

Miami Lodge, No. 948, B.P.O.E., is noted for its practical charities and unheralded relief work among its members as well as non-members. It is also commended for its tolerance, as revealed by its roster which includes men of diverse faiths. One of its chief tenets is the inculcation of patriotism. This is accentuated in the initiatory ceremonials in which Old Glory is the most prominent feature.

This fraternal order is also noted for its ingenious devices employed in the promotion of social diversion for its members and their friends. Its frequent initiatory ceremonials are looked forward to with joyous anticipation (not by the candidates). The local lodge occupies a prominent position in the state organization as indicated by the election of two of its members, at various periods, as state president, namely, Gus A. Mills and George A. McKinnon.

The following members served terms as Exalted Ruler: W. M. Brown, 1905-1907; John B.

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Reilly, 1908; George A. McKinnon, 1909; A. J. Kolb, 1910; John C. Abernathy, 1911; T. H. Bogue, 1912; J. N. Jones, 1913; J. A. Conrad, 1914; W. S. Gramling, 1915; S. M. Tatum, 1916; V. G. Farr, 1917; Chas. A. Mills, 1918; the late Don Ferris, 1919; Fred W. Pine, 1919; Edwin N. Belcher, 1920; Geo. F. Holly, 1921; W. F. Blanton, 1922; and David J. Heffernan, 1923-1924. L. F. McCready is repeatedly elected to the office of secretary.

Among the organizations that have passed out of Miami's history after accomplishing the purpose for which they had been formed, the "North Miami Improvement Association," has, in no inconsiderable degree, contributed to the community's progress. That organization was composed of boosters who had arrived in Miami following the agitation incident to the Everglades-reclamation project. Among its active members, the writer recalls Frank Baker, Percy Threadgill, Horace W. Scott, Sam T. Young, Phillip Clarkson, John E. Holland, J. H. Meyer and Eugene C. Stahl.

Upon the extension of its usefulness beyond the locality which it had set out to boost, a number of older settlers became identified with

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that organization; among them R. E. Hall, who was one of its delegates who attended the Philadelphia convention of the "Atlantic Deeper Waterways Association," in 1916, which held its following convention in the city of Miami. The presence in this city of its president, Congressman J. Hampton Moore, had furthered the interests of Miami Harbor.

The "North Miami Improvement Association" was instrumental in giving Miami and Dade County very valuable publicity through its creditable Dade County agricultural exhibit in the city of Philadelphia. It has also been instrumental in the eventual widening of some of the arteries of traffic in the northern section of the city. That booster club had functioned, rather aggressively, in the period between 1915-1917, when it frequently clashed with the Miami Chamber of Commerce.

In keeping with the general progress of the city, its diverse philanthropic agencies and eleemosynary institutions have been relieved of their financial problems through the adoption of the community-chest method of collection and distribution of funds. The Miami Community Chest Association was organized in the month

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of April, 1924; and it has done away with the necessity for individual fund-raising campaigns by the various welfare organizations. It has also solved the problem of meeting the growing demands for relief without duplication of effort and wastage as was frequently the case in the unsystematic treatment of applications for help.

The Community Chest Association acts as the exchequer for all of Miami's welfare societies. After receiving their respective budgets for the ensuing year it sets out to raise the required total amount through public subscription. It employs a paid secretary who, under the supervision of an Executive Board, composed of eleven citizens, administers the fund and is the connecting link in the chain of Chest units.

The Executive Board is composed of the following personnel: Chairman, E. B. Douglas, J. E. Junkin, Sr., Marcus Milam, John B. Orr, T. J. Pancoast, Judge F. B. Stoneman, Rev. Robert T. Phillips, Clifford H. Reeder, Mrs. Mamie Terrell, R. M. Price, treasurer, and the writer, secretary of the Executive Board. The administration office is in charge of Miss Mary C. Raymond, Executive Secretary.

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The preliminary work in the adoption of the Community-Chest system has been performed by Paul R. Scott and Rev. Robert T. Phillips, representatives of the Miami Kiwanis Club. The Miami Rotary Club has contributed in a large measure to the success of this enterprise. The combined budget of the Chest units amounted to \$127,281.83. This sum was raised in a campaign lasting three days. The teams of workers, under the general supervision of R. B. Burdine, were headed by the following citizens: A. J. Riach, C. A. Mills, Hamilton Michelson, John B. Orr, Dan Hardie, John T. Weathers, Hamilton Hopkins, Geo. C. Stembler, F. G. Railey, Mrs. C. E. Dunway and Miss Lulu McLendon. The budget committee was composed of the following personnel: J. E. Lummus, James H. Gilman, C. D. Leffler and J. I. Wilson. The motto of the Community Chest is "One Cause, One Campaign, One Community."