

# **The Development of Freemasonry in the Caribbean with special reference to Guyana.**

**by  
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The subject matter of this paper has been treated from various perspectives by a number of distinguished Brethren in the various Caribbean territories. As such it will be difficult to avoid treading over ground that will be familiar to some, particularly those more experienced and knowledgeable among us. This study will however attempt to review the parallel development of Craft Freemasonry in the various English- speaking territories since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and to highlight the impact that society changes over the period have contributed to a Masonic tradition that is of a distinctly Caribbean nature. I will also attempt to analyse present day trends and open discussion on what we today can do to influence the continuance of the awareness of Freemasonry as a relevant and beneficial factor in future society.

In compiling the data for this study, I have so far had greater success in accessing historical data on Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago. It is also apparent that given the fluctuating sovereignty within the Caribbean, the roles of the Grand Lodges of France, the Netherlands and the Grand Orient of Spain have not been insignificant in the beginnings of Freemasonry in the Caribbean territories. This study is therefore by no means complete. It is my hope to continue seeking to learn more of Masonic history in our region, as what I have been able to learn to date has been most fascinating and rewarding.

The development of Freemasonry in Caribbean society has been largely influenced by the events in the United Kingdom and Europe in the Colonial era and more recently by the nationalism that has developed and grown in the years following the Second World War. From that historical perspective, six distinct periods of change within freemasonry can be identified:

1. The Pre-Union period, prior and up to 1813 (The active presence of Scottish and Irish Freemasonry notwithstanding)
2. The early Post-Union years – 1814 to 1850
3. A period of consolidation - 1850 to 1900
4. A period of steady growth – 1900 to 1950
5. Growth in Caribbean nationalism – 1950 to 1970
6. Post – Independence period

## **The Pre – Union Period**

It is not surprising that outside of the British Isles, some of the oldest Lodges in the English and Scottish Constitutions are to be found in the Caribbean. This region was after all at the time the prized possessions of the European Colonial powers of the day. Many of the early lodges were established by members of the military, who have been and still remain ambassadors for the worldwide spread of Freemasonry. The Craft in those early days was however, maintained by members of the Colonial Service, members of the Planter class, influential businessmen and merchants.

The mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century appears to have been a very busy period in the Caribbean with respect to the formation of lodges. The not – infrequent changes in Colonial power as result of the struggle for possession as well as the general state of turmoil in Europe as result of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the growth of Republicanism in the Netherlands, also contributed to the fluctuating fortunes of Freemasonry, particularly in Guyana (British Guiana) and some of the Eastern Caribbean islands. Most of these Lodges have long since been erased

This period was also one of intense rivalry between the two Grand Lodges in English Freemasonry i.e., The Premier Grand Lodge (Moderns) and the Grand Lodge of the Antients (Atholl lodges). Scottish Freemasonry, not subject to such rivalry, enjoyed steady progress. Although there is evidence that Irish Freemasonry has always been influential in the Caribbean, particularly in the early days, this Constitution has had by far the weakest following among British Grand Lodges over the years within the Region. Why this has been so is not clear although the close association of Irish Freemasonry with the Atholl Lodges may have been a factor.

The first record of a consecrated lodge in the English speaking Caribbean was that of Parham Lodge No.154 E.C., which was warranted in Antigua in 1738. Also around 1738, it is said that Mother Lodge No.182 E.C. was established in Jamaica. This Lodge was however actually warranted in 1776. Other early Lodges included, St. Christopher's Lodge No.174 E.C. (St. Kitts), established in 1939, Great Lodge of St. John No.192 EC (Antigua), 1744. and Port Royal Lodge No.193 E.C. (Jamaica), 1942.

Several Lodges, predominantly of the English Constitution were apparently established in St. Kitts, Antigua, Barbados and Jamaica during the period 1740 and 1775. None of these have survived, although it is to be noted that St. Christopher's Lodge No.174 (The Mother Lodge) of St. Kitts had unbroken activity for 123 years, until it was erased in 1862. A Provincial Grand Lodge had already been established in Barbados in 1740. This Provincial Grand Lodge was to play an important role in the early establishment of Freemasonry in Guyana. A Provincial Grand Lodge had been established in Jamaica by the Premier Grand Lodge in 1742 and by 1775, there were 14 active Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Premier Grand Lodge in various parts of that island. The Antient Grand Lodge had by then established two Lodges, the first at OldHarbour in 1763 and the second at Green Island in 1772. There is also a record of a Provincial Grand Lodge in Bermuda in 1745.

Scottish Freemasonry apparently made its appearance a little later than the English Brethren. The first recorded Scottish Lodge in the Caribbean was Lodge St. Andrew No.102, which met in St. Thomas Jamaica. This Lodge was erased in 1816. Another early Scottish Lodge was Lodge St Andrew No.151 (St. Kitts), which was warranted in 1761and, was active until 1809.

Early Scottish Freemasonry apparently began its major expansion in Caribbean in the 1790's. This period also coincided with a period on expansion of English Lodges as well. It is therefore possible that the relative stability and prosperity of the English Colonies at the time may have been associated with a period of growth in Freemasonry. Not to be ignored would have been the impact of the French Revolution, which had spread its influence to the West Indian Islands, the British colonies gaining numbers by Frenchmen, who had fled the French islands. Scottish Lodges warranted the 1790's include Lodge St. George No.200, of Bermuda, which was warranted on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1797. This Lodge has met continuously since its formation. Other Scottish

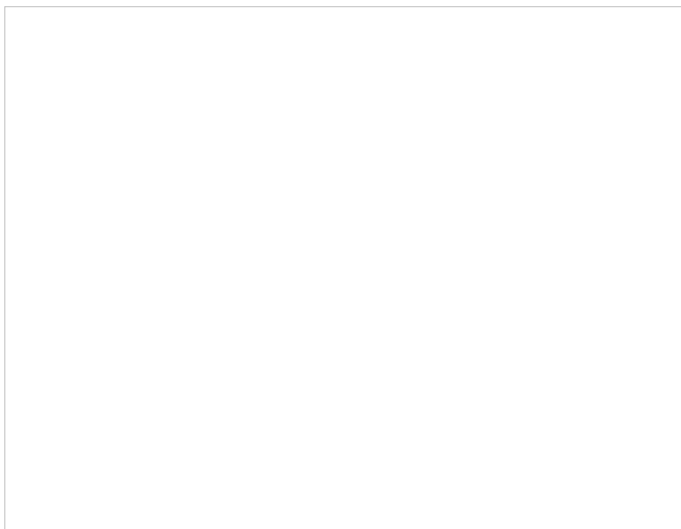
Lodges warranted in the period include Lodge Scotia No206 of Barbados, which was warranted in 1797, but became inactive by 1844 and was quickly revived in that year as No340. Lodge Mount of Olives No.241 was warranted in St. Kitts in 1791, but became dormant in 1816. It was revived in 1835 as No.497. It was subsequently renamed Lodge Mount Olive and allocated the present number 336.

There is evidence that Irish Freemasonry was active in the Caribbean in the early years. Indeed one of the early Lodges of Trinidad and Tobago was Union Lodge No. 690, which was chartered in Martinique in 1788 and relocated to Trinidad in 1802. This Lodge became dormant 1838. Royal Lodge No207 EC of Jamaica began its existence as an Irish Lodge No.699 in 1789. Irish Freemasonry was also apparently evident in the early years in Guyana. An Irish Lodge No.887 was warranted in Demerara in 1800. There is some speculation as to whether this Warrant may have been for Chosen Friends of Demerara; the acknowledged precursor of Union Lodge No.247 E.C. Chosen Friends functioned under a warrant from the Grand Lodge of New York. Members of an Irish Lodge No.33 (It is believed this may have been a military lodge stationed in Guyana around the time) were associated with the charter of Mount Olive Lodge No.385 EC. Today Irish Freemasonry has a significant presence only in Jamaica and Bermuda, both of which have Provincial Grand Lodges.

Freemasonry came to Trinidad and Tobago later than its sister Caribbean islands. It is believed that this was most likely influenced by the fact that Trinidad had been a stable Spanish colony from 1498 up to 1797 when it passed to British rule. Under Spanish rule, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church was very dominant. The church at the time had adopted a firm anti-Masonic position. Another characteristic of Spanish colonialism of the day was the principle of the exclusive, minimal exposure to trade and cultural contact with other cultures. Although there were also significant numbers of French plantation owners in the colony at the time, these were also Roman Catholic and blended well into the society established under colonial Spanish rule.

The first Lodge to be established in Trinidad and Tobago was Lodge Les Freres Unis, which was forced to find another base of operation from its native St. Lucia, in 1798. Les Freres Unis was first chartered in 1795 by the Grand Lodge of France, then in 1798 by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania as No.77. It was subsequently warranted as Lodge United Brothers No.251 S.C. in 1813. Lodge United Brothers continues to be very active. It has a tradition of a unique and dramatic ritual which is practiced in only a very few Lodges and no other in the Caribbean. The second Lodge to be operative in Trinidad was another import. Union Lodge No. 690 IC transferred its operations from Martinique in 1802, following the return of that Island to French rule under the Treaty of Amiens. This Lodge ceased to function in 1838.

Freemasonry also developed in Guyana at a slower pace than in the West Indian Islands. The first record of a Lodge to be established in Guyana was St. Jean de la Reunion, which met in the Colony of Demerara under a warrant from the National Grand Lodge of the United Provinces (the Netherlands), from 1771. The petitioners for this Lodge apparently had a preference for affiliation to the Premier Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), as the principal petitioner, Bro Antonio Rigano was an English mason. However an agreement between the Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Lodge of Holland signed in 1770, placed the Colony of Demerara under Dutch Masonic jurisdiction. It is not clear where this Lodge met but it is possible that it may have been on Fort Island, (in the mouth of the Essequibo River) which was the seat of administration for the Colonies of Demerara and Essequibo. The two Colonies were under one administration in that period. It is interesting to note that in the Court of Policy building which is preserved on Fort Island, are to be found two iron tombs with unmistakably Masonic symbols engraved on their surfaces. The dates on these tombs are earlier than our existing record of Masonic activity in Guyana. Lodge St Jean de la Reunion, from its inception had a very unsettled existence and went into dormancy some time during the 1780's.



#### **Engraved tombs in Court of Policy Building – Fort Island, Essequibo River**

A second Dutch Lodge “Coelum Non Mutat Genus” translation “*The clime does not change the breed*” was warranted in 1799. This Lodge met in New Amsterdam in the Colony of Berbice. There is little documentation on the activities of this Lodge, although it is of interest that one of the Founders was one Bro. A.J. van Batenburg who later became Governor of the Colony of Berbice.

The fortunes of Dutch Colonial rule in the Caribbean were significantly affected by the French Revolution and the ensuing Napoleonic wars. The Netherlands came under the rule of the Batavian Republic by 1795. The Dutch sovereign William V fled the country and sought refuge in Britain, to which country he declared allegiance. The British occupied the Colonies in the name of the Dutch monarch, to the relief of the Colonials who were avowed monarchists. This situation continued until 1802, when the colony was returned to the Dutch under the Treaty of Amiens. The Colonies were reoccupied by the British the following year,

and were formally transferred to Britain in the peace of 1814 to 1815.

The occupation of the Colonies by the British created the conditions for an influx of English planters. Among these persons were drawn the founders of the Lodge Chosen Friends of Demerara which was warranted in 1800 by the Grand Lodge of New York. This unusual affiliation arose because the Colonies were still formally under Dutch Masonic jurisdiction as agreed by the Premier Grand Lodge. The founders of Lodge Chosen Friends were clearly in opposition to the Premier Grand Lodge. The application for the warrant included the words: “ – **notwithstanding the desire to establish the Lodge, the difficulties of the times have rendered all intercourse with Holland unattainable. And moreover, your petitioners are given to understand that the denomination of people styling themselves Masons in that country are not of our illustrious order but are distinguished by the APPELATION OF MODERNS AMONG WHOM WE HAVE NO MASONIC INTERCOURSE** -”

The Grand Lodge of New York issued the warrant on condition that it could only remain in force until the issue of sovereignty over the Colonies was settled, at which time the warrant would be voided. By 1813, it was clear that the Colonies would remain under British jurisdiction and that condition would be invoked. Although there is no formal documentation of the withdrawal of the warrant of Chosen Friends and the warranting of Union Lodge under the Antients Grand Lodge of England in July 1813, there is more than circumstantial evidence that Union Lodge was formed by the membership of Lodge Chosen Friends. A number of the Chosen Friends furnishings and documents remain in the records of Union Lodge. It is also to be noted that Abraham Cart, the Founder Master of Lodge Chosen Friends was the Founder Master of Union Lodge. Union Lodge was Warranted as No.358 on the Register of the Antients. After the act of Union it was renumbered No.462 in the new United Grand Lodge. This was changed to No.308 in 1832 and finally in 1863 to No.247, which it still bears.

There is also a record of a Fellowship Lodge, which met in New Amsterdam prior to 1813 under a warrant from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Barbados. This would have made the Lodge irregular in the eyes of United Grand Lodge, which did not recognize any warrant issued by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Barbados issues outside the shores of the island. This was subsequently regularized in 1839 when the Lodge received an official warrant as No. 682. It was unfortunately erased in 1862.

The intense and often bitter rivalry of the latter 18<sup>th</sup> century, between the Premier and the Antients Grand Lodges of English Freemasonry appears to have been very evident in the Caribbean territories. It would seem however that the Antients (Atholl) Lodges attracted a more dedicated membership, as all six of the surviving English Lodges from the period are Atholl Lodges. These are:

1. Albion Lodge No. 196- Bridgetown, Barbados -----1790
2. Royal Lodge No. 207 – Kingston, Jamaica-----1794
3. Atlantic Phoenix Lodge No.224 – Hamilton, Bermuda-----1797
4. Prince Alfred Lodge No.233 – Somerset, Bermuda-----1792
5. Friendly Lodge No. 239 – Kingston, Jamaica -----1797
6. Union Lodge No.247 – Georgetown, Guyana-----1813

Scottish Lodges of similar vintage in the Caribbean are:

1. Lodge St. George No.200 – St. Georges, Bermuda -----1797
2. Lodge United Brothers No.251 – Port of Spain, Trinidad -----1813  
(1795 to 1798 St. Lucia – Grand Lodge of France & 1798 to 1813 – Trinidad – Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania)

### **The Early Post- Union Years – 1814 to 1850**

This period was one of adjustment within the United Grand Lodge of England following the protracted dispute between the Moderns and Atholl Lodges. Some of the Atholl Lodges appear to have held on to their traditional practices for some years after the union would have arrived at a compromise position. For example, the records indicate that Albion Lodge of Barbados and Union Lodge in Guyana, continued to work the Mark Degree and to practice the Royal Arch as a Fourth Degree within the Craft Lodge for several years even after the formation of a Supreme Grand Chapter in 1817.

These years also coincided with an extremely testing time for Freemasonry in the Caribbean. The period coincided with the end of the Slave Trade and eventual abolition of Slavery. Caribbean societies of the day were plantation economies and were heavily dependent that system for their continued prosperity. Freemasonry drew its membership from the upper, business and professional classes (as it still does) and many of our early brethren were slave-owners and businessmen, whose income was derived from services to the plantations. Many of these experienced financial difficulties and even bankruptcies. As a consequence, our early Lodges suffered from attendance difficulties and several went into dormancy and were erased during that period.

Notwithstanding the prevailing adverse economic climate, and associated impact on the growth of Freemasonry, 11 Lodges that were warranted between 1814 that have remained active to the present time. These include 8 English and 3 Scottish Lodges:

1. Sussex Lodge No.354 EC - Kingston, Jamaica -----1816
2. Harmonic Lodge No. 356 EC – St. Thomas, V.I. -----1818
3. Lodge of Loyalty No.358 EC – Hamilton, Bermuda-----1817
4. Friendly Lodge No. 383 EC – Montego Bay, Jamaica-----1826
5. Mount Olive Lodge No.385 EC – Georgetown, Guyana-----1826
6. Royal Philanthropic Lodge No. 405 EC – Port of Spain, Trinidad-----1831
7. Lodge Mount Olive No.336 SC – Basseterre, St. Kitts -----1835
8. Royal Victoria Lodge No.443 EC – Nassau, Bahamas -----1837
9. St. John's Lodge No 492 EC – St. John's, Antigua -----1843
10. Lodge Scotia No. 340 SC – Bridgetown, Barbados-----1844

Among the noted casualties of the period was the first attempt at English Freemasonry in Trinidad, Les Freres Choisis de Naparima, which was warranted in 1823 in Central Trinidad. This Lodge was warranted under the United Grand Lodge of England, after failed attempts to obtain warrants from the Scottish and Irish Constitutions. The record indicates that the Irish Constitution's then Provincial Grand Master's decision was influenced by the presence of coloured Brethren among its members. The Lodge continued to experience troubles and eventually stopped working in 1825. Royal Philanthropic Lodge No.405 EC was established in 1831 and has continued to be active to this day. This Lodge we are told was founded by free "high coloured Trinidadians", who apparently, though wealthy and well educated could not gain admission to Lodge United Brothers at the time.

Mount Olive Lodge No.385 EC first obtained a warrant in 1823 from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Barbados. As that Provincial Grand Lodge had no authority to issue warrants outside of the island of Barbados, Mount Olive Lodge was for a period, irregular. The Lodge was subsequently warranted as No.812 by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1826. Mount Olive drew its early membership from locally born whites.

Mount Olive and Union Lodge both struggled between 1833 and 1853 and met infrequently, if at all during those years. Both Lodges had revived their fortunes by 1854 and have continued a very active existence to the present day.

## 1851 to 1900

During this period, the period of adjustment after the formal end of slavery continued in the Caribbean Colonies. The region worked itself to a measure of prosperity and Masonic activity resumed at a steady rate of progress. Indeed, this period was associated with a steady rise in English Freemasonry throughout the British Empire. The years also saw the beginnings of the truly cosmopolitan society that currently exists in the Caribbean. Labour shortages on the Sugar Plantations, then led to the sourcing of labour from Madeira, China, India and Java. The descendants of these "new" immigrants together with the earlier input from Europe and Africa have combined to give the Caribbean Society and our Order, its unique character.

Fifteen English and eight Scottish Lodges that were warranted in these years remain active today. Nine of these (six English, three Scottish) were established in Jamaica. These were Phoenix No.914 EC, Hamilton No.1440 EC, Collegium Fabrorum No.1836 EC, Kingston No.1933 EC, Moore Keys No.2519 EC, Hope No.2813 EC, Seville No. 530 SC, Caledonian No.554 SC, and St. John No.623 SC. Barbados saw the charter of Victoria No.2196 EC and St. Michael No.2253 EC. Island Forth No.647 SC, St. George No.2616 EC, Abercrombie No.2788 EC and Caribbee No.2869 EC were warranted in the Bahamas, St. Vincent, St. Lucia And Antigua respectively. Bermuda saw the birth of Broad Arrow No.1896 EC and Civil and Military No.726 SC, while in Trinidad Royal Prince of Wales No.867 EC, Eastern Star No.368 SC, Rosslyn No.596 SC and Arima No.726 SC were warranted in the period. In Guyana, Unity No.797 SC and Ituni No.2642 EC were consecrated.

The formation of Lodge Unity No.797 SC in 1893 and Ituni Lodge No 2642 EC in 1896 were themselves significant events in Guyana. Lodge Unity was the first Lodge warranted under the Grand Lodge of Scotland in Guyana. The Lodge's founders were drawn mainly from sister Lodges in Trinidad. Lodge Unity provided an opportunity for the emerging middle classes of professionals of African descent to pursue Masonic interests. The Installation ceremony for the first Master of Lodge Unity No.797 SC was held a regular meeting of Lodge Scotia No.340 SC, in Barbados, because the Masters of Union and Mount Olive Lodges did not attend the consecration. Freemasonry was clearly not immune from the prejudices of the day. It must be noted however that this was not universal, as the founders of Lodge Unity No.797 SC were all of European descent.

Ituni Lodge was consecrated in New Amsterdam on September 29<sup>th</sup> 1897. This Lodge represented the renaissance of Freemasonry in Berbice. United Grand Lodge must have had great faith in the founders of Ituni Lodge, or tremendous foresight, given the unfortunate history of Freemasonry in the County, because on the strength of Ituni's formation, the District Grand Lodge of British Guiana was consecrated two years later. The premonition if that is was, proved correct, as Ituni Lodge has maintained an enviable record of keeping each regular meeting since its consecration.

These years also saw the first visible signs of a permanent Masonic presence in Guyana with construction of buildings for purposes of Lodge meetings, which remain to this day. The Freemason's Hall at the Company Path site was constructed by Union Lodge, which occupied the Building sometime between July and November 1862. Mount Olive Lodge acquired the building at 86 Carmichael Street, now Masonic Hall, from the Oddfellows in 1891.

## 1901 to 1950

These years were probably the most critical in the development of the Caribbean, which it may be arguably stated came of age as a Society and acquired its distinct cultural identity during that period. These years also saw the two World Wars, which undoubtedly altered the balance of power and as a consequence Human Society permanently. The century began with the major centers of influence with the Colonial powers of Europe, Britain in particular and by the end of the Second World War in 1945, it was clear that the era of Imperial Domination was over and the human society would be dominated by the competition between Capitalism and Socialism led by the United States of America on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other.

The Caribbean could not fail to have been influenced by these developments and as Freemasonry has tended to mirror the shifts of the more dominant classes of our societies, the Institution changed its image with progressive time accordingly. Britain of the early Twentieth Century was faced with the task of administering the largest and most Empire in the History of mankind from a small isolated Island in the North Atlantic. It could only do this successfully by soliciting the willing co-operation of the Colonials. In the Caribbean this was done through the structure of the education system, which mirrored the British Public school system and a University Structure that mirrored Oxbridge. Institutions such as our own Queen's College, Queen's Royal College of Trinidad, Harrison College of Barbados, Jamaica College, Kingston College, Wolmer's and Munroe College of Jamaica and



similar schools in the other Territories were established for this purpose. The products of these Institutions were expected to display those qualities of leadership in the Colonies and of course to be loyal to the Crown. The Senior Civil Servants, Educators and Professionals came out of these Institutions and among them were many who expressed interests in Freemasonry. The Lodges across the region enjoyed a steady expansion in numbers. There are eighteen Lodges consecrated in that period that continue to be active today. These include St. George No.3072 EC (1904), the oldest Lodge in Grenada and St. Anthony No.4684 EC (1924) of Montserrat. There are relatively few records of erasures during these years.

Guyana saw a significant increase in numbers of Lodges. Four Lodges were added to the English District i.e. Silent Temple No.3254 (1908), Concord No.3508 (1912), Roraima No.3902 (1919), and Mount Everest No.5868 (1943). Silent Temple Lodge was formed from Mount Olive Lodge Brethren of Chinese ancestry. There was a distinct degree of mystery and highly secretive arrangements associated with the origins of this Lodge, but there is some evidence that the Brethren may have felt themselves unduly kept back from promotion within Mount Olive because of their origins. Silent Temple established a tradition of predominantly Chinese character, but this has changed in recent years to a more diverse membership, possibly influenced by the high rate of migration from the Chinese community in the 1980's. The Lodge's early tradition remains evident in the Lodge. Concord Lodge was formed as an offshoot of Union Lodge, but rapidly assumed its own distinct character.

Probably the most significant development of the period was the formation of Mount Everest Lodge, which was established to facilitate admission of eligible Brethren of East Indian ancestry, who at the time, were very few in number. This Lodge grew rapidly in number and is today, numerically one of the largest Lodges in the District. The active presence of this Lodge has undoubtedly contributed to fostering appreciation of cultural values of our East Indian Brethren in a society, though plural, but which was dominated by Anglo-Saxon cultural norms.

Scottish Freemasonry in Guyana also increased with the formation of Lodge Harmony No.1110 (1912) and Lodge Victory No.1203 (1919). These with Lodge Unity formed the basis for the consecration of The District Grand Lodge of Scotland in Guyana in June 1959.

### 1951 to 1970

In the Caribbean, as in the rest of the British Empire, this was a period of intense Nationalism. The growing leadership emerging from the Caribbean's class of intellectuals provided voice to growing calls for self – determination in the Colonies. It cannot be claimed that Freemasons were in the forefront of the struggles for Caribbean independence. However given our Institution's affinity for fostering free thinking, it would be surprising if at least some of the Brethren of the period were not caught up in the prevailing energy and enthusiasm for building new institutions within their countries. Twenty- one new Lodges were consecrated in this period, the great majority of which (12) were consecrated in Jamaica. Among the newly established lodges in Jamaica during this period are University Lodge of The West Indies No.7128 EC (1951), Jamaica College Lodge No.7254 EC (1952), Installed Masters Lodge of Jamaica No.7420 (1955), Lodge Wolmers No.1506 SC (1955) and Lodge Mico No.1583 SC (1961). These names associated as they are with educational institutions and also in the case of the Lodge of Installed Masters, for research and ritual perfection are perhaps reflective of a growing sense of responsibility for taking control of one's own affairs and establishing traditions in that country.

Conversely Guyana saw the consecration of only one Lodge, Alpha No.1594 SC during the twenty-year period. Guyana's independence struggle was particularly bitter and associated with radical politics. There was also considerable social unrest in the country during the 1950's and 1960's. Whether these circumstances had anything to do with the relatively quiescent period in Masonic activity is open to question.

### 1971 to the Present Day.

The recent years have by all considerations been impressive in terms of growth in the spread and development of Freemasonry across the Caribbean. Today the region can be proud of five District Grand Lodges and an Inspectorate under the English Constitution, five District Grand Lodges under the Scottish Constitution and two Provincial Grand Lodges under the Irish Constitution. In each Territory there are personal fraternal relationships and regular visitation among the different Constitutions. There is also a developing tendency towards forging closer relationships. The English Districts include:

1. The District Grand Lodge of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands with 23 Lodges.
2. The District Grand Lodge of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean with 17 Lodges
3. The District Grand Lodge of Guyana with 15 Lodges
4. The District Grand Lodge of the Bahamas and Turks (the most recent) with 9 Lodges.
5. The District Grand lodge of Trinidad and Tobago with 7 Lodges

There are also five English Lodges in Bermuda under a Grand Inspector.

District Grand Lodges under the Scottish Constitution are:

1. The District Grand Lodge of Jamaica with 16 Lodges
2. The District Grand Lodge of Trinidad and Tobago with 13 Lodges
3. The District Grand Lodge of Barbados with 6 Lodges
4. The District Grand Lodge of Guyana with 6 Lodges
5. The District Grand Lodge of the Bahamas with 5 Lodges

There are three Scottish Lodges in Bermuda under a Grand Superintendent and one Lodge (Mount Olive No.336) St. Kitts, administered from the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Provinces under the Irish Constitution are:

1. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Jamaica with 6 Lodges
2. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Bermuda with 4 Lodges

English Freemasonry in Guyana grew by eight Lodges over the past 30 years. The Lodges include Kara – Kara Lodge No.8349 (1969), which established Freemasonry in the Mining community of Linden on the Upper Demerara River, Eureka Lodge No.8515 (1973), formed to attract persons with a University background, the Guyana Lodge of Research No. 8525 (1973), Lotus Lodge No.8735, which was formed from the overflow of members of Mount Everest, Klubba Lodge No.9103 (1983), the University of Guyana Lodge No.9331 (1989), which was formed to attract graduates and staff of the University of Guyana, the Guyana Wheel of Service Lodge No.9431 (1991), and most recently a second Lodge in New Amsterdam, Phoenix Lodge No.9517 (1993). Two Lodges were also consecrated under the Grand Lodge of Scotland – Lodge Kyk-over-al No.1672 (1972) and Lodge Irenaeus No.1791 (1991).

The 1970's also saw the development of Prince Hall Masonry in Guyana. Prince Hall Lodges are all ultimately derived from **African Lodge No.1**, which had been warranted in the USA in 1784 as No.459 by the United Grand Lodge of England. For various reasons, this Lodge lost contact with the UGLE and was erased from its records. Prince Hall however continue warranting Lodges of free men of African descent within the United States and in the traditions of that country each State has its own Grand Lodge. There has been considerable debate within and external to the USA as to whether Prince Hall Freemasons are regular. These have since been largely resolved. The Grand Lodge of France has unilaterally granted official recognition to all Prince Hall Lodges. The United Grand Lodge of England has acknowledged the regularity of Prince Hall Freemasonry, but has preferred to deal with the issue of recognition individually with each Grand Lodge.

Trinidad has four Prince Hall Lodges. These are affiliated to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, which is recognized by Grand Lodge. Visitation is permitted to the Lodges and their meetings are publicised in the Annual Masonic Directory of Trinidad and Tobago. Prince Hall Lodges in Guyana are closely aligned to those in Barbados and were together originally aligned to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York. These Lodges now belong to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the Caribbean, which was inaugurated in 1993. The Headquarters of the Grand Lodge is in Barbados. Lodges in St Maarten, Martinique, St Lucia and Antigua are also affiliated to this Grand Lodge. There is no official relationship between The Prince Hall Grand Lodges of New York or the Caribbean and the United Grand Lodge of England.

The first Prince Hall Lodge to be consecrated in Guyana was Mt. Ayangana Lodge in 1965. We are told that Bro Claude Geddes and the late Bro Amin Mohamed were the principal movers behind the establishment of Prince Hall Masonry in Guyana. The numbers of Prince Hall Lodges in Guyana has increased to four. The others Lodges are Tamarin Lodge (1971), Celestial Lodge (1985) and Mt. Roraima Lodge (1998). Barbados also has four Prince Hall Lodges. Another regional Prince Hall Grand Lodge is to be found in the Bahamas.

### Current Trends and the Future

This presentation has attempted to highlight that Freemasonry has evolved in the Caribbean to gradually become truly representative of our societies. Masonry in the Caribbean started as an enclave of the European Planter and Colonial Official Class. As our societies have evolved towards independence so the involvement of the local populace in the Freemasonry has grown. Freemasonry in the Caribbean has today generally assumed a cosmopolitan character.

Individual Lodges tend to be small groups comprised of persons with close ties of family, friendship, profession and shared interests. Within the fraternity, brethren have found ample opportunity to cement close friendships based on mutual respect that have transcended narrow cultural interests. Society continues to change and our Institution will need to change accordingly. Some of our Lodges have been experiencing difficulties in recent years for various reasons, some of which involve a breakdown of the relationships among the brethren in the Lodge. It is our duty to support these Lodges in their difficulties, but ultimately the resolution of these will depend on their reflection over what are the important ties that will keep a body of men of good intention in fraternal union. The familiar and oft repeated words in the “**Charge to the Brethren**” are probably the best guide on the manner in which we should relate to each other:

***“... I therefore trust that we shall have but one aim in view, to please each other and unite in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness. And as this association has been formed and perfected with so much unanimity and accord, long may it continue. May brotherly love and affection ever distinguish us as men and as Masons. May the principles and tenets of our profession, which are founded on the basis of religious truth and virtue, teach us to***

***measure our actions by the rule of rectitude, square our conduct by the principles of morality, and guide our inclinations, and even our thoughts, within the compass of propriety...."***

There will be other and greater challenges. We live to day in an increasingly materialistic and cynical world. The characteristics that contribute to material success are those of very practical objectives i.e. cost, competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. There is increasingly less room it seems for those less tangible values such as concern for one's fellow creatures, social conscience, and fairness. The strength of Freemasonry lies in that it fosters a continuous striving towards those intangible values that will enable us to make better men of ourselves. The Order I believe will always continue to appeal to thoughtful and well – intentioned men. It is our challenge in a world where the culture of ***"nothing is for free"*** is prevalent to appeal to those with similar inclinations by such conduct that:

*" .....the world may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrow, to whom the distressed may prefer their suit, whose hand is guided by justice and whose heart is expanded by benevolence....."*

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