perhaps other ephemeral publications of which there is scarcely a trace left, have seen the light of brief periods in Buffalo during the past ten or twelve years.

The history of Buffalo journalism would be scarcely complete without the record of the remarkable, though brief career in the city of one, A. Lecras, which is thus given in a paper written by C. F. S. Thomas, which is now in the rooms of the Historical Society:

"It was in the year 1838, I think, that a very worthy printer named A Lecras, living on the Isle of Jersey, thinking to enlighten the benighted people of this region, discontinued a very respectable weekly paper he then published, packed up all his presses, old types on which his paper had been printed, and all his printing paraphernalia, brought all to London and there purchased a few additional types and some paper, freighted the whole from London to New York and from there up the Erie canal to Buffalo. Arriving here he rented the building known as the old Niagara Bank and set up his printing house in the basement, his family occupying the main portion of the building as a dwelling. Mr. Lecras was an educated Franco-Englishman with a fair share of the prejudices of the natives of the fast-anchored isle, and could not conceive of its being possible that away out in Buffalo such a thing could be as a printing establishment equal to the one he had brought all the way from Jersey, in Great Britain. He was still more astonished when he found his printing house on Washington street created no sensation; in fact, but few knew of his arrival. So, after remaining about a year, he became disgusted with our want of appreciation, perhaps, and packed up all his old types, presses and printing materials, sent them down the Erie canal to New York, thence to Liverpool and thence back to Jersey, where the material was soon again employed in printing the journal he had left."

CHAPTER XIV.

SECRET SOCIETIES IN ERIE COUNTY.

Freemasonry — Beginning of the Order among the Early Settlers — The First Lodge — History of Western Star Lodge — Its first Officers — Records of Succeeding Lodges — List of District Deputy Grand Masters — History of Chapters, Councils, Commanderies, etc. — Ceremonies in which Masonic Organizations Have Taken Part — Odd Fellows' Lodges — Other Secret Societies of Buffalo.

FREEMASONRY was transplanted into Erie county with the advent of the early settlers. It was in the year 1807, when New Amsterdam* was but a small village, that a sufficient number of Masons had collected in the place who felt the necessity of founding for themselves a Masonic home.

* Buffalo was called New Amsterdam from the year 1801 to 1811 or 1812.
Western Star Lodge No. 239.—A petition dated New Amsterdam, December, 1807, was drawn up and forwarded to the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, asking for a warrant empowering the petitioners to form a lodge, to be known as "Western Star Lodge," and to be located in the village of New Amsterdam, in the town of Clarence, at the house of Brother Zenas Barker. The petitioners stated in their petition that it was extremely difficult for them to attend a lodge, as the nearest one to their home was sixty miles distant.

The petition was endorsed by Genesee Lodge, in the town of Hartford, in the county of Ontario, September, 1808.

Zenas Barker was to be the first Master of the lodge; Cyrenius Chapin,* S. W. and Frederick Miller,+ J. W. In addition to these three names, the following were attached to the petition:—Philo Andrews, Apollos Hitchcock, Erastus Granger;* Joseph Landon,§ Benjamin Caryl Edmund Raymond, Rowland Cotton and Benjamin Hodge.¶

For unexplained reasons the effort to establish a lodge was not crowned with success. Five years later, however, the attempt was renewed. The second petition was dated New Amsterdam,** January 6, 1812. The new lodge was to bear the same name and be located, as the document expresses it, "in the village of New Amsterdam, in the township of Buffalo, at the house of Brother Joseph Landon." With the exception of Philo Andrews, Edmund Raymond and Rowland Cotton, the names of the signers of the former petition are also attached to the latter, and in addition thereto appear those of Daniel Bristol, Heman B. Potter, Ralph M. Pomeroy, Raphael Cook, James Beard, Asa Standard, Nehemiah Seelye, James Atkins and A. M. Grosvenor.

In the second petition the petitioners stated that there was no lodge within forty miles of their residence. The petition bears the endorsement of Olive Branch Lodge, held at Batavia at that time; it is dated January 16, 1812, and is signed by Richard Smith, Master and I. Babcock, Secretary.

The illustrious DeWitt Clinton, who was Grand Master of the State of New York for fourteen years, (from 1806 to 1819 inclusive) granted a dispensation for the lodge January 31, 1812, endorsing his consent with the following words:—

* Cyrenius Chapin, M. D., one of the earliest settlers and one of the most resolute defenders of Buffalo in the war with England. He was the leading spirit in capturing two vessels near Fort Erie, October 9, 1812.
† Frederick Miller was the father of the late Captain William Miller, who was also a Mason, and grandfather of the late William F. Miller and Charles G. Miller.
‡ Erastus Granger was the first postmaster and the first collector of customs in the collection district of Buffalo; he died December 21, 1826.
§ Joseph Landon kept a tavern on Exchange Street, occupying a part of the site on which the Mansion House now stands.
¶ Benjamin Hodge was the uncle of Mr. William Hodge, still residing in Buffalo.
** Batavia.
†† It is estimated that the number of inhabitants had at that time increased to about 1,600.
"The Grand Secretary is requested to make out a dispensation on the above application for two years and to deliver it to Mr. Bassford."

It was issued February 6. On the same day the Grand Master granted authority to Brother Heman B. Potter to institute the lodge, which duty he performed March 10, 1812,* by installing Brothers Zenas Barker, Master; Cyrenius Chapin, S.W.; Frederick Miller, J. W.; Abel M. Grosvenor, treasurer; Charles Townsend,† secretary; Nehemiah Seelye and Daniel Bristol, deacons; Raphael Cook and Ralph M. Pomeroy, stewards; Rowland Cotton, tiler.

The petition to the Grand Lodge for a warrant is dated "Village of Buffalo, (late New Amsterdam), 15th day of June, 1813." It is stated therein that several of the petitioners had sometime in the year 1810 applied for authority to hold a lodge in the village, and had enclosed the usual fee, but that unfortunately the letter and money miscarried and had not since been found; that a dispensation had been granted by the Grand Master on the 6th of February, 1812; that since that time they had assembled at stated periods and conducted the business of Freemasons according to the best of their abilities, etc., and that they now wished to obtain a warrant; that the officers mentioned declining to serve a further term, the following names are proposed in their place: Benjamin Caryl, Master; Heman B. Potter, Senior Warden; Oliver Forward,+ Junior Warden. The signers of the petition are Frederick Miller, Heman B. Potter, Joshua Lovejoy, Thomas Atkins, Joseph Hershey, Sylvester Clark, Asa P. Harris, Nehemiah Seelye, Benjamin Hodge, Joseph Sill, Charles Townsend, J. Harrison, Josiah Trowbridge, Oliver Forward, Benjamin Enos, Ralph M. Pomeroy, Cornelius Davenport, Z. W. Barker, Joseph Landon, Willard Smith and Asa Coltrin.

The report accompanying the petition states that during the time the lodge had worked under a dispensation, it had conferred the three degrees of Masonry on the following persons: Jonas Harrison, Oliver Forward, Thomas J. Atkins, Guy J. Atkins, Jonathan E. Chapman, Benjamin Enos, Joseph Hershey, William Hodge, Sylvester Clark, Harvey G. Morse, Joshua Lovejoy, Orange Dean, Silas Hopkins, Phipps W. Hewitt, Zenas W. Barker, Joseph Sill, John W. Macomb, Josiah Trowbridge, Adam Hayes, William Pomeroy, Talbot Chambers, John W. Smoot, Rufus Spaulding, Ebenezer Hovey and Thomas B. Randolph. The lodge conferred the third degree on Asa Coltrin, Charles Talmadge, and Robert G. Hite, they having received the preceding degrees in some other lodge. Samuel Pratt, Jr., received the second and third

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* The Buffalo Gazette of that date gives it as a news item, that the officers of Western Star Lodge would be installed on the 10th.
† The Charles Townsend mentioned as secretary was better known as Judge Townsend; he was a member of the old firm of Townsend & Coit.
‡ Oliver Forward was one of the foremost men of Buffalo in his time. He was a lawyer by profession, one of the Judges of Niagara county in 1817, collector of the port in 1817, member of the Assembly in 1819, etc., and afterwards State Senator.
degrees. The first and second degrees were conferred on Joseph Johnson and Asa P. Harris, and the first degree only on Elisha Foster, Isaac Davis, John Beach, Daniel Miller, Josiah Hovey, Jr., Robert W. Sever, William C. Johnson, John McCall, and Christopher H. Tappan. The following were admitted to membership:—Daniel McCleary, Erastus Granger, Willard Smith, Elijah Doty, Cornelius Davenport, and Charles Mudge.

The petition for a warrant was laid before the Grand Lodge December 7th, 1814, by the Grand Master, M. W. Brother DeWitt Clinton, who stated that he had been requested by the brethren who had on the 1st of March, 1809, and again on the 4th of March, 1812, applied for a warrant to hold a lodge by the name of Western Star Lodge, in the village of New Amsterdam in the town of Buffalo, (formerly Clarence) in the county of Niagara, to renew their application for a warrant and to pray that their dues under a dispensation, which they have for some time been working under, might be relinquished in consequence of the great losses the members have sustained by the destruction of that place by the enemy during the present war;* upon which it was unanimously:—

"Resolved, That a warrant do issue to the said brethren and that all dues under the dispensation be relinquished."

The lodge received its warrant which was dated December 24, 1814, and was numbered "239" on the Grand Lodge register. Western Star Lodge, No. 239, was, therefore, the first Masonic Lodge of Buffalo and the county of Erie.

It is to be greatly regretted that all information in regard to this lodge subsequent to the time when it received its warrant is exceedingly limited. Its records were either lost or destroyed during the Anti-Masonic excitement, or fell a prey to the flames, November 15, 1832, with the building corner of Main and Seneca streets, in which the lodge held its communications. We are, therefore, forced, however unwillingly, to content ourselves with such items as we are able to gather from various sources. The following items are taken from the Gazette, formerly published in Buffalo:—

"September 9, 1812, Captain William Brown shot himself accidentally in a boat on Buffalo creek and was buried with Masonic honors."

This was probably the first Masonic funeral that had ever taken place in Erie county. April 21, 1814, the following advertisement appeared in the same paper:—

"Members of Western Star Lodge are requested to meet at the house of Brother Frederick Miller, Cold Springs, at noon on that day."

March 23, 1815, the Gazette publishes a notice that the officers of Western Star Lodge would be installed in the village of Buffalo.

* The village of Buffalo was burned by the British and Indians Dec. 30, 1813.
The petition of Blazing Star Lodge No. 294, to be held at Willink, was recommended by Western Star Lodge No. 239, February 5, 1817, at which time Daniel Bristol was its Master; John Mullett, Senior Warden; and John E. Marshall,* Secretary.

In March, 1820, the Gazette reports that Western Star Lodge celebrated the anniversary of St. John and marched in procession from the lodge room to the court house.

February 25, 1826, the Gazette has an advertisement that Western Star Lodge was holding regular meetings. A July number of the Gazette for 1828, has a notice "that a lodge was holding its meetings at Black Rock." The lodge referred to was Barton Lodge No. 442, an account of which appears on another page.

The Masonic Record of May 31, 1828, (printed at Albany, N. Y.,) has a notice dated May 19, 1828, stating that Niagara Chapter and Western Star Lodge would celebrate St. John's day June 24th. The committee of arrangements consisted of Benjamin Caryl, Cyrenius Chapin, Bryant Burwell, E. D. Ewer, Nathaniel Vosburgh and William Kelly.

June 21, 1826, the lodge petitioned the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer to permit the dedication of the new hall of Western Star Lodge.

June 1, 1827, Western Star Lodge petitioned the Grand Lodge to remit its dues to that date, which was granted.

In 1822, Benjamin Caryl was master and John A. Lazell, secretary of Western Star Lodge, and in 1824 Jacob A. Barker filled the office of master.

West Orb of Light Lodge.—The next petition for a lodge to be held in Erie county came from the town of Willink, then a part of Niagara county.† The document is without date and is signed by John Carpenter, Seth Abbott, Calvin Clifford, John Strong, John Cole, Eames Merriam, Parmilee Allen and William Warren. The lodge was to be called "West Orb of Light." Isaac Phelps, Jr., was to be its first Master, Benjamin Er:os, S. W., and James S. Stevens, J. W. The petition is recommended by Western Star Lodge No. 205, at their lodge room in Sheldon, (Genesee county,) January 20, 1815, of which Flitch Chipman was Master, Benjamin Potter, S. W., James Ward, J. W., and Chauncey Sadd, secretary. From the date of the endorsement it may be assumed that the petition originated during the latter part of 1814. The Grand Lodge granted a warrant to the lodge December 6, 1815, but it never went into operation. From the date of the warrant the lodge would have ranked as the second in Erie county.

Blazing Star Lodge No. 294.—The warrant for the Lodge "West Orb of Light," which was to have been located in the town of Willink, being for some reason abandoned after being granted, a new petition for

* John E. Marshall was the father of the Hon. O. H. Marshall, now residing in Buffalo.
† Erie county formed a part of Niagara county at that time.
a lodge to be located in that town, in the county of Niagara, (now Erie) was drawn up. It bears date, Willink, May 19, 1816, and recommends Isaac Phelps, Jr., as its first Master; Hawxhurst Addington, S. W.; and James M. Stevens, J. W. Among the signers of the petition appear Benjamin McKay, Henry B. Stevens, William A. Burt, William Warren, David Norton and Seth Abbott. Several of the names are identical with those attached to the petition for the lodge, "West Orb of Light." The petition was recommended by Western Star Lodge No. 239, February 5, 1817, at which time Daniel Bristol was its Master, John Mullett, S. W., and John E. Marshall, Secretary.

Blazing Star Lodge received the number 294, and its warrant was dated July 31, 1817. An endorsement on the petition, made by the Grand Secretary, explains why the warrant granted to the Lodge, "West Orb of Light", was not taken out. It reads as follows:

"This warrant was granted on a former petition on the 6th of December, 1816, but never taken out; $30 were then received by J. Wells, Esq., who has paid the same to me."

The petition referred to upon which the $30 fee was paid and endorsed as having been received, is without date. The lodge petitioned for was to be held in the town of Willink, in the county of Niagara, and be known as the Lodge, West Orb of Light.

Sardinia Lodge No. 342.—Was located in the town of Sardinia, county of Erie. The Grand Lodge granted a warrant for that lodge March 6, 1822. David Bigelow was its first Master; Elihu Rice, S. W.; Silas Parker, J. W.; Bela H. Colegrove was Master of the Lodge in 1825. No other information of this lodge was attainable.

Concord Lodge No. 346.—The Grand Lodge granted a warrant on the 8th of June, 1822, to Comfort Knapp, Master; Ira Hall, S. W., and Archibald Griffiths, J. W. to hold a lodge in the town of Concord, in the county of Erie, to be known by the name and style of Concord Lodge No. 346.

Centre Lodge No. 356.—The petition for a dispensation to hold a Lodge at Clarence is dated January 31, 1814. Among the signers of the petition appear the names of Asa P. Harris, William K. Stewart and others, recommending Archibald S. Clark to be the first Master; Jonathan Hastings, S. W.; and James Baldwin, J. W. The petition was recommended by Olive Branch Lodge No. 215, at Batavia. By a misapprehension the Grand Secretary supposed that this petition had been superseded by the warrant issued to Western Star Lodge No. 239, December 24, 1814. Waiting patiently for an answer until May 31, 1817, the petitioners despatched a letter of inquiry, the reply to which, stating the above mentioned supposition, was forwarded to them June 9, 1817, which, however, does not seem to have reached its destination. The petitioners were evidently models of patience and perseverance, for again they waited until October 22, 1822, when another effort was made
by them to ascertain the fate of their petition. An answer to this letter, dated November 1, 1822, advising them to petition anew, finally reached them. On the new petition appeared the names of Benjamin Bevins, Elisha Baldwin, Rhodes Stranahan, Ovid Pinney and others. It was dated Clarence, November 16, 1822, and was recommended by Western Star Lodge No. 239, of which at that time Benjamin Caryl was Master, and John A. Lazell, Secretary.

The lodge, after a lapse of nearly nine years, was granted a warrant at the quarterly communication of the Grand Lodge, March 6, 1823, and was registered as Centre Lodge No. 356, to be located in the town of Clarence, in the county of Erie. Frederick Sheldon, Master; Benjamin Bevins, Senior Warden; and Elisha Baldwin, Junior Warden. Amos Wright was Master of the lodge in 1825, representing it in the Grand Lodge.

Livingston Lodge, No. 416.—At the session of the Grand Lodge on the 1st of June, 1825, a warrant was granted to Comfort Knapp, Master; John Brooks, Senior Warden; and Hiram Knapp, Junior Warden, to hold a lodge in the town of Boston, county of Erie, by the name of Livingston Lodge, No. 416.

Amherst Lodge, No. 429.—This lodge also received its warrant at the session of the Grand Lodge, June 1, 1825. The names entered in the warrant were Frederick S. Sheldon, Master; Job Beston, Senior Warden; and Ebenezer A. Lester, Junior Warden, who were authorized to hold a lodge in the town of Amherst, county of Erie, to be known as Amherst Lodge, No. 429.

Hamburg Union Store Lodge, No. 434.—This lodge also received a warrant at the sessions of the Grand Lodge, June 1, 1825. It was issued to Cushing Swift, Master; Edmund S. Stevens, Senior Warden; and Mason Young, Junior Warden, to hold a lodge in the town of Hamburg, county of Erie, by the name of Hamburg Union Store Lodge, No. 434.

Porter Lodge.—A petition for a dispensation to hold a lodge at Black Rock, to be known as Porter Lodge, and dated Black Rock, Erie county, N. Y., November 12, 1823, is on file in the archives of the Grand Lodge. James L. Barton was to be its first Master; Nathaniel K. Olmstead, Senior Warden; and Nathaniel G. Reynolds, Junior Warden. The following names are attached to the petition:—Lewis G. Hoffman, William Burt, John D. Hart, Adam Gray, Ethan Allen and Donald Fraser. The petition is recommended by Western Star Lodge, No. 239, of Buffalo, on the 15th of November, 1823. The Grand Lodge seems to have taken no action on this petition. Comparing the date of this petition with that of Barton Lodge, No. 442, at Black Rock, it will be seen that the petition of the latter antedates it about six months, while the endorsement of Western Star Lodge, No. 239, on the petition of Porter Lodge antedates that of Barton Lodge about the same length of time. The name of James
L. Barton for Master appears on both petitions, and a number of the names of the petitioners are identical.

*Barton Lodge No. 442, Black Rock.*—The petition for a dispensation to form this lodge bears date, Black Rock, May 5, 1823, and recommends James L. Barton to be its first Master; Nathaniel G. Reynolds, S. W., and James McKnight, J. W. The names of the petitioners were L. G. Hoffman, John D. Harty, Ethan Allen, Henry Hanson, Henry Potter, Sheldon Thompson, James Tisdale, D. S. Davison and Nathaniel Fills. The petition was recommended by Western Star Lodge No. 239, Buffalo, May 5, 1824, Jacob A. Barker, Master. A dispensation was issued October 16, 1824, and the Grand Lodge at its session of June 6, 1825, ordered a warrant to issue to Barton Lodge No. 442. Brother Robert McPherson became secretary, and Sheldon Thompson, treasurer of the lodge.

With our well-paved, gas-lighted streets, street railroads, etc., the reason advanced for the petition cannot well be appreciated by the present generation. The petition states that the object in petitioning for a lodge, while one was held at Buffalo, was as follows:—

"We have in this village and vicinity about twenty-five Master-Masons; the major part of them are men of families, and we have the only alternative of either traveling a considerable part of the year on a bad road, at unseasonable hours to our great inconvenience, or be deprived the pleasure of participating in full communion with our brethren."

The endorsement of Western Star Lodge attached to the petition of Barton Lodge intimates, but does not fully explain the reason why no action was taken by the Grand Lodge on the petition of Porter Lodge, of which mention is made under that head. The following sentence is contained in the recommendation of Western Star Lodge for the lodge at Black Rock, to be called "Barton Lodge, and that all former recommendations for a lodge at that place be recalled." The first candidate initiated in Barton Lodge was Samuel Everett, farmer, December 22, 1824. In the list of those initiated are also found Benjamin Bidwell, ship carpenter, December 22, 1824; Levi Allen, tavern keeper, February 21, 1826; Daniel Lockwood, lawyer, May 23, 1826; George McKnight, merchant's clerk, May 23, 1826; William T. Pratt, silversmith, May 23, 1826; Abner Cutler, cabinet maker, May 30, 1826. James L. Barton, after whom the lodge was named, was its master for 1825; Roger Jones for 1826, and John D. Harty for 1827, '28 and '29; beyond the last named year, during which Brother George McKnight was secretary, our information does not extend. The lodge succumbed to the anti-masonic blast which swept over the western part of the State of New York, and was not revived again.

The lodges were progressing under favorable conditions. On their rolls of membership were registered a large number of highly respect-
able and intelligent citizens. This growth increased the jealousy and enmity of the anti-Masons. The sudden disappearance, therefore, of the notorious William Morgan on the 12th of September, 1826, who was reported to have been drowned by the Masons in the Niagara river, led to hostile demonstrations. Unfortunately for the Masonic fraternity, nothing definite could be discovered of the fate of this individual. The adversaries of Masonry under control of designing leaders, were not slow in making use of the rumor of his murder to fan the spark into a flame. Anti-Masonry swept over the land like a whirlwind, shaking the institution to its foundation. Manipulated by skillful but unscrupulous politicians, the anti-Masonic faction increased in strength and power and forced many lodges to discontinue their labors. The Masonic fraternity was subjected to every variety of indignity and persecution, and many weak-kneed members were forced to renounce their membership. The progress of Masonry received a check throughout the United States, and it was only in the year 1843, that the anti-Masonic party lost its political power. Anti-Masonry died, but Masonry survived. All efforts to drag it into the dust and to cast suspicion upon its aims, were in vain. It has spread and developed and in the course of time has essentially aided civilization. Founded upon an indelible necessity of human nature, it has and is fulfilling its high mission. It educates the members to practice love and charity, imbues them with moral courage, with a devotion to truth, and enjoins upon them a faithful performance of duty. It offers consolation to the afflicted, restores the erring to the path of virtue, dries the tears of widows and orphans, and creates many institutions for beneficent purposes. An institution resting upon such principles can only receive a temporary check from prejudice and ignorance.

Among the lodges who had ceased their labors during the anti-Masonic ascendency, were those of Erie county. The revival of Masonry imparted new life to its adherents here also and once more were they permitted to gather around the altars which they had been forced to abandon. The old members, with undiminished love for the institution in their hearts, again met in council. A petition to the Grand Lodge of the State of New York for a dispensation to form a new lodge, was circulated in Buffalo in November, 1844, and eagerly signed. The thirty-two brethren, true and trusty, who attached their signatures to the document were Henry B. Myer, Selah Barnard, Nelson Randall, James Forrestall, Horatio G. Gates, Orman Butler, Thomas J. Winslow, John A. Weimer, Robert Russell, Charles S. Pierce, Miles Jones, Nehemiah Case, Abner Cutler, Joseph A. Cameron, Daniel M. Seaver, Charles Radcliffe, John McPherson, Solomon Druillard, Elijah D. Effner, Benjamin H. Austin, Thomas Muller, George Case, Levi Allen, Christian Heistend, Cornelius A. Waldron, Benjamin Bidwell, Isaac W. Newkirk, Merlin Camp, Stephen Powers, David C. Sough, Joseph Dorr and Darius Smith.
Of these good men and true Nehemiah Case, Abner Cutler and Levi Allen are still living at a good old age, honored by all Masons as well as by their friends and neighbors.

The Grand Lodge granted a dispensation on the 31st of January, 1845, for the formation of Hiram Lodge; it was received with joy by the brethren who had been called together to meet on Friday, February 14, 1845. Brother H. B. Myer, who had been named Master of the lodge, presided on the occasion. At the first meeting of the lodge under dispensation, February 28, 1845, a petition for membership was presented from Brother Horatio Warren, who subsequently filled the office of Master of Washington Lodge No. 240. At the same time petitions for initiation were received from Ebenezer B. Putress and John W. Davock. At the communication of the lodge March 7, 1845, the Master, Brother H. B. Myer, reported that Brother Dr. Clark had placed in his hands the jewels of the old lodge (Western Star Lodge No. 239) excepting the square and compass. The latter having been lost, it was ordered that new ones be procured in their place. Some years after that a Brother from Buffalo, visiting a lodge in Detroit, found the two long lost jewels in that city. They were returned to Hiram Lodge as will hereafter appear. The dispensation, which expired by limitation with the session of the Grand Lodge in June, was extended by the Grand Master to October 20, 1845. At the communication of the lodge December 19, 1845, the Master announced that the warrant from the Grand Lodge had been received. It is dated December 5, 1845. The lodge is registered on the roll of the Grand Lodge as Hiram Lodge No. 105.

Hiram Lodge No. 105.—At the communication of the lodge December 26, 1845, the following brethren were elected its officers:—Henry B. Myer, Master; Nelson Randall, S. W.; Charles S. Pierce, J. W.; Robert Russell, treasurer; Stephen Powers secretary. On the 1st of January, 1846, the lodge was constituted and its officers installed by the following brethren, who acted as Grand officers:—Brother Asher Torrance, P. M., of Lockport Lodge No. 73, as G. M., assisted by Brothers Peter P. Murphy, of the same place, as G. M.; W. E. Cooper, Lockport Lodge No. 73, as S. G. W.; B. H. Fletcher, as J. G. W.; Charles French, Hiram Lodge No. 105, as Grand Treasurer; G. Dennison, of the same lodge as G. C.; W. Harrison of Lockport Lodge No. 73, as S. G. D.; A. H. Eastman, of the same lodge, as J. G. D., and A. Brush, of the same lodge, as G. T. In addition to the elected officers, the following appointed officers were duly installed:—Brother Carlos Cobb, S. D.; James McCredie, J. D.; Miles Jones and Charles Pickering, S.; and James A. Forristall, T. The lodge held its meetings on the fourth floor of the building now known as No. 219 Main street. Some of the paper with which the walls of the room were decorated (imitation marble blocks and columns) may still be seen in its place at the present time. The owner of the building seems
to have been a Mr. Dart. The lodge adopted a resolution May 1, 1846, notifying him that it would continue to occupy the room for another year, if properly repaired. The annual rent paid was $75. Brother E. S. Barnum, of Utica, was appointed proxy to represent the lodge at the June session of the Grand Lodge in 1846. As the membership of the lodge increased, it became evident that more extensive quarters were required and on the 23rd of October, 1846, a resolution was adopted to rent the room on the third floor of Brother Case’s building, on the corner of Exchange and Washington streets, at $150.00 per annum. At the communication of the lodge, May 21, 1847, a resolution was adopted that the building committee, together with the tiler, take charge of the removal of the furniture and fixtures of the lodge to the new lodge room. The expense of moving and the preparation of the new hall had entailed a heavy outlay on the young lodge and that, together with frequent calls for charity, kept its finances at a low ebb. At a communication of the lodge August 4, 1848, Brothers James Wenz, Ehrman and others requested the lodge to recommend their petition to the Grand Lodge to give its approval to the formation of a German Lodge in Buffalo, with which the lodge readily complied. Buffalo Chapter No. 71, of Royal Arch Masons had become the successor of Niagara Chapter No. 71, which had succumbed to the force of circumstances. It became a tenant of the new hall under Hiram Lodge in 1848.

The spirit of Masonry reviving throughout the western part of the State of New York, a request was presented to the lodge October 22, 1848, from Brother Budlong and others, for a recommendation of their petition to the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, for a dispensation to form Mount Moriah Lodge, at Jamestown, N. Y. The assent was readily given.

The brethren above spoken of, who had petitioned the Grand Lodge for a dispensation to establish a German Lodge, were successful in their application. The members of Hiram Lodge rejoiced with them in their success and adopted a resolution on the 10th of November, 1848, congratulating the new sister lodge, Concordia, on the auspicious event and expressing its good wishes for its welfare and prosperity. Concordia Lodge also became an occupant of the new hall. The two lodges jointly celebrated St. John’s day on the 27th of December, 1848, by a supper at Brother Dorsheimer’s (Mansion House.)

On the 20th of December, 1848, Brother Nelson Randall, Master, publicly installed the officers elect for the ensuing year, in the lodge room, which was witnessed by a large and highly respectable audience. Brother Horatio Gates delivered an able address on the occasion, which was well received.

On the 27th of April, 1849, Hiram Lodge adopted a resolution to celebrate the approaching St. John’s day publicly, provided Concordia
Lodge and Buffalo Chapter approve of the same. Both gave their assent readily; but the 24th day of June falling upon Sunday, the celebration occurred on the 25th.

The following address casting some light upon Masonic affairs at that time, was issued by the fraternity soon after Concordia Lodge and Buffalo Chapter* had approved the resolution:

"The members of the Masonic fraternity composing Buffalo Chapter, No. 71, Hiram Lodge, No. 105, and Concordia Lodge, believing the time has now come when the interest of our beloved institution would thereby be best promoted, have resolved to celebrate the next anniversary of our ancient Brother, St. John the Baptist, and have, from their respective bodies, appointed the undersigned a committee of arrangements, to carry such resolutions into effect; with instructions to invite our brethren at a distance to participate with us in the honors of the day. Committee of Buffalo Chapter, No. 71, C. H. Dibble, N. Case, M. Jones, G. W. Allen, B. H. Austin, H. W. Rogers, P. Dorsheimer. Committee of Hiram Lodge, No. 105, C. S. Pierce, F. S. Wheeler, B. Welch, Jr., B. Bidwell, C. Cobb, J. McCredie, C. Pickering. Committee of Concordia Lodge, U. D., J. Wenz, P. Ehrman, J. Weil, F. Atwicker, F. A. Georger, G. Black, B. Weimar.

"This being the first public demonstration in this section, for many years, it is desirable that the procession should be numerous and imposing; so that the unenlightened may see and know that Masonry was not dead but sleeping." ** * * We rejoice in being able to say that the prejudices which once existed against our order here have nearly passed away, giving good reasons to hope that they will soon be numbered among the things that were.

"The 24th of June being Sunday, the celebration will be on Monday, the 25th. The procession will form precisely at 10 o'clock, at Masonic Hall, on the corner of Washington and Exchange streets, and proceed thence to one of the churches of the city, where an oration will be delivered and other appropriate exercises will take place according to ancient usage.

"Your attendance is hereby cordially and earnestly solicited, either in a body or individually. It is expected that chapters and lodges will bring their jewels, and brothers their regalia.

"Respectfully and fraternally yours,

"O. H. Dibble, (P. H. P.) Chairman.

"JAMES McCREDIE, Secretary."

Besides the members of the lodges and the chapters a large number of visiting brethren were present. The procession proceeded, according to arrangement, to the Universalist Church on Washington street, where, after appropriate services, the Rev. Brother Dolphus Skinner, from Oneida county, delivered the address in the presence of a large audience.

At the communication of Hiram Lodge, June 1, 1849, a resolution was adopted recommending to the Grand Lodge of the State the petition

* We are indebted for a copy of this address, to that ardent veteran Mason, Brother James McCredie, and we take pleasure in acknowledging that he has placed us under obligations for much other valuable information.
of Brother Isaac Bloss and others for the revival of the charter of Han-
over Lodge at Forestville, Chautauqua county.

On the 15th of June, 1849, Brother Randall, Master, informed the
lodge that the Grand Lodge had remitted one-half of the Grand Lodge
dues for the past year, amounting to fifty-six dollars.

On the 21st of December, 1849, the resolution was adopted, "That
this lodge recommend the petition of Brothers N. Randall, C. Cobb and
others to the Grand Lodge for a new lodge to be held in this city, to be
called Erie Lodge."

On the 31st of January, 1851, the lodge appointed Brother Dibble
a delegate to attend a meeting of delegates to be held in Albany, N. Y.,
February 7th, for the purpose of discussing the propriety of building an
asylum for indigent Masons, their widows and orphans. And again, on
the 3d of May of the same year, the same subject being again before the
lodge and its members desiring to testify their desire to carry out prac-
tically the greatest and noblest principle of the institution—charity—
adopted the resolution, "That our representative W. Brother Benja-
min H. Austin, be instructed to attend the convention of delegates to be
held in the city of New York June 3d next, for the purpose of erecting a
Masonic Asylum, and to support the object intended as far as he may
think proper."

On a preceding page of this sketch, it is stated that at the communi-
cation of the lodge, March 7, 1845, the jewels of the old lodge (Western
Star No. 239) had been presented to Hiram Lodge, except the square
and compass, which were missing, but subsequently found in Detroit.
The fact coming to the knowledge of the lodge, the preamble and reso-
lutions were offered and adopted June 2, 1852: --

WHEREAS, We have long cherished as inestimable tokens of remem-
brance of a distinguished and worthy brother of our order, the Hon.
DeWitt Clinton, the jewels presented by him to Western Star Lodge
No. 239, now the property of this lodge; and,

WHEREAS, We have learned with the greatest pleasure that of
those jewels, the compass and square, which have for a long time been
missing, are now in the possession of —— Lodge No. ——, at Detroit,
Mich. Therefore,

Resolved, That the brethren of —— Lodge No. ——, at Detroit,
be respectfully asked to deliver to —— the compass and square of
Western Star Lodge No. 239, of New York, for Hiram Lodge No. 105,
of New York.

Resolved, That we will regard a compliance with the request con-
tained in the foregoing resolution, as a token of the high considera-
tion which the Freemasons have for their brethren.

Resolved, That the secretary of this lodge be directed to send a
copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions to the secretary of
—— Lodge, No. ——, at Detroit, Mich."

The square and compass were surrendered by the lodge at Detroit
to Hiram Lodge, in whose possession the whole of the jewels have
remained ever since. They had a very narrow escape from being destroyed at the fire in December, 1882, of which mention will be made hereafter. The square, which still remains discolored from smoke, was shown us a short time ago. It has the following inscription: "Presented by the M. W. Grand Master DeWitt Clinton, to Western Star Lodge No. 239." They are priceless jewels.

Hiram Lodge received an invitation from the building committee of the German Evangelical Church at Lower Black Rock, to participate in laying the corner-stone of said church, on Thursday, August 26, 1852, which was accepted.

At the communication of February 25, 1853, a petition to the Grand Lodge for a new lodge was presented, requesting the recommendation of Hiram Lodge. The lodge was to be known as Parish Lodge, and to be located at Black Rock. The following were the names of the brethren attached to the petition: Brothers Levi Love, Stephen W. Howell, L. P. Dayton, John Rudy, John H. VanBenthusen, Reuben Justin, Alexander McCloud, Hiram B. Lusk and William P. Sheldon. Hiram Lodge recommended the petition.

At the suggestion of Erie Lodge No. 161, a committee was appointed at the meeting of March 4, 1853, to take in consideration the propriety and feasibility of erecting a Masonic Temple in the city of Buffalo.

A number of influential members of the fraternity throughout the State, deeming it desirable that the Grand Lodge of the State of New York should be divided. Hiram Lodge adopted a resolution August 19, 1853, to attend by delegation a convention to be held at Rochester, September 2, to consider the propriety of carrying out the proposition.

The rapid increase of the German population of the city and the favor with which Freemasonry was viewed as its principles became better known and understood by the intelligent classes, brought a large number of applications for admission to the lodges. A second German Lodge became a necessity, and brother James Wenz, in connection with other German Masons, petitioned the Grand Lodge for a dispensation for a new lodge, which was endorsed by Hiram Lodge at its communication of May 12, 1854.

The officers elected Hiram Lodge for the year 1855, were publicly installed in American Hall, which was filled on the occasion to its utmost capacity. The applications for charity became more frequent and the lodges of Buffalo found it necessary to establish in self-protection, a central Board for that purpose, to which all applications were to be referred. On the 22d of July, 1855, Hiram Lodge appointed a committee to act in conjunction with like committees for that purpose, from Erie, Washington, Queen City and Ancient Landmarks Lodges, who agreed upon "Articles of Association of the Masonic Board of Relief of the City of Buffalo." The first representatives of Hiram Lodge in the
SECRET SOCIETIES IN ERIE COUNTY.

Board were Past Masters James H. Barton and William F. Rogers. The necessary funds for charitable purposes were supplied by an assessment of twelve per cent. on the receipts of the lodges who were associated in the Board. Hiram Lodge, as well as the rest of the Masonic Lodges, Chapters and Commanderies, were invited by the proper authorities to participate in the laying of the corner-stone of the State Arsenal, on Batavia street (now Broadway), in Buffalo. The ceremony was performed by the Grand Lodge on the 5th of May, 1858.

A number of brethren desirous of forming a new lodge, to be called DeMolay Lodge, petitioned the Grand Lodge for a dispensation. Hiram Lodge recommended the petition to the favorable consideration of the Grand Lodge, at its communication of January 20, 1860.

The lodge rooms heretofore occupied by a majority of the Masonic bodies of Buffalo, on the corner of Washington and Exchange streets, having ceased to be convenient for their accommodation, it was determined to move to more suitable quarters. The upper floor of the building on the corner of Main and Swan streets, known as Townsend Hall, was selected and rented from its owners at an annual rent of $400, and suitably fitted up and furnished by the lodges who had heretofore met at the corner of Washington and Exchange streets.

It was on the 1st of August, 1861, that Hiram Lodge held its first communication in the new hall, which was properly dedicated to the use of Masonry, by the Grand Master of the State, M. W. Brother Finlay M. King, on the 27th of December, of the same year.

On the 22d of January, 1864, Hiram Lodge received a communication from the president and secretary of the great Central Fair which was to be held in Buffalo on the 22d of February, for the benefit of the sick and wounded of the army and navy, to which the lodge responded on the 5th of February by a donation of $200.

On the 2d of August, 1864, the lodge adopted a resolution to participate in the laying of the corner-stone of the First Universalist Church, in Buffalo, and on the 2d of September, resolved to appropriate $5 of the amount received with each petition for degrees and membership, for the hall and asylum fund.

The lodge deposited the remains of Brother Daniel D. Bidwell, with masonic ceremonies, on the 30th of October, 1864. Brother Bidwell had during the war attained the rank of Brigadier-General in the volunteer army of the United States, and died a hero's death at the battle of Cedar Creek, West Virginia. With the destruction by fire of the American Hotel and adjoining buildings in Buffalo on the 25th of January, 1865, two Masonic halls fell a prey to the devastating element, making a number of lodges homeless. Hiram Lodge immediately determined to offer to one of the lodges the temporary use of their hall for every alternate Friday, the regular nights of its meeting being on Friday of each week. A reso-
olution was adopted at the same time to confer with the other Masonic bodies to take in consideration the feasibility of erecting a Masonic Hall for the use of the lodges in this city. The lodge at once subscribed $1,500 to the capital stock of the Masonic Hall Association. The other lodges and individual masons responded liberally to the call and the amount subscribed reached the handsome sum of $30,000. Unfortunately, however, the unsettled state of the financial affairs of the country interfered with the carrying out of the project and the plan was reluctantly abandoned.

The lodge accepted the invitation extended by the trustees of Forest Lawn Cemetery to assist in the laying of a memorial stone September 26, 1866, and on the 8th of August, 1867, lent its aid in laying the cornerstone of the State Normal School at Fredonia, N. Y.; participated in laying the cornerstone for the State Normal School in Buffalo, April 15, 1869, and of the monument of the Firemen’s Benevolent Association in Forest Lawn Cemetery, July 23, 1869; of Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, July 13, 1871; of the City and County Hall, June 24, 1872; of the asylum for the insane, September 18, 1872; of the Soldier’s monument, Forest Lawn, October 21, 1880, and of the cornerstone of the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ monument, in LaFayette Square, July 4, 1882.

The petition of Brothers Kiene, Juengling, Breitweiser and others in November, 1869, to the Grand Lodge to grant a dispensation for a third German lodge in this city, met the approval of Hiram Lodge. No event of importance has occurred in the lodge for a number of years. In 1871–72, it contributed liberally to the hall and asylum fund and when in 1873, the financial crisis by which the country was overtaken compelled the Grand Lodge of the State to raise $100,000, Hiram Lodge advanced $500 towards it.

On the 10th of December, 1875, Hiram Lodge joined the Masonic Association formed for the purpose of leasing the fourth floor of Miller & Greiner’s building, on the northeast corner of Washington and North Division streets at the yearly rent of $1,500. The hall was fitted up in magnificent style. Hiram Lodge held its last communication in the old hall, corner of Main and Swan streets, on the 12th of March, 1876, and its first communication in the new hall, northeast corner of Washington and North Division streets, on the 24th of June of the same year, it being St. John’s day, and set apart for the dedication of the new Masonic Temple. The first regular communication of the lodge in the new hall took place July 14, 1876.

Brother Charles H. Rathbune, Master of Hiram Lodge, died July 28, 1879. Hiram Lodge, joined by a large number of members from other lodges in this city, escorted by Lake Erie and Hugh de Payens Commanderies, accompanied the remains to Forest Lawn, where they were deposited according to ancient Masonic rite.