

## CHAPTER 12

### SECRET SOCIETIES IN ANCIENT AMERICA

Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Free Masonry*, page 62, says:

"Among the many evidences of a former state of civilization among the aborigines of this country, which seems to prove their origin from the races which inhabited the Eastern hemisphere, not the least remarkable is the existence of fraternities bound by mystic ties, and claiming, like the Free Masons, to possess an esoteric knowledge, which they carefully conceal from all but the initiated."

"DeWitt Clinton relates, on the authority of a respectable native minister, who had received the signs, the existence of such a society among the Iroquois. They claim that their institution has existed from the era of the creation, the times of their meetings they keep secret, and throw much mystery over all their proceedings."

"Brinton tells us, in his instructive and interesting work on *The Myths of the New World*, (page 285) that among the red races of America, the priests formed societies of the different grades of illumination, to be entered only by those who were willing to undergo trying ordeals, whose secrets were not to be revealed under the severest penalties. The Algonkins had three such grades, the Waubino, the Meda, and the Jossakeed, the last being the highest. To this no white man was ever admitted. All tribes appear to have been controlled by these secret societies."

Baron Von Humboldt, than whom no better authority exists, says that these secret societies existed among the Indians of South America, notably among those occupying the country along the Orinoco river, in Venezuela, and of Peru.

Charles Francis Sanders in his book, "*The Indians of the Terraced Houses*," says: "Everyone who knows

the Pueblo Indian, knows that so far as his profession of Christianity goes it is his pastime, his real religion is that remarkable system of rites which his fathers have delivered to him as a trust from the foundation of the world."

Mr. Frank Cushing, was commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D. C., to make a study of the customs, manners, traditions and religion of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico (a tribe of Indians among whom the writer did missionary work more than fifty years ago) and he spent many years among these people. Cushing was adopted into the tribe and became one of their most influential chiefs. He discovered that there existed among them sacred orders, with their priests, their initiations and their sacred rites as carefully guarded as the secrets of the ancient sacred mysteries to which they bear a remarkable resemblance. To these fraternities he could not gain admission.

## II

### SECRET SOCIETIES AMONG THE MAYAS AND QUICHES

The peninsula of Yucatan forms the most southerly state of the Republic of Mexico. Cape Catoche, its northeasterly extremity, is one hundred and twenty miles southwest from Cape San Antonio on the southern coast of Cuba. Its length from north to south is about two hundred and fifty miles, and its breadth from east to west about one hundred and seventy-five miles.



TEMPLE OF KUKUL CAN  
God of the Feathered Serpent.

The entire formation of the country is fossiliferous lime stone, and the mean elevation is but a few feet above sea level, the highest point being less than a hundred feet. The entire country which is now covered with almost impenetrable forests and contains but a scanty population, was once the home of teeming millions of people, of whose civilization and intelligence the great cities, mighty temples, and palaces, the ruins of which are to be found in all parts of the peninsula, bear silent witness.

Yucatan was at one time in the remote past the center of a great government, composed of a highly civilized people whose dominion extended from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec on the north to Darien on the south, thus covering all that territory now known as Central America.

It was over this territory that Lindbergh, while on his recent good will visit to Central America, flew, at which time he discovered ruined cities, temples and castles which have never been visited, explored or charted by modern explorers.

Here stand the ruins of magnificent temples erected to the gods whom the people worshiped; palaces which were the homes of their kings, and the humble abodes of the peasantry. Among these the cities of Uxmal, Chichen Itza and Palenque appear to have been the centers of government, education, and art.

The majority of the present population of Yucatan consists of two native races known to us as the

Mayas and Quiches, both of the same root origin and who were occupants of the country at the time of the discovery of America by Columbus. These people are the unquestioned descendants of the builders of the great ruined cities to which reference is made. Two records which survived the destruction of every available written history that had been kept by these people that fell into the hands of the Spanish conquerors, are the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Quiches, and the Chimalpopoca Manuscript which has come to us through the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg. It is from these two manuscripts that the greater part of the ancient history of the people of Yucatan is obtained.

It is not the purpose of the author to enter into a discussion of the interesting history of these people, their government, their religion, and wonderful accomplishments, but to refer only to the particular portion of their history which applies to the question under consideration in this treatise, viz., did secret orders exist among them, of which the devil was the author?

Augustus Le Plongeon, French scholar and archaeologist, with his wife, devoted more than ten years to the study of the history, and archaeology of Yucatan. He learned the language of the Maya and Quiche Indians, became familiar with their traditions, and studied, and translated many hieroglyphic inscriptions which cover the walls of the rooms in their temples, and are inscribed upon their monuments.

In 1886 he published a book entitled "Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas and Quiches—their relation to the Sacred Mysteries of Egypt, Greece, Chaldea, and India." In this book the author undertakes to prove that Freemasonry existed in Yucatan before the construction of the temple built by Solomon, and that the mystic rites practised by the Mayas and Quiches had been handed down from the era of creation.

The entire volume, a book of 163 pages, is written for the purpose of proving that Freemasonry had its origin in America, and was taken from here to the people of the Old World.

While it is true that scholars did not accept his theory of the existence of Atlantis, a continent said to have existed, which connected America with the lands of the East, and which was sunk in the Atlantic Ocean, leaving Cuba and the islands which lie between America and Europe to mark its former location, or that Freemasonry had its origin on this continent, he did discover many important facts which have been accepted by those who have made a study of the subject treated. It is to some of these facts that the writer desires to call attention.

In the preface to his book *Le Plongeon* says:

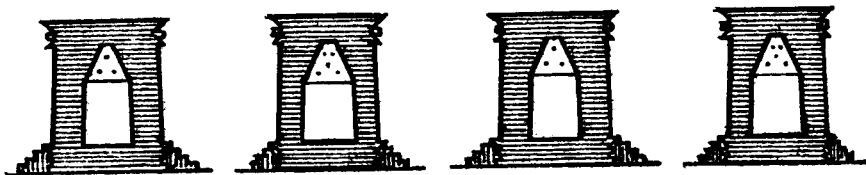
"In this small book I present only such facts as can be proved by the works of well known writers, ancient and modern, and by the inscriptions carved on stone by the Maya learned men and historians. I will endeavor to show you that the ancient sacred mysteries, the origin of Masonry consequently, date back from a period more remote than the most sanguine student of history ever imagined."

"I will try to trace the origin, step by step, to this continent which we inhabit, to America, from which Maya colonists transported their ancient religious rites and ceremonies, not only to the banks of the Nile, but to those of the Euphrates and the shores of the Indian Ocean.

"In the depths of the forests which cover Yucatan and Central America, hidden under a cloak of verdure, lie the remains of ancient cities; crumbling, awe-inspiring remains of grand old monuments, mementos of the power and civilization and the scientific attainments of the mighty races that erected them and have disappeared forever."

At Uxmal, one of the great cities of Yucatan, now in ruins, there stands one of the many remarkable structures which are to be found in that country in great numbers.

On the top of a pyramidal structure, the base of which is 214 feet in length and 107 feet wide, and which rises to the height of 95 feet, rests a building called by Le Plongeon "The Temple of Mysteries." The interior is divided into three rooms. The center room, which is the largest of the three, faces west, while the two other rooms face east. The ceiling of each room, like all similar buildings in Yucatan and Central America, forms a triangular arch. Inside the triangle formed in the north and south rooms by the converging arches the following symbols are inscribed on the wall:





GOVERNOR'S PALACE, UXMAL

One of the many beautiful ruins which are scattered over the peninsula of Yucatan.



In the center, below the main building, facing west, is a small structure known as the Sanctuary, or Holy of Holies. Referring to this building Le Plongeon says:

"A few centimeters above the entrance to the Sanctuary is a cornice that surrounds the whole edifice. On it are sculptured these symbols many times repeated. On the under part of this cornice are small rings cut in the stone, from which curtains are suspended, to hide the Holy of Holies from profane gaze."

"The exterior of the monument was once upon a time ornamented with elaborate and beautifully executed sculptures which have now in a great part disappeared. Still those which adorn the exterior walls of the sanctuary remain as specimens of the beautiful handiwork and of the great skill of the artists, while the exquisite architectural proportions of the whole edifice bespeak the mathematical and other scientific attainments of the architects who planned the building and superintended its construction. The ornaments that cover these walls are remarkable in more than one sense.

"They are not only inscriptions in the Mayan language written in characters identical with and having the same meaning and value as those carved on the temples of Egypt, but among them are symbols known to have belonged to the ancient sacred mysteries of the Egyptians, and to modern Freemasonry. In August, 1880, among the debris at the foot of the mound just described, I found pieces of what once had been the statue of a priest. The part of the statue from the waist to the knee, particularly attracted my attention. Over his dress the personage wore an apron with an extended hand, as shown in the adjoining

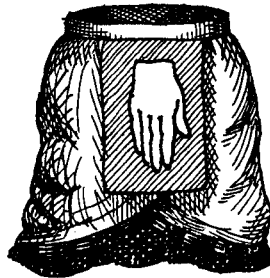


illustration. A symbol that will easily be recognized by members of the Masonic fraternity."

"Are we not right then if we surmise that the monuments of the Mayas existed 11,500 years ago, and that mysteries similar to those of Egypt were celebrated in them? To support that belief we have the symbols already mentioned as existing in the chambers, the construction of the chambers themselves, the sculptures carved on the cornice that surrounds the sanctuary, representing cross bones and skeletons, with arms and hands uplifted, tokens that many of the Masons again cannot fail to recognize; besides other emblems that I will endeavor to explain, which exist on the walls of the residence of the priests, an edifice adjoining the temple. This may be considered the oldest known edifice in the world consecrated to secret rites and ceremonies, and its builders the founders of the sacred mysteries that were transported from Mayax to India, Chaldea, Egypt, Etruria, by colorists or missionaries."



Stephens in his travels in Yucatan, published in 1855, refers to other buildings upon the walls of which the symbol of the skull and cross bones is repeatedly engraved.

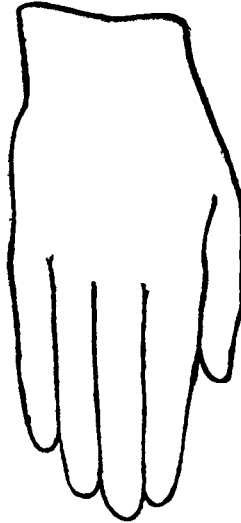
Le Plongeon tells us that according to the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Quiches, applicants for initiation into the sacred mysteries were required to undergo most trying ordeals before they were admitted. He describes these initiatory requirements in detail, and says:

"These were the awful ordeals through which the candidate for initiation into the sacred mysteries had to pass. Do they not seem an exact counterpart of what happened in a milder form at

the initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries, and also the greater mysteries of Egypt from which these were copied?"

"That sacred mysteries were celebrated from times immemorial in the temples of Mayax, Xibalba, Palenque, Copan, and other places of Central America, there can be no doubt, since besides the symbols sculptured on the walls of the temples and palaces, in two distinct instances we see the rites and trials and of initiation were imported into Peru by the ancestors of Manco initiation described in the Popol Vuh. The rites and ceremonies Copac, the founder of the Inca Dynasty."

Another interesting and important thing to which Le Plongeon calls attention is the fact that upon the walls of the ruined temples of Mexico and Central America one sees the red imprint of a human hand,



placed there with some imperishable pigment which leaves the imprint almost as fresh and clear as it was when made.

In a recent conversation with the author of "Mor-

monism and Masonry," he referred to a visit which he had made to the cave dwellings in San Juan County, Utah. He expressed great interest in that which he had seen there. Among other things he referred to the red imprint of a human hand on the wall of one of the rooms that he visited.

The writer was surprised to find that this symbol was found as far north as Utah. He had seen in various parts of Mexico this same red hand, similar to that shown on the apron of the figure which was excavated from the ruins of Uxmal by Le Plongeon.

What significance this symbol, a human hand dipped in blood or other pigment and pressed against the wall may have the writer cannot surmise, but that it had a significant meaning which was understood by the people of that period, from Yucatan on the south, to Utah on the north, is obvious.

The following is copied from a local newspaper of recent date, and is a dispatch from Amarillo, Texas:

"The trail which he has followed for 22 years, in quest of proof of an ancient race to which he believes the foundation of the modern Masonic lodge may be traced, has brought John Winthrop Sargent to the United States. He is in Texas to continue his research, which has taken him through Mexico, Central America, and most of the South American countries."

The purpose of this chapter is to submit proof that secret societies existed among the ancient inhabitants of America, with esoteric rites and ceremonies which bound the members together, and which were not to be broken or divulged. But a small portion of the available evidence has been presented, but it is sufficient.