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THOUSAND MASONS SEE DEDICATION OF HOME.

Gathering of Lodgemen and Their Families at Bayamon Last Sunday Marks Important Masonic Event.

One of the largest and most important Masonic festivals ever held in Porto Rico, took place last Sunday when more than a thousand members of the Masonic lodge and their families, met some two miles out from Bayamon to dedicate the Masonic Home which has been in project for sometime.

Not so long ago it was discovered that this property, which once belonged to the Mission Board of the Christian Church, was for sale, and someone intimated that it would be a good place for a Masonic Home. With only \$250.00 in hand arrangements were made for the purchase of the property which is a two story concrete building with a spacious dormitory, several other rooms, and good schoolrooms on the first floor, with nine acres of land surrounding it.

The campaign for raising funds to buy the place was headed by the lodges of San Juan, some of which contributed \$500.00 others \$150.00 and \$1000.00. Then appeals were made to the lodges in the different towns of the island who responded eagerly by each member giving one dollar, and as many of these lodges had a membership of one hundred a 100% pledge was obtained in several cities and towns. The masters of several of the lodges showed such genuine interest in pushing the project, that they gave the money pledged in advance, and collected it from the members later. Others, in

order to lend enthusiasm to the scheme pulled out a \$5.00 bill, and said "I'll start the budget with this much" so \$4,000, which was the first payment to be made on the property, was soon raised, and a transfer of deed was made to the Masons. The actual cost of the place is \$12,000 and the remaining \$8,000 is to be made in yearly payments until the debts is entirely paid.

The problem of the up-keep of the institution has been solved by the fact that each lodge will become responsible for one or more inmates in the home, so that if the minimum sum per month for the maintenance of each child is \$6.00 that amount will be paid in by the lodge that sends the child. The personnel of the institution will receive salaries from the Grand Lodge or Central Administrative body of the Masonic order in Porto Rico. If everything turns out as expected the institution will be opened by the first of April. It has been started for the benefit of Masons whose health makes it impossible to educate their children or support them, and widows and orphans of Masons. While the property now secured for the home is not equipped with all the necessary facilities for the care of girls it may be possible to look after a few, and those interested in the work believes that there is no reason why this building should not be eventually assigned to the exclusive use of the boys while another may be obtained later on for girls, and Masons too old to work, or their widows.

The aim is not to teach the boys to raise sugar-cane, but to look after a five or ten acre farm, raise potatoes, beans, corn, fruit, and everything needed in family life so that when they leave the institution if they haven't anything else in view but a patch of ground they will know how to take care of it and make a living out of it. They will also be taught other trades and crafts according to their natural tendencies. The girls are to be educated in the same manner, much stress to be laid upon domestic science and needlecraft. There is a distinct understanding that every lodge which recommends and pays for the maintenance of inmates in the home shall look after them when they leave the institution, and see that they get a start in some line of business or industry.

The Board of Directors of the Masonic Home is as follows: Pedro del Valle, president; Angel Archilla Cabrera, secre-

tary; Manuel Calderon, treasurer, and Manuel Arroyo. There is also a visiting board of ladies of the Eastern Star order to give practical suggestions on the needs of the home.

The dedication was held on Washington's birthday as some years ago it was decided that February 22nd should be kept as a Masonic festival, so this seemed to be the appropriate date for the formal opening of the institution. Bayamon Masons did royally by preparing a fine lunch for the big crowd. Twenty-five "lechones asados" were done to a turn and an abundance of other good things to eat awaited the visitors. Thirty-six towns were represented at the dedication, and someone counted 464 automobiles all told. There was no formal program, and no prepared speeches. Two trees which had been donated by Miss Margaret Leitch were planted. This was done in order that the Masonic Home might have a part in the campaign inaugurated by Governor Yager last year in which he asked that a million fruit trees, all of valuable species should be planted throughout the island. The trees planted were an East India Mango and a Guatemala aguacate. They were chosen because they have been approved by the Department of Agriculture and Labor as worthy of extensive planting throughout the island.

In addition to ideal weather and plenty to eat, there was music. A band from San Juan, and another from Bayamon made things lively and just like all "fiestas" in Porto Rico folks danced until it was time to start home—*Porto Rico Progress, Feb. 20th.*

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