

THE LIFE OF. BRO.PAUL M. SCHNEIDAU

by

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Union Lodge No. 172

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Paul M. Schneidau was born September 21, 1849, in New Orleans, approximately a year and a half after the cessation of the Mexican War. He received his elementary education in Rouen, France and his secondary and university education at Cambridge University in England.

Upon returning to the United States, he became associated with the Peoples' Homestead Association, eventually becoming president.

In 1887 he went into the wholesale distributorship of coal. His firm sold merchandise to steamboats, steamships, plantations, rice mills, cotton presses, and foundries. The company was named the Wood and Schneidau Company. His partner was named John A. Wood. The business remained in operation until 1897. It was located at the corner of Race & Levee Streets adjacent to the Mississippi River wharves. The business office was at 43 Carondelet Street with a telephone number of 576.

After selling the coal business, he became sales representative for the Pittsburg Coal Company, a major producer in the mining regions of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1916.

Paul M. Schneidau was quite fluent in French, Spanish, German, and English, and had a smattering of other languages. He was an active leader in the promotion of foreign and domestic trade through the Port of New Orleans, and was a long-time member of the New Orleans Board of Trade and chairman of its Maritime Committee. In addition to his activity with the New Orleans Board of Trade, he was also a member of the New Orleans Cotton Exchange.

His civic contributions were centered around beautification projects of the City of New Orleans. He was a board member of the City Park Improvement Association for many years and held the office of Treasurer until his death.

Brother Schneidau's Masonic career was a succession of accomplishments and distinctions bringing honor to himself, his lodge (Union Lodge No. 172 F& AM.), and appendant Masonic bodies. He received the three symbolic degrees in 1874 in Union Lodge No. 172 and became Worshipful Master in 1883 where he served continuously until 1890. During the years 1890-1893 he served as Secretary and was again elected Worshipful Master for the Masonic years 1892 and 1893. He served the Grand Lodge of Louisiana as District Deputy Grand Master.

His activity in the Scottish Rite bodies consisted of serving as Venerable Master of the Albert Pike Lodge of Perfection and Wise Master of the Pelican Chapter of the Rose Croix No.11. He was coronated a 33° Inspector General Honorary of the Scottish Rite, November 26, 1892.

In the Shrine he was elected Potentate of Jerusalem Temple in 1900.

Paul M. Schneidau was a devoted family man and was married to the former Margaret Trompy. They had four children, two sons, Arthur J. and P. Selfton Schneidau, and two daughters, Mrs. William P. Conery and Mrs. Jules Lee. At the time of his death, he resided at 1323 Esplanade Avenue with his wife.

Paul Schneidau lived during the Post Civil War recovery period, the Gay nineties, and the “Gilded Age” of American Culture. It was an age of American expansionism in the Caribbean area; an age of technological growth and industrial expansion and vast waves of immigration. During this period, Paul Schneidau left his mark on our nation and our fraternity.

Bro. Schneidau’s full Masonic burial rites were conducted by the combined efforts of the Grand Consistory of Louisiana, the Camp Guards of the Grand Consistory, and Union Lodge No. 172, F &A.M. Services were held at the Scottish Rite Cathedral at 619 Carondelet Street with burial at Greenwood Cemetery. He was 67 years old at the time of his death.

It is a rare occasion that a Masonic Lodge has the privilege of sponsoring another lodge. Union Lodge No. 172 had this privilege, and it is credited with the introduction and sponsorship of the Paul M. Schneidau “Under Dispensation.” The dispensation was granted November 5, 1920 and the Lodge was chartered on May 8, 1921 as Paul M. Schneidau Lodge No. 391.

We of Union Lodge No. 172 F &A.M. are most pleased to claim credit for such a distinguished Lodge operating in the Scottish Rite ritual, a Lodge that is to be commended for its achievement and contribution to our Masonic Fraternity.

Bibliographical Sources

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- 3- Simms, George A. Notables of New Orleans, Press of George A. Simms, New Orleans, 1905. 264pps.
- 4- Times-Picayune Publishing Co. Times Picayune August 30, 1917, Page 2, Column 7 and Page 5, Column 6