

CHIRIQUI LODGE 391 BACKSTORIES

(most of the following is derived from the book FROM KUNA AND CALUSA, written by Rick Obermeyer).

For many years, the smallest lodge in the Florida Area/ Section was a lodge that was over 1000 miles from the southernmost point in Florida. Chiriqui Lodge 391 was chartered to the Canal Zone Council in 1948, twenty-five years after the creation of the council in the Canal Zone, a 50 mile by 10 mile enclave of America within the nation of Panama. Members of the council were mostly from the families of servicemen assigned to one of several military bases in the Zone, the American governmental authority in the Zone, or families of employees working for the company that ran the Canal. In 1977, the US signed a treaty with Panama, that led to the turnover of the Canal to that nation. The council changed its name to Panama Canal Council, to reflect the change in the status of the Canal Zone. As more of the Canal's operation was turned over to Panama, fewer American employees were needed, so that the council was no longer sustainable. In 1987, Panama Canal Council was merged into Direct Service Council, and Chiriqui was dissolved, becoming a chapter of Gamenowinink Lodge 555.



Members of Chiriqui attended area and section events since the late 1960s, usually the smallest contingent in attendance. Members would often turn the trip into a week-long experience, visiting Florida attractions prior to the conference itself. As the smallest lodge, patches were often traded for a tremendous premium over the typical one-for-one.

S-7 (YEL marker used on a WHT border S-5 flap). With the creation of a WHT bordered flap for Ordeal and a RED border flap for Brotherhood members, Vigil members created their own flap, by running a yellow marker over the WHT border of the Ordeal flap. The number of flaps created this way is unknown, as members were observed at the 1977 National Conference creating their own.

S-8 (GMY border). This became a true Vigil flap, with the manual removal of the border of other flaps with a seam ripper, replaced with a gold mylar merrowed border sewn by the mother of one of the lodge members. On some, the GMY thread was sewn over a border that had not been removed.

S-12 (thin GMY border). The Taiwanese supplier of the S-10 and S-11 sent 24 flaps without borders. These were taken to a local company that sewed a thin GMY border. The supplier later sent 100 with a regular GMY border (S-13).

S-14 (ORG border, "E Urner Goodman Memorial"). This had been created prior to S-13, but 50 flaps arrived with an ORG border. With the passing of Dr. Goodman, these were sold as a "memorial" issue.

S-28 ("National Honor Lodge"). Fifty made in 1988, sold 1/ activity. While these were sold after the dissolution of the lodge, the creation and order of the flap occurred prior to the official dissolution date of June 30, 1987.

"P" patches. Meant to be sewn onto an old-style blue Explorer neckerchief. These were sold loose by the lodge.