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The national expansion of the Rotary Organization

Some notes prepared by Leif B AXELSSON

Rotary was founded in Chicago 1905 and in 1908 the word was brought to San Francisco by Manuel Munõz. He met with attorney Homer Wood, who was attracted by the idea and he got engaged to charter the world's second Rotary Club on November 12, 1908. Paul Harris had been heard saying "*Rotary in Chicago was something definite, understandable; Rotary in San Francisco and New York was vague, shadowy, visionary, probably quite impossible*". However the initial members where no speculators and had never know failure.

Now it was done and by the same group of founders, only fourteen days thereafter, the third Rotary Club was founded in Oakland, across the bay. 25 charter members inaugurated Tri-City RC (Alameda, Berkely and Oakland) on 4th of December 1908. The name was changed in 1911 to Oakland RC.

Seattle and Los Angeles would follow. After initial four years as a single club event in seven month Rotary had expended to five clubs including a presence in the West coast's four largest cities.

A dispute followed in Los Angeles and a person formed his own corporation called the National Rotary Club and with different objectives. A bitter fight followed as the latter managed to register their club and the name why they were formally the first Rotary Club registered in L.A. Even they wanted to expand and a race started who could first register the name in the other cities. The traditional Rotary was then first and the winner of the registration race. Herbert Quick, the motor of the rival Rotary was after some time thrown out of his club and by that the clubs could settle and merged in one traditional Rotary Club of Los Angeles – with 300 members!

The trade mark Rotary was rescued. Later Paul Harris and his friends formed an executive committee and more formally planned for further expansion. New York was next and on 24 of August 1909 the decision was taken by 100 charter members to start at a RC in N.Y – club number six. In December Boston formed the seventh club and club no. eight started in January 1910 in Tacoma, just south of Seattle. Next to go was Minneapolis with 65 charter members, growing in a week to 80 and a year later to 163 – club no. nine. The day after, close by the 10th club was formed in St. Paul.

The world now, after five years, had the first 10 Rotary Clubs established with hundreds of Rotarians. In the same year, 1910 further six clubs was formed across America and by this they started to organize a national club structure with convent, voting delegates, observers and guests.

The agreed to form the National Association of Rotary Clubs of America and on 15th of August 1910 it was done during the very first convent.