

History of The Ancient Order of Hibernians

The Ancient Order of Hibernians was founded in America on May 4, 1836, when a unit was established in New York City.

The idea of organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians was known in Ireland long before the birth of Christ. In those days the men of Ireland grouped themselves into special types of organizations called "Orders." Among the "Orders" were: "Knights of the Golden Chain," the Bardic Order," and "The Knights of the Red Branch." These ancient fraternities were powerful units long before the dawn of Christianity.

When St. Patrick came to Ireland in the Fifth Century, these Ancient Orders embraced Christianity and built schools and monasteries. When in the early 1500's the long persecution of the Catholic Church and the Irish nation began, the men of Ireland naturally set up an organization that was patterned after the Ancient Orders with which they were long familiar. The Ancient Order of Hibernians was organized in 1520 in Ireland to protect the Mass, the Priest and the Church. From 1536 to 1547 it resisted the efforts of King Henry VIII to make himself instead of the Pope head of the Catholic Church. It fought the armies of Queen Elizabeth from 1560 to 1603 and defied her plans to exterminate the Irish Catholics by dungeon, fire and sword.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians fought Oliver Cromwell from 1649 to 1658. The Order's purpose of protecting the Mass, the Priest and the Church took on added significance when Cromwell by law decreed that "priests were to be found guilty of high treason and those who sheltered them guilty of felony." In 1655 Cromwell ordered "every priest found in the country to be arrested and either executed or sold as a slave to the Barbados Island." Cromwell paid more money for the head of a priest than for the head of a man-eating wolf which at that time brought a reward of

three pounds.

A mounting wave of religious bigotry, discrimination, mob action and violence in the 1830's brought the Ancient Order of Hibernians to America. On Aug. 11, 1834, The Ursuline Convent in Boston was burned by a mob which called itself "Native Americans." At the same time there arose an organization which called itself the American Protective Association. Whenever a member of this association was arrested for crimes of violence against Catholics and questioned, his stock answer was "I know nothing." To combat these activities the AOH was established in America on May 4, 1836, for the same purpose as in Ireland: to protect the Mass, the Priest and the Church. The Division that was formed in New York City that year continues to this day..

By 1840, the AOH spread to Newark, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The reason was to counter plans of the "Native American" and "Know Nothing" organizations which were active in these regions. In May 1844, the "Know Nothing" organization physically attacked Catholics and burned the church, rectory and convents of St. Michael's and St. Augustine's parishes in Philadelphia. They also threatened other churches in Philadelphia. The "Hibernian Greens," a company of Irishmen in the local military forces, were among those who, with civilian Hibernians, defended Philadelphia's churches from attack.

In April 1844, the "Know Nothing" organization advanced and prepared to burn the old St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. Archbishop John Hughes of New York called in the Hibernians to defend it. Armed with muskets they manned the walls, while others manned swiftly erected barricades in the streets. Their action turned away the "Know Nothing" mob that had come to burn the Cathedral. The action is recalled to this day in a

plaque on the front wall of St. Patrick's and it reads as follows:

"Erected to the memory of the members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians of the City of New York who like their Irish fathers of old were ready to sacrifice their lives for religious freedom and the right to worship God as their conscience dictated and who in April 1844, at the call of the most Rev. John Hughes, first archbishop of New York City, rallied to the defense of this Cathedral when it was threatened with destruction by the forces of bigotry and intolerance."

Resolute Hibernian action such as this also turned away church-burning "Know Nothing" mobs in other sections of the country during the 1844-56 period of "Know Nothing" activity.

In the Civil War, whole Divisions of the AOH volunteered and entered the armies at a time when other young were buying themselves out of the draft for one hundred dollars each. The Hibernian Divisions were active in opening the way for Catholic nuns to go on the battlefield as nurses for the sick and wounded. There was no organized nurses corps in the Civil War and the nuns took over that duty. In 1924, a monument to the "Nuns of the Battlefield" was erected in Washington, D.C. by the Ladies Auxiliary of the AOH on land donated by Act of Congress. It is dedicated to the 600 nuns of twelve religious communities who volunteered to serve in the Civil War. Official records show that 306 of these nuns were born in Ireland.

Today the Society is striving to unite our people in one vigorous Organization with aims to perpetuate in America the spirit of our Catholic ancestors and to preserve the ideals and make known the history of the race and to guard and defend the principles of civil and religious liberty in our own heaven blest land.

Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.

Joseph D. Duellk Jr. - Division #1 - Orange County, NY
 P.O. Box 337
 Monroe, New York 10950



Membership Application

I hereby apply for admission into the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc., and agree that my reception and continuance in said Order shall depend upon the truthfulness of my answers to the questions which are hereto attached, which answers are made by me for the purpose of obtaining admission into the Order.

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| My name is _____ Occupation _____ Age _____ Born on _____ What is you wife's name? _____ What was your mother's maiden name? _____ Are you a Roman Catholic? _____ Have you complied with your religious duties within the past 12 months? _____ Do you belong to any society to which the Catholic Church is opposed? _____ Name of parish church _____ | Residence _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone (Home) _____ Business Address _____ Phone (Business) _____ Are you Irish by birth or descent _____ Were you ever a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc., and if so, in what city, town and State? _____ _____ What was the number of your Division? _____ What was the cause of your withdrawal? _____ |
| E-Mail Address: _____ | Irish County Connection: _____ |

I do solemnly pledge my sacred word and honor that the answers I have given to the above questions are true.

Applicant _____ Date _____

PROPOSER'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify on my honor as a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc., that I am acquainted with the above applicant. I know him to be a practical Catholic, and one worthy in every way to become a member of this Order.

Proposer's Signature _____

Date _____

DIVISION PRESIDENT'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this application has been read by me at a regular meeting and that the applicant has been elected by the membership of this Division on the

_____ day of _____ 20 _____

Signed _____
President

REPORT ON APPLICATION

Your Committee, to whom was referred this application, would respectfully report that we have investigated the qualifications of said applicant for membership in the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc., and recommend him.

Committee

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the initiation fee of \$ _____
 has been paid on the _____ day of _____ 20 _____

Signed _____
Financial Secretary