

**ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIAN
HANDBOOK
ROCHESTER, NY**

HISTORY

The Ancient Order of Hibernians is a Catholic Irish-American Fraternal Organization. The AOH was established, in NYC, in 1836, to assist the onset of the large number of Irish immigrants. The AOH traces its roots back to Ireland's AOH, which was founded 300 years ago. In New York City, in 1836, the Irish were looked down upon and down right hated. The Irish had two things when they came to the U.S., their poverty and religion. Catholic churches were being burned in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. There was a high level of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Irish sentiment. The Hibernians stood guard around St. James Church and battled the members of the No-Nothing Party, who wanted to burn it down. A number of Catholic Churches were burned in NYC. Initially, the AOH was filled with Irish born members fiercely committed to their Catholic faith. The Hibernians set up a social organization that aided the Irish and their families. As more and more Irish came to our country, second and third generation Irish Catholics were making up a large part of the organization. This organization started in Rochester in the 1860's. The motto of the AOH is Friendship, Unity, and Christian charity. Today the AOH serves the Irish and Irish-American community through charitable works and service.

ORGANIZATION

The AOH is divided into divisions. Each division has a president and an executive board. The next level up is the County Board, which unites all the divisions in the county. The County Board has a president. There has to be at least two divisions in a county to have a County Board. Each state has a State President and a State Board of Officers. On the top of the AOH structure is the National Board, which is made up of the National President and the National Board of Officers. Every two years, each state has their state convention to elect new officers and legislate changes in the odd years. The National Board has the National Convention every two years on the even years. There are approximately 200,000 Hibernians in the U.S. The most famous Hibernian was John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Many divisions are named after him. The National Board's highest honor is the JFK Award. This award was presented to Gerry Adams one year and Congressmen Pete King and Chris Matthews from MSNBC in the recent past. The AOH is at the forefront of other Irish issues such as immigration, the McBride Legislation and through the Freedom For All Ireland Committee a peaceful and just end to the issues that divide Ireland today.

ROCHESTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There were at least 12 divisions in the 1930's. During the 1960's and 70's, Irish-Americans lost their commitment to their heritage. Many were focused on being Americans. As the 1990's approached, there was a resurgence in Irish-Americans being committed to their heritage and culture of being Americans of Irish decent. There were two divisions in Rochester in the late 1990's. Membership was declining. A change in leadership and the total commitment by a number of brothers changed our make up. The AOH went from 25 total members in 1996 to almost 150 in 2003. Division 2 and Division 7 united bringing a great amount of experience and knowledge from the members in Division 2. Our corporation has \$65,000 in an account that will be used to purchase our own Hibernian Hall and Irish Cultural Center.

The Rochester AOH raised money and purchased one of the only 1500 BOOK OF KELLS. This recreation has been placed in the St. John Fisher Library for students to study the ancient writings of monks detailing the New Testament.

There is a special relationship between the AOH and St. John Fisher College.

In 1996, the AOH, to commemorate the victims of the Great Hunger, erected an Irish Famine Monument. It is a moving piece of stone placed behind the library with sentiments on each side detailing the tragedy.

Every summer the AOH sponsors the Irish Open golf tournament and money raised goes to the Rochester Irish Children's Program, that brings children from N. Ireland here for the summer to escape the violence in their homeland.

Throughout each year the AOH donates time and money to a variety of causes and charities.

The AOH stresses family. Each year a family picnic is held and during the year a hospitality room is set up for friends and family to get together during and after the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Irish Day, at Frontier Field, was the largest ethnic event at Frontier ever.

Every player on the Red Wings team wears an AOH/Red Wing hat during the game. A number of local celebrities have thrown out the first pitch.

A number of Hibernians have been selected as parade Grand Marshall, Bob Kelly, Kevin Murray, Eileen Fee and Bill Lawler.

MISSION

To increase quality membership. The AOH is a cross section of society, tradesmen, small businessmen, large corporation workers, professionals, police and firemen. This diversity in employment is an excellent example of why this organization works so well. We are united by faith and heritage. We need to increase members of different backgrounds and professions.

To purchase our own club or hall and establish an Irish cultural Center. After the convention a corporation president should be named to get this process in gear.

At least three meetings a year dedicated to education and heritage.