



THE HISTORY OF MAINE IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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Chapter One: The Beginning of the Knights of Columbus.

We all know that the Knights of Columbus was formed by Fr. Michael J. McGivney at St. Mary's Parish in New Haven, Connecticut on March 29, 1882. Father McGivney had been working with the poor, uneducated Irish immigrant population of New Haven about forming an organization of Catholics to protect themselves in difficult financial times. They considered forming a sodality of St. Mary's parish. The then Bishop Lawrence T. McMahon of the Diocese of Hartford was asked for his approval. His request was rejected. After much research they considered forming the Connecticut Order of Foresters. This name was changed to the Sons of Columbus and finally changed to the Knights of Columbus. On March 29, 1882 the Knights of Columbus were legally and formally chartered in the state of Connecticut. That which was to be considered to be a parish organization became a State-wide society. The first formal meeting of the Knights of Columbus was held at Smith's Hall, Chapel Street, New Haven on April 6, 1882. A few months later the Supreme Council was established and upon which was conferred the highest honor and authority within the Order. The power of this body was all-inclusive excepting in the matter of amendments to the Constitution, and so it has remained to this day. There was no ritual at the time but a provisional ceremonial had been adopted in three sections or degrees, and these formed the basis of the three degree of the Order as we know them today. The first subordinate council formed was the San Salvador Council #1 in New Haven. Bishop McMahon reviewed the degree ritual and gave his complete approval for the Knights of Columbus to spread to other parishes in Connecticut. Father McGivney did not live long enough to see his dream come to reality. Father McGivney died at the age of thirty seven due to progressive effects of tuberculosis in 1890.

The first 48 councils of the order were all in Connecticut. Next came the formation of 12 councils in neighboring Rhode Island. The first council of New York was #60 located in Brooklyn, N.Y. on September 23, 1891. The first council in Massachusetts was formed on April 10, 1892 in Boston.

Maine's first council was located in Portland. Council #101 was instituted on August 12, 1894. Five hundred Knights from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island chartered the special ship "City of Portland" and travelled from Boston Harbor to Portland to participate. The ceremony was held in City Hall under the direction of State Deputy James F. Hayes of Massachusetts, assisted by a staff from Lowell and Bunker Hill Councils.

Chapter Two: The Knights of Columbus Grows in Maine