



THE HISTORY OF MAINE IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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Chapter Three: The Early years of Knighthood in Maine

Who was our first State Deputy? JOSEPH A. McGOWAN 1896-1898 His biography.

Joseph A. McGowan was elected our first State Deputy at our first State Convention in Portland Harbor on May 30, 1896. He was born in Ireland on July 21, 1859 and came with his parents to live in Portland, ME. After being educated in the public schools of Portland he entered the employ of the Grand Trunk Railway Company in Portland. He filled various positions of trust in that company rising to cashier and accountant. He was also a director and chairman of the finance committee of the Falmouth Loan and Building Association and vice-president of the Forest City Loan and Building Association. Brother McGowan identified himself with some of the best societies, having the interest of the Church, and the intellectual improvement of their members. For ten years he was superintendent of the Cathedral Sunday School, and was an ex-president of the Grattan Literary Association.

In the political field he filled various offices, having been first elected a member of the common council in 1886, during which year Portland celebrated its centennial. He served four years in the common council, and was elected president of that body in 1892. During the years 1893 and 1894, he served his city in the capacity of alderman, and later was a member of the Portland school board. To him belongs the credit of first establishing free public evening schools in Portland.

When it was decided to form a council of the Knights of Columbus in Portland, Maine, Mr. McGowan was invited among others, to push the work forward. The council was instituted on August 12, 1894, and was unanimously elected as its grand knight. In March, 1895, the Supreme Knight appointed him District Deputy for the whole state of Maine. This was before there was even a state council. At the state convention in Portland on May 30, 1896, Mr. McGowan was elected State Deputy and was re-elected in February, 1897.

For several years he was a delegate to the "national board", now known as the Supreme Convention, at which time he acted as one of the assistant secretaries. He also attended the meetings of the board of directors, which causes us to assume that he was one of the Supreme Board of Directors at that time. He organized several of the early councils in the state and conferred the major degree in several places.

That the organization in Maine owes its early establishment to "Joe" McGowan is evidenced in the fact that he organized the first seventeen councils in the state:

101 Portland	106 Lewiston	114 Bangor	136 Rockland	146 Frankfort	148 Waterville	149 Calais
152 Orono	169 Rumford Falls	172 Old Town	188 Lubec	214 Houlton	249 Bath	260 Biddeford
320 Chisholm	334 Augusta	342 Montague.				

