



THE HISTORY OF MAINE IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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Chapter THIRTY ONE : Robert J. Ouellette 1952-1955

On the twenty-seventh of March 1916, at Brunswick, our 28th State Deputy was born. He was the son of Cyprien Ouellette and Marie Ann Plourde Ouellette. They chose for his name, Robert Joseph. Robert attended At. John's Parochial school and was graduated from Brunswick High School with the class of 1935. While attending high school, he worked part time as a clerk in the W. T. Grant Store and continued as a full time clerk after graduation. He worked for this store for a total of ten years. In November of 1940, Robert started work at the Bath Iron Works and learned the trade of ship-fitter. He continued to live in Brunswick and commuted daily. He was motivated in taking employment here for two reasons: first, the wages were much higher than elsewhere, and secondly, the war clouds of World War Two were very dark and the government was preparing for any eventuality and requested everyone to seek employment in defense work, if possible, as a patriotic duty. Mr. Ouellette has continued his employment there until he retired as a Supervisor in February, 1981 after a total of over 40 years.

On September 1, 1941, he married Sylvia Beatrice Nickerson and they have two daughters; Margaret Ann and Beatrice Arlene.

As a freshman at high school, Bob as he was affectionately known, took part in cross country running. However, due to the fact that there were eight children in the family, Bob gave up sports in order to take part time work to help support the family. Later, he became a member of the semi-pro Brunswick Bears football team and continued to play until an injury forced him to conclude all active participation in this sport in 1940. He had played a total of nine years.

In 1937-38, Bob organized a semi-pro Knights of Columbus hockey team, which won the State Championship the first year at the old St. Dom's Arena in Lewiston. The second year the K of C team played in the New England Championship at Concord, N.H. Bob continued to play hockey with the team until the football injury in 1940 forced him to retire as a player but he continued to coach the team. In the 1941-1942 season, this team that he coached completed an undefeated season of twenty-two games. For a ten year period the team won forty-five games and lost but ten. Besides football and hockey, Bob also coached, or managed softball, volley ball and bowling for the Knights of Columbus Council #1947.

At Bath Iron Works, Bob helped organize the American for a period of five years. In 1942, he joined the local fire department as a call-man and he made a Second Lieutenant in 1945, within three years. He made Captain within five years later and served a total of 27 years in the department as a call-man.

Bob joined Sekenger Council #1947 in Brunswick on December 6th, 1936 at the age of twenty. He worked through the chairs, holding the offices of Warden, Chancellor and Deputy Grand Knight. The council elected him their Grand Knight in 1946 after filling out the unfinished term of the Grand Knight and serving the office for two additional years.

He was appointed a District Deputy at the same time he was elected Grand Knight and held this office simultaneously. This was the first and only time in the history of the Maine State Council that a Grand Knight and District Deputy held two offices at the same time.

During his tenure of office as Grand Knight, he organized a walking blood bank and with the celebration of the Centennial year 1982, Bob himself will have donated 100 pints of blood.

He served five years as District Deputy, or until 1951, when he was elected State Secretary, which office he held for one year before being elected State Deputy at the convention held in Houlton in 1952. He was the second youngest State Deputy ever elected to this high office at that time.

He held the office for three terms and during this three year period, he gave his all to the promotion of the Order, traveling the length and breadth of the state, speaking, reorganizing, encouraging those leaders who might be having troubles, conferring with the clergy. He was out six and seven nights a week. He was endowed with a drive, a passion, for the cause he espoused. His close friends were concerned about his health and urged him to let up. At the convention held at Skowhegan, in 1955, Bob ran again for election for a fourth term.. This was a precedent, since no other person had ever run for a fourth term, in the Maine jurisdiction. He was defeated and the convention passed a resolution that the office of State Deputy be restricted to two consecutive terms, knowing while doing so that such action was not legal, but wishing to express the opinion of the delegates assembled. The vote was unanimous and was no reflection on State Deputy Ouellette, who was given a rising vote of confidence and Bob in return congratulated the winner.

Brother Ouellette is deeply religious. He not only leads an exemplary life but instills devotion to those whom he comes in contact. He is a close friend with the members of the clergy where ever he goes. He is a tireless worker, exceedingly conscientious in all his activities. He gives a lot, and in return expects much from his followers. He is a man who is deeply devoted to his family, who made great sacrifices of his companionship because he was away from home so much. While not being a member of the Total Abstinence League, he could well qualify, for he never uses alcoholic liquor in any form, neither does he drink tea or coffee, but confines himself to milk.

While a Fourth Degree member and having participated in all of the public functions, he never held office in his assembly until he retired as State Deputy. He was elected Faithful Comptroller in 1958.

Supreme Master Mulligan appointed Bob in 1961 to finish out the term of State Master William R. Provencher who resigned because of ill health. Bob received his own appointment as State Master of the District of Maine in 1962.

Another activity that gave Brother Ouellette much pleasure and satisfaction was the organization of the major degree staff of the Brunswick council. Over a period of years, this staff has exemplified over one hundred major degrees all over the state and was outstanding in this activity, being much sought for.

Of French-Canadian extraction, he was the fourth of his race to hold the highest office in the state, with credit and honor. While State Deputy, he instituted Belfast Council and four Columbian Squires Circles.

Brother Ouellette was appointed Financial Secretary of the Brunswick council by Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart in 1957 and it is due to his untiring efforts that the council is on a solid foundation to this day.

Bob was selected to be one of the first groups of Lectors in his parish and being able to speak French fluently, he lectured, at both the French and English speaking masses. He was commissioned a Eucharistic minister in 1978 and he faithfully brings communion to the hospitalized and shut-ins every week as well as distributing communion at the masses.

FOURTH DEGREE MASTER #9: William R. Provencher, SR- Waterville

William R. Provencher, Sr. served as District Master of the James A. Healy province from 1952 to 1955. He held degrees at Lewiston, Madawaska and Biddeford.

STATE CHAPLAIN 1953 to 1967: Rev. Daniel J. Haggerty

Father Haggerty was born on West Rose Hill in Lewiston on August 22, 1899. He was the only son of Daniel J. and Ellen Gainey Haggerty. Father Haggerty was a native of St. Patrick's parish and entered the Wallace Parochial School the first day it opened. From there he attended Lewiston High School, graduating in the class

of 1916. Four years later he received his bachelors degree from Holy Cross College, Worcester, MASSACHUSETTS. He completed his studies for the Priesthood at St. Mary's Seminary at Baltimore in 1924. He was ordained at Baltimore, June 13, 1925, by His Grace Archbishop Michael Curley.

Father Hagerty served as an assistant at the Cathedral in Portland, at St. Dominics in Portland, St. Mary's in Orono, Sacred Heart in Portland, St. Joseph's in Deering, and at St. Athanasius in Rumford. His first parish, as a pastor, was at Wilton on January 8, 1933. He was stationed there until September 1936 at which time he was transferred to St. Denis, at Fort Fairfield, where he served for eighteen years. It was while at Fort Fairfield that Bisop Feeney appointed Father Hagerty as State Chaplain of the Maine State Council, following the death of Father McCaffrey in December 1953.

In the summer of 1954, Father Hagerty was transferred to St. Patrick's in Lewiston, as the first native son to become pastor of the parish, and fourth pastor of the parish. And thus Father Hagerty became the eleventh State Chaplain of the Order in Maine. On Sunday October 23, 1955, a signal honor was paid to Father Hagerty for on this day a large class of Fourth Degree candidates was inducted in this patriotic degree and named the class in honor of Father Hagerty, as part of a three-day Diocesan Centennial celebration in the Waterville area.

Bishop of the Portland Diocese: Most Rev. Daniel J. Feeney, D.D. 1955-1969

Born on September 12, 1894, Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Feeney succeeded Bishop McCarthy upon his death and was consecrated as the seventh Bishop of the Diocese of Portland on September 12, 1955 (his 52nd birthday). Bishop Feeney Was a native Portland and graduated from Portland High School in 1912. He also studied at the Grande Seminary of Montreal before being ordained to the priesthood in 1921. From 1921 until his appointment as auxiliary bishop in 1946, Daniel Joseph Feeney held a variety of roles at parishes around Maine and also served as superintendent of diocesan schools. During his tenure as bishop, Bishop Feeney celebrated the centennial of the arrival of the first Bishop of Portland and established the Catholic Youth Organization as well as the predecessor agencies of Catholic Charities Maine. Bishop Feeney attended at four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. Bishop Feeney also opened a number of diocesan buildings during his time as bishop, including the Chancery. In February 1967, Coadjutor Bishop Peter Leo Gerety became apostolic administrator of the diocese due to the failing health of Bishop Fenney, who died on September 15, 1969.

State Convention for 1952 was held in Houlton in May, 1952

State Convention for 1953 was held in Old Orchard on May 30 – June 1, 1953

State Convention for 1954 was held in Rumford on May 29 - 30, 1954

State Convention for 1955 was held in Skowhegan on May 28 - 29, 1955