



*God Bless America*



Organized  
in 1894



*Ireland Forever*

## HISTORY OF THE LADIES ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians was organized in Omaha, Nebraska in 1894 as the "Daughters of Erin." The organization pledged itself to God and Country. Minnesota proudly claims the organization's First Charters in the Country; Division #1 - Hennepin Co., MN and Division #2, Washington Co., MN.

The primary purpose of the organization was to protect young immigrant Irish girls coming to the United States, to assist them in securing positions, and to offer support and encouragement; as well as assist the AOH in all of its efforts to perpetuate the memory of our ancestors, to aid the sick and needy, to defend the priests, our church and country.

In 1902 in Denver, Colorado, a National Advisory Board consisting of three (3) members of the Daughters of Erin was elected. Mrs. Mary Quinn of Illinois was elected Chairman. Also, in 1902, a resolution was adopted to establish a four years' scholarship to Trinity College, Washington D.C., The Lillian E. Fay Scholarship. The college was only four years old.

At the 1904 National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, the sum of \$10,000 was donated to Trinity College by the Daughters of Erin. The women were sponsors of a Grant which would enable, in part, young Catholic women to obtain benefits and challenges of a strong Catholic education. The first three recipients were Religious Sisters and returned to Trinity College as teacher administrators.

1906 at the National Convention held in Saratoga Springs, New York, the Ladies' Auxiliary, Ancient Order of Hibernians, was given the right to elect National Officers and to draft a Constitution which upon the approval of the AOH National President and the National Chaplain, would govern the Organization. Mrs. Anna Claire Malia Ruddy, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, was elected as the First National President of the LAOH.

1908, LAOH assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana for their first official National Convention. There had been a growth in membership to 56,000 and delegates from thirty-three (33) states and the Province of Quebec. Members

quickly realized the tremendous power of the organization. Within Divisions, sick and death benefits were established; the unemployed were assisted, and the immigrant Irish girls were given needed support of all types.

The Ladies Auxiliary was distinguishing itself by actual accomplishment of good. At the National Board meeting of 1913 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the National Vice-President was empowered to develop Junior Divisions. In 1914 with LAOH membership reaching 60,000; Junior Divisions were established and are functioning well in Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

To create a greater interest in the history of Ireland and of the Irish in American, the National Board, in its early years, instituted the Annual Irish History Essay Contests, currently titled, "Annual Irish History Writing Contest" and awarded prizes to the winners. These awards continue today to the winners in the Elementary and High School Levels.

Religious activities were faithfully attended by the members. Masses honoring St. Patrick, March 17<sup>th</sup> and St. Brigid, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, the patron and patroness of the Order, flourished throughout the country and the deceased members of the Order were remembered annually with special Masses.

1914, in Norfolk, Virginia at the National Convention, LAOH National President, Mrs. Helen Ryan Jolly, of Rhode Island, recommended with unanimous approval, the erection of a monument in Washington D.C. to honor the Sister-Nurses of the Civil War. This was accomplished September 20, 1924 when the Monument, sculpted by Jerome Connor, was ceremoniously unveiled in Washington, D.C. in the presence of leaders of our country and the hierarchy of the Church headed by His Eminence, William Cardinal O'Connor of Boston.

Upon conclusion of the project which erected the Nuns of the Battlefield Monument, the Auxiliary was asked to donate the St. Brigid's Altar to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. In May, 1927, National President Mary Timon Hogan presented a check for \$10,000 to the Most Reverend Thomas J. Shahan, Rector of the Catholic University of American. 1928, a Gold Chalice, designed from the celebrated Kilmallock chalice of the Dominican Priory in Limerick, Ireland which dates to 1639 A.D. was donated by the Order. Accompanying the Chalice was a 14 karat gold paten engraved with a Celtic Cross to match the Chalice. A Missal was added and in 1929, a Crucifix; all presented to the National Shrine for the St. Brigid's Altar. In the following years, a hand carved Missal Stand from the wood of the pews where the "Nuns of the Battlefield" had actually cared for the wounded as well as Candlestick of

gold with Celtic designs were presented along with generous donations of linens and vestments for use at the National Shrine.

1935 - Delegates of the National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland voted to name the Columban Missionary Order, the principal charity of the Ladies Auxiliary. In fifty-nine years (59) over one half million dollars have been contributed.

\$10,000 was raised to assist in building expenses of the Irish College in Rome.

During World War 1, the LLAOH contributed over \$11,000 to the Mass Outfit Fund for the Catholic Army and Navy Chaplains of the United States. Through the years, contributions have been made to victims of earthquakes and famines, scholarships, church windows, church artifacts, vestments, charitable donations and corporal works of mercy. The Order helped to defray the expenses of the building of the Shrine to Our Lady of Knock, in County Mayo, Ireland.

1976, the LAOH joined with the AOH in presenting a case to display the vestments of Archbishop John Carroll to the Catholic University of American; thus the vestments of American's first Roman Catholic Bishop, who was of Irish descent, could be viewed.

1978 National Convention of the Order in Killarney, Ireland, the women endorsed the proposal presented by the University of Notre Dame to establish the Hibernian Chair. This was the first Joint Vote and would enhance the Order and expand its capabilities for relating the story of the Irish to future generations and of the Irish commitments to their country and faith. Proposal adopted. Under the terms of the agreement between the Order and the University of Notre Dame, the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University administers the program and through a variety of ways seeks to promote the study of the Irish American experience. Grants that seek to encourage the study of Irish America are awarded to scholars who are working in this area of study and annually, the winner is announced on St. Patrick's Day.

The Hibernian Lecture Series commenced in 1982. Annually one or more distinguished scholars is invited to lecture at Notre Dame on some aspect of the Irish experience. Students and faculty attend these public lectures.

The Hibernian Endowment sponsors conferences at Notre Dame that relate to the study of the Irish in America. The Fund awards scholarship assistance to sons and daughters of AOH and LAOH members.

1978, at the National Convention, the right to vote for forthcoming Convention sites was granted to the LAOH. 1980, The LAOH delegates voted for the 1980

Convention site.

1985 the AOH dedicated an Obelisk at the Medal of Honor Grove, Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The Obelisk honored those recipients of the Medal of Honor not accredited to a state and of whom sixty-five are credited with Irish birth. The women assisted with the fund-raising activities and donated \$2,500 to the AOH for the Monument. In addition, the National Board of the Ladies' Auxiliary, Ancient Order of Hibernians donated and placed two matching granite benches on either side of the Obelisk.

October 19, 1985, the women of the Order completed the work begun at the 1982 National Convention in San Antonio, Texas and the new Constitution was completed and signed by the AOH National President, Joseph A. Roche. The word "AUXILIARY" was deleted and the organization officially assumed its new name, LADIES ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS, and gained jurisdiction over its own affairs. The Constitution was revised in 1996 and amended in 1998.

1995 - Project St. Patrick - A Joint Project of the AOH and LAOH was created to help increase and subsidize vocations through prayer, moral support and financial offering. The First Grants were awarded in 1996 and continue annually through a dedicated endowment Fund utilizing the accrued interest. Special consideration is given to applicants who are Hibernians members or sons/daughters of members.

March 2, 1986, the LAOH National Board officially opened the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the Founding of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America with a Mass of Thanksgiving at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. This tribute given the AOH by the LAOH, was in recognition of their many accomplishments and in appreciation for the then ninety-two (92) years of Association which the women's Order had shared with the men and the toast was given by LAOH National President, Sarah E. Murphy.

June 24, 1997, National President, Mary Paglione, addressed the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights and the concern of the LAOH with human rights abuses in Northern Ireland.

April 25, 1998, the LAOH National Board, Pennsylvania State Board and Divisions of Lackawanna County, Pa. honored the memory of our First National President, Anna Malia Ruddy, of Scranton, Penna. in a Dedication Ceremony and Memorial Celebration at Cathedral Cemetery, Scranton, Pa.

There has been High visibility of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians marching for many years in the *March for Life* to attest, in their determined efforts, to defend the unalienable and paramount right to life of our born and pre-born brothers and sisters.

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians is a fraternal, charitable organization, promoting the ideals, perpetuating the history and traditions of the Irish people and promoting Irish Culture. In addition to all the Major Projects that the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians has been involved in, the Order has made significant contributions to various local charities, assisted in appeals for the Retired Religious, and scholarship funds. Currently the membership is about 12,000 in 27 States with seven (7) Degree Teams .

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc. Was Incorporated 08/27/2004.

501c3 Status granted to the LAOH, Inc. March 6, 2007

John J. Burns Library, Boston College, Home of Archival Documents of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, as of November 1, 2007.

Five National Presidents from Pennsylvania:

Mrs. Anna Malia Ruddy .....	1906-1912
Mrs. Mary Timon Hogan .....	1925-1929
Mrs. Lenore Shea .....	1948-1952
Mrs. Margaret Cooney .....	1998-2000
Mrs. Dorothy Weldon .....	2006-2008

The theme of the LAOH Centennial Celebration:  
A CENTURY OF DEDICATION TO RELIGION, HERITAGE AND CHARITY.  
symbolizes the work of:  
THE LADIES ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

*Dorothy Flaherty Weldon*  
National Irish Historian  
Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians  
January 25, 2001 - updated 2013.

*Sources:*

*LAOH Informational data - Sarah E. Murphy, 1993*

*LAOH History - Mary B. Dolan, current National President, April 9, 1994*

*LAOH Irish Historian, Dorothy Weldon, 2001, National President, 2008*

*Proceedings of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians*

*Internet*

*copy/National Board, State Presidents, State Historians*

**NATIONAL PRESIDENTS  
LADIES ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS**

1894 - 1902 - Directed by the AOH National Vice-President  
1902 - 1906 - National Advisory Board - Mrs. Mary Quinn, Illinois, Chairman  
1906 - 1912 - Mrs. Anna Malia Ruddy - Pennsylvania - First National President  
1912 - 1916 - Dr. Ellen Ryan Jolly, Rhode Island  
1916 - 1921 - Mrs. Mary F. McWhorter, Illinois  
1921 - 1925 - Mrs. Adelia Christy, Ohio  
1925 - 1929 - Mrs. Mary Timon Hogan, Pennsylvania  
1929 - 1933 - Mrs. Mary Martin Silk, Massachusetts  
1933 - 1937 - Mrs. Anna K. Bryant, Minnesota  
1937 - 1941 - Miss Mary A. Kinsella, Massachusetts  
1941 - 1948 - Mrs. Anna M. Carey, New Jersey  
1948 - 1952 - Mrs. Lenore Shea, Pennsylvania  
1952 - 1956 - Miss Lillian E. Fay, Washington, D.C.  
1956 - 1960 - Miss Mary F. Hurley, Massachusetts  
1960 - 1962 - Miss Kathleen J. Smith, New York  
1962 - 1964 - Mrs. Mary E. Bennett, New Jersey  
1964 - 1966 - Miss Doretta McManus, Minnesota  
1966 - 1968 - Miss Kathleen C. Roche, Massachusetts  
1968 - 1970 - Mrs. Mary L. King, Rhode Island  
1970 - 1972 - Miss Rita A. McDonough, Maryland  
1972 - 1974 - Mrs. Rita M. Murphy, New York  
1974 - 1976 - Mrs. Margaret F. Rust Fastow, New Jersey  
1976 - 1978 - Miss Margaret M. Webb, Massachusetts  
1978 - 1980 - Mrs. Violet M. Forciea, Minnesota  
1980 - 1982 - Miss Sarah E. Murphy, Maryland  
1982 - 1984 - Mrs. Zoe J. Foley, California  
1984 - 1986 - Miss Sarah E. Murphy, Maryland  
1986 - 1988 - Miss Sheila M. Clifford, Connecticut

1988 - 1990 - Mrs. Mary Bradley McEnery, Rhode Island  
1990 - 1992 - Miss Dolores E. Voelker, New York  
1992 - 1994 - Mrs. Therese A. Kelleher, California  
1994 - 1996 - Mrs. Kathleen Linton, Ohio  
1995 - 1998 - Mrs. Mary Paglione, New Jersey  
1998 - 2000 - Mrs. Margaret Cooney, Pennsylvania  
2000 - 2002 - Miss Mary B. Dolan, Massachusetts  
2002 - 2004- Mrs. Eleonore Grimely, Virginia  
2004- 2006 Mrs. Mary T. Leathem, New York  
2006 - 2008 Mrs. Dorothy Flaherty Weldon, Pennsylvania  
2008-2010 Mrs. Mary Ryan, Massachusetts  
2010-2012 Mrs. Margaret Hennessy, New York  
2012-2014 Mrs. Maureen Shelton, Michigan