The history of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians in Ohio: a comparative analysis

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The History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians in Ohio: A Comparative Analysis

by

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Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the Master of Arts in History

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This project is dedicated in memory of my great-great-great-great grandparents, John R. and Mary Fagan who emigrated from Ireland in 1848 during the height of An Gorta Mor. They arrived in New York City and eventually settled in Cleveland, Ohio.
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Introduction

There has been extensive historical analysis on Irish immigration to America and the lives of Irish-Americans. However, an analysis of the fraternal organizations in which the Irish were involved in has been somewhat lacking in the area of ethnic American history. Two such organizations are the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH). The purpose of this work is to focus on the history of these two organizations in the state of Ohio. Both the AOH and LAOH in Ohio are two of the largest groups in the nation amongst all AOH and LAOH divisions in America. Ohio has played an important role on the national level of the two organizations as well. While a national history of the AOH and LAOH was written in the 1920s, nothing has been written extensively on the history of the AOH and LAOH in Ohio.

Historians such as Kerby Miller, Lawrence McCaffrey, Hasia Diner, and Janet Nolan have written about the experiences of Irish immigrants in America. These efforts have focused on the various aspects Irish-American life, however none of them have an in depth focus of an Irish fraternal organization such as the AOH or LAOH. Many monographs written about the American Irish address the role that labor unions and religious communities played in immigrants’ lives, but fail to give more than a fleeting reference to Irish ethnic organizations. The goal in writing this work on the AOH and LAOH in Ohio is to stress the importance of these organizations in both Irish immigrants and American-Irish lives in the United States, especially in Ohio. The goal of this project was to help fill the gap that currently exists in both Irish immigrant and Irish-American experience literature which lack an in depth analysis and explanation of the important
role that Irish ethnic organizations such as the AOH and LAOH played in America in retaining ethnic identity and assimilation in America.

The AOH and LAOH are separate organizations in the state of Ohio, but they have many things in common. Although the organizations are separate entities, they share similar goals and objectives. The methodology that was utilized to write about the organizations was a comparative analysis, which looked at the various activities of the orders from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and compared that to the organizations’ activities during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The project identified similarities and differences within both the AOH and LAOH during the two periods that were studied. Although, the organizations’ activities have changed over the years to some extent, both the AOH and LAOH remain committed to the core values found in the mottos of the two orders, “friendship, unity, and Christian charity.” In order to evaluate the organizations’ activities and to see how they remain committed to the mottos, it was necessary to look at five specific areas of inquiry in order to see if the AOH and LAOH remained committed to their respective mottos throughout the two time periods that were analyzed. The five specific areas of inquiry are taken from the goals of the organizations which are listed in the Order’s constitution preamble, which can be viewed in Appendix B.

The first area of inquiry was to examine the LAOH and see how its activities have changed during the course of the twentieth century. During the early years of the LAOH

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1 The mottos of the AOH and LAOH have remained the same over time. An example of this can be found in Appendix A which is a copy of the AOH constitution preamble from 1872. Appendix B contains a copy of the AOH constitution preamble from c. 2000. A look at both documents reveals that the organization’s motto of “friendship, unity and Christian charity” have remained unchanged, although the scope of activities for both organizations have evolved over the course of the two time periods that were examined.
during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Hibernian women tended to keep within the traditional societal roles of women carrying out their activities for the order. This early era was compared with that of the late twentieth century role to see how the activities of the LAOH have changed along with society’s defined expectations of women. The second area of inquiry was to look at the role that the AOH played in Irish nationalism during two distinct time periods. The first time period, 1880 to 1922 examined AOH assistance in the cause for a free Ireland while under British rule. The second period that was examined was 1966 to 2004 when the majority of the island had won its independence except for the six counties in the northeast. The third area of inquiry looked at the AOH and how it combated nativism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and compared it with how the Order combated cultural stereotypes during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The fourth area of inquiry examined the activities of the two organizations and compared how they have promoted and preserved Irish culture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The fifth and final area of inquiry examined the AOH, LAOH and Catholic action. This chapter looked at how Catholic action has evolved over the course of the two Orders’ history in Ohio.
Chapter 1: History of the LAOH in Ohio

The majority of Americans can trace their ancestry back to immigrants who made the decision to leave everything they knew behind, for a chance at better lives in a new and foreign land. Upon their arrival many of these immigrants joined ethnic organizations as an important means of socialization in adapting to their lives in America. These organizations provided mutual assistance for members during times of need, provided a network of information on employment, and gave people a sense of belonging in a strange world where one longed for the comforts of the native homeland. Scholars such as Kerby Miller, Lawrence McCaffrey, and Andrew M. Greeley have written extensively on the Irish-American experience and organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) in America. While the majority of the literature focuses on the male perspective of ethnic organizations and immigrant life, it is necessary to give a voice to the female perspective in the area of immigration, an area that is still somewhat overlooked in immigration history.¹

Hasia Diner and Janet Nolan have written about the experiences of Irish immigrant women in America, but these past efforts focused primarily on a narration of their lives.² This study takes an in-depth look at one of the ethnic organizations in which Irish immigrant women took part. The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) was one organization that both Irish immigrant and Irish-American women could join. While membership in the LAOH was widespread throughout the United States during the late


nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Ohio organization stands out as particularly significant. Ohio became the home to many Irish immigrants as they worked their way westward on the canals and railroads. Many Irish settled in the cities of Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Youngstown. Divisions of both the AOH and LAOH sprang up in these cities. The state of Ohio had one the largest AOH and LAOH memberships in the nation at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and contributed important officers to the organization on the national level.

The LAOH’s scope of activities changed from the early twentieth century to the late twentieth century and this shift in activity can be traced to changing societal roles for women. Most importantly, the activities of the LAOH helped to maintain the link with native Ireland. Members also worked to keep the heritage alive among American-born generations who may not have felt a close connection with their ancestral roots without the organization. The AOH and LAOH “developed in the nineteenth century as… provident association[s] devoted to the advancement of the interests and welfare of Irish immigrants.”3 In order to understand the history of the LAOH it is necessary to take a look at the history of its male counterpart, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), its rate of growth in the number of divisions and members, and finally, the activities of the LAOH organization.

The AOH is one of the oldest Irish organizations in the United States. It was founded in 1836 in New York City as a Catholic lay organization for people born in Ireland and later, people born of Irish descent in the United States. The roots of the AOH stretched back to Ireland where the precursor to the American AOH was founded in 1565 to defend Catholic Ireland against Protestant Britain. The American AOH’s motto

3 Reginald Byron, Irish America (Great Britain: Clarendon Press, 1999), 246.
of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity” was based on that of the older original Ancient Order of Hibernians in Ireland. The AOH was created in New York in response to the rise of nativists’ bigotry against the Irish. The nativist movement was a response to increasing numbers of immigrants, especially the Irish coming into America to flee hunger, disease, and death in Ireland. They feared that increasing numbers of immigrants would harm America economically and felt Catholicism threatened their Protestant nation. Of these three, “anti-Catholicism was the core of nativism from the 1830s through the 1850s.” Many well-known individuals such as Reverend Lyman Beecher and Samuel F. B. Morse “believed in an international conspiracy, engineered by European despots, mainly the Hapsburgs, to use Catholicism as a wedge to destroy American liberal democracy.” After nativists burned down an Ursuline convent in Massachusetts in 1834, “a wave of shootings, hangings, and burnings” were carried out against the Irish immigrants. In order to understand this bigotry and hatred of the Irish, it is necessary to see what was being said about them. Wealthy Protestant George Templeton Strong provides an example of typical rhetoric in a journal entry that described the Irish as “brutal, base, cruel, cowards and as insolent as base; they came from a land populated by creatures that crawl and eat dirt and poison every community they infest.” During the 1850s, a nativist group called the Order of the Star Spangled Banner or Native American party (Know Nothings) became the main nativist group to

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4 Information contained in paragraph was garnered through a variety of sources such as the national website of the AOH located at http://www.aoh.com/history/main.htm and newspapers from the AOH national newsletter, The National Hibernian Digest. The National Hibernian Digest archives are located at: Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Manuscript Collections, Philadelphia, Penn.

5 McCaffrey, The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America, 99.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 100.

attack Catholic and especially Irish immigrants.⁹ To try and halt the Know Nothings attacks on both Irish people and Church property, the AOH began to “stand guard to defend Church property.”¹⁰

Most early AOH activities remain unknown as the society was founded upon the basis of secrecy. In addition to defending Church property, the organization assisted Irish immigrants financially “who arrived as members in good standing from the Irish Order,” and provided networks which facilitated employment and upward mobility for their members.”¹¹ The AOH was also instrumental in the “preservation of Irish culture and traditions in America.”¹² As the nativist movement dissipated after the American Civil War, the AOH shifted its focus from defending property to “charitable activities in support of the church’s missions, community service, and the promotion of preservation of their Irish cultural heritage in America.”¹³ Organizations such as the AOH did not hinder assimilation into America, but felt “the development of an ethnic identity expressed through a rich institutional and associational life was the primary means through which the American Irish assimilated.”¹⁴ Between the years of 1856 and 1921, over three million Irish immigrated to the United States, increasing membership in the AOH.¹⁵ However controversy over membership in the AOH developed. In 1884, the AOH debated whether or not American born Irish could be admitted as members.¹⁶

Members of the AOH decided that American born Irish could be admitted to the order in

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¹⁰ Taken from the Ancient Order of Hibernians website history page.
¹² http://www.aoh.com/history/main.htm
¹³ Ibid.
¹⁴ Kenny, The American Irish, 148-149.
¹⁵ Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 346.
¹⁶ Ibid., 535.
addition to those who were born in Ireland.\textsuperscript{17} This decision ensured that AOH membership would remain strong after the Irish born members died and that their American born children could carry on the traditions and the work of the AOH.

As the organization grew in membership and as more unmarried Irish women immigrants entered the United States, it was necessary to form a female branch of the Hibernians. According to historian Hasia Diner, “the Church provided the only formal institution in which women participated on any regular basis,” so forming a female branch of an Irish and Catholic faith based organization made sense.\textsuperscript{18} The LAOH began as the “Daughters of Erin” and was first organized in Omaha, Nebraska in 1894 by a group of women who were married to members of AOH. However, the men were wary of granting the “Daughters of Erin” their own charter at the National AOH Convention held in Detroit, Michigan on July 14-17, 1896. In order to calm the fears of the men, a female delegate, a Miss Laughlin stated:

Now, by our presence here, we do not want…to be speechmakers, or political speakers…we are not the “New Woman,” but women who have good Irish mothers who taught them to cook, to sew, to wash, to iron, and to get a good square meal for their husbands. The time, has almost arrived when women and men can stand on equal ground.\textsuperscript{19}

While her speech calmed the fear of men about the possibility of Hibernian women becoming suffragists, it also served as a warning that Irish-American women “would no

\textsuperscript{17} John O’Dea, \textit{History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Auxiliary, published by the authority of the National Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians} (Philadelphia: Keystone Printing, 1923), 1066-1072.


\textsuperscript{19} Janet Nolan, \textit{Ourselves Alone: Women’s Emigration from Ireland, 1885-1920} (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 85-86. First name of Miss Laughlin is unknown. In the national history of the Ancient Order of Hibernians written by O’Dea, \textit{History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians} she is referred to as both Miss Laughlin and Sister Laughlin, with no mention of her first name.
longer be content to remain in the background” according to historian Janet Nolan.20 The charter members of this new organization notified the public of what the exact purpose of the new female organization was going to be and changed the name of the organization to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1906. This act made the LAOH completely independent of the men, although the name of auxiliary suggested otherwise. The Auxiliary part of the LAOH was dropped in the 1980s in order to signify that the women’s branch was truly independent of the male AOH. The LAOH adopted the same motto of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity” as the men, but it remained a completely separate organization from its male counterpart. The LAOH “sought to educate their members in the Catholic culture as well as provide a place where people could come together, enjoy one another’s company, and share their concerns.”21

At the National Convention in 1896, delegates debated whether or not wives of AOH members who were not born in Ireland or of Irish descent should be allowed admittance into the LAOH. Father Murphy, chaplain for the Wisconsin AOH said he was:

in favor of the free coinage of Irishmen at any rate; that when persons were married, they became two in one, although in some cases it is hard to find out which it is; but, when a woman cares enough about an Irishman to marry him he will very likely be the one; heartily in favor of taking them into the order every white woman who was a practical Catholic and married to an Irishman.22

This argument eventually won over the men at the convention, and non-Irish women who were married to AOH members were invited to become members of the auxiliary. This is

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20 Ibid.
21 Information contained in paragraph was taken from the following source: the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians state of Ohio website: http://www.geocities.com/ohiolaoh/ and the quote was taken from the following source: Jay P. Dolan, The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, Inc, 1985), 258.
22 O’Dea, History of the Ancient Order, 1121. Statement is attributed to Murphy according to author John O’Dea who had access to the minutes of the convention when writing the history of the AOH in 1923.
the only account of Hibernian men getting involved in the LAOH. After this debate over membership, the LAOH members were able to keep the men out of the organization’s business.

Allowing American born Irish women and non-Irish wives of Irishmen as members led to an increase in membership for both the AOH and the LAOH. As Irish immigrants moved from the East to the Midwest, they established new divisions of the AOH and the Auxiliary. The AOH came to Ohio in 1850 when the first division of the state was installed in Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{23} Divisions sprang up in the urban areas of Youngstown, Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Dayton and Akron by the end of the 1870s. Cleveland’s first division was created in 1871. By the end of 1875, four divisions were up and running in the area with membership nearing 400. Toledo installed its first division in July of 1875 with Patrick Garry as the division president. By 1884, “there were 74 divisions in the state, in 27 different counties—the fourth highest number in America and a membership numbering 4,000.” After the 1896 Convention, each male division encouraged their Irish and Irish-American wives to start their own divisions of the LAOH as well. The first charter for the LAOH in Ohio was granted in 1896 to the wives of AOH members in Dayton.\textsuperscript{24} By 1910, the Dayton division had over 200 members and “was [one] of the largest auxiliaries in the state.”\textsuperscript{25} However, membership

\textsuperscript{23} Irish in Cincinnati Events of Importance. Timeline in the hand of Pat Mallory, President of the Hamilton County, Ohio # 1 division, Cincinnati, Ohio. Timeline was obtained through correspondence with Mr. Mallory. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

\textsuperscript{24} Mary Colleen Russell Townsend, Centennial celebration, 1896-1996, November 2, 1996/Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, John F. Kennedy Division No.1, Dayton, Ohio (Dayton: Ohio: Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians John F. Kennedy Division No.1, 1996), 1. Available at Dayton Public Library, Local History Department, Dayton, Ohio. The Dayton No. 1 division of the LAOH is one of the oldest, continually active divisions in the United States. The LAOH in Dayton changed the name of the division to honor President John F. Kennedy upon his assassination in November of 1963. Prior to the 1960s, the division was strictly known as division # 1.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 2.
in both the AOH and LAOH began to decline with the onset of the 1920s and 1930s. This trend in declining membership in the order can be traced to the high rates of members leaving due to death or old age while not being replenished by the younger generations. By 1941, “there were only 111 Hibernian [members] in divisions left in the entire state.”26 According to the LAOH state board, the LAOH records reflect this trend as well.27

By the 1970s, the tide of decline in membership changed to an increase for both the AOH and LAOH. With the explosion of the interest in ethnicity and genealogy due to the successful television mini-series of Alex Haley’s *Roots* during the 1970s combined with a time of great social and political turmoil inspired by the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and the Women’s Movement, people of many different national backgrounds began to recognize and assert their ethnic identities. They objected to ethnic stereotypes and promoted the benefits of their individual cultures. They took the view that rather than a “melting pot,” America was more like a “tossed salad” in which each ingredient is distinct and adds its own flavor the whole28

This was also a time where both the AOH and LAOH seemed to be reborn. In 2004, the AOH has over seventeen divisions and total membership of over 2000 in Ohio, while the LAOH has over ten divisions in eight counties and a total membership of over 700. Both

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26 Information contained in the paragraph including the first and third quotes was taken from the following source John T. Ridge, *Erin’s Sons in America—The Ancient Order of Hibernians* (Brooklyn, NY: AOH Publications, 1986), 93-94.

27 Ann Dollman, LAOH state board of Ohio Vice President, interview by author, Toledo, Ohio, 14 December 2003, Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo Ohio. This trend is also reflected in variety of city directories from the cities of Dayton, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Youngstown during the years from the 1920s through the 1970s where there where a lack of divisions actually in existence. This can be compared to the directories of those cities during the 1880s through the 1920 when divisions were listed for several pages for each city.

organizations continue to induct new members every month into their respective organizations.²⁹

The activities of the LAOH changed during the course of the twentieth century. During the early years of the LAOH, the Hibernian women tended to keep within the traditional societal roles of women in carrying out their activities for the order. During the early part of the twentieth century, “propriety demanded that wives [and women in general] remain at home, and in many cases domestic chores and childbearing drained them of any energy that they might have devoted to intellectual activities or careers.”³⁰ According to Sara M. Evans, a historian of women’s history, “the urban middle class appeared to be devoted primarily to the elaboration of a life-style focused on domesticity and motherhood.”³¹ She went on to argue that “women were to serve as an emotional center of the family and home.”³² Although women were confined to the home, they were able to take part in the community through organizations such as the LAOH.³³

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the LAOH, or the Auxiliary as it was known, was featured in the March 16, 1903 issue of the Youngstown Daily Vindicator in

²⁹ Information compiled from AOH and LAOH state board information given to author via correspondence from J. Michael Finn, state historian of Ohio for the AOH and Ann Dollman, LAOH state board vice president. Information given to author consisted of directory and membership lists for each division in the state of Ohio. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
³² Ibid., 229.
an article describing the Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations in the city. Mr. J.T. Carroll, state secretary for the AOH state board of Ohio commented that the evening’s festivities would not be complete without thanking the ladies for “their assistance in furthering the A.O.H. work” and the Auxiliary members who sang at the banquet with their “sweet soprano voice.”34 The ladies division in Youngstown met every other Wednesday evening at the AOH hall at 145 W. Federal.35 In addition to singing at the banquets of the AOH, the Auxiliary held an Easter dance and card parties to provide entertainment for the men of the order.36 Auxiliary members in other cities played similar roles according to newspaper accounts in the cities of Toledo and Dayton.37 State board president of the LAOH prior to World War I, Eva DeVanney summarized that the motto of the friendship, unity and Christian charity

will be practically demonstrated so that in coming years all entitled to membership will be included in its ranks and the history, language, customs, traditions and songs of our mother country will be perpetuated.38

The LAOH in both Toledo and Dayton raised money for various causes. The Dayton LAOH collected over $1700 and gave it as death benefits to the families of fifteen sisters “who had been called from our midst” during the early years of the

34 The Youngstown Daily Vindicator, 16 March 1903.
35 The Burch Directory (city directory of Youngstown, Ohio, 1903 & 1904).
36 The Youngstown Daily Vindicator, 20 February 1904.
38 Townsend, Centennial celebration, 1896-1996, 1. The Dayton division also assisted sisters who were in need of financial assistance for medical reasons as well.
organization. The LAOH in Toledo’s project focused raising money for the stained glass windows in the new Irish parish of St. Patrick’s on Avondale Avenue in downtown Toledo. The women of the organization, along with the men of the AOH, were able to raise enough money to install a beautiful stained glass window depicting St. Patrick and the birth of Christianity in Ireland. Both of these examples fulfilled the traditional role of women within the community, which was to assist their community in times of need and to improve the beauty of their surroundings.

However, bigger events to plan for the Youngstown divisions came to fruition with the announcement that the AOH state convention of 1904 would be held there on August 9th through the 11th. The women assisted with the planning of the state convention, which began in June of 1904 according to an announcement in the

Youngstown Daily Vindicator. The announcement states:

The convention soon to be held here is exciting uncommon interest and the enthusiastic way in which the members are perfecting details leads to the conclusion that the gathering will be extremely pleasant as well as successful in other ways.

By the eighth of August, members of both orders began arriving in Youngstown. Some of the members who arrived that day were Catherine Collins of Toledo, the state president of the Auxiliary, state secretary Gertrude O’Brien, state treasurer Mary

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39 Information on the Toledo LAOH project was taken from the following sources: Toledo Blade (Toledo, Ohio), 16-18 March 1904 & 20 July 1904 and Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, Local History Collections, Historic Church of St. Patrick records, Toledo, Ohio, Box 1 Folder 2-5, Box 2 Folder 16-18, Box 3 Folder 37, and Box 4 Folder 70,95,114,118, and 121.
40 Harris, Beyond Her Sphere, Campbell, The “Liberated” Woman of 1914, and Evans, Born for Liberty
41 The Youngstown Daily Vindicator, 21 July 1904.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 1 June 1904.
Blakeley and state board officers for the men’s order including D.D. Cahill and J.P. Rigney.44

_The Daily Vindicator_ described Catherine Collins as “brilliantly educated, tactful president” in an article about the first day of the convention.45 Collins addressed the Convention delegates with the following statement:

> It is indeed a pleasure to me to have an opportunity to greet the majority of this assembly as sisters and brothers in the cause of friendship, unity, and true Christian charity, as children of the mother church and as sons and daughters of an unconquered race. The auxiliary to the A.O.H. is still in its infancy but by faithfully following the footsteps of our brothers we have already accomplished a great deal for the cause of education by contributing $10,000 for the endowment of a free scholarship for the members at Trinity college. Our hopes for the future are many but among our most cherished are the introduction of Irish history and the revival of Irish literature in our schools.46

Collins came across as a traditional, but strong and independent woman who informed the men of the convention that the women were pursuing their own goals, and not just what the members of the men’s order deemed appropriate for them. She followed the proscribed gender role of women of that time by promoting the traditional roles of women in educating the children on both the primary and higher levels of education. A testament to her character was her refusal to accept another term as state president she said that “there are so many capable, brilliant young women throughout the state who are willing to fill the office.”47

In addition to Collins, the journalistic coverage of the convention focused on Gertrude O’Brien of Urbana, Ohio who was re-elected to her position of state secretary.
“by acclamation which shows her popularity” according to the *Youngstown Vindicator*. The *Vindicator* described Miss O’Brien as “a charming young lady and [was] gifted with many affable and pleasing traits” who was “deeply devoted to the interest of the L.A.O.H. and there is no more sincere worker [than her] in the organization.”

Besides commenting on the individual leaders of the LAOH, the newspapers concentrated on the philanthropic ventures of the organization. The *Youngstown Daily Vindicator* came across as “surprised” by the fact that the auxiliary treasury “had a balance of $9,030.45” which the reporter remarked was “a financial condition which would do credit to any association.” The report continued, “the members of this state forwarded a contribution of $525 to the $10,000 endowment given Trinity college by the national auxiliary and … [gave] without reserve to countless other worthy enterprises.”

The endowment at Trinity College was created in 1902 at the Denver, Colorado national convention, where “a resolution was adopted to establish a four years’ scholarship.” The leaders of the LAOH set up the endowment as they saw a “need for and the value of good educational opportunities for the young women of the day.”

After commenting on the charitable activities of the organization, attention was drawn to the number of people involved and the *Daily Vindicator* seemed impressed with the number of members in the auxiliary. At the 1904 state convention, the auxiliary had over 2500 members. In addition to commenting on its large membership, the paper sang the praises of the Youngstown division of the auxiliary:

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48 Ibid., 12 August 1904.
49 Ibid.
50 *Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and Trinity College: Partners in the Education of Women for More than a Century*. Brochure in the hand of Ann Dollman, state board Vice President, Toledo, Ohio. Brochure is a timeline of information about the relationship between the LAOH and Trinity College in Washington, D.C., Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
51 *The Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, 10 August 1904.
Although organized but six years, the Mahoning county division of the Ladies’ Auxiliary has prospered in a most remarkable manner, and none are more active in the state. The constitution of the auxiliary is practically the same as that of the men and many a benevolent and charitable action has been engineered by them.\textsuperscript{52}

The delegates of the AOH complimented the women on the work, yet the editorial board of \textit{The Youngstown Daily Vindicator} did not fail to mention that a woman’s duty was to the home first:

They have accomplished and are accomplishing a great and noble work and we believe that they are doing this work without detriment to home and fireside. The Irish women of today are maintaining the noblest traditions of the women of our race. It was Christianity that first emancipated womankind, and in woman has ever been found the purest and best exemplifications of Christian virtues and Christian principles.\textsuperscript{53}

Although the news coverage gave a favorable opinion of the LAOH, by the tone of the report, the paper appeared that it did not want to insinuate the idea that women should neglect their duties to the children and home by taking part in fraternal organizations, but rather that such involvement kept women in their confined societal roles as cook, housekeeper, and nurturer.

After the conclusion of the 1904 state convention, the auxiliary went back to the normal order of business such as planning and participating in social gatherings and charity events with the AOH. In May of 1912, the six local divisions of the AOH along with Auxiliary held an outing at Lincoln Park in Youngstown. The outing was to serve as a fundraiser for a local hospital, St. Elizabeth’s. Events such as ball games, sprinting, dancing, and other Gaelic related sports were organized, which drew over 5,000 people.\textsuperscript{54}

During the time of events such as the state convention and the fundraiser for St. Elizabeth’s the Auxiliary in Youngstown saw an increase in membership when it

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 11 August 1904.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 24 May 1912.
expanded from one division to four by 1915.\textsuperscript{55} This increase in membership can possibly be explained by the fact that during this time the overwhelmingly majority of Irish immigrants were women, according to historian Janet Nolan. These women were fleeing Ireland due to the loss of their independence and life, as then they had lived prior to the Great Hunger of the 1840s and early 1850s. Before the Great Hunger, women in Ireland were seen as equals in society, however they were seen as secondary to Irish men afterwards. This new role for Irish women forced many “to seek a new direction in their lives by emigrating.”\textsuperscript{56} Between the years of 1880 and 1920, the majority of emigrants coming from Ireland to the United States were women.

Nolan argues that the influx of female migration during those years resulted from the fact that Ireland lacked an urban and industrial culture. “The inhibiting social, demographic, and economic constraints placed on women promoted overall economic recovery but, at the same time, also prevented women from achieving an adult status as wives and wage earners within the still agricultural world of rural Ireland.”\textsuperscript{57} Women saw emigration as their chance at gaining back what they had lost in Ireland as a result of the Great Hunger or \textit{An Gorta Mor}.\textsuperscript{58} Upon their arrival in America, women worked in

\textsuperscript{55} Youngstown City Directory (1915, Youngstown).

\textsuperscript{56} Nolan, \textit{Ourselves Alone: Women’s Emigration}, 42. Before the 1880s, men made up of over fifty percent of those emigrating from Ireland. By 1885, females were the emigrant majority. This shift occurred as more opportunities became available to men in Ireland, while those for women were nonexistent. Lack of opportunity combined with a decrease in the male population and an increase in the female population, led to the increase in female emigration.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 73.

\textsuperscript{58} In Ireland, it is referred to as \textit{An Gorta Mor}. Also known as the more commonly used Famine, but I disagree with the word famine as that would indicate that there were no sources of food available in Ireland and that all of the crops had failed. However, the only crop that failed was the potato, which 90\% of the Irish relied on as their main source of food. According to Dr. Seamus Metress, noted scholar of Irish Studies, the \textit{An Gorta Mor} was “a time period when Irish peasants starved in the midst of plenty. Wheat, oats, barley, butter, eggs, beef, and pork were exported from Ireland in large quantities.” Seamus Metress & Richard A. Rajner, \textit{The Great Starvation: AN Irish Holocaust} (Stony Point, NY: American Ireland Education Foundation, 1996), xviii. \textit{An Gorta Mor} is an Irish phrase that is used extensively throughout the field of Irish Studies and in the Republic of Ireland.
various occupations such as domestic service and joined Irish fraternal organizations such as the LAOH “where women found support and aid” which enabled them to remain committed to their heritage according to historian Hasia Diner.59 Diner goes on to state that “their economic assertiveness and strong sense of self did not jar those cultural traditions but proved instead to be the mechanism for blending old-world ideals with American needs.”60

Irish women became involved in all facets of Irish-American life, which helped them to regain the independence and status that they once had in Ireland. However, with this independence, many women turned away from their cultural roots and instead celebrated their newly found American heritage. This new sense of being an American combined with the political events including the outbreak of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, led the LAOH to suffer a decline in membership. The children and grandchildren of Irish immigrants became Americanized and did not seem to be concerned with keeping the heritage of the older generations alive. This lack of interest in Irish roots can be tied to a variety of factors such as the devastation of two world wars which led to great loss of life and an economic depression which caused people to be more concerned about putting food on the table than maintaining the cultural roots of the earlier generations.61 A final and most important factor, which led to the decline in membership of the LAOH, was that the majority of the island of Ireland achieved its independence from Britain in 1921. Since Ireland was finally free of British

59 Diner, Erin’s Daughters in America, 153. Members of the LAOH in Ohio were predominantly married women who did not work outside of the home. Newspaper coverage about the LAOH seemed to introduce LAOH members as Mrs so and so and not Miss. Many Irish single women were often too busy working to earn a living to become involved in LAOH activities. Once they married, however, many women were able to combine LAOH activities with their roles as wives and mothers.
60 Ibid.
61 Thomas O’Mahoney, interview with author, 12 December 2003. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
rule, many Irish-Americans were no longer concerned with the events that occurred back in the old homeland. According to noted Irish-American historian Lawrence J. McCaffrey, “many Irish-American Catholics were disgusted and puzzled by the 1922-1923 civil war between Free Staters and Republic diehards.”62 The overwhelming majority of Hibernians felt the same way in regards to the Irish civil war and “they agreed with Michael Collins, Ireland’s leading hero in the 1919-1921 guerilla war of liberation, that dominion status was a major British concession, and that it provided an opportunity for expanded sovereignty.”63

With this in mind, the Hibernians turned their attention to the fears of Communism and the Cold War. Members were American first and Irish second. This sense of being American first and Irish second led to many Irish rallying around the American and even, the British flag during World War II and the Cold War. They felt that it was their patriotic duty to defend America from the evils of Communism. As the Irish became more educated, they became exposed to improved economic conditions, and they were soon swept in the consumer culture that began in the 1950s.64 Throughout the

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63 AOH/LAOH opinion comes from the following interviews conducted by the author: Ann Dollman, interview with author, 14 December 2003; Sister Ann McManus, interview with author, 12 December 2003; Mary Ann Buckley, interview with author, 24 November 2003; Thomas O’Mahoney, Ohio AOH state board president, interview with author, February 2004; and J. Michael Finn, Ohio AOH state board historian, interview with author, February 2004. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
64 McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora*, 172-177 and interviews with J. Michael Finn and Thomas O’Mahoney.
next thirty years there was a lack of Irish-American involvement in their culture. By the 1980s, Irish-American attention became centered on the conflict in Northern Ireland. This new found interest in the current events of Northern Ireland combined with the new found interest in understanding their ethnicity led many Irish, Catholic Americans back to the old fraternal organizations, especially the AOH and the LAOH. Historian Ronald Takaki summarizes this need to understand our ethnic heritage with the words of Walt Whitman, “of every hue and caste am I, I resist any thing better than my own diversity.” For example, Sister Ann McManus joined the LAOH because “it means I’m continuing

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65 Quote from Whitman comes from Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 428 and the other quote comes from: Sister Ann McManus, interview with author, 12 December 2003. Sister Ann McManus is an Ursuline nun born to Irish immigrant parents from County Roscommon. She has held every office in the Lucas County LAOH division except for Treasurer. She was involved in various Irish organizations as a child and young adult such as the Irish Benevolent Club and Knights of Equity. Information and quote taken from interview dated 12 December 2003. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

66 Ibid.

67 Mary Ann Buckley is an Irish immigrant born in County Mayo, Ireland. She began working in Dublin as a waitress at an ice cream parlor on O’Connell Street. She moved to London and trained as a typist and began work in the Ministry of Works. Poor wages in London led her to follow her brother to immigrate to America, who was living in Toledo in 1947. She worked in a local office doing secretarial work until she met her husband, Morris in 1949. She was actively involved in several Irish organizations in Toledo such as the Irish Social Club and the Knights of Equity before starting up the new LAOH division in Toledo in 1990. Information gathered by author in interview on 24 November 2003 in Toledo, Ohio. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Kathi Linton went on to become the national president of the LAOH during the latter half of the 1990s.
my Irish heritage." Her parents were born in Ireland and by becoming a member; she could ensure that “Irish roots would continue in Toledo.”

The LAOH re-emerged in Toledo at a meeting at OB’s Tavern on May 17, 1990 when a group of Irish-Americans met with the purpose of organizing a new chapter. The person responsible for leading the charge was Mary Ann Buckley. Buckley had received a phone call from the Dayton, Ohio LAOH about starting up a new division in Toledo. Shirley Keaton, on behalf of the state LAOH board, initiated new members into the division. On June 2, 1990 a meeting was held at Chicago’s Restaurant with LAOH state president Kathi Linton present to witness the election of officers. This served as the first official meeting of the new division in Lucas County. In addition to the election of officers, the determination of the amount of dues and names for the new order were suggested. These included Cardinal O’Faigh, Bernadette Devlin, and Oliver Plunkett, but Mother Catherine McCauley was chosen as the name for the division.

One charter member, Sister Ann McManus, along with Mary Ann Buckley went on a

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66 Mary Ann Buckley is an Irish immigrant born in County Mayo, Ireland. She began working in Dublin as a waitress at an ice cream parlor on O’Connell Street. She moved to London and trained as a typist and began work in the Ministry of Works. Poor wages in London led her to follow her brother to immigrate to America, who was living in Toledo in 1947. She worked in a local office doing secretarial work until she met her husband, Morris in 1949. She was actively involved in several Irish organizations in Toledo such as the Irish Social Club and the Knights of Equity before starting up the new LAOH division in Toledo in 1990. Information gathered by author in interview on 24 November 2003 in Toledo, Ohio. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Kathi Linton went on to become the national president of the LAOH during the latter half of the 1990s.

71 Membership drive correspondence from Mary Ann Buckley dated May of 1990 and minutes from the June 2, 1990 meeting of the Mother Catherine McCauley division of Lucas County, Ohio. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
“rampage for new members” for the division. The result of this rampage was between 25 and 35 new members. The resurgence of the LAOH in Toledo and the state of Ohio was reflected nationwide as well.

Today, the LAOH nationwide has over 12,000 members in thirty states. The LAOH remains committed to their motto of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity.” The lady Hibernians actively raise money for various Catholic charities and to support the renovations of historical Irish parishes throughout the United States. An excellent example of this is the annual St. Patrick’s Festival held by the AOH and LAOH of Toledo, Ohio to raise funds for the restoration of Historic St. Patrick’s Catholic Church. The LAOH actively promotes Irish culture through lectures at schools, Irish dancing demonstrations, exhibits at libraries, and musical gatherings held at local Irish-American pubs such as Mickey Finn’s on Lagrange Street in Toledo. The LAOH in Dayton also participates in promoting and preserving Irish culture. The division organized an Irish step-dancing school in the 1950s in order to instruct its junior members in that tradition. The dancing school known as the Celtic Academy participates in parades, banquets, political rallies, and dance contests throughout the state. They also “heartily support national LAOH efforts such as the Columban Missions, the Irish Brigade Civil War Museum at Antietam, scholarships, vocations, and the annual Irish history essay contest.” In addition to all of the activities just mentioned, the LAOH is actively involved in the conflict in Northeastern Ireland.

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72 Sister Ann McManus interview.
73 June 2, 1990 meeting minutes of Mother McCauley division of Lucas County Ohio.
75 Information from Toledo taken from meeting minutes and Dayton came from the Townsend article on the history of the LAOH in Dayton, pgs 6-12.
The Mother McCauley division works with *Project Children* to bring the children living in northeastern Ireland, both Catholic and Protestant, to America. Here they have an opportunity to see that they have quite a lot in common, although they are raised in northeastern Ireland to be on opposing sides. Since the *Good Friday Agreement*, *Project Children* is more focused on bringing the disabled children of northeastern Ireland to America where children with disabilities are more widely accepted than in their homeland. A second activity of the LAOH is to give the Catholic families of northeastern Ireland a vacation outside of that area. Because Catholics have the highest unemployment rate in northeastern Ireland, they often do not have the money to escape the conflict for a few days. A third activity involving LAOH is the *Between Project*, which brings children from both northeastern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland together in order to show that the children are the same, rather than different from one another.76 Dayton LAOH chose to get involved in northeastern Ireland by “adopting” Sister Corrigan at St. Paul’s parish in Belfast “in efforts to help diminish the affects of The Troubles among the youth there.” Some of their contributions to the children there are “sports uniforms, monetary donations, and many prayers.”77

The emphasis on historic preservation, raising funds for Catholic based charities, promotion of Irish culture, and involvement in the conflict in northeastern Ireland is a shift in the focus of the LAOH in the late twentieth century from that of the LAOH in the early twentieth century which focused its energies on social gatherings and raising money

76 Information contained in paragraph was obtained in interviews from the following people: Sister Ann McManus, and Ann Dollman. Additional information was obtained from meeting minutes of the Lucas County LAOH and Townsend, 12. The term “The Troubles” refers to the conflict in northeastern Ireland from 1969 to the present.

77 Information contained in paragraph was taken from the following sources: Diner, *Erin’s Daughters in America*, Nolan, *Ourselves Alone*, Ann Dollman’s private collection of LAOH in Ohio historical papers. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
for the scholarship endowment at Trinity College and local charities. This shift in focus of the LAOH can be traced to the liberation of women from the traditional roles of society. During the early twentieth century, married women were expected to not work outside of the home. Society’s gender roles deemed that middle class women belonged in the home cooking, cleaning, and caring for the children while men worked outside of the home. However, Irish women did not always fulfill the traditional role in which society deemed appropriate for them. Many Irish immigrant women worked outside of the home as domestic servants, nurses, teachers and only left the work force when they married late in life when compared to other immigrant women in America according to Diner. But, the overwhelming majority of LAOH members worked inside of the home, due to the fact that the majority of the LAOH members were part of the middle class.\textsuperscript{78}

Since the LAOH members of the early twentieth century worked inside of their homes, their activities within the order were confined to the traditional middle class activities such as planning socials and raising money for local charities. The AOH discouraged the LAOH during the early twentieth century from taking part in the cause of Irish independence from Britain; this cause was strictly reserved for the male organization.\textsuperscript{79} As middle class Irish women began to bend society’s traditional roles and left housework for work outside of the home, the scope of their activities within the order changed. They honored their roots by raising money to preserve historically significant buildings, which are important in Irish-American history and by hosting Irish dances, speakers, and other events to promote Irish culture. The AOH during the late twentieth century encouraged the women to become involved in Irish nationalism. LAOH delved

\textsuperscript{78} Diner, \textit{Erin’s Daughters in America}, 25 and interviews with Mary Ann Buckley, Ann Dollman, J. Michael Finn, & Thomas O’Mahoney.
into issues by the 1970s and 1980s that they had not dealt with before, such as the conflict in northeastern Ireland. By joining the LAOH, Irish-American women were able to go beyond the “green beer” aspect of their heritage and to use the organization as “an eye opener to my Irish heritage” according to Ann Dollman, a heritage where their Irish ethnicity is intrinsically linked with their Catholic faith.80

The LAOH in Ohio has made important contributions to Irish-Americans in Ohio and to Ireland as a whole, the organization has undergone a remarkable transformation from the time that women were confined to the role of housewives during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in which women take full part in all of the order’s activities, including Irish nationalism. A cause which had been reserved for the men during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Irish nationalism has and continues to be an important mission for both the AOH and the LAOH. The AOH played a primary role in the fight for Irish independence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and only involved the women during the late twentieth century. The AOH both in Ireland and in the United States have played an important role in the last two centuries of Ireland’s seven hundred year fight for freedom from British oppression.

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80 Ann Dollman interview.
Chapter 2: Irish nationalism and the AOH from 1880-1922 & 1966-2004

Ireland is a nation that has fought foreign oppressors for over seven hundred years. Many nations such as France and Spain have given their assistance to the fight, even if they were to benefit from it, such as the humiliation of Britain losing an important part of its empire next door to the mother country. Individuals took part in the struggle as well, including Irish immigrants living in the United States. One of “the central themes in the history of American Irish…[was] the emergence of powerful Irish nationalist movements on American soil.”¹ According to historian Lawrence J. McCaffrey:

Religion and politics were the priority concerns and interests for Irish-American Catholics, but nationalism, a passionate determination to free Ireland from British domination, captured the attention and enthusiasm of many. For a significant number, it possessed an idealism they found wanting in their church, and an integrity absent from their politics.²

The existence of the Irish nationalist movement in America can be traced from the era of Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal Movement during the 1840s to the current day situation in Northeastern Ireland.³ Organizations such as Repeal clubs, Fenians, Clan na Gael, National Association for Irish Justice (NAIJ), Irish northern Aid Committee (Noraid), and the Ancient Order of Hibernians all took part in the fight for a sovereign Ireland free from British tyranny.⁴

⁴ These are just some of the many organizations that have been founded throughout American history to aid Ireland in its struggle for independence. Repeal clubs were founded throughout the United States during the 1830s and early 1840s in support of Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal movement to repeal the Act of Union with Great Britain. The movement founedered after O’Connell began to urge the clubs to support the abolitionists in America. The Fenians was a secret society movement based upon the idea of advocating the use of force in order to remove the British from Irish soil. The movement collapsed after the Church hierarchy spoke out against the organization and they were defeated in their attempt to take over Canada following the Civil War. Clan na Gael was founded in 1867 by Jerome Collins and a group of
The Ancient Order of Hibernians both in Ireland and in the United States has played an important role in the last two centuries of Ireland’s seven hundred year fight for freedom from British oppression. In order to examine the important role that the AOH in the United States, especially Ohio, took in the fight for Irish independence, a person must have an understanding of the history of British tyranny in Ireland and at how the Irish nationalist movement in America got its start. After taking a look at the historical background, an in-depth look at the Ohio AOH role in the Irish nationalist movements of Parnell’s Land League, the Home Rule movement, the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence, and to examine why the Irish Civil War turned the majority of Irish Americans and the AOH away from the movement between the years of 1880 and 1922. Finally, the analysis will contrast the AOH’s role in “the Troubles” of Northeastern Ireland from 1966 to the present.

The preamble to the AOH’s constitution states that one mission of the order is “to aid and advance by all legitimate means the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people...”

for complete and absolute independence.”

This mission of a free and united Ireland is still as important to the members of the AOH as it was during the early part of the twentieth century. However, the AOH’s approach to this mission today is different from that of the early twentieth century. Today’s approach is more cautious and emphasizes political negotiation and compromise when compared to the earlier physical force approach. In other words, the AOH in Ohio has always “schizophrenic” with which approach to take: physical force versus political negotiation.

In order to understand the importance of the role of Irish nationalism in AOH activities, it is necessary to take a brief look at the history of Ireland’s struggle to be a sovereign nation of thirty-two, not just twenty-six counties. The words of Padraig Pearse, the leader of the 1916 Easter Rising summarized this struggle, as “Ireland, unfree, shall never be at peace.”

Ireland’s fight for freedom can be traced back to the time of the Vikings, who began their raids on Ireland’s coast in 795. The Vikings concentrated their power in the areas of Cork, Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford. Although controlling these areas, the Vikings were never able to completely conquer the Irish; instead many of them married into Irish families and became absorbed into Irish communities. The Irish were not united in their effort to drive out the Vikings until Brian Boru became high king of Ireland. Boru’s army was able to defeat the Vikings and forever drive them out of Ireland at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. This victory, according to Irish Studies scholar...
Seamus Metress, “inspired the first sense of [a] national political identity [for the Irish] as a result of resistance.”8

After this victory for a free nation, another struggle began. No one knew that this new struggle for a sovereign nation would go on for over seven hundred years and continue on to the present day. This second struggle began in 1156 when the Pope, Adrian IV, the only English pope, granted Henry II of England lordship over Ireland. The Pope feared paganism would take over Christian Ireland, and Henry could “ensure that the Peters Pence, a special collection for the Pope, would be sent to Rome with great regularity” since “one king, one church seemed to be a papal objective.”9

Although Henry II possessed the grant from the Pope, he did not send troops into Ireland until 1169, when the deposed king of Leinster, Diarmid McMurrough, asked Henry to send troops to Ireland in order to assist him in regaining his throne from enemy chieftains. Henry sent Richard de Clare, the earl of Pembroke otherwise known as Strongbow, to Ireland in 1170. Instead of conquering the Irish, the Anglo-Norman troops under Strongbow married into Irish families and became Irish themselves. This disloyalty to the crown enraged the English kings and, for the next century, Ireland became a battleground between the opposing forces: the Irish and Norman-Irish versus the English. For the next three hundred years skirmishes continued between these forces, but none boiled over to the point which engulfed the country. By the early 1400s, the only region completely controlled by the English forces was an area around Dublin called “the Pale” due to throne wrangling in England amongst the many branches of the royal family.

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8 Seamus Metress, *Outlines in Irish History: Eight Hundred Years of Struggle* (Detroit, MI: Connolly Books, 1995), 8.
9 Ibid., 10-11.
With the ending familial warfare in England for the throne in 1485, Henry VII strengthened English control, but allowed the Irish to keep their basic institutions and govern themselves. The real death struggle between the two nations did not fully begin until the time when Henry VIII made himself head of the English church. The impact of the reformation in Ireland was minimal at first. The majority of the Irish remained Catholic despite efforts of Henry and his successors. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth I that a rebellion led by Shane O’Neill, an Irish chieftain, against the British crown was put down severely. Villages were plundered and burned, crops and cattle destroyed, and people put to death. The entire nation was punished for it. The Anglican Church was made the established church of Ireland and the Penal Laws denied Catholics the right to vote or hold public office and their land was confiscated and given to English nobles loyal to the crown as their punishment for rebelling against English rule.

These policies grew more severe under the Stuart kings. During this period, Scottish settlers colonized Northeastern Ireland, displacing many Irish Catholics who had lived on family lands for hundred of years. The Irish rebelled again and again, and each rebellion was firmly crushed. The Irish were subdued for a time after the victory of Oliver Cromwell’s army in 1649 due to his tyrannical policy against the Irish. Soon Anglo and Scottish Protestants held nine-tenths of the land, though most of the Irish remained Catholics. It became illegal for Catholics to buy land in Ireland and as a result Irish Catholics became serfs, tied to Anglo landlords. Although, Ireland had its own Parliament, only Protestants held office in it. When the English people forced James II to abdicate in 1688, he found enthusiastic support in Ireland, because he was Catholic. After his army was beaten at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, Ireland was subdued once
more. A treaty that emerged from the battle promised Catholics land and civil rights, but the Parliaments of England and Ireland refused to keep the terms of the treaty. New laws crushed Irish trade.

The first half of the 1700s was the darkest period in Irish history. Many Irish left the island during this period. Rebellions continued throughout the 1700s. In 1778 the Irish Parliament finally gave Catholics the right to hold land and practice their religion. But another rebellion under Theobold Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen took place in 1798 in order to free Ireland of British rule. That rebellion was put down and as a result an Act of Union was passed in 1801 when the Irish Parliament abolished itself, making Ireland a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. William Pitt, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, as a way of helping Ireland solve its problems, sponsored this law. However, the British Parliament refused to keep the promises that had been made. The Irish, led by Daniel O’Connell, continued to demand religious and political freedom. In 1829, the Catholics were finally given the right to hold office and sit in Parliament, but the Anglican Church remained the official church of Ireland for another thirty years.10

The failure of the potato crop in the 1840s resulted in an Irish holocaust known as the “famine” or as An Gorta Mór (the Great Hunger in Irish).11 At the height of the Great Hunger, it is estimated “that two million people out of a population of nine million were lost to death or migration” and “that conservative figures suggest half of those two million people died of starvation or related diseases such as typhus” between the years of

10 Information in preceding paragraphs can be found in a variety of sources on Irish history, but the author found the following to be the most helpful: T.W. Moody & F.X. Martin, ed. The Course of Irish History (Cork, Ireland: Mercer Press, 1984), T. Pakenham, The Year of Liberty: The Story of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 (London: Haddon and Stoughton, 1969), & Seamus Metress, Outlines in Irish History.

11 For information on An Gorta Mor, please see page 17 footnote 57 for additional information.
1846 and 1848, two years in which so many lost their lives in such a short span of time. According to historian Kerby Miller “the volume of emigration was astonishing, between 1845 and 1855 more people left Ireland than during the preceding two and one-half centuries.”

The surge of Irish into America created a breeding ground for Irish nationalist activism in the urban ghettos of America. In his book, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, Lawrence McCaffrey points out that:

Irish nationalism jelled and flourished in the ghettos of urban America as an identity search, a cry of vengeance, and a quest for respectability. Irish-Americans furnished hate and passion as well as funds to constitutional and physical force nationalism in Ireland... The development of an Irish identity among American immigrants speeded the progress of Irish nationalism on both sides of the Atlantic.

Physical force in Ireland has been advocated in every rebellion in Irish history, however the majority of them failed. The Irish who took part in those rebellions became known as freedom fighters and came from all walks of life according to Irish-American and sociologist Andrew M. Greeley. In his book, *The Irish Americans: The Rise to Money and Power*, Greeley summarizes the nationalist movement in Ireland with the following words:

The Irish “freedom fighters” from 1798 to Easter 1916 were for the most part priests, poets, intellectuals, dreamers. The ’98 rising was a bloody disaster. The various other conflicts, particularly those of the Young Ireland movement and the Fenians a couple of decades later, were more ludicrous than dangerous. Caught in the same combination of military ineptitude and popular indifference, the same fate would have almost certainly happened to the occupants of the GPO if the British had been more intelligent and less bloody-minded in their response to the rising. Only after 1916 did the brilliant military and political genius Michael Collins invent modern guerilla warfare for which the British, with professional

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12 Metress, *Outlines in Irish History*, 63.
14 McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora*, 139-140.
soldiers, mercenary auxiliaries, and paid informants and agents, provocateurs, were no match. Collins knew that his guerillas were, as Mao would later say “fish swimming in the sea of the people.”\textsuperscript{15}

Besides the devastating memory of the Great Starvation and of failed rebellion, the idea of cultural nationalism also played an important part in Irish-American involvement for an Ireland free of British domination. The Young Ireland movement placed an emphasis on Irish literature that described the resistance to British rule. Irish immigrants taught their children the speeches of Irish patriots such as Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone, and songs of resistance. They developed literature that placed an emphasis on Celtic legends fighting resistance such as Finn MacCool and his Fianna soldiers.\textsuperscript{16} It is easy to see why many Irish-Americans felt that “Britain had to be punished and humiliated, not only as a step toward Irish freedom but as an atonement for its sins against the Irish.”\textsuperscript{17} This was the goal of all Irish-American nationalist groups, including that of the AOH during the years between 1880 and 1922 to “promote armed conflicts between Great Britain and her continental enemies, emphasizing the slogan England’s difficulty is Ireland’s opportunity.”\textsuperscript{18} The AOH and other nationalist groups raised over $170 million for the nationalist cause in Ireland between the years of 1848 and 1887.\textsuperscript{19} The AOH in Ohio reflected this involvement in Irish nationalism as well.

According to John Ridge, author of \textit{Erin’s Sons in America—The Ancient Order of Hibernians}, the Ohio divisions of the AOH have “taken strong stands on Irish political

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{16 Seamus Metress, (Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Toledo), in discussion with the author, March 27, 2003.}
\footnote{17 McCaffrey,\textit{The Irish Catholic Diaspora}, 141.}
\footnote{18 Ibid.,148.}
\footnote{19 Joanne Mooney Eichacker, \textit{Irish Republican Women in America: Lecture Tours, 1916-1925} (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003), 24. The majority of the fundraising was done through Clan Na Gael through their various front groups.}
\end{footnotes}
activities.” This strong stand began during the 1880s with Charles Stewart Parnell’s Land League movement in Ireland. According to McCaffrey, Parnell was “interested in enlisting the enthusiasm and dollars of the most important wing of the Diaspora, the American Irish.” Those American dollars supported Parnell’s movement, which was “the struggle for both land and independence, [which] became merged in a mass movement without precedent in Irish history.”

Parnell’s movement at first focused on the “land war” of 1879-1882. During these three years, Ireland was facing the possibility of another famine, like that of An Gorta Mor. Crop failures and low prices were leading to the evictions of Irish peasants from the land on which their livelihood was based. Parnell along with Michael Davitt founded the National Land League, which advocated the reforms such as fair rents, fixity of tenure, and free sale of the tenancy. Under the auspices of the land league, peasants began refusing to pay rents, assisting those financially whom were evicted, and boycotting “to socially ostracize collaborators.” Money from organizations such as the AOH and Clan na Gael’s Irish National and Industrial League of the United States and the American Land League “made it possible for Irish tenant farmers to restrict eviction

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23 Taken from Seamus Metress, Outlines in Irish History, 80. The idea of fair rent was “based on the value of the land, instead of the inflated rates the landlords demanded. Fixity of tenure so tenants would not arbitrarily be ejected from the land. Free sale of the tenancy so tenants who left the land would receive compensation for the improvements they made.”
24 Ibid., 81.
threats."25 According to McCaffrey, one of the leaders of league, Michael Davitt, described American Irish as “the avenging wolfhound of Irish nationalism.”26

Following the rise of Parnell as the leader of the Irish Party in Parliament, the AOH passed the same resolution of support for Parnell and his movement at the national conventions held in Philadelphia in 1880 and St. Louis in 1881:

That we universally regret the present humiliating condition of Ireland, the country that gave us birth; that we condemn as headless and inhuman the laws which have rendered our people medicants at the door of every nation of the earth, and that we denounce in the most emphatic manner that government which has been for centuries sucking the life blood of the Irish people…we earnestly recommend to the members and divisions their hearty cooperation and assistance in further alleviating the present famine, the possibility of future famines, and the objects of the League generally. That we especially thank the people of this American Republic for the warm and generous interest manifested in the case of Ireland, and the unbound sympathy and aid extended her suffering people in their hour of dire necessity.27

The resolution further stated that the AOH would “contribute five percent of the funds of the Order to the Treasurer of the Irish National Land League.”28 The resolution passed due to:

the testimony of Parnell and Davitt …is that the best friends of the Land League movement in America were the members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. No other organization [donated] so much from its treasury to the Land League funds and no other organization created so much sympathy for the movement and originated so many meetings as the Ancient Order. In almost every city and town where there was a Land League organization its chief officers were Hibernians. The great meetings which were addressed by Mr. Parnell were in large measure due to the organizing ability of the Hibernians.29

26 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 1058.
29 Ibid.
With the national board's involvement in Parnell’s movement, it was up to the individual states to carry out the board’s directive. The Ohio AOH state board president, Mr. Hargan was interviewed by the Pittsburgh Sunday Dispatch about why the AOH, a Catholic organization was supporting Protestant Parnell. He stated, “the order holds itself to be essentially Roman Catholic, yet this struggle to free Ireland is of all religions.” He goes on to say that “what was required was the uniting of the Irish Protestants and Catholics in their efforts for Ireland, and the fact of Parnell being at the head of the League is a big step toward this accomplishment of such an object.”30 The Youngstown Daily Vindicator described Parnell “as the noblest Roman of all the living Irishmen struggling for the freedom of the green isle.”31

In addition to articles in newspapers praising the leadership of Parnell, the Irish leader toured Ohio to raise awareness and funds for the movement in Ireland. Parnell’s tour of Ohio was important due to its large Irish population which enabled his speeches to be well attended according to AOH state board historian Mike Finn.32 Before making his historic speech in Cincinnati, Parnell made a special stop in Columbus in order to meet two AOH members at the train station to thank them for their support.33 At a rally organized by the AOH in Cincinnati on February 23, 1880 Parnell said:

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30 Interview was published in the following newspaper: Youngstown Daily Vindicator, “The A.O.H. and Parnell,” May 30, 1884.
31 Youngstown Daily Vindicator, March 18, 1886.
32 J. Michael Finn (state of Ohio AOH state board historian) in tape-recorded interview with the author, February 8, 2004. Finn joined the AOH in 1988, became division historian for Columbus’s Padraic Pearse division and was appointed state board historian in 1996. He has done extensive research on the Columbus AOH, publishes a monthly AOH history newsletter, and has written several articles, which are pending publication on the history of the Irish in Columbus. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
33 Ibid. The speech is labeled “historic” due to the fact that it has been cited in numerous books and articles that have been written on the history of Irish nationalism and for the first time in public, Parnell gives support to physical violence in order to free Ireland.
None of us…whether we are in America or Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link that keeps Ireland bound to England…no man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation. No man has the right to say to this country, ‘thus far shalt thou go and no further’ and we have never attempted to fix the ne plus ultra to the progress of Ireland’s nationhood and we never shall.34

After his speech, Parnell’s movement was able to pass land reform legislation by obstructing the British Parliament from passing any other legislation until land reform was dealt with in 1890.35 However, Parnell and his movement were unable to get home rule legislation passed.36 In a letter that was read at the 1890 AOH national convention in Hartford, Connecticut, Parnell thanked the AOH for their $50,000 donation to the movement:

I have always much appreciated the practical and moral support afforded by the Ancient Order to our movement in America since its first inception in 1879 and it would be impossible for me to speak too highly of the patriotism and devotion towards Ireland which has been so constantly manifested by your Order. When we shall have attained for our people the great end of national self government, we shall look upon the sympathy and exertions of your organization as having filled to a very large extent to ranks of that great army of American sympathizers by whom so much has been done to enable us to win the victory. The time is now very near when the last battle must be fought, and I have every confidence that Ireland shall then be able to rely upon the members of the Ancient Order to the same extent as in former years.37

In addition to Parnell, Hibernians enlisted political leaders such as the Ohio speaker of the house, Neal J. Hysell to speak in favor of the Irish cause at a St. Patrick’s Day event.

36 Ibid.
37 O’Dea, *History of the Ancient Order*, 1100-1101. Parnell’s involvement in the fight for a free Ireland soon drew to a close when he became the center of controversy. His affair with Katherine O’Shea became public when her husband, Captain O’Shea named Parnell in his divorce case. A combination of the scandal, Catholic church disapproval of Parnell’s actions in his private life, British press, and party opposition brought Parnell down. He tried to regroup by making speeches across Ireland in order to put the scandal behind him but the strain of so much travel combined with illness led to his death on October 6, 1891 at the age of forty-five. The Irish people were left without a dynamic leader to fight the British aggression.
held in Cleveland in March of 1890. In his speech according to the account in the

*Cleveland Plain Dealer*:

No one, … who weighed the subject of Ireland’s destiny can doubt that the day
will surely come when Ireland will be liberated from her bondage… Why is
Ireland not prosperous? Its people are more downtrodden than any other people in
the world. Why is it? It is because Irishmen have not fought as hard for
themselves as for others…there was no reason why she should pay tribute to
England. She should be free. While the state of Ohio pays in taxes about
$3,000,000 Ireland pays double the amount. That is not taxation; it is tribute. He
believed when Ireland is relieved of its thralldom it will be through the aid of the
United States. No American should hesitate to espouse the cause of Ireland. He
should be proud to do it.38

Local attorney, James Welsh also spoke at the event. Welsh stated in his speech “that
what Ireland lacks are homes, and that no country can be prosperous with the population
of Ireland where all the land is owned by 10,000 landlords, mostly foreigners.”39 The
speakers, mass, dinner, and music, provided by the Hibernians raised awareness and
possibly money for the cause.40

In addition to the event held in Cleveland, the Youngstown AOH brought a
speaker from Chicago to lecture on Ireland and its relationship with America on February
21, 1898 at St. Columba’s church. The lecture entitled, “Ireland and America” was given
by the Honorable John F. Finnerty of Chicago. Finnerty outlined Irish participation in the
American Revolution, the 1798 rebels such as Wolfe Tone, Daniel O’Connell, *An Gorta
Mor*, and “then urged that the moral sentiment of Youngstown be brought to bear against
the adoption of any international arbitration treaty with Great Britain.”41 He stated that if

38 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 18, 1890.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid. The newspaper coverage did not indicate if money was raised at the event so it is left to
the author’s speculation that such an event that was open to the public at large would have sought donations
for the cause although the author has no evidence to support such speculation.
41 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, February 21, 1898.
such a treaty were passed, America would not be able to help free Ireland out of Britain’s

grip.

Another speech for a free Ireland was made in Youngstown at the AOH St.

Patrick’s Day banquet in 1902. Father Mears of St. Columba’s parish, the evening

speaker, began with this passionate message:

We look on St. Patrick’s Day not only as a national feast day but as a religious

feast day that reminds us of Ireland, a day that reminds us of God, and a day that

inspires in us a hope for the day when Ireland will be free. For seven hundred

years the Irish people have been fighting for their liberty. Notwithstanding

continual and persistent reverses the idea has never been crushed and never will.

It is the anomaly in human nature, the anomaly of nations, Ireland has never

despaired of her freedom, and sooner or later she will be free.42

Throughout the remainder of his speech, the Hibernian crowd applauded. Father Mears

sent the Hibernian patriots home with his concluding remarks:

Prove to the world ‘tis falsely said, you never can unite. Drown not the shamrock,
drown your feuds, and join for Ireland’s right. Together naught can crush you
down, and soon no tyrant sway, shall blight our land or blast our homes upon St.

Patrick’s Day.43

Speeches like the ones in Youngstown drew members of Clan na Gael to infiltrate

the AOH, according to Cleveland State University scholars Nelson J. Callahan and

William F. Hickey in their work on the Irish in Cleveland. They infiltrated the

organization out of fear that the Church hierarchy would focus the AOH, an important

source both financially and emotionally for the Irish cause, strictly on defending the

Church against nativist attacks. According to Callahan and Hickey it was those Clan na

Gael members that “held great sway within [the AOH and that they] were welcomed with

42 Ibid, March 17, 1902.
43 Ibid.
knowing nods, if not open arms." Clan na Gael members were able to keep the AOH engaged in the fight for Irish liberation. In fact, at the AOH national convention in 1902, the AOH came to the same conclusion as the AOH in Ireland that “we are determined to go on preparing for war” in the event that settling the issue peacefully failed.45

In 1903 the Cleveland AOH divisions held a mass meeting in order to raise $100,000 in the United States to help in the fight against the Anglo landowners who wanted to keep Ireland united to the British crown. The speaker for the event was an Irish member of Parliament, Joseph Devlin from North Kerry, Ireland. For the Joseph Devlin event, the AOH requested that “all friends of Ireland and lovers of liberty are invited and [are] earnestly requested to co-operate in dealing a final blow to Landlordism in that country by helping to raise the sum of $100,000 needed for [the] Irish defence fund.”46 During this time most money raised in America was given primarily to John Redmond’s Irish Party whose goal was to attain a moderate form of Home Rule for Ireland.47

Later on that year Columbus AOH divisions held an event which commemorated the centennial of patriot Robert Emmet’s execution by the British in September 1803.48 Emmet made a speech at his trial for treason which became the rallying battle cry for a liberated Ireland: “When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not til then, let my epitaph be written.”49 This rallying cry is why the Columbus

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46 *Cleveland Catholic Universe*, February 20, 1903. Admission charge for the event was 25 and 50 cents.
47 Moody & Martin, *The Course of Irish History* and Metress, *Outlines in Irish History*.
48 Robert Emmet was a younger brother of one of the leaders for a free Ireland during the 1790s. Emmet led a failed rebellion in Dublin on 23 July 1803. He was executed in July of 1803.
49 Metress, *Outlines in Irish History*, 46.
AOH decided to honor both the death a great Irish martyr and to educate the Irish and others in Columbus about the cause for a free Ireland. The event drew approximately 50,000 people according to AOH historian, J. Michael Finn.\textsuperscript{50} In order to accommodate such a large crowd, the railroads had to bring in extra trains to Columbus and hotels were booked with each division housed according to what city they were from in Ohio.\textsuperscript{51} The national president of the AOH, James Dolan served as the keynote speaker for the event.

Dolan said in an interview with the \textit{Columbus Sunday Dispatch}:

I believe in progress everywhere. We must move forward and keep abreast of the times. By education we can accomplish more towards the unity of our race and the dissemination of Irish history, which means the awakening of widespread enthusiasm, than through any other agency ever devised in the eight hundred years of our struggle against the tyranny of an oppressive government.\textsuperscript{52}

He went on to say that:

The Ancient Order of Hibernians is the one national order of the Irish race. It welcomes all affiliated societies and strives to attain only the one great aim, the freedom and unity of the Irish race at home and abroad, and to an Irishman “at home” always means the dear old isle of Erin.\textsuperscript{53}

The newspaper then asked him about his opinion on land reform and he responded:

…I welcome any measure provided it, bring[s] either temporary or permanent relief to our people. I gladly sanction a measure that improves the condition and makes happier the life of any man or class of men. Understand that a land bill is not the solution of the Irish problem: it is only one step in advance. The only possible solution will be Irish unity and Irish independence. For this we have fought, sacrificed and died for 800 years. For this we have been killed while clinging to the cross and in the sanctuary of our churches. For this we have left our homes, our friends and our loved ones. Should we desist now with success our portion?\textsuperscript{54}

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\textsuperscript{50} J. Michael Finn (state of Ohio AOH state board historian) in tape-recorded interview with the author, February 8, 2004. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Columbus Sunday Dispatch}, September 20, 1903.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Besides the keynote speech, participants sang revolutionary songs, and the Hon. John T. Keating delivered Robert Emmet’s famous speech from the dock. His oration represented “the natural fervor and eloquence of his race” according to the newspaper.55

The final event was a meeting held at the Hartman Hotel for all AOH members in the state of Ohio. They passed the Hartman Resolution in support of freeing Ireland from British oppression. According to Finn, “It borders on [advocating] physical force.”56 The resolution stated:

We, the Irish-American citizens of Ohio, in mass meeting assembled on the centennial anniversary of the martyrdom of Ireland’s best loved patriot, Robert Emmet, affirm our undying allegiance to the principles for which he fought and died. Our ambition is that of Emmet, to see a republic established upon Irish soil and we will never be satisfied with less than absolute independence. We believe with the American colonists that whenever a government fails to secure for its people those inalienable rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, that that government is a failure, and that it is not only the privilege, but the duty of the people to resort to revolutionary means to secure those rights for themselves and their posterity. The history of the world demonstrates that liberty can only be secured by force of arms and that no people have ever gained their independence by any other means. We as American citizens, are unalterably opposed to any alliance, open or secret, written or verbal, between the United States and Great Britain, and we refer to Washington’s address and to England’s attitude towards this republic from the dawn of her history to the present time to substantiate our position and we declare our unalterable hostility and opposition to any party or individual who advocates or supports any measure tending to any alliance with English royalty or aristocracy. We rejoice at the evidence of the unity of our people, which is so significantly demonstrated on this memorable commemoration by the mingling of the orange and green, for we know that Ireland united means Ireland free. We congratulate the Irish race upon the fact that through 800 years of unparalleled persecutions, they have maintained the spirit of their nationality and are unconquered today as when Hugh O’Neill led…[the Irish] to glorious victory at Yellow Ford 400 years ago. And we have unbounded faith that this spirit will be maintained until Erin takes her place among the nations of the earth and Irish freemen can write the epitaph of Robert Emmet.57

55 Ibid.
56 interview with J. Michael Finn.
57 Copy of Hartman Resolution in the hand of J. Michael Finn. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
In March of 1908 the Youngstown AOH celebrated the 113th anniversary of Robert Emmet’s birth. According to the account in the *Youngstown Daily Vindicator* “a feature of the gathering was an address on Irish history and the life of Robert Emmet by Thomas McNamara Jr.” The paper stated, “the speech was a brilliant effort and was greatly appreciated by the 200 members present.” The Robert Emmet Literary society which was founded under the auspices of Clan na Gael and whose many members were AOH members passed a resolution at the meeting urging that the United States not support the arbitration treaty with Great Britain because:

Such treaties are notoriously sought by England not for the maintenance or promotion of the world’s peace, but for the purpose of leaving herself free to carry on her policy of aggression and spoliation against weaker peoples and maintaining her robber grip on and continuing to oppress countries to which her rule has been a curse and a blight.

This grievance against the ratification of the arbitration treaty seems to be directly related to the British treatment of Ireland, since many in the AOH at that time had the opinion that British rule in Ireland had indeed “been a curse and a blight.” On the day before St. Patrick’s Day over 1,000 members of the AOH in Ohio gathered in Cleveland in order to protest the proposed treaty. Copies of the resolution and reports of the protest were sent to the White House, senators and representatives from Ohio, and to the chairman of the senate committee on foreign affairs.

While the Ohio Hibernians were honoring great patriots like Robert Emmet they were also changing their political allegiance from Parnell’s old Irish Party to that of Sinn

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58 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, March 10, 1908.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., March 16, 1908.
63 Ibid., March 10 & March 16, 1908.
Sinn Fein was founded by Arthur Griffith in 1908 as an alternative to the Irish Party. Griffith originally wanted to set up a dual monarchy like that of the Austro-Hungarian empire, but soon other groups such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) which wanted to overthrow British rule in Ireland by means of physical force infiltrated Sinn Fein. This is just what the Ohio AOH members were looking for in a political party after the passage of the Hartman Resolution.65

As the IRB and Sinn Fein began making plans for an armed rebellion in Ireland, the AOH made plans to assist in that goal. AOH’s planning came about by working “closely with German Americans [German-American Alliance] prior to World War I to gain support for an independent Ireland” according to Irish historian Kevin Kenny in his work entitled *The American Irish: A History.*66 In addition Clan na Gael, which had infiltrated the AOH helped plan the actual rising that was scheduled to take place during the Easter Week.67 They decided to strike the blow for freedom in April 1916 since the British were occupied with fighting the war in Europe. The AOH and Clan na Gael helped raise funds to buy arms from the Germans for the rising. Besides the Irish fighters, “50 members of the AOH’s Hibernian Rifles from the United States” took part.68 The Easter Rising lasted a week before being brutally put down by the British. At the end of the week, the rebel leaders were not viewed favorably by the majority of the Irish since many of Dublin’s poor lost their homes in the fighting. However, that opinion

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64 Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles,* 542. Sinn Fein is the Irish for “ourselves alone”.
67 McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora,* 165.
68 Metress, *Outlines in Irish History,* 89. The information that is available does not state where these 50 Hibernians came from in the United States. The Hibernian Rifles were a military division of the AOH, which met on a regular basis to practice drilling.
changed when the British executed the leaders of the rising within three weeks of the surrender.

Once those who had been imprisoned for their part in the Easter Rising were released, including Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera, it was time for Sinn Fein to run in the 1918 parliamentary election in London. Sinn Fein received 80% of the Irish vote; clearly the majority of the Irish people wanted an Ireland that was free of Britain.69

Support grew among the American Irish as opinion in Ireland turned in favor of the rebel martyrs. Greeley summarized this increased support as “American money began to pour into Ireland; it is difficult to tell how much.”70 According to McCaffrey, “Irish-American Catholics through the Clan na Gael organization supplied money and guns to Sinn Fein in Ireland, and pressured Washington to recognize the Irish Republic.”71 Besides donating money to the cause, the AOH began to campaign against Woodrow Wilson and the passage of the Treaty of Versailles. An article in Cleveland’s Catholic Universe presented the AOH argument:

This war and the conference which follows it was dedicated by the president’s own words and by the acceptance of those words by the allies, to the doctrine of the rights of small nations and their privilege of self-determination as to their form of government. If there is any place in the world where this principle is violated, it is in Ireland. If there is another people anywhere in the world more resentful of being ruled by another people than the people of Ireland are of English rule, we do know of it. If the peace conference in basing its work on justices and righteousness between peoples, ignores the case of Ireland, it challenges on the very face of it the good faith of its own pretensions.72

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69 Metress, Outlines in Irish History, 102.
70 Greeley, The Irish Americans 93.
71 McCaffrey, The Irish Catholic Diaspora, 167.
72 Cleveland Catholic Universe, March 14, 1919.
In Sandusky, the AOH chaplain, Reverend Graham said “the peace conference will not have fulfilled its mission it if fails to give Ireland independence.” At an AOH St. Patrick’s Day celebration in Youngstown, Father Kirby “asked the American people to thunder at the cliffs of Dover and gates of Paris until Irish freedom was recognized on the Emerald Isle.” In addition to the typical banquets and rallies for Irish independence, Irish republican leaders came to the United States to raise money for the cause and to thank Irish-Americans for their support.

One of the first Irish leaders to visit Ohio during this time period was Eamon De Valera. He came to Columbus in October 1919 in order to solicit financial support for the Irish Republic that had been declared during the 1916 Easter Rising. Members of the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) (a Clan na Gael led organization to raise funds for the Irish Republic) met De Valera. AOH members were involved heavily in the organization. The majority of the FOIF officers were AOH officers as well. De Valera made two speeches during his visit in Columbus. The first was given at the Southern Theater and the second at the Chamber of Commerce. De Valera stated in his address at the Southern Theater:

Every place I have been from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the mayors of cities have expressed themselves in sympathy with our request for recognition. And everywhere, also, I am told that our cause is just, that Ireland is entitled to independence. I have never heard the contrary. The only argument against recognition I have heard is that it would be regarded by Great Britain as a hostile act. But why should that hinder America from doing what is justice, bare justice? Should you keep from doing what is right just because a robber would feel

73 Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 18, 1919.
74 Cleveland Catholic Universe, March 21, 1919.
75 Eamon de Valera was the male leader of the 1916 Easter Rising to survive. He avoided execution because he claimed American citizenship since he was born in New York City. The only time he ever acknowledged being an American. He was raised in Ireland by his mother’s family. Once some degree of independence for Ireland had been obtained, he went to become seven-time taisoechoir (Irish for prime minister) and two time President of the Irish Republic. Further information can be found in Tim Pat Coogan’s biography on Eamon de Valera.
offended? You can say to England, ‘We will do so whether you like it or not. If you were a small, weak nation, It might be different. But you can exercise your right despite the whole world. The snarl of the lion over his prey will not prevent you from doing justice to Ireland. Article 10 of the League of Nations covenant, by its guaranteeing of territorial integrity of nations, will prevent Ireland from obtaining assistance from any source, will be denied the assistance the American colonies got from France during the revolution, the help the United States gave Cuba and other oppressed peoples, even the assistance America gave to the restoration of subjected nations of central Europe. We can revolt, of course, and will continue to do that as often as opportunity presents itself. But if you read history you will find that few oppressed peoples ever got their independence without assistance from the outside. Ireland exactly is in the position Belgium was in and would have remained in if Germany had won, except that we have had 700 years of it where Belgium had only four.\(^{\text{76}}\)

After De Valera’s plea for assistance, resolutions were read by Timothy S. Hogan, a two term Ohio Attorney General and AOH member.\(^{\text{77}}\) The resolution against the ratification of League of Nation was:

Ratification without the previous recognition of Ireland’s independence would be, in effect to disregard Ireland’s rights, to admit Britain’s claim to rule Ireland as part of her legitimate possessions and to commit the United States to the maintenance of Britain’s rule in Ireland by pledging her our strength as a nation to Britain against any nation which might seek to assist Ireland to regain her liberty.\(^{\text{78}}\)

Greeley best summarized Irish-American opinion that President Woodrow Wilson “deliberately and callously ignored the demand of Irish-Americans to support freedom for the Republic of Ireland, thus confirming the conviction of many Irish American

\(^{\text{76}}\) *Catholic Columbian*, October 10, 1919.

\(^{\text{77}}\) Information taken from the following sources: *Catholic Columbian*, October 10, 1919 & J. Michael Finn, e-mail message to author, July 11, 2004. Uncataloged material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. Timothy Sylvester Hogan was “two time State President of the AOH and two-term Ohio Attorney General from 1911-1915. He ran for US senate against Warren G. Harding in 1914 and lost due to pressure by anti-Catholic groups. He was originally from Wellston, Ohio.” He was also the President of the Columbus branch of the FOIF during the time of De Valera’s visit. J. Michael Finn, e-mail message to author, July 11, 2004. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

\(^{\text{78}}\) *Catholic Columbian*, October 10, 1919.
Catholics that Wilson was an arrogant and self-righteous bigot.”79 Irish-American opposition was just one of the many factors that helped to shatter Wilson’s vision for the League of Nations as the Treaty of Versailles failed to be ratified by the United States Senate.

Meanwhile in Ireland, Michael Collins led the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which consisted of the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army who had fought during the 1916 Rising and new volunteers to the cause. Collins led his men in attacks on British government institutions in Ireland such as military and police barracks. This battle with the British military and auxiliaries, known as the Black and Tans, was to be called by historians the Irish War for Independence.80 According to Metress, the Black and Tans were:

a force sent to Ireland by Britain that had a social composition similar to the Nazi SS troops; in fact Hitler and Mussolini copied the concept. The name is a result of the fact that they wore uniforms that were a mixture of dark and khaki colors. They used murder, arson, torture, rape and systematic beating up and looting of whole areas.81

In an article found in the Catholic Columbian in March 1921, the AOH published an appeal from Cardinal Gibbons that asked “all kind-hearted and generous Americans to contribute to the fund for the relief of the many thousands now suffering want in Ireland.”82 The article described “that villages, towns and cities have been in large part burned or wrecked, homes laid in ruins, factories and creamories destroyed and thousands

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79 Greeley, The Irish Americans, 96. President Woodrow Wilson was an anti-Catholic Protestant who was a member of the Ku Klux Klan.
80 The War of Independence began in January 1919 and continued until late 1921 when a cease-fire was declared and treaty negotiations began. Michael Collins was not the official head of the army, which was Cathal Brugha, Eamon Lynch, and Liam Mellows. Collins served as the Director Intelligence for the IRB and Minister for Finance for the Provisional Irish government. He often referred to himself as the “Minister of Mayhem” according to Tim Pat Coogan’s biography on Michael Collins.
81 Metress, Outlines in Irish History, 92-93.
82 Catholic Columbian, March 11, 1921.
of persons thrown out of employment” while the majority of those displaced are dependent on charity for food and shelter. In Columbus alone, the AOH was able to raise $8000 for the Irish Relief Fund.

While Columbus was raising funds for the relief campaign, the AOH in Akron welcomed Harry Boland from Ireland, who served as an aide to Eamon De Valera during his tour of the United States. Boland was in town to thank the Hibernians for their support and to ensure that it would continue in the future. The AOH in Sandusky hosted an evening with Rev. Dr. Graham on the fight for a free Ireland. He answered questions about the struggle and closed his presentation with the following: “We are asked to do justice not for Ireland’s sake, but for our own sake, to redeem the pledges which America made to humanity and to keep faith with our dead, else America will lose her soul.” Sandusky continued to take part in the cause when they hosted the AOH state convention at Cedar Point in July of 1921, attended by over 500 members, which focused on the situation in Ireland. While these events were going on in Ohio, the fighting continued in Ireland.

By the end of 1921, the IRA was running out of ammunition and the British called for peace talks since they were being defeated at every turn by Michael Collins’s IRA. This was the time that De Valera had returned to Ireland from his tour in America. Although De Valera was the President of the Irish Republic at the time, it was Collins and his troops who brought the British to an impasse. De Valera knew that the chances of a thirty-two county republic were slim since the Protestants in the Northeast part of

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83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 18, 1921.
86 Cleveland Catholic Universe, March 25, 1921.
87 Sandusky Register, July 26, 1921.
Ireland had formed their own militias during World War I and vowed to fight to remain a part of the British empire. So, he sent Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Fein, and Cathal Brugha to London in order to negotiate the peace treaty. Collins fought hard for Ireland at the negotiations but Britain would not give up Northeastern Ireland. The British threatened Collins with all out warfare which would include aerial bombing of Irish cities, but he knew that it was time to stop fighting and to rebuild Ireland into a strong nation that it was destined to be. Collins stated that the treaty “gives us freedom, not the ultimate freedom that all nations desire and develop to, but the freedom to achieve it.”

He viewed the treaty as a stepping-stone for a united thirty-two county republic, but for now Ireland would have to make do with a twenty-six county republic. Unfortunately, De Valera and his supporters did not see the treaty that way. Soon, the united front of Irish nationalists led by Sinn Fein and the IRB cracked under differences in opinion over the partition of Ireland. A civil war was looming on the horizon that would pit De Valera and the anti-treaty group against Michael Collins and the pro-treaty group, which was backed by the British.

In Ohio, the AOH celebrated the treaty. Columbus members met and paid tribute “to the genius, the courage, the soldiership, the statesmanship of Sinn Fein.” But they soon got word of the split of Sinn Fein over the treaty. According to Finn, the AOH historian, members did not understand what was going on in Ireland. They had De Valera’s side telling them that “Collins was a traitor” for agreeing to the treaty terms and they saw Collins’ side just trying to hold things together in order to for the Irish Republic.

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89 *Catholic Columbian*, December 16, 1921.
90 Interview with J. Michael Finn, February 8, 2004.
to develop fully.\textsuperscript{91} The AOH “wanted a political solution” to the split over the treaty, not more bloodshed.\textsuperscript{92} However, the Civil War in Ireland interrupted. Ultimately, the AOH just lost interest in the whole issue with the onset of civil war. The membership of the AOH lost interest in the Irish issue which led to many members leaving the Order in droves and therefore the Order remained inactive for the next sixty years in Ohio.\textsuperscript{93} They “could no more understand the bloody civil war (in which Collins was assassinated by British operatives) between pro-Free State and anti-Free State forces than they can now understand the complexities of the conflict in [Northeastern Ireland].”\textsuperscript{94} Nor could they understand the differences between nationalism and republicanism. AOH members believed that both were interchangeable and only advocated armed rebellion for the fight in British occupied Ireland. Nationalists are “those people who want to see Ireland united into one nation.”\textsuperscript{95} Republicans are “more militant nationalists who are willing to use physical force to drive Britain from the six counties and allow the people of Ireland to decide its political future.”\textsuperscript{96}

According to Finn, AOH involvement with the “Irish question” continued to be schizophrenic in nature as it had been during the 1920s.\textsuperscript{97} The AOH has “supported where they could” in regards to Northeastern Ireland.\textsuperscript{98} This would later change with advent of the Good Friday Agreement. Many of the Hibernians did not want to take a position on the north because of the IRA’s activities. However they also saw it as an

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{93} Observation obtained through compiling city directory information for Akron, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Youngstown AOH divisions for the years 1880-2000.  
\textsuperscript{94} Greeley, \textit{The Irish Americans}, 103.  
\textsuperscript{95} Metress, \textit{Outlines in Irish History}, 121.  
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 121-122.  
\textsuperscript{97} J. Michael Finn interview.  
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
“unjust situation” where government involvement had made things worse.\textsuperscript{99} Ohio, with the exception of Columbus, remained passive in regards to the issue of Northeastern Ireland until the 1990s, however the AOH on the national level got involved in the issues with the start of the “Troubles” in Northeastern Ireland in 1966.

By 1966, the issue of Irish nationalism was heating up again, this time in Northeastern Ireland. In this part of British occupied Ireland, Catholics were kept unemployed and confined to crumbling ghetto housing. According to Metress, “the government encouraged the development of a caste system of inequality.”\textsuperscript{100} In Metress’s monograph, civil rights activist Fionbarra O’Dochartaigh states that the Catholics of Northeastern Ireland “are the white negroes of Ireland.”\textsuperscript{101} In order to fight this injustice, in 1967, members of the Catholic community founded the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. The organization was not going to “challenge the existence of the Northern Ireland state” but wanted the Northern Ireland government to put an end to the systematic abuse and discrimination of its Catholic citizens.\textsuperscript{102} Some of the abuses being committed were the discrimination of Catholics in education, housing, and jobs, and the illegal detainment of Catholics without the filing of criminal charges.\textsuperscript{103} NICRA organized marches in Derry, Dungannon, and Belfast where they were confronted by the police and later British troops. It was these clashes that first gained the attention of some of the AOH members on the national level.

The national board of the AOH began writing letters to politicians in Ireland, Britain, and the United States about the ongoing turmoil in Northeastern Ireland

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} J. H. Whyte, “Ireland: 1966-82” in Moody & Martin’s \textit{The Course of Irish History}, 289.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
beginning in 1966.\textsuperscript{104} However, it was not until Bloody Sunday occurred on January 30, 1972 when British troops shot and killed fourteen unarmed civilians who were marching for civil rights in Ireland when AOH involvement in British occupied Ireland intensified and when one of the Ohio AOH divisions took notice. The AOH in Columbus started up again after the Bloody Sunday massacre. People who joined the AOH in Columbus during this time were “rebels, not NORAIMD, they were full of fire, they were a part of the 60s/70s social agenda” according to state board president Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney.\textsuperscript{105} They began raising funds for the Christmas appeal, which assists prisoners’ dependents. When Irish freedom fighters and people involved in the nationalist movement are imprisoned, their families are cut off from all social services. They wrote letters of protest to newspapers in the United States who were unfairly, in their opinion portraying the nationalists in Northeastern Ireland as “terrorists” and to politicians in Britain and Ireland.\textsuperscript{106} They also wrote letters of support for a thirty-two county Irish republic.\textsuperscript{107} These types of activities continue in the AOH today. However, it was the Hunger Strikes of 1980-1981 that proved to be “a turning point in the AOH role” in Northeastern Ireland.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{104} Brendan Moore telephone interview, August 9, 2004, Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

\textsuperscript{105} Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney interview, February 8, 2004, Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

\textsuperscript{106} Information obtained from: Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney & J. Michael Finn interviews. Brendan Moore, national chair for the AOH Freedom for all Ireland committee, telephone interview, August 9, 2004 & AOH national website.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{108} Brendan Moore interview. “In 1981, ten republicans held in Northern Ireland jail on terrorist offences died on Hunger Strike in pursuit of being treated as [political prisoners instead of terrorists.]” in Moody and Martin’s Course of Irish History, 295.
With the occurrence of the Hunger Strikes in the early eighties, AOH members wrote letters of outrage and protested outside the British consulate in New York.\textsuperscript{109} In order to educate their membership and communities about the “Troubles”, the AOH in Ohio began a “speakers bureau” where people from Northeastern Ireland were brought to Ohio to speak out on the issues. One of the speakers was a sibling of the Gibraltar three martyrs. In 1994, the Columbus AOH brought over Fr. Malachy Murphy from St. Paul’s parish in Belfast in order to raise awareness and funds for the center for children. Father Murphy spoke in Detroit, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Columbus, and Cincinnati, raising $80,000 of the $700,000, needed to build the center.\textsuperscript{110} By 1994, there was talk about peace and an IRA cease-fire in Belfast. It was during this time that the United States under President William Clinton made peace in Northeastern Ireland a priority.

As peace talks ensued, additional Ohio AOH divisions such as Toledo became more involved in Northeastern Ireland. The Columbus AOH wrote the editorial board of the \textit{Columbus Dispatch} requesting that the articles be more balanced. The newspaper sent a reporter to Belfast to report on the peace negotiations.\textsuperscript{111} The AOH and LAOH began further collaboration with other Irish-American groups such as the Irish American Unity Conference. Divisions provided members opportunities to learn about the issues in the north so that they can find ways to get involved in the process. Some examples of this are the speakers forum which brings in speakers to help divisions understand Irish political issues such as Jim Gallagher of IAUC and the teachers from Holy Cross School.

\textsuperscript{109} Brendan Moore interview.
\textsuperscript{110} Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney and J. Michael Finn interviews.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
in Belfast.\textsuperscript{112} The goal of AOH is to “do things people can concretely touch, feel” according to Ohio AOH state board president, Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney. O’Mahoney continued with the fact that the AOH in Ohio is becoming “very much interested in Irish issues, we ought to be doing more and listening to the Irish.”\textsuperscript{113} The Good Friday Agreement is important “because it allows people to take a non-violent and legal stand.”\textsuperscript{114}

With this newfound sense of involvement in Ireland, the AOH is continuing its tradition of fighting for a free Ireland. Irish-Americans, especially the AOH have “always tried to impact Irish history [in regards to nationalism but] have always been schizophrenic about it.”\textsuperscript{115} The AOH has always been torn over the debate between supporting political negotiation versus physical force. The issues in Northeastern Ireland present a “mixed bag” to the AOH membership and always will until there is a thirty-two county republic in Ireland.\textsuperscript{116}

The struggle for a free Ireland has always presented problems for the AOH in how to deal with the debate over physical versus political force. The issues of combating nativism and cultural stereotypes have presented a struggle for the AOH as well. The British have a history of attacking the Irish and their Catholicism, which are intrinsically linked with the cause of Irish nationalism. The Catholic faith and Irish culture have been under attack since the time that the British occupied Ireland during the twelfth century. When the Irish emigrated to America, their faith and culture continued to be under attack.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid and State Convention meeting minutes. Holy Cross School is a Catholic school that has been under siege by Loyalist terrorists who have vandalized the school and threatened teachers and students’ lives. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
\textsuperscript{113} Thomas O’Mahoney interview.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} J. Michael Finn interview.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
The AOH was brought to America for the primary purpose of halting such attacks on the Irish faith and culture and to help immigrants become loyal Americans.
Chapter 3: The AOH in Ohio: Combating Nativism and Cultural Stereotypes

Irish-Americans and their organizations have had to combat Nativism and cultural stereotypes for the past one hundred and seventy five years. Nativism is “a policy of favoring native inhabitants as opposed to immigrants” a thought, which has been prevalent throughout American history since the 1830s.\(^1\) Since the 1830s, Irish-Americans and their culture have been under attack. In American society today, the image of drunken Irish and apish leprechauns is the common stereotype of Irish-American culture. The Catholic faith has given Irish-Americans an incredible “cultural power” according to historian Kevin Kenny.\(^2\) Catholic historian, Jay P. Dolan stated that, “two centuries of attack and discrimination had strengthened the importance of religion among Irish Catholics.”\(^3\) That importance of religion to Irish-American Catholics is evident in the many organizations in which they participated such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH).\(^4\) The AOH was founded upon several premises: the protection of Irish immigrants in America from nativist attacks, protection and defense of their faith, and to be loyal to their new country.\(^5\) Many native born Americans held the opinion that the “Irish Catholics were an urban social plague and a cultural tumor eating away at America’s heart and soul.”\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 765.
\(^4\) Some of the Catholic based organizations are: Irish Catholic Benevolent Union, Catholic Total Abstinence Union, and the Knights of Columbus according to historian Kevin Kenny in his work on the Irish in America, 147-148.
\(^5\) Information obtained from the national AOH website: [http://www.aoh.com/history/main.htm](http://www.aoh.com/history/main.htm), the AOH Constitution Preamble (will be at Canaday Center), and the AOH national newsletter, *The National Hibernian Digest*. Newspapers located at Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Manuscript Collections, Philadelphia, Penn.
Nativism has been a force in American history since the founding of the nation. American historian, John Higham stated that nativism can be found in “four scattered intervals in American history.”\textsuperscript{7} The first period consisted of the Revolutionary era of the 1770s through the 1790s which “produced the notorious Alien Acts.”\textsuperscript{8} The second period was the 1840s and 1850s leading up to the Civil War. The third, 1886 to 1896, “magnified a host of social problems associated with unrestricted immigration.”\textsuperscript{9} The final period can be traced to the period after World War I, when “nativism generated repressive orthodoxies on a grand scale.”\textsuperscript{10}

Anti-Catholic sentiment can be traced back to the origins of the American Revolutionary era when this sentiment “played a role in the American decision to reject British rule” according to McCaffrey.\textsuperscript{11} This was due to the fact that:

Colonists deeply resented the 1774 Quebec Act that gave the Catholic Church a privileged position in French Canada, and included within Quebec’s boundaries land north of the Ohio River-territory claimed by Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and in the early stages of the war against Great Britain, Americans celebrated Guy Fawkes Day on November 5 by hanging the pope in effigy.\textsuperscript{12}

The rationalism of the Enlightenment “as well as the British Protestant historical heritage encouraged the perception that Catholicism as a superstitious, anti-intellectual, authoritarian monster threatening to devour America values and institutions” played a role in establishing the nativist tradition in American history.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} McCaffrey, \textit{The Irish Catholic Diaspora}, 93.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. Historian John Higham work \textit{Strangers in the Land} does not address nativism in prior to 1860, except in his introduction about history of nativism in general.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
However, nativism did not spread among the masses until the late 1830s and 1840s when Irish Catholics began emigrating to America in large numbers. It became dominant in American history during the 1850s leading up to the Civil War. Between the years of 1845 and 1855 two million Irish emigrated to the United States. According to historian Les Wallace, it was this period when the “antagonism against Catholics took many forms: anti-Catholic newspapers and books, demonstrations at convents, an occasional violent confrontation, and organization of political groups.” Books such as *Awful Disclosures* by Maria Monk were published which told falsifications about Catholicism in general. During this time, riots broke out in cities such as New York and Philadelphia. According to historian Ray Allen Billington in his work entitled *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860:*

In New York and Philadelphia each election after 1834 was the occasion for violent street fighting between rival Irish factions or between natives and foreigners. In 1834 in New York Irishmen armed with stones and cudgels put the mayor, sheriff, and a posse to flight and terrorized the city. A year later police who tried to quell Irish fighting in the Five Points area were driven back and the turmoil was not ended until a man had been killed. The spring elections of 1842 brought a pitched street battle in New York between Irish and Orangemen aided by native Americans.

In reaction to this violence, the bishops of Philadelphia and New York took different approaches with their flocks. When nativists in Philadelphia “burned the churches of St. Augustine and St. Michael and the homes of Irish workers, the scholarly Bishop Kenrick

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merely advised patience to his flock.”\(^{18}\) In New York, Bishop John Hughes “allowed his people to prepare for the defence of their churches and called upon the city officials to check the violence before Catholics had to protect themselves.”\(^{19}\) The mayor asked Hughes: “are you afraid that some of your churches will be burned?” Hughes replied back, “No sir; but I am afraid that some of yours will be burned. We can protect our own. I come to warn you for your own good.”\(^{20}\) According to historian Lawrence J. McCaffrey “Irish Catholics brought local and family allegiances with them to the United States, but the common American urban experience and confrontations with Anglo-Protestant nativism forged a larger Irish identity.”\(^{21}\)

Those interested in the nativist cause of keeping America free of foreign influence joined the American Party which, like many nativist groups described their policy during this time as “Americanism.”\(^{22}\) The primary goal of the American Party “is the principle of nationality…we must do something to protect and vindicate it. If we do not it will be destroyed” according to the various Know-Nothing journals in 1855.\(^{23}\) Nativists believed that:

some influence originating abroad threatened the very life of the nation from within. Nativism therefore should be defined as intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign connections.\(^{24}\)

The nativists believed that the immigrant Irish Catholics were the “internal minority” due to the Catholic faith which many nativists believed was the “foreign connection.”

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19 Ibid.
21 McCaffrey, The Irish Catholic Diaspora, 139.
22 Higham, Strangers in the Land, 4.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
Civil War put an end to “large scale discrimination against Catholics in America.” The Irish, who were primarily Catholic participated in fighting on both sides during the Civil War. It was the Union troops such as the Fighting 69th, which was made up of primarily Irish immigrants that garnered the respect of many Americans and put an end to Irish Catholic discrimination, albeit temporarily. However, the flames of anti-immigration and anti-Catholicism would ignite once again after the war’s end.

The third period of nativism in the United States took place during the 1880s to 1896 when the decline of the American economy combined with “a host of social problems associated with unrestricted immigration.” McCaffrey states that:

Xenophobia expressed the anxieties of a wide variety of Americans. While workers feared immigrant employment competition, the middle class doubted that capitalism could survive the combined impact of depression and immigration. They suspected that European socialist ideology permeated the expanding labor movement. An increasing number of strikes, some violent, confirmed these anxieties. Nativism during this time took on more “scientific” terms during this time period:

Although nativism continued to feature an Evangelical Protestant aura, professional and upper-middle-class sophisticates abandoned “crude” religious bigotry for a nativism rationalized in pseudoscientific terms. It condemned inferior races rather than alien creeds.

Even though it was “scientific” the period was still rampant with anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiment. According to Higham:

…the late eighties gave birth to an anti-Catholic movement tinged with more hysteria and suffused with a deeper nativism than the religious friction of the mid-seventies. But what most clearly distinguished the new Protestant nativism from that of the preceding decade was its inclusion of immigrant along with the priest as an object of attack….Typically they trembled at the Roman challenge to

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25 Cogley, *Catholic America*, 60.
28 Ibid., 111.
American freedom[,] rallied to the defense of the public school system, and urged limitations on immigration and naturalization.\(^{29}\)

Since the late 1880s consisted of a “deeper nativism”, the years of 1887 and 1888 provided nativists with many books that were published with “intense anti-Catholic emotion” during that period.\(^{30}\) Books such as *Outlook of Freedom, The Roman Catholic Element in American History, Rome in America, Washington in the Lap of Rome* spoke about how the hierarchy of the Catholic church had a strong influence on the politics of the nation. *Washington in the Lap of Rome* claimed that:

> …a private wire runs from the White House, in Washington to the Cardinal’s Palace, in Baltimore, and that every important question touching the interests of Romanism in America is placed before his eye, before it becomes a public act, it is true that the Cardinal is a factor in politics.\(^{31}\)

There were many nativist organizations during the late 1880s, but one of the largest was the American Protective Association (APA).\(^{32}\) The APA was founded in 1887 at Clinton, Iowa and “became the largest, most influential anti-Catholic force during the latter part of the nineteenth century.”\(^{33}\) By 1894, “the APA had established itself in every state in the Union.”\(^{34}\) Another important nativist group during this period was the Immigration Restriction League which was founded in a Boston law office. Its goal was to agitate in favor of the literacy tests for immigrants according to historian John Higham.\(^{35}\) The Immigration Restriction League believed that:

> southern and eastern Europe-in sharp contrast to northwestern Europe in sharp contrast to northwestern Europe-was dumping on the United States an alarming

\(^{29}\) Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 60-61.


\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 114. Other nativist organizations were the Guardians of Liberty, American Minute Men, Convenanters, Knights of Luther, and the Ku Klux Klan.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 2.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 65-66.

\(^{35}\) Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 102.
number of illiterate paupers, criminals, and madmen who endangered the “American character” and “American citizenship.”

Although the League played a role like that of the APA, its strength declined as well.

The final period of nativism that Catholics dealt with came immediately after World War I through the 1920s. This period “was a kind of nativism which could identify a threat to national and individual identity in the diverse, increasingly urban society of the 1920s.” Organizations such as the Masons “struck a well of popular sympathy when… [it was] discovered that… [the] order could represent itself as the champion of the ‘forgotten’ native born Protestant middle class.” However, the “most blatantly anti-Catholic group in the country…was the KKK.” During its peak of power in the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) had “four to five million strong …and spread throughout the southern, Midwestern, and middle Atlantic states.” What led to the decline of the nativist movement was a combination of the lack of interest in fraternal organizations and “ultimately, legislated immigration restriction itself sapped the nativist movement.”

Fraternal organizations played an important role in helping immigrants assimilate to their new lives in America. The AOH was born in the United States as a result of the period of nativism that swept America during the 1830s through the 1850s. The organization in cities such as Boston and New York had to address specific nativist threats and defend the churches from attack. However, the AOH was not found in Ohio

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36 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 246.
41 Knobel, America for the Americans, 274.
until the 1870s and 1880s, a period when nativism against the Irish did not appear to be rampant. It appears that the Hibernians in Ohio were questioned about their loyalty to America and how it might conflict with loyalty to the Catholic Church. The AOH laid out several aims to address this issue of loyalty to America.

AOH aims “were for the honor of God, our country, and for the elevation of our race.” At an 1886 Saint Patrick’s Day celebration in Youngstown, the AOH followed the mantra in Ireland that the Hibernians “refrain from arousing the animosity of the Orangemen” in their celebrations for that day. The Hibernians tried to emphasize the fact that they were loyal and patriotic Americans. Many of their businesses were decorated with the red, white and blue of the United States along with the Irish green during the 1891 St. Patrick’s day festivities in Youngstown. The newspapers in Youngstown picked up on a story about how an anti-Irish organization known as the Mechanics asked the Mayor of Pittsburgh to not allow AOH units to carry the Irish flag in the Pittsburgh AOH’s St. Patrick’s Day celebrations. The Mechanics in Youngstown did not want to follow in the footsteps of their Pittsburgh brethren and chose to speak out in favor of Hibernians expressing their Irish spirit without questioning their loyalty to America with the following:

The action of the members of the Mechanics in Pittsburg, should receive the condemnation of every member of the order. It is not the province of the American Mechanics to inspire hatred of other countries, but to inspire love for the stars and stripes. We are not organized to wage war on class or creed, but to protect American institutions, in which protection we invite the aid of all, against foreign or domestic traitors. The carrying of the Irish flag on St.

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42 Conclusion of the author based on newspaper accounts from Youngstown Daily Vindicator between the years of 1880 to 1922.
44 Youngstown Daily Vindicator, March 18, 1886.
45 Youngstown Daily Vindicator, March 17, 1891.
Patrick’s day is not, in our opinion, in any way against American institutions any more than by carrying the American flag in Canada on the Fourth of July would mean that any one intended to annex that country to the United States. 46

One could speculate about this difference in opinion between the Pittsburgh and Youngstown Mechanics. But there is little to no evidence how the relationship between the Hibernians and Mechanics were in both Pittsburgh and Youngstown. But the above statements seem to suggest that the Pittsburgh relationship was more strained between the two organizations than the one in Youngstown.

After addressing the Mechanics claims, the AOH turned it concerns to the APA. The AOH discussed the APA at the national convention held in Omaha, Nebraska in May of 1894. One delegate by the name of Wilhere urged his fellow Hibernians to show their loyalty to America by displaying the American flag in Catholic classrooms with the following statement:

In these modern times, when the descendants of the Revolutionary Tories are organizing all over the land for the avowed purpose of ostracising and destroying us in business, public and social life, our protests cannot be too strong and our vindication of the truth of history too pointed. It is our duty to ourselves, to our children, and to our children’s children to stand up like manly men and combat this modern Know Nothingism which is spreading over the land in the guise of an organization called the A.P.A. In my judgement, brethren, it is our duty to fight this un-American order and its professed principles with every weapon with which American freemen should fight the battle of right and justice as against the accursed spirit of bigotry and intolerance which should find no place under free institutions, but which unfortunately runs riot through our country at the present time.” 47

Other delegates continued by addressing intolerance in America:

We have no intention of expounding our doctrines of trying to make converts, or have we any intention of that character. All we want to do is to allay this awful spirit of

46 Ibid.
47 O’Dea, History of the Ancient, 1106-1107.
intolerance. No sensible person believes that we are enemies to the State or the nation. We are as patriotic as any church; but our aims and our objects are misunderstood.\textsuperscript{48}

Besides combating questions of their loyalty to the United States, the Hibernians decided to take on the APA. At the AOH state convention in May of 1896 members passed a resolution condemning the activities of the APA:

Resolved, that we recognize and so teach our members that our highest and first civic duty is to the stars and stripes and to the free institutions of our beloved country; that we are proud of the heroic record of our Irish and Catholic forefathers in the struggle for the establishment and maintenance of liberty in this free land and we pledge the manhood, the life and the sacred honor of every Irish-American Catholic and of every Hibernian to the perpetuation of the God-given rights of every American freeman life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As true American citizens, we condemn all organizations that aim to abridge the rights of any American citizen because of his national descent or religious belief, and appeal to all true Americans, who love liberty, justice, and fair play to join with us in our patriotic effort, to free American citizenship from the disgrace of fostering such il-liberal societies that should find no place under our free institutions.\textsuperscript{49}

Hibernians passed this resolution due to the fact that the APA “controlled city government in Columbus and Toledo Ohio.”\textsuperscript{50} They were also aware that the APA “used the AOH as primary evidence of the growing aggressiveness and military preparedness of Rome.”\textsuperscript{51} The Supreme Vice President of the APA in 1894 stated that:

The Michigan Catholic declares that 30,000 members have been added to the list of Hibernians during the last year. If there is any doubt as to their being armed and drilled, we need only refer to the fact that on the 21\textsuperscript{st} of June last, one of their regiments was mustered into the State service of Illinois, since which time it has been a part of the troops of that state. This certainly would not have been, were they merely a fraternal order.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 1206. O’Dea does not identify which delegate made this statement in his account of the convention.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Youngstown Daily Vindicator}, May 18, 1896.
\textsuperscript{50} Lew Wallace, 67. “Toledo, Cleveland, and Columbus were the sites of the first APA penetration of Ohio…Toledo was also the site of the Organization of the Ohio Superior Council of the APA” according to Donald L. Kinzer in \textit{An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association} (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 68.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 137-38.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
Nativists believed that “Catholicism locked the Irish into ignorance, shiftlessness, superstition and disloyalty to the American nation.” Hibernians knew that the key to overcoming nativist’s thought was to show their loyalty to their adopted nation. The AOH in Youngstown decorated their events with the:

- stars and stripes and Ireland’s flag embossed and colored, standing together in bold belief. Streamers of patriotic colors were stretched from the center chandalier to the four corners of the room and were draped along the walls...
- Suspended above the speaker’s tables were a number of portraits of Irish patriots. The centre of these were the likenesses of the martyred Presidents of the United States, Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley.

The Hibernians always included the song, “America” at either the beginning or ending of their programs according to the Youngstown Telegram’s March 16, 1903 edition.

Another way that the Hibernians proved their loyalty to America was to honor Irish-Americans that had fought for America’s freedom. An example of this is the letter writing campaign that the Cleveland AOH embarked upon in order to support a monument to be built in Washington, D.C. in memory of John Barry, who many considered to be the “Father of the American Navy.” At the AOH state convention, held in Youngstown in 1904, Mayor W.T. Gibson welcomed the Hibernians with the following tribute:

> As Irishmen you are welcomed, for Irishmen have taken part in many events that have raised this country to its present greatness, and the Irish nation has furnished her quota of distinguished men. They helped to win the independence of this country, and their courage was plainly evident at Bunker Hill, Monmouth, Valley Forge, Germantown, and other places where the defenders and upholders of the country’s rights and prerogatives were sorely tried by vicissitudes of war. With Jackson at New Orleans and with Perry on

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53 McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora*, 94.
54 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, March 17, 1902.
55 *Youngstown Telegram*, March 16, 1903.
56 *Cleveland Catholic Universe*, December 18, 1903.
Lake Erie, it was men of Irish nationality who helped to win these battles. Among the early pioneers of the Mahoning Valley, none were more prominent than the Irish people. They hewed their way through the forest vastness, and opened up parts of the country that had never yet been trodden by feet of white men. They built the railroads and today are among the majority of those who are operating them.\textsuperscript{57} The mayor of Youngstown and the city itself seem to appreciate the Irish due to the fact that quite a few Irish lived and worked in the city’s steel mills. Although there is no evidence to suggest this, the Mayor may have relied on the Youngstown Irish for his political support. While there have been Hibernians such as T.S. Hogan elected to state office, there appears to be no record of what political affiliation the Hibernians were or how involved the AOH was in local or state politics or if they were involved in the labor movement during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{58} The Mayor then applauded the Catholic Church with the following:

As members of the Roman Catholic church, one of the greatest institutions in the world, we bid you welcome. For that church has been the means of preserving education in the darkest days. She sent out the crusaders to the Holy Land and they returned with the production of oriental culture and learning, and installed them into the minds of those who had never heard of such things before, new ideas and thoughts. While there are some actions that seem derogatory to the Catholic church it must be remembered that there is a vast difference between the action of men and the doctrine of an established church. The Catholic church has at all times sought to preserve law and order, and is an upholder of sobriety and good character.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57} *The Youngstown Telegram*, August 9, 1904. Author was not able to find a lot of information about Youngstown Mayor W.T. Gibson. Gibson was of Scottish origin and he appeared at many ethnic organization events throughout the history of Youngstown according to the *Youngstown Daily Vindicator* during the years of 1894 and 1895 since Youngstown had a large number of European immigrants working in the steel mills.

\textsuperscript{58} Author looked at the main city and Catholic diocesan newspapers in Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo, and Youngstown for information on AOH involvement as an organization in either labor or political activities and came to the conclusion that no such evidence exists. That does not mean however that members as individuals were not involved in either movement.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
The mayor appears to have been trying to alleviate any fear that individual citizens might have had about the Catholic Church and how loyalty to the pope might take away from one being loyal to America. The *Youngstown Daily Vindicator* stated that:

…it was extremely fitting…that the Stars and Stripes should be linked with emerald tones for the Irish-American’s loyalty to their adopted land has never been questioned—history’s pages are too full of instances in which they have risked all for the perpetuation of the principles governing the grandest nation on earth, to admit of anything of that sort. As has been so beautifully been said, “The Ancient Order of Hibernians reverence the old Land as a sainted mother while at the same time loving America as a chosen bride.”

The Youngstown AOH wanted to let their fellow citizens know that they could be both loyal to Ireland and the United States at the same time. Hibernian members also spoke on behalf of their organization in addition to non-Hibernian members.

The AOH national president, James E. Dolan made the following speech at the 1904 convention in order to point out how much the Irish have contributed throughout America’s history and that their loyalty to America will always come first due to the fact that they are willing to die for their adopted nation if the need ever arises:

On the whole earth there are no more loyal people to the flag and principles than the stalwart sons of Irishmen. On every battlefield our people have shed their blood. Andrew Jackson, son of an Irishman, won the last and the greatest battle of 1812. It was an Irishman who was the first to plant the stars and stripes in the City of Mexico. Sixty years ago Martin Murphy came west through the wilderness and opened up the first wagon trail in the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains. While we labor for Catholic principles and higher ends in Ohio, our brethren also throughout the entire country are doing the good work. I convey to you the greetings of the Hibernians of New York and congratulations for the success that has been yours. At every gathering of Irish people two flags, the starry banner under which we live and are ready and willing to offer our lives in its defense and the principles it represents, are always in evidence: the other, the flag of Erin, the flag of green and gold, the flag which waves side by side with the stars and stripes, the flag which was prominent at Gettysburg. Numerous others have held it forth on the battlefields and it is these flags that form the badge of society.

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60 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, August 9, 1904. Quotes are included in the original.
61 *The Youngstown Telegram*, August 12, 1904.
Another speaker at the convention, Thomas McNamara, Jr., elaborates further on Irish contributions to America’s freedom from British tyranny:

…come with me back to that dreary winter at Valley Forge, when the army, starved, naked, and unpaid was tempted to desert and let me remind you that the great majority of those who adhered to the army during that trying time were Irishmen. Not only that, but the organization to which we have the honor to belong, “The Ancient Order of Hibernians” was at that time known in the city of Philadelphia as the “Friendly Sons of St. Patrick” and the “Friendly Sons of St. Patrick,” during that crucial time for the army, when the treasury was bankrupt, donated to General Washington a purse of one hundred and three thousand dollars ($103,000), and the records and minutes of that society show that fact today, and the additional fact of a letter of thanks from General Washington and the American counsel to the “Friendly Sons of St. Patrick” for their patriotic and generous donation—a donation that not only came in the nick of time to and the glorious cause of American liberty and independence. Coming down however, along the milestone of history a few years, to more recent times down to 1861, when an effort was made to burst asunder the bands that bound us together as a nation, when treason was rampant and the flag was fired upon, when that great lover of liberty and humanity, Abraham Lincoln issued a call for volunteers to defend the flag, who, let me ask you, was the first to respond to that call? Be it said to the credit and glory of the Irish race in these United States, that the very first to respond to that call was the patriotic 69th Irish regiment of New York, who, twenty-four hours after the call, marched down Broadway at the head of their gallant commander, Michael Cochran, eighteen hundred strong. Indeed, I might say, that not a land was found here, not a mountain crossed, not a river forded or valley entered, but the Irishman was there ever ready to assist in bearing the burdens and duties of the hour and likewise rejoicing in its triumphs and successes. And if, today, instead of dense forests through whose solitude roam the untutored savage at will, we have smiling fields, beautiful cities, and towering church spires, it is because all along this wonderful march of progression in national and industrial development in science, art, literature, and education, the fertile brain and industrious hand of the Irishman has been no less potent than that of his native born brethren…When we reflect upon the many disadvantages the Irish race have had to contend with in coming here, their centuries of oppression at home deprived of many of the advantages of education mounded by a brutal foreign press, strangers in a strange land and then behold the great results they have accomplished here in all that goes to make this country great and good, their efforts stand out in shining letters and characters of gold upon the pages of our country’s history.62

62 Ibid.
By using examples of Irish involvement in American history, the AOH members appear to be attempting to combat any questioning of their loyalty to America. The emphasis on how the Irish assisted during the American Revolution is an excellent example of how the Irish helped their adopted country win her independence from the British before they were able to free Ireland. Hibernians continued to speak about their loyalty to America and about the nativist attacks. According to the account in the *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, Father Moran, the county chaplain of the Youngstown AOH made the following speech at a St. Patrick’s Day celebration in March of 1909:

…He declared that persecution at home resulting in the sons and daughters of Ireland taking up their residence in America, had added a proud chapter to the church history of this country. He said that every battle was baptized with Irish courage and Irish blood. In closing Father Moran spoke of a coterie of so-called Anglo-Americans, small in number but powerful in wealth and influence, who attempt to prejudice the people of the world against Ireland and the Irish people.63

The AOH state board president, J. Barry of Columbus also spoke at the event, with his focus on the history of the AOH combating anti-Catholic attacks both in Britain and the United States:

He told of the broken treaty of Limerick followed by persecution. He said that from the time of inception of the order at Wicklow shortly after the penal laws had been instituted in the government of Ireland by the English, the motto of the A.O.H. had been Faith and Fatherland. He said that among the 101 sections of the penal code it was death for a priest to be caught administering the sacraments of the church or for a school master to teach the Irish youth. The faithful of those early times of persecution assembled in the glens and the craigs and vales of the land and members of the A.O.H. kept watch for the English spies and soldiery from the hilltops, while mass was celebrated on rude alters. A.O.H. members were then known as “Ready Men” or “White Boys.” He said that England, desirous to stamp out Irish nationality, had, during one period after the broken treaty of Limerick, taken in all over 100,000 children between the ages of 12 and 16, torn them from their parents and sold them into slavery in the West Indies and Jamaica. He said that from all of that number the historious of Ireland tell us that no message ever came back to relate to the fate of [those sold into slavery.] The speaker said that the next great event was the turning of the eyes of the people to

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the west-to America, the Land of the Free. He said that in the early days of this
country the police system was imperfect and villages did not have home rule.
Great dock and shipping companies hired patrolmen who were in large majority
straggling English soldiers who had deserted the army in their native land. The
first A.O.H. division was organized in New York to protect the Irish emigrant
women from these dandies.64

These speeches portray the importance that the Hibernians and their supporters wanted
to portray about their loyalty to America. Hibernians wanted to demonstrate to the local
community that one could be loyal to Ireland while practicing their Catholic faith. In the
speeches, the Hibernians illustrated how the Irish heard President Lincoln’s call to
preserve the Union during the Civil War and assisted their fellow Americans in the fight
for a nation, free of British tyranny during the American Revolution. The AOH believed
that it was important to be a loyal American first and foremost, placing loyalty to Ireland
second to that of their adopted nation. Although the AOH tried to express their loyalty to
America, nativists continued to take swipes at Irish-Americans, an attitude that was taken
from the British.

The nativists in America copied British ideas that the Irish were “feminine,
emotional, lazy, improvident, and dependent [as the British are] masculine, rational,
industrious, thrifty with resources and committed to individual freedom.”65 An excellent
description of this hatred of the Irish comes from British historian, Edward A. Freeman,
who said in a letter in 1881, “This would be a grand land if only every Irishman would
kill a Negro, and be hanged for it.”66 Newspapers in both Britian and the United States

64 Ibid.
65 McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora*, 111.
depict the Irish as apes according to L. Perry Curtis, Jr in his work entitled, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*.67

Despite the growing hatred of the Irish in America, the AOH strived to continue its message of loyalty to America. At the AOH St. Patrick’s day celebration in 1914, Father Moran spoke out about the importance of the day and at why America’s founding father, George Washington saw this day as an important holiday:

We celebrate tonight this feast with uncharacteristic loyalty and generosity in honor of St. Patrick and the unique idea of making his feast day a national holiday. And this carries the mind over the record of American history, and on every page we find inscribed tributes to the gallant sons of St. Patrick, who have played a leading part in every path of life, for the advancement and well being of America. George Washington recognized this in the struggle of the colonies for independence, paying honor to his Irish heroes and their saints. We tread on the day that the British evacuated Boston, March 17, 1776, General Sullivan was made marshal of the day, and “St. Patrick” the countersign.68

Although the AOH in Ohio did not face any specific or direct nativist attack, they chose to keep taking on nativists that attacked either their Catholic faith or Irish heritage.

By 1920, the AOH’s concern in Columbus was the anti-Catholic wave that had erupted following World War I. The AOH there placed an editorial in the *Catholic Columbian* with the following:

The indications are that another wave of anti-Catholic feeling is about due. To stir up such a movement always for a time engulfs their own faults and failure. A rather strange nomination in Georgia of Tom Watson for the U.S. Senate indicates how far this can be carried. That a notorious character as he has been could claim the votes of a State for such an office indicates that this anti-Catholic journalism has been influenced by the “hillbillies” of Georgia until he has become their idol and can do no wrong. Strange to say, other candidates for office who stood on his platform failed of nomination. The Atlanta “Constitution” says in not less than five districts, the issue was carried direct to the people and the fight was lost. This journal of Atlanta also concludes “the defeat of every candidate for Congress

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who made common cause with him (Watson) is not without significance, etc.” Watson in the U.S. Senate will surely cut an unique feature—very likely he will sponsor Smith’s educational bill—if he learns that it is not pleasing Catholics.\(^{69}\)

The Hibernians spoke out against Watson because they seemed to believe that Watson was a threat to all Catholics, due to the fact that “he emerged as a force for white supremacy and anti-Catholic rhetoric.”\(^{70}\) Another threat to the AOH that emerged during the 1920s was that of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). At the 1924 St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in Youngstown, “the klan lit crosses throughout Youngstown…[and ] a near riot resulted [between the Irish and the klan] in the downtown square shortly before midnight” according to historian William D. Jenkins in his work entitled *Steel Valley Klan*.\(^{71}\) At the fifty-third AOH national convention, the AOH pledged as a whole to fight the KKK. P.H. O’Donnell, a founder of the American Unity League served as the keynote speaker in this pledge to take on the KKK. In his speech:

> Some of the most prominent men in the States of Illinois and Indiana have been severely injured, if not ruined, through the publication of their names in our official organ, “Tolerance.”…We are attacking the Klan because we claim they are a treasonable body to the United States, on four indictments. The American Constitution provides for severence of Church and State, but they try to fill the Senate with Klux, who will legislate against Catholic, Jew, Negro, and the foreign born; they undertake to destroy denominational schools and force attendance upon other than Catholic churches, thereby destroying freedom of conscience; they hold their secret courts, hear evidence, pass sentence, convict and punish, according to their secret rules, going even to the extent of murder, thus denying equality before the law; they undertake to degrade the Negro by declaring against him and for white supremacy.\(^{72}\)

\(^{69}\) *Catholic Columbian*, September 24, 1920.


\(^{71}\) William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan*, (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1990), 112.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., July 27, 1923.
Although no nativist threats to the AOH emerged during the latter twentieth century, the organization has embarked on a journey to defend not only their faith, but that of their culture as well when the society of the twentieth and late twenty-first centuries continued to portray that the Irish are a bunch of “drunken IRA supporters.” Hollywood, the press, greeting card companies, and Protestant based organizations continue to portray the Irish as drunken apes who lack any measure of intelligence and only care about the IRA and how much alcohol one can consume. Gerry Curran, Deputy National Historian for the AOH wrote in an article that in America, “St. Patrick’s Day has, unfortunately, become a collection of extravagant parades, shamrocks, and leprechauns on napkins and party hats, chartreuse apparel, maudlin Irish-American songs, and green beer in which the nexus between the Irish and alcoholic drink is reaffirmed.” However, this is not the truth. The AOH in Ohio has combated these attacks at every turn and they have shown their fellow Ohioans that Hibernians are intelligent citizens who contribute much to their communities, not only on Irish issues, but local issues as well.

In 1983, the AOH in Cincinnati had to overcome charges of being “too political.” The division there had invited the national president of the AOH, Joseph A. Roche to take part in the parade. However, Roche scheduled a press conference that was to be held before the parade in order to speak about former IRA member Michael O’Rourke who was imprisoned in New York City for overstaying his visa and to express

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73 Telephone interview with Brendan Moore, AOH national Freedom for All Ireland Chair, August 9, 2004, Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
74 Gerry Curran, “St. Patrick’s Day and the AOH” available online at [http://www.aoh.com/history/archive/stpatdayandaoh.htm](http://www.aoh.com/history/archive/stpatdayandaoh.htm). Gerry Curran is a member of the AOH in Ohio.
75 Interviews with J. Michael Finn, AOH Ohio State Board Historian & Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney, AOH Ohio State Board President, February 26, 2004, Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
76 *Cincinnati Post*, March 12, 1983, 8A.
his support of the IRA.\textsuperscript{77} Cincinnati AOH parade organizers stated that “the parade itself will remain non-political.”\textsuperscript{78}

Youngstown AOH decided to honor “Irish persons of the year” to show the community how much Irish-Americans give back to their communities and to address any anti-Irish sentiment. In 1990, Judge Martin P. Joyce and Dorothy M. McLaughlin were honored for their contributions to the community as “Irish people of the year.” Judge Joyce for his work as a juvenile court judge and McLaughlin for her work as a law enforcement officer in Mahoning county.\textsuperscript{79} The following year, Michael McCullion, Jr. and Patti Ryan Woolf were honored as the “Irish people of the year.” McCullion for his work in state government and Woolf for her work in local government.\textsuperscript{80}

In March 2003, the Cincinnati AOH was no longer dealing with IRA politics in regards to their annual St. Patrick’s day parade, but now they have focused the press coverage on the fact that Hibernians are loyal Irish-Americans. According to parade committee chairman, Will O’Neill:

> The American flag is going to be an integral part of the parade. An honor guard from the St. Patrick’s Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians will head the parade as it has for 37 years but we will also position an honor guard at the beginning of each division throughout the parade. The spirit of patriotism will be strong.\textsuperscript{81}

Hibernians continued to address how the Irish were perceived in the past. A local Cincinnati AOH president stated in a Cincinnati newspaper, \textit{The Downtowner}, “In 1879, the national president of the Hibernians realized that the country was looking at the Irish
as being troublemakers of sorts." This statement appears to be partly in response to both current and past anti-Irish feeling in the United States. This perception of the Irish as “troublemakers” continued during the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, where there are still some Americans who believe and portray the Irish as a drunken and troublesome lot.

In order to address past and current defamation, the AOH in Ohio has formulated a plan to address this issue. J. Michael Finn, AOH state historian wrote an article on Irish defamation. He states:

We Irish continue to allow the most heinous forms of defamation of our history and culture that would not be allowed by any other nationality or religion. It is time we all stepped forward to rid the marketplace of these stereotypes. Where did all of this Paddy crap begin? During the Great Hunger of the 1840s it was necessary for the British to justify their failure to save millions of starving Irish. So, they depicted the Irish as drunken, violent, lazy animals. Surely, no one would want to give money or food to that kind of people. Cartoonists of the day depicted the Irish as apes who turned up noses and animal-like pointed ears. Why turned up or pug noses—that happens to be a symptom of untreated syphilis (it denotes to the view that clearly the Irish were immoral). Most often they had a bottle of whiskey sticking out of their pocket and a gun in their hand. The association of the Irish with apes in caricature were carried across the Atlantic and American political cartoonists such as Thomas Nast drew the Irish as, you guessed it, out of control violent gorillas…Of course the Irish are their own worst enemy when it comes to defamation. Just look at some of the images we use of leprechauns. Pointed ears with monkey like features are common. The original folklore collectors who described leprechauns described them as small old men with beards, not elves or animals, and certainly not with a glass of green beer in their hands. We must first clean up our own shop before we can expect others to stop. The AOH has made considerable progress over the years in working with the national greeting card companies to stamp out these stereotypes from their merchandise. However, much more work is needed as some companies are slipping back into the old stereotypes. Do not purchase greeting cards that defame or make fun of our race or religion. Be sure to let card shop owners know of your objection to any cards that depict the Irish as drunken fools or animals. These cards often make fun of St. Patrick and the Catholic faith. These images are neither cute nor funny. In answer to the most common merchant response, “No we can’t take a joke, and certainly not at the expense of our race or religion.”

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82 Ibid. The paper does not identify the person’s name, just that they are the president of the local AOH division.
If we want the public to take us seriously on issues that we care about (Freedom for all Ireland, abortion, etc) we must shake this “drunken Paddy” image. You and I know where it started. Your help in this effort is needed now and throughout the year!83

The purpose of this article is to let every Hibernian in Ohio know about how the Irish have been perceived throughout American history. The goal was to let AOH and LAOH members know about what action has been taken and what they can do themselves as individuals in order to put a stop to such portrayals of the Irish. Finn’s quote of “we must first clean up our own shop before we expect others to stop” refers to the many Hibernian events where Irish beer and whiskey play a central role especially St. Patrick’s Day.86

Finn appears to be arguing that Hibernians must place more emphasis on the cultural and religious aspects when celebrating St. Patrick’s Day and not continuing to play into the drunk fest that St. Patrick’s Day has evolved into in the United States. After starting with themselves, the AOH needs to direct its attention towards retailers who sell cards and other St. Patrick’s Day novelty items that portray the Irish as drunks. A plan of action was created by Finn for Hibernians to combat “the Irish getting kicked around every March 17th.”87 The action plan consisted of two points:

(1) Respond! If you see something in the newspaper you think is offensive to the Irish, write the Editor. Keep the letter short and to the point. Be polite and explain your position calmly. It will likely get published. Use the same procedure if the offense occurred on TV or radio. Write the Program

83 J. Michael Finn, “Still Paddy After All These Years” in Sean MacBride Division #1 Trumbull County, Ohio (February 2004 Newsletter), 2. Available at http://aohdiv1.freecanada.com/newsletter.html. Article was later sent out via the AOH national email list, appeared as a Letter to the Editor in The Columbus Dispatch and online on the History News Network.

Director. You may not hear about it on the air, because the electronic media is generally not as responsive as the print media. You can also write to the sponsor of the program. Advertisers are usually more sensitive to public opinion than the networks and can often apply more pressure than you or I (put the dollar to work for us-remember the Irish invented the boycott and we still know how to use it). (2) If you believe the Catholic church has been defamed (which today is all to common) you should respond in writing to the source, but you can also contact the Catholic League…They monitor such incidents and if its is serious enough, they will also respond to the source with a news release from their chairman. Be vigilant and respond!84

The outcome of this call to action is still unfolding. Divisions in Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo now hold family centered events on Saint Patrick’s Day that focus on Irish music and food. These events allow families to come together to celebrate their heritage without having to deal with the alcohol infused events that are held at local bars in those cities every St. Patrick’s Day. Card companies are creating more positive greeting cards that portray the history of Ireland and less of the drunken, apish leprechaun that we are all familiar with. However, it is still too early to calculate the outcome of this call to action, only time will tell if the Hibernians can turn the drunken Irish image around. Besides the action plan created by the Hibernians to address the issue of cultural defamation, the Church itself has spoken out on the issue as well. At the Columbus AOH St. Patrick’s day mass, Bishop James Griffin said in his homily:

Who should be more empathetic? Who were routinely described in the 1840s and 1850s As ‘wild savages’: than those who found signs that said, ‘Irish need not apply.’ Are we now going to play the role of the unforgiving servant?85

Although the bishop’s appeal for forgiveness of those who committed sins against the Irish in the past such as the “no Irish need apply” (NINA), there is no evidence to suggest that this phenomenon existed in Ohio when the majority of the Irish arrived in Ohio

84 Ibid.
during the mid-nineteenth century. However, this may not be the case in parts of the nation. There has been a debate among scholars on whether or not this NINA concept ever existed. Historian Richard Jensen in his article, *No Irish Needy Apply: A Myth of Victimization* in the *Journal of Social History* argues that NINA never existed:

> The fact that Irish vividly “remember” NINA signs is a curious historical puzzle. There are no contemporary or retrospective accounts of a specific sign at a specific location. No particular business enterprise is named as a culprit. No historian, archivist, or museum curator has ever located one; no photograph or drawing exists.

Historians such as Kevin Kenny disagree with some of Jensen’s conclusions. Kenny argues that “Victimhood always has its political benefits” and that Jensen has written “a deliberately pugnacious paper that carries his conclusions too far.” Kenny concludes his argument with the following, “‘No Irish’ is a symbol of something real, the prejudice the Irish faced, that we don’t want to discount.”

The Irish overcame numerous obstacles upon their arrival in America. They have somewhat successfully proved their loyalty to America and took on defamation that is present in today’s society. However, there is still work on the defamation front that needs to be addressed, such as the continued perception of Irish as “drunks.” Both the AOH and LAOH were able to overcome the difficult times of the past and remain a strong presence in the Irish-American community. Maury Collins comment about the traditional St.

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86 Author conducted a random sample of newspapers in the following cities: Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati to see if want ads during the years of 1840 to 1860 indicated “no Irish need apply” existed. After checking the second week of the following months: January, May, and September during those years and found no such thing existed.


89 Ibid.
Patrick’s Mass held at Historic St. Patrick every March in downtown Toledo best

summarizes that loyalty and presence:

The church is full of people all dressed in green outfits and showing pride in their heritage. But, when all people rise up to sing “God Bless America”, the windows shake and many an eye turns misty. I told them [the County Commissioners] that this is the true Irish culture and heritage. God and country. Family and heart not the drinking and fighting that people laugh at.90

Without their loyalty to both country and faith, many aspects of being Irish would have been lost to the future generations.

Both the AOH and LAOH have played an important role in exhibiting to their communities what “true Irish culture and heritage” are all about.91 Throughout the history of the Order in Ohio, Hibernians have promoted and preserved Irish culture not only for its own members, but for the local communities as well. Irish history, music, literature, step-dancing, and historic preservation have been brought to cities such as Akron, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, and Youngstown by the AOH and LAOH in order to illustrate the importance of preserving and promoting Irish culture so that future Irish-Americans may have the chance to learn of their own unique cultural heritage as well.

90 Email correspondence between Maury Collins and author, July 26, 2004. Will be in Canaday Center. Uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

91 Ibid.
Chapter 4: Ancient Order of Hibernians and Irish Culture: Then versus Now

The promotion and preservation of Irish culture have played important roles in AOH activity and history since it’s beginning in Ireland during the mid-sixteenth century. In regards to promotion and preservation, AOH involvement in Ohio can be traced to two distinct time periods: 1880 to 1936 and 1967 to 2004. The first time period is important because it was those years that AOH began in Ohio and grew to become one of the largest in the nation. This earlier period is ripe with newspaper coverage of the various AOH events that promoted and preserved Irish culture. The second time period is important because the resurgence of the AOH can be traced to that time period. This period brought new Irish-Americans into the fold as events in Northeastern Ireland unfolded and the explosion of Irish cultural activities such as step-dancing in the 1990s.

During the 1880 to 1936 era, the AOH in Ohio primarily focused on Irish history and music in preserving and promoting Irish culture. This earlier era primarily focused its promotion of culture amongst its own members, thereby overlooking the promise of promoting Irish culture within their local communities. The AOH of the 1967 to 2004 era has broadened its preservation and promotion of culture to include Irish step-dancing, literature and language in addition to the older era’s history and music cultural promotions. This latter era primarily focuses its attention on preserving and promoting Irish culture for the community at large, not just for the benefit of its own membership. The preamble of the AOH constitution clearly spells out that the AOH must “…foster the ideals and perpetuate the history and traditions of the Irish people [and] to promote Irish culture.”

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1 AOH constitution preamble, (circa 2000), uncatalogued material, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
One of the first accounts of the AOH promoting Irish culture was in Youngstown where the divisions held a procession through the town for St. Patrick’s Day in 1876. A lecture was held for the AOH members about why Irish-Americans celebrate the holiday in honor of their heritage. This lecture educated Hibernian members about the history of their native country and why it was important to honor their heritage at their gatherings. The Dayton AOH members in 1890 held a gathering for St. Patrick’s Day in order to educate their membership about the importance of preserving their Irish heritage in America. That same year, the Cleveland AOH held a procession through the streets of Cleveland followed by a speech that was given by the Speaker of the Ohio State House, Representative Hysell. According to the newspaper account of the speech, Representative Hysell said, “he could appreciate the love of country implanted in every true Irishman’s breast” after viewing the parade.

Mr. Thomas McNamara, Jr. spoke at the gathering in Youngstown in 1893 on how Hibernians “appreciate what St. Patrick’s day is in the green isle beyond the sea.” In March 1890, Cleveland’s AOH divisions hosted two speakers at a community wide event which focused on *Ireland as It Was* and *Irish-American* as the topics for the evening.

Columbus divisions of the AOH held a celebration of Irish heritage on St. Patrick’s Day in 1901. The morning began with mass at St. Patrick’s church with the AOH divisions of the city. Following mass, a parade consisting of Hibernian members, Columbus police, Hibernian military divisions known as the Hibernian Rifles, and civic leaders of Columbus. The evening entertainment was held at the Board of Trade.

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2 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, March 24, 1876.
3 *Dayton Daily Journal*, March 17, 1890.
4 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 18, 1890.
5 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, March 18, 1893.
6 *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 18, 1893.
auditorium with speakers, music, and dramatic recitations of famous Irish speeches in order to educate the community at large about the culture and history of Ireland.7

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) in Youngstown held its first annual ball in honor of St. Patrick’s Day with music provided by the Mahoning Orchestra in 1903.8 For Cleveland’s St. Patrick’s Day celebration, the shops of the city were decorated with “…pots of hardy shamrock…and the bits of fluttering green on every other pedestrian gave the proper note to a festival which has the peculiarity of being almost a national holiday in every country on the globe” according to the Cleveland Catholic Universe during that same year.9 The AOH in Cleveland organized a banquet featuring speakers and Irish music at a local parish for their members later that evening.10

AOH in Columbus focused on promoting Irish history during the centennial anniversary of the execution of Robert Emmet by the British in 1803. A tribute “of word and song” was one of the highlights of the remembrance according to the Sunday Columbus Dispatch during the event in 1903.11 Speakers for the ceremony were Ohio Governor George K. Nash, Mayor Robert H. Jeffrey of Columbus, Honorable T.S. Hogan (state president of the AOH), and Captain George Sweeney (chairman of the state AOH committee). LAOH took charge of the evening program where Irish songs were sung and a presentation was made on the historical contributions of women in Ireland.12

In December 1903, national AOH president James E. Dolan spoke to the Cleveland AOH about the movement to revive the Irish language in America. Cleveland

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7 Columbus Sunday Dispatch, March 17, 1901. This is the only account of a Hibernian Irish culture event that was open to the public at large. All other events during this era continued to be geared towards the education of their own members.
8 Youngstown Daily Vindicator, February 5, 1903 & February 25, 1903.
9 Cleveland Catholic Universe, March 20, 1903.
10 Ibid.
11 Columbus Sunday Dispatch, September 20, 1903.
12 Ibid.
Catholic Universe stated that the AOH are “devoting thousands of dollars a year to spread the movement, because they believe that with a general knowledge and use of their native tongue, Irishmen will regain their racial individuality and her national independence.”¹³ To help with this endeavor, the AOH created an endowed Chair of Gaelic at Catholic University for $50,000.¹⁴ In addition to the Irish language, Hibernians placed an emphasis on Irish literature when the AOH in Cleveland also planned a literary evening with lectures given by Irish writers such as Seamus McManus in order to educate their members about Irish literature.¹⁵

The AOH members in Youngstown decided that in lieu of the traditional St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, they decided to celebrate the division’s fortieth anniversary on March 9, 1904. Michael Davitt, “the famous Irish member of Parliament, will be here to deliver an address” in celebration of the order’s existence.¹⁶ Toledo AOH held a program celebrating Ireland’s literary tradition entitled, “Modern Irish Literature” in March 1904. The speaker, J.P. Madigan talked about “the position that Ireland held in the world of letters and her educational institutions, [which were made] famous during the early centuries…[and how modern Irish writers] are restoring Ireland to her ancient literary glory” according to the Cleveland Catholic Universe.¹⁷ AOH Cuyahoga county board members published “a list of books in the public library relating to Ireland and by Irish writers” so that its members could educate themselves about their Irish heritage.¹⁸

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¹³ Cleveland Catholic Universe, December 4, 1903.
¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ Youngstown Daily Vindicator, March 9, 1904.
¹⁷ Cleveland Catholic Universe, March 25, 1904.
¹⁸ Ibid., July 15, 1904.
In 1904, the Youngstown AOH hosted the Ohio state convention for three days in August. “A parade through the principal streets of the city, in which home and visiting folks… [took] part” was held after the opening of the convention. An estimated “10,000 people … [were] expected in the city while the convention is in session” according to the *Youngstown Telegraph*. Ireland’s history was celebrated throughout the course of the parade:

The parade was headed by a squad of the city police. Next came the Youngstown Military band with brilliant white head pieces, and the rifle companies in the following named order: Springfield, Cleveland, Columbus, and Zanesville, followed by the Gallow Glass pikemen, wearing the costume of the fighting men of the time of Ireland’s patriot, Brian Boru who drove the Danes from that country about the eleventh century.

During the state convention, a resolution was passed which stated:

Resolved, That we most heartily endorse the action taken by the national convention at St. Louis, commending the efforts and work of the Gaelic League, in endeavoring to revive the interest in the Irish language, and that we, this committee, request that wherever possible, the work be taken up by our sisters [in the LAOH].

With the passage of this resolution, Hibernian members wanted to stress the importance of promotion of Irish culture and history were to the Hibernians in Ohio. They had a real desire to keep various aspects of their culture alive, especially the Irish language which was struggling to survive in the Emerald Isle.

The AOH in Cleveland continued to honor and promote Irish history in a celebration “commemorating the 127th anniversary of the birth of Robert Emmet” in March of 1905. The event was:

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19 *Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, August 5, 1904.
20 *The Youngstown Telegram*, August 8, 1904.
21 Ibid., August 10, 1904.
22 Ibid., August 11, 1904.
23 *Cleveland Catholic Universe*, March 10, 1905.
attended by over 800 people, who crowded the large auditorium and the anterooms. County President Callahan made the opening address, after which the Hibernian Rifles, of Division No. 12, under Captain A.F. Burke, gave an exhibition drill lasting half an hour. The ladies especially were much interested in the work. Panoramic views of scenes in Ireland . . . were then shown under the direction of John Graham, of Division 12. While the picture of the trial scene was displayed on the canvas, Miss Conroy recited Emmet’s speech in the dock.24

The reenactment of important themes from Irish history such as Robert Emmet’s speech from the dock reinforced the themes of struggle and triumph over tragedy that have been rampant throughout the history of Ireland. By keeping their members aware of those themes, they AOH was able to keep the flame for Irish freedom from the British alive and to keep their members interested in their culture and heritage.

Promoting Irish music became the focus of the Youngstown AOH during the summer of 1906. The program concentrated on “…the music of Irish composers and the tunes so dear to the Irish hearts” according to the Youngstown Daily Vindicator.25 The musical program was such a success that more and more people flocked to AOH sponsored events that promoted Irish culture. At the 1907 St. Patrick’s Day banquet, “it was estimated that the crowd would probably number from 1,200 to 1,400 people, but it is safe to say twice this number turned out, the outpour being simply amazing” according to the local newspaper.26 The program consisted of dinner, music, and comedy acts.

Entertainment was limited during the first couple of decades of the twentieth century before the advent of television and radio due to the fact that access to facilities was limited and that many Irish worked a six day work week. Musical shows held within the local community were an important part of bringing people such as the Irish together for an evening of culture and fun.

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24 Ibid.
25 Youngstown Daily Vindicator, June 12, 1906.
26 Ibid., March 17, 1907.
At a March 1909 open house celebrating the dedication of new AOH headquarters for Mahoning county, Father John L. Moran addressed the gathered Hibernians on the subject of St. Patrick. *Youngstown Telegram* said that Moran:

referred to the early life of Ireland’s patron saint when the youth was a slave, to his return to preach the gospel of Christianity, to the prosperity, the learning and the wealth of Ireland at that time and lastly to the indissoluble relations of the history of St. Patrick and the history of Ireland.27

The focus on Irish history and Christianity continued at Youngstown’s St. Columba Church in March 1910. Father Maurice Griffin reviewed:

the history of the Green Isle during its missionary period when its children entered the church and spread the gospel throughout Europe. After three hundred years of religious zeal persecution followed, and after drinking the cup of sorrow the Irish people came through the frightful period lasting for centuries, stronger in their faith than ever [before].28

Youngstown brought a speaker by the name of P.H. O’Donnell from Chicago who spoke on “Irishmen’s Contributions to Civilization” at the St. Patrick’s Day banquet.29 The *Youngstown Daily Vindicator* concluded that O’Donnell’s presentation was “…pleasing, inspiring, [and] ennobling.”30 Hibernians brought speakers in to keep their membership informed about Irish history and culture.

The AOH divisions of Columbus held a parade through downtown and a mass where Father Gaffney spoke on “Irish Ideals.”31 According to *The Catholic Columbian*, Father Gaffney’s sermon was:

a tribute to the trinity of trait characteristic of the Irish race-loyalty to God, to Church, and Country. Devotion to these Irish ideals during the past sixteen centuries was briefly traced down to the history of the Fighting 69th, recently issued by Father Duffy, its Chaplain. It was pleasing and inspiring to listen to

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27 *Youngstown Telegram*, March 15, 1909.
29 Ibid., March 13, 1914.
30 Ibid.
Father Gaffney, who always stays with his text and emphasizes his points with apt quotations from recognized authors.32

In 1921, the Chamber of Commerce was the setting for St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in Columbus under the auspices of the AOH and LAOH. The local Catholic newspaper described the event as:

The most complete Irish program ever attempted in this city…The entertainment…will include a review of Ireland’s most loved songs, dances and instrumental numbers. The famous marching song of the Irish Republican Volunteers will be given by members of the Hibernian Rifles chorus and many beautiful Irish melodies will be given by the most prominent Irish singers of the city. Musical numbers including the Irish harps, concertinas, melodians and flute will be given and a chorus of pretty colleens will sing delightful Irish airs.33

In addition to events previously discussed, which were held to promote Irish culture and history, the Hibernians decided to expand their outreach to the children whose parents were already members or those who were not in order to educate Irish-American children about their ethnic heritage.

In January of 1923, the outreach activity decided upon by the national AOH was to create an essay writing contest that was open to all parochial and public schools “for the purpose of stimulating an interest in the study of Irish and American history.”34 The contest was open to grades seven through twelve and college students and contestants need not be of Irish descent. “Twelve cash prizes ranging in value from $200 down, will be given successful contestants in the competition.”35 The division of subjects were the following:

The choice of two subjects is given the essayists in each class. In the college division the subjects indicated are: “Did Ireland Gain or Lose, or Both, and How,

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32 Ibid., March 19, 1920.
33 Ibid., March 11, 1921.
34 Ibid., January 19, 1923. The contest is now run by the LAOH today.
35 Ibid.
by Not Becoming a Part of the Roman Empire?” and “Ireland’s Influence on American Affairs and America’s on Irish Affairs.” The prizes for this class will be $200, $100, $75 and $50. The length of the essays for this class will be about 3,000 words. In the high school and academy class the subjects will be “The Relation of the American Colonies to England and That of Ireland, Till the Year 1800, Compared,” or “Why We Should, and How We Can Best Study Irish History.” The prizes in this class will be $100, $75, $50 and $25 and the length of essays about 2,000 words. In the grammar school class the subject will be: “What in Your Opinion, Was the Greatest Event in Irish History, and Why?” or “My Favorite Irish Hero or Heroine.” The prizes will be $50, $25, $15 and $10 and the length of the essays about 1,000 words.36

The essay contest continues to play an important role for Irish cultural outreach for American children today.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the usual mass and banquet combination of celebrating St. Patrick’s Day and Irish heritage continued in Ohio. Youngstown AOH’s program was to follow mass and “recount the glories of Ireland and of St. Patrick in songs and stories.”37 A year later, in 1926, the Mahoning County members focused their celebration on the Gillespie Fiddlers’ Orchestra of Five Instruments whose presentation focused on “the endearing ballads of Irish tradition during the [St. Patrick’s Day] feast.”38 Dayton AOH and LAOH held dinner banquets for St. Patrick’s Day throughout the Great Depression.39 Dayton celebrations in 1936 focused on “Irish wit and Irish song [which] permeated the green-festooned ballroom of the Miami hotel [and speakers] who spoke on subjects pertinent to the Irish people and nation.”40

37 *Youngstown Telegram*, March 13, 1925.
38 *The Youngstown Vindicator*, March 7, 1926.
40 Ibid., March 18, 1936.
During the decades between the thirties and sixties, Irish-American culture took a hiatus according to historian Dennis Clark in his work entitled *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures*.

He argues that:

The hiatus in the Irish-American tradition in the second half of the twentieth century had numerous causes. Decreased emigration, changes in the Catholic Church after Vatican II, decline of traditional roles for members of the group, displacement by other groups, and failure to renew organizational forms all contributed.

However, it was the onset of the civil rights movement during the 1960s that inspired many Americans to work in the interests of their communities. Irish-Americans were drawn to this struggle as well. Many women [and men] “rediscovered their ethnic backgrounds” as a result of the work they embarked upon in their local communities.

Third generation Americans:

were now secure enough in their American identity to turn more openly to ethnicity; moreover the “new ethnicity” was encouraged in the late 1960s and after by a national climate more favorable to individuality and diversity.

According to historian Maxine Seller:

The impact of the new ethnicity varied from individual to individual. Some women were virtually untouched. Others participated in ethnic heritage festivals, revived ethnic arts, crafts, dances and foods, conducted ethnic holiday celebrations in their homes, sent their children to ethnic schools and camps, and read— and sometimes wrote—about their ethnic backgrounds and immigrant ancestors. Some traveled to the ethnic homeland as tourists or students. Grandchildren sometimes made efforts to learn the language of their grandparents, efforts that helped bring the generations together.

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42 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
This new found sense of cultural and ethnic identity encouraged many Irish-Americans in Ohio to join the old Irish ethnic organizations such as the AOH and LAOH beginning in the 1960s.

The latter half of the 1960s was the beginning of a new generation of the AOH and LAOH in Ohio. It is necessary to examine why the AOH and LAOH developed a new focus in their promotion and preservation of Irish culture and history before examining the organization’s activities during the latter 1960s. This new generation of Hibernians strove to get the community as a whole to participate in Irish cultural activities such as parades, festivals, concerts, and other events. The primary reason for Hibernians to involve the community at large was to illustrate the positive side of being Irish-American according to leading AOH members in Ohio.47 Another Hibernian goal was to ensure that there was a “historical context to what we’re trying to do.”48 An example of this “historical context” is the pike carrying division of the Columbus AOH which carries pikes in the annual St. Patrick’s Day parade to honor those Irish who fought the British with pikes during the rebellion of 1798.49 In order to promote Irish culture, the AOH sponsors “Irish dance, Irish language, involving other Irish groups in their history projects, financial support of PBS programs which concentrate on the Irish, attending Irish cinema and theatrical productions.”50

Parades became the first and one of the most popular activities that promoted Irish culture during the latter 1960s. Following the St. Patrick’s Day parades in cities such as

47 Interview with author, J. Michael Finn, February 8, 2004. and interview with author, Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney, February 8, 2004, Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Interview with author, Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney, February 8, 2004.
New York and Chicago, the AOH in Cincinnati planned the first St. Patrick’s Day parade in a century for that city in February of 1967. The primary goal was to involve the community at large in an Irish-American cultural tradition. The parade featured:

- the bands of both Xavier University and the University of Cincinnati, Irish dancers and musicians, uniformed members of Cincinnati’s Police, Fire and Postal Departments and all the Irish organizations also will be represented. And there’s a place for any loyal Irishman who feels he’d like to participate. But get out those maps of Ireland, because the Irish will be divided into groups according to the province of ancestry: Connaught, Leinster, Munster and Ulster.\(^{51}\)

The parade has been held every year since 1967. Each year the Hibernians of Cincinnati “borrow the statue of St. Patrick from Immaculata Church in Mt. Adams.”\(^{52}\) The statue leads the St. Patrick’s Day parade. The Cincinnati members attend an Irish language mass “before purloining the statue and hiding it away for the parade.”\(^{53}\) According to the AOH members, borrowing the statue is a somewhat complicated task as the statue “is ceramic, 6 feet tall, and requires the muscle of about six strong men to hoist it aboard the pickup truck for its trip to its day of glory.”\(^{54}\)

Community participation is encouraged through a variety of ways. One way is the nationality division in the parade. The “various ethnic groups of Cincinnati march in costume.”\(^{55}\) Nearly “40,000 people and 67 bands participated in the parade” in 1973.\(^{56}\) Another way to encourage participation is the “interrelationship between the [different] Irish groups and you’ll find that those people who are active in one [Irish organization] are usually active in the others” according to Gordon Thomas in an interview with the 

\(^{52}\) *Cincinnati Post*, February 19, 1979, 18.
\(^{53}\) Ibid.
\(^{54}\) Ibid.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.
\(^{56}\) Ibid.
Cincinnati Post in September of 1973. This interrelationship is important due to the fact that various Irish American groups collaborate on large events such as festivals and parades in order to increase capital and participation amongst a community’s Irish American citizens. Cleveland’s United Irish Societies is an excellent example of this interrelationship of the different Irish groups working together to put on Irish events such as parades, dances, and festivals.\(^{57}\) Both the AOH and LAOH in Cleveland work with the United Irish Societies in order to put on the annual parade on St. Patrick’s Day and Irish festival in the summer. Without the help of other Irish organizations, large scale events such as these would be difficult for a small organization such as the AOH to organize.

Besides St. Patrick’s Day parades, the AOH “either coordinates or supports various Irish events” throughout the year all over the country, these events feature Irish music, food, dance, and culture according to AOH member, Joe Casey.\(^{58}\) Youngstown AOH invited an Irish step-dancing organization called the Theresa Burke Irish Dancers to their annual St. Patrick’s Day luncheon in 1973.\(^{59}\) Cincinnati LAOH “sponsors the Hibernian Dance Group” which is made up of mainly children of Irish descent but does include members of non Irish descent.\(^{60}\) Akron AOH sponsors an Irish dancing organization as well.\(^{61}\) Originally, “Irish immigrants brought traditional step-dancing to America, where it became part of theatrical dancing” according to author Maureen Dezell in her work entitled, *Irish America Coming into Clover the evolution of a people and a*

\(^{57}\) *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, March 16, 1979. Other cities where AOH/LAOH works with other Irish organizations are Columbus, Cincinnati, and Toledo.

\(^{58}\) Email correspondence with author, February 17, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.


Dance has played an important role in Irish history. It was one aspect of Irish culture that the British were unable to stamp out of Ireland. Although Irish dancing schools existed in the United States before the 1990s, it was not until the popularity of Riverdance that led to the explosion of Irish step-dancing in America. The Hibernians decided to sponsor Irish step-dancing schools in order to meet the demand for dancing instruction amongst their membership and to expand the organization’s attempts at involving the community at large in Irish cultural activities.

Another way that the AOH promotes Irish culture is through the Irish language. Many Hibernians join Irish language societies such as Cumman na Gaeilge in Cincinnati whose goal is to “revitalize Irish, the oldest language in western Europe.” At Hibernian meetings, the Irish language is used in prayers, rituals, and sometimes voting in order to educate members about the language of their ancestors.

Hibernian divisions in Ohio also recognize their members and others in the community who promote Irish culture. An example of this is the Kevin Barry Award given by the AOH and LAOH in Cincinnati “in recognition of service within the local order in promoting the Irish and the goals of the Hibernians in Cincinnati.” The Youngstown AOH gives out the “Irish persons of the year” for service to the community at large.

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63 *The Irish World*, December 6, 2002
64 *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 16, 1979, E21.
65 Lucas County LAOH meeting minutes from the years of 2002-present, Ohio State board meeting minutes, 2003-present. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
66 Ibid.
Hibernians in Ohio are active in preserving their own history in addition to the numerous activities they pursue in promoting Irish culture and heritage. The preservation and documentation project that Ohio has embarked upon has garnered national attention. “In the latter part of the 1800s and early 1900s the AOH donated stained-glass windows to many Catholic churches in Ohio and across the country.”68 The windows have been found in churches “of all sizes, from cathedrals to small mission churches.”69 Many have been found where there are no longer active AOH divisions.70 The Hibernians:

are now involved in a project to identify and photograph all of these windows. To date, the organization has identified eleven churches in Ohio that currently have or have had Hibernian windows. Several of these churches have two windows, one donated by the AOH and one by the Ladies Auxiliary (now known as the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians).71

The project began in 2001 when the state board:

began a campaign to raise funds for the preservation and restoration of the AOH window at St. Lawrence O’Toole Church in Ironton, Ohio. This fundraising effort drew the attention of the Hibernian National organization, which also made a financial contribution to the Ironton project. Subsequently, a project was begun through the National Archivist’s Office to identify all of the AOH windows around the country, Dan MacDonald, AOH state president, said, “We are pleased that our continuing efforts to assist the parish of Ironton St. Lawrence with their window preservation effort has resulted in this nationwide campaign to identify these physical pieces of our history.”72

The project has been taken on by the national AOH board as well. According to national AOH president, Ned McGinley:

This gifting of the stained glass windows began as early as 1870 in PA and across the nation wherever the immigrant Irish went to work. In the past three years 227

69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid. Following is the list of churches in Ohio where AOH/LAOH windows can be found: Diocese of Youngstown: Immaculate Conception (two windows), there have been other documented windows but those churches are no longer in existence within the diocese; Toledo: Historic Church of Saint Patrick and the Catholic Church located in Ironton.
72 Ibid.
windows have been discovered and this is thought to be only a fraction of the number originally gifted. Of that amount, eight no longer exist so it is likely that hundreds may be lost already.\textsuperscript{73}

Besides historic preservation projects, the AOH holds cultural activities in order to bring in new members for the Order.

The AOH in Ohio organizes and supports numerous Irish themed festivals, dinners, and religious services that are open to the public at large. The goal in opening up such events to the public is to increase membership. According to Toledo AOH president, Maury Collins, the belief is that “the more people you have involved, the more good you can accomplish.”\textsuperscript{74} Both the AOH and LAOH:

Sponsor or support cultural programs such as festivals wherein Irish dance, music, instruments, storytelling and clothing are featured. Many LAOH divisions also help sponsor competition festivals (a.k.a. Feis) wherein children and adults compete in dancing, singing, and instrumentals. Many divisions also work on Masses dedicated to the feasts of St. Patrick, St. Brigid, and the Our Lady of Knock apparition of Mary.\textsuperscript{75}

At the national level, the AOH sponsors high school students to study and travel in Ireland for five weeks through the \textit{Irish Way Program}.\textsuperscript{76} The program “is a unique cultural and educational program for American High School students.”\textsuperscript{77} Students involved in the program travel to Ireland and live with an Irish host family for five weeks. While in Ireland, “they learn about Irish history, literature and language through classes and field trips; experience Ireland’s culture through traditional Irish music and

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[73] “Media Release Regarding AOH Window Search, January 31, 2005” J. Michael Finn, Hibernian email listserv, Yahoo groups. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
\item[74] Email correspondence with author, July 26, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
\item[75] Email correspondence with author, February 15, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
\item[76] http://www.aoh.com/reports/irishway_20021231.htm
\item[77] Ibid.
\end{itemize}
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dancing…and travel the Irish countryside.”\(^7^8\) Both the national boards of the AOH and LAOH give two $500 scholarships to help send the children of members to Ireland for the program. Hibernians also sponsor a study abroad scholarship for juniors in college who are children of AOH/LAOH members in order to study in Ireland. The national board gives away two $1000 scholarships and in return the recipients of the scholarship: are expected to do two years of a community service project. The community service project could possibly be a lecture on his/her experiences or the setting up of a display of Irish books at their local library during National Library Month.\(^7^9\)

Additional programs that the national board involves themselves with are historical projects that promote and preserve Irish and Irish-American history in the United States. One such project known as the Jeanie Johnston Project, is a replica of a ship, which brought Irish immigrants to America who were fleeing An Gorta Mor. The AOH and LAOH sponsor historical sight-seeing trips to Ireland as well.\(^8^0\)

The AOH and LAOH have and will continue to preserve and promote Irish culture and history through their variety of projects, festivals, parades, and competitions. Many people joined the AOH and LAOH because they “wanted to become more of an Irish-American and learn as much as …[they] could regarding …[Ireland’s] history, politics, and culture.”\(^8^1\) Another reason for membership was Irish-Americans to join was so that they “…wanted to be more than a St. Patrick’s Day Irishman” according to AOH member Joe Casey.\(^8^2\) However the most important factor of taking part in the AOH and

\(^7^8\) Ibid.  
\(^7^9\) Ibid.  
\(^8^0\) http://www.aoh.com/letter/99main.htm  
\(^8^1\) Joe Casey correspondence. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.  
\(^8^2\) Ibid.
LAOH is the fact that many Irish-Americans “need to know where [they have] been and where [they are] going.”83

Both the early and latter time periods of both AOH and LAOH activity promoted and preserved the various aspects of Irish culture not only for its own membership, but for the state of Ohio as well. The AOH of the latter twentieth century has utilized the activities of the early twentieth century and expanded them to include dance, literature, language, music, and historical preservation projects such as the Jeannie Johnston Project. By building upon the past, present and future of Irish culture, the organizations have been able to “foster the ideals and perpetuate the history and traditions of the Irish people [and] to promote Irish culture.”84

An important aspect of “…the ideals [and] the history and traditions of the Irish people [and]…culture” is the Catholic faith.85 Catholicism and Irish history and culture have been intrinsically linked since the time that St. Patrick brought Christianity to the Emerald Isle. That faith and culture have also played an important role in both the AOH and LAOH history as well. The importance of religion to the organizations has shaped the activities of the Orders, especially in regards to charitable activities throughout the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

83 Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney interview.
84 AOH constitution preamble.
85 Ibid.
Chapter 5: AOH, LAOH, and Catholic Action: Then And Now

The Catholic Church has played an important role in the history of the both the AOH and LAOH. In order to be a member of either organization, a person must be a practicing Roman Catholic in good standing with the parish and diocese. When the order was founded during the sixteenth century its goal was to ensure that the Catholic Church would survive the penal laws and continue to thrive in Ireland. AOH was brought to the United States during the mid-nineteenth century in order to defend the Catholic churches and Irish immigrants against nativist attack. According to AOH historian, Mike McCormack, the shift from defending the faith to charity can be traced to the fact that:

In large measure due to the significant contributions of the Irish in defending the Union during America’s Civil War, it became unfashionable to be anti-Irish, and the bigoted Know Nothings faded away, taking their No Irish Need Apply signs with them. The AOH, on the other hand, grew stronger, following Irish immigrants as they worked their way across the country. As the need for militant support of their Church dwindled, the AOH shifted its purpose to charitable activities in support of the Church’s missions, [and] community service…1

This shift can also be traced to the fact that greater emphasis has been placed on the Order’s motto of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity” by the national board in order to encourage divisions to help out their local communities.2

Throughout the history of the order, the Hibernians have engaged in a number of Catholic action initiatives. Nineteenth and early twentieth century initiatives focused on assisting Irish immigrants while the late twentieth and early twenty-first century initiatives have been greater in number and involve such issues as charity projects, pro-

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1 Mike McCormack, AOH National Historian, The Ancient Order of Hibernians, article available at the following website: [http://www.aoh.com/history/main.htm](http://www.aoh.com/history/main.htm) At the history homepage of the AOH, there are links to the various articles that have been written by McCormack and previous National Historians.

life issues, and keeping their members active in the church. The early Hibernians did not concentrate the majority of their energy on Catholic action initiatives while the members of the latter twentieth century placed greater emphasis on the importance of helping others in the community and assisting the church on issues such as pro-life. Ohio played a very small role in assisting immigrants due to the fact that east coast states such as New York and Massachusetts served as the main points of entry for Irish immigrants into the United States. Upon arrival, the majority of the Irish remained in cities such as New York and Boston to earn a living instead of venturing on towards Ohio. The latter period of Catholic action and the AOH in Ohio played a greater and important role in AOH national Catholic action initiatives due to the fact that the AOH had a resurgence during the 1980s and 1990s than the earlier period.

The surge of Irish immigration to America during the 1840s and 1850s was a result of *An Gorta Mor*. The AOH “provided a monetary stipend to immigrants who arrived as members in good standing from the Irish Order, and...[the AOH] assisted Irish immigrants in obtaining jobs and social services.”³ At a national convention meeting during the mid 1880s the Hibernians met to discuss the issue of the divisions along the eastern seaboard that helped support new Irish immigrants financially:

> Having under consideration a matter of the utmost importance to ourselves and brethren arriving in this country in destitute circumstances, your committee begs leave to report that it has been custom of brothers of our Order living in New York, and particularly the State Delegate (who can very ill afford it), to help our unfortunate brethren until such time as they could procure employment, or furnish funds to send them to the interior parts of the State, or to the West, for the purpose of bettering their condition.⁴

³ Mike McCormack, AOH National Historian, *The Ancient Order of Hibernians*.
⁴ John O'Dea, *History of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Auxiliary, published by the authority of the National Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians*. (Philadelphia, PA: Keystone Printing, 1923), 1094-1095. O'Dea fails to mention many dates when recording the minutes of the various conventions throughout his account of the AOH. The author is unable to ascertain the exact date of the
The delegates voted to approve that three hundred dollars be allocated for those divisions who assisted new Irish immigrants along America’s east coast.\(^5\) The delegates also passed a resolution stating that:

The National Board, and especially National Delegate Wilhere executed the directions of the convention, and communicated with the Irish Catholic and Immigration Societies, particularly the parent association in New York City. This action was simply a resumption of the policy which had been followed by the Order in earlier days, for in the ‘70’s and early ‘80’s the Hibernian Divisions in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, [and other cities along the east coast] maintained close relations with the Irish Catholic immigration and colonization associations.\(^6\)

Since cities located along the east coast addressed the assisting of immigrants issue, there was nothing left for AOH in Ohio to do except to support the work of the east coast divisions. Assisting Irish immigrants now is “not an organized effort like in the past” according to AOH state board historian, J. Michael Finn.\(^7\) States such as New York and Massachusetts continued to assist Irish immigrants throughout the latter twentieth century. Now that Ireland’s economy is booming, many Irish immigrants are returning to the Emerald Isle, thus negating the need for the AOH to assist new immigrants financially. However, “AOH individual divisions will see a need to assist if an Irish national is in their area” according to AOH member Joe Casey.\(^8\) Assisting immigrants has always been an important AOH activity since the motto of the order is “friendship, unity, and Christian charity.” The link between the immigrants, the AOH and the

\(^{5}\) Ibid., 1095.
\(^{6}\) Ibid., 1096.
\(^{7}\) J. Michael Finn (state of Ohio AOH state board historian) in tape-recorded interview with the author, February 8, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
\(^{8}\) Email correspondence with author, February 17, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
Catholic Church have always had a strong relationship, especially during the latter
nineteenth century.

During the height of AOH membership in the 1880s and 1890s, the Catholic
hierarchy such as diocesan bishops took an active part in AOH activity. However, now
the AOH “has to go out and get them” according to Finn about the lack of hierarchy
involvement in both the AOH and LAOH membership today.9 Divisions in Ohio faced
great difficulty in finding chaplains. An example of this is Columbus where it took the
newest division three to four months to obtain a chaplain.10

The AOH and the LAOH of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first
century are organizations that are rich in dealing with Catholic action issues and
supporting their communities in variety of ways such as Habitat for Humanity builds,
Red Cross blood drives, visiting the sick, fundraising drives for charities, taking up
donations for food banks, and other charitable activities within a division’s community.11
This interest and resurgence of both the AOH and LAOH in Ohio in one way was
“generated by the Kennedy presidency, Irish Catholics displayed confidence and energy
in a variety of ways and in many aspects of American life” according to historian
Lawrence J. McCaffrey.12 Both the national and state boards of the AOH and LAOH let
“each division direct themselves” in regards to which Catholic action initiatives they will
take on in their communities.13 “Divisions usually support local charities within their
geographic areas, while sending a portion of their monies to higher levels for support of

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney (state of Ohio AOH state board president) in tape-recorded interview
with the author, February 8, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of
Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
12 Lawrence J. McCaffrey, The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America (Washington, D.C.: The
Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 184.
13 J. Michael Finn interview.
state, national, and international charities.”

However, the AOH and LAOH national boards sponsor two to three major charities each year which they ask the divisions to raise funds for as well.

Catholic action initiatives within the community are a major focus of both AOH and LAOH divisions in Ohio. To help facilitate Catholic action endeavors, “each division appoints a chairman who gives reports at meetings on various issues, such as abortion and death penalty… , report on sick members of the division and [the Catholic action chairmen] normally are the ones who send out get well or sympathy cards” according to AOH member Joe Casey. Divisions assist their dioceses with raising funds for restoring historic parishes and outreach activities through the St. Vincent De Paul societies, which assist people in financial need. Many divisions also work in parish soup kitchens within their respective dioceses such as Toledo and Columbus. For example, the AOH and LAOH in Toledo are responsible for the first Sunday of each month working in the soup kitchen and clothing bank that are run by the Historic Church of St. Patrick parish which feeds and clothes the local citizens living in the area who are in need of assistance by the parish. Habitat for Humanity has proven to be another important charitable initiative that local divisions take part. Columbus AOH has participated in

15 National Hibernian Digest, January 2000-December 2003. The newspaper is published six times a year. Author examined newspapers beginning with the January/February 2000 issue through the November/December 2003 issue in order to gather general information about the organization’s charitable programs. Newspaper archives are located at Blach Institute for Ethnic Studies, Manuscript Collections, Philadelphia, Penn.
16 Email correspondence with author, March 2, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
17 January 2004-September 2004 meeting minutes of Sean P. Kelly AOH division and Mother McCauley LAOH division, divisions of Lucas County, Ohio, January 2002-December 2002 meeting minutes of Padraic Pearse AOH division, Columbus, Ohio, (unpublished data) and interview with J. Michael Finn. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
building homes in the Columbus area, as a way to reach out to their local community.  

Akron LAOH helped the local community by holding three fundraisers for families of military personnel, by holding a spaghetti dinner and two USO dance parties. 

AOH and LAOH divisions also support local religious orders in their endeavors and attend religious films such as *The Passion of the Christ*. An example of this is the Toledo LAOH’s relationship with the Ursuline order in Toledo. The LAOH in Toledo holds its meetings at the Ursuline Center and assists the Ursulines financially with the order’s annual benefits for the Ursula Academy such as the Christmas Bazaar and Annual Benefit Dinner. Close to three hundred dollars has been donated to the Ursulines in the last year.

Divisions keep their Catholic faith at the center of every meeting. Members begin and end their meetings with the various prayers of the faith such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory To Be, and prayers for the unborn and religious vocations. Many divisions co-sponsor feast day masses for Irish saints with historic Irish parishes within their diocese. Toledo holds a mass in honor of St. Patrick every March. Some divisions sponsor prayer chain or prayer request web pages such as the AOH in Toledo.

Hibernians attend the taping of Masses for shut ins and take financial donations for rosary

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18 Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney interview.  
20 Toledo AOH & LAOH meeting minutes Jan. 2003 to present. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.  
21 Toledo LAOH meeting minutes Jan. 2003 to present.  
22 Ann Dollman, Mother McCauley Lucas County, Ohio, unpublished data. LAOH rituals obtained from Lucas County LAOH meeting agenda form, in the hand of Ann Dollman and the author. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.  
23 Some of the Irish saints celebrated are St. Patrick, St. Columba, St. Brigid (patron saint of the LAOH), St. Brendan, Our Lady of Knock and Our Lady of Limerick.  
24 Toledo prayer page can be found at [http://www.tolaoh.com](http://www.tolaoh.com).
supplies. AOH and LAOH members are “strongly encouraged to be involved in the life of their parish” as well.

National initiatives in which local divisions take part are projects such as Project St. Patrick, Columban Fathers Mission, Holy Cross School in Belfast, pro-life, and hunger in America issues. Project St. Patrick is an endowment fund that was created to assist seminarians with their education in order to help them achieve their goal of becoming priests and deacons for the Catholic Church. AOH and LAOH are committed to increasing the number of those studying for the priesthood because “across America there are Catholic parishes and facilities desperately in need of religious personnel.” The Ohio State Board of the AOH donated $250 to the project in addition to the money that was donated by various divisions over the year. Columban Fathers Mission is a Catholic organization sponsored by the LAOH that assists the people of South American with social justice issues such as education, equality, employment, healthcare and educating people in the Catholic faith. The money that is raised by the LAOH goes toward the building of schools, clinics, and training people for the workforce. All of these donations are ongoing commitments by the Hibernians.

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25 Toledo LAOH meeting minutes, Jan.2004-present. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
26 Cindee Case, Email correspondence with author, February 15, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. Members can be involved in their parish as liturgical ministers, religious education, Eucharistic ministers, social justice events and pro-life initiatives.
28 Ibid.
29 October 26, 2002, Ancient Order of Hibernians Ohio State Board general meeting minutes, Cuyahoga County Ohio, (unpublished data), given to author by AOH Ohio State Board. No figures were available about division donations. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
At the Ohio state AOH/LAOH convention in July of 2003 two teachers, Orla O’Dowd and Sian Mulholland from Holy Cross School, located in Ardoyne, Belfast, Northern Ireland were the featured speakers for the bi-annual convention. The AOH brought the two women to speak at the convention in order to raise funds for the school due to the fact that the school has been under constant attack under by Loyalist paramilitary organizations. Toledo AOH vice president, Matt Cassidy said that after hearing about the teachers’ story that one “would have to have a heart of stone not to give them every penny in your pocket.” In addition to the financial and moral support of the Holy Cross School, the AOH and LAOH have donated funds for Father Hayden Troy’s church in West Belfast in order to provide activities and outreach for the youth of the area.

Pro-life cause is an important Hibernian issue that many members take part. Both the AOH and LAOH strongly “believe in the affirmation of dignity of all human life.” The national board of the AOH sponsors an organization called Priests for Life which helps people to “confront the ugly desperation of abortion with the truth and facts” of the harsh realities that women face when dealing with the issue. In November of 1999, the AOH national president made “a special appeal for reflection and commemoration on the
sanctity of human life on December 28th the Feast of the Holy Innocents." The national board called on all Hibernians to do four things in an effort to help preserve the life of the unborn:

First,…I would invite Hibernians on that day [Feast of the Holy Innocents] to gather at Mass and pray for all the victims of abortion but especially for the helpless and innocent child. Second, join with others in your Diocese to distribute literature or peacefully protest outside facilities that offer abortions. Third, we must share and seek resources for programs that assist women wishing to bear the child. Those of you who find this day difficult for any reason are encouraged to participate in the National Right to Life March in Washington in January.

Since the abortion issue is such a contentious one in American society, the AOH and LAOH leave the matter to individual divisions to decide if and how they will get involved in pro-life movement.

The Hunger Project is a program created and sponsored by the AOH that is held during the month of March every year. The Hunger Project was developed in order to have “every division strive to have a project to feed the hungry [that is] modeled on the Philadelphia County Project that fed 60,000 needy people during St. Patrick’s Week, we [the AOH] will ask each Division, County, and State to feed the poor in March.” A final project is the annual Christmas Appeal where money is raised to assist the families of current political prisoners in Northeastern Ireland with meeting their basic needs of food and shelter as social services are cut when their loved ones are imprisoned for alleged crimes against the British government.

37 Ibid.
The Catholic Church has always played an important role amongst Irish-American Catholics. In many ways, “the Irishman clung to his religion as though it were all he had, and frequently it was” according to sociologist Andrew M. Greeley in his work on the Irish entitled, *The Most Distressful Nation: The Taming of the American Irish.*\(^{40}\) Their Catholic faith was the “one genuinely transatlantic institution in Irish life, the one institution that Irish immigrants could unhesitatingly recognize in America.”\(^{41}\) Historian Kevin Kenny states that:

As the Irish came to dominate the American Catholic Church, the Church in turn became one of the critical institutions in Irish America, along with the Democratic party and the labour movement, welding enormous cultural power and determining in no small measure how the emerging Irish-American ethnic community defined itself.\(^{42}\)

The Irish used their Catholic faith as way to separate themselves from Protestant Irish-Americans.\(^{43}\) Today, the Catholic faith is still an important part of cultural and ethnic identity amongst Catholic Irish Americans, especially the Hibernians where they chose to integrate their faith and identity by volunteering in their communities on Catholic action initiatives.

When comparing the two different eras of AOH Catholic action activity in Ohio, the AOH of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century have embarked on a wide variety of initiatives when compared to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century AOH. This can be traced to the fact that the AOH in Ohio was just getting its start in Ohio during the latter nineteenth century and was limited to the types of activities they

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\(^{42}\) Ibid.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 75.
chose due to the east coast divisions and national board placing a greater emphasis on assisting new Irish immigrants in the United States. The national board of the latter twentieth century and early twenty-first century encourages individual divisions to find ways to become involved in their local communities while still following the AOH motto of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity” while still directing several national Catholic initiatives. It is up to individual divisions in Ohio to decide what Catholic action initiatives to embark upon. Many joined the Hibernians in the last decade in order to integrate their faith, heritage, and assisting the less fortunate in their communities.

Although the AOH works on a number of Catholic action initiatives it is still a struggle to “find concrete things to do” according to AOH state board president, Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney.44 It is a struggle due the fact that some of the issues are very contentious such as abortion while others such as hunger are more easily defined and easier to be involved with. Besides the struggle over which initiatives to get involved in, many AOH members feel that it is important to “become involved more in the community” as membership increases in divisions across the state according to Toledo AOH member Matt Cassidy.45 This involvement in the community is an important goal of both the AOH and LAOH due to the fact that it allows the organizations to “focus on more issues than just the social” gathering aspects of being a member of the Order.

44 Dr. Thomas O’Mahoney interview, February 8, 2004. Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. Since the abortion issue has divided the United States, it has somewhat divided Hibernians. Many chose to take part in pro-life issues while others opt out because it might conflict with their political and social beliefs. Issues such as assisting the homeless lead to less tension in the divisions because it is an issue in which everyone can agree upon.

45 Matt Cassidy, Email correspondence with author. The ongoing increase in membership can be traced to several factors: interest in genealogy, the explosion of Irish culture such as step-dancing in America during the nineties, and the international attention that the Good Friday Agreement in Northeastern Ireland has received have led many Irish-Americans to seek out the old ethnic groups such as the AOH in order to connect with their heritage and to give themselves an identity besides being just an American.
Even though the Hibernians are dealing with the issues regarding what initiatives to take on or how to increase their membership, one thing seems to be certain among the members that the majority of Hibernians “enjoy learning more about [their] ethnic roots while strengthening [their] faith as a Catholic.”\textsuperscript{46} Finally Hibernians commit to their motto of “Christian charity” in order “to make those men and women who went before us very proud” according to AOH national president, Ned McGinley.\textsuperscript{47}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} http://www.aoh.com/reports/mcginley_conv_keynote.htm
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Conclusion

Ethnic organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians played an important role in the lives of ethnic groups and immigrants in America. The activities of the two organizations kept the various aspects of Irish culture alive among subsequent American-born generations who may never have experienced their ethnic and cultural roots without the aid of such organizations.

According to sociologist Richard D. Alba, there is no longer

…any contradiction between being American and asserting an ethnic identity. Increasingly, they are accepted as the same thing. Therein lies the ultimate significance of the transformation of ethnicity for white Americans.¹

Since this contradiction no longer appears to exist in America, many people can assert their hyphenated identity through organizations such as the AOH and LAOH. Irish-Americans in Ohio have been drawn to the core values of “friendship, unity, and Christian charity” of the two organizations. Although the scope of the organizations’ activities have changed over time, both the AOH and LAOH remain committed to these core values that have existed since 1836.

The LAOH has played an important role in retention of the core values and Irish culture. Several of these divisions, particularly in Ohio, continued during the middle of the twentieth century when many of the AOH divisions ceased to exist due to the lack of membership. An example of this is the Dayton LAOH division which has been in continuous existence since 1896. When the AOH divisions were no longer in existence, it was the LAOH divisions that continued with the preservation of Irish culture by holding literary and musical events for the benefit of Irish-Americans in their local

community. This retention of Irish culture by women was evident due to the fact that it was Irish-American women who were often the “head” of the family, even if there was a male presence. “Ethnic identities are bound up in the minds of many with their family history” and the LAOH provided Irish-American women with an avenue of retaining their ethnic culture which might have become “…weakened by powerful currents of assimilation.”

Historian Thomas Archdeacon summarizes this relationship between assimilation and cultural retention:

by 1950 America’s ethnic groups were becoming composed of English-speaking members of the second generation who were busily ridding themselves of the vestiges of Old World cultures. Ethnicity still counted in the lives of these people, but with each passing year they were increasingly being drawn by their shared interests into political, economic, and social contacts that transcended the boundaries of individual nationalities.

Historians have written extensively on assimilation and cultural retention in regards to ethnicity in America. Historians that have written extensively on the Irish experience in

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2 Ibid., 299-301.
America such as Dennis Clark, Andrew M. Greeley, Kevin Kenny, Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Kerby Miller, and Janet Nolan devote little, if any attention to the importance of ethnic organizations in assimilation and ethnic cultural retention. They focused on important institutions such as the Catholic Church, labor unions and political party machine politics in order to explain to readers how Irish immigrants assimilated into American culture; yet retain their ethnic and cultural identity. This project fills a significant historiographical void, and raises important questions for future researchers to consider the importance of ethnic organizations in the assimilation and ethnic cultural retention processes. These associations have only been mentioned in brief passing or not addressed at all by historians in the field.

It is important to analyze the activities of ethnic organizations both in the past and present to see what role they have played in assimilation and cultural retention. If historians can identify how and why these organizations were able to pursue both of these aims, then other ethnic groups will be encouraged to revive the old associations as a way to connect with their past and help to further shape both their American and ethnic

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identities. Organizations such as the AOH and LAOH helped Irish immigrants to adjust to life in America through employment and housing while keeping the cultural traditions of Ireland alive in the hearts of their members. In the twenty-first century, the two organizations help Irish-Americans to go beyond the “green beer” aspect of their Irish heritage and to use the organization as “an eye opener” to that heritage that gives Irish-Americans a unique identity. Many aspects of Irish culture, such as music, dance, literature, and history have exposed Americans to the culture of Ireland in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. Irish nationalism has also played an important role in shaping Irish ethnic identity within the AOH and LAOH. Ireland has been under attack politically and culturally by the British for over 700 years. Many Hibernians identify with their ancestral homeland’s struggle to be completely free of British rule. The movement for a thirty-two county republic in Ireland has brought many new members and retained old members for both the AOH and LAOH. Finally, the charity projects that the AOH and LAOH embark upon, such as Habitat for Humanity and local soup kitchens have helped local communities take care of their less fortunate. If both the AOH and LAOH continue to keep the focus on this wide range of activities, the future of the two organizations looks bright. Membership is increasing and new divisions have been forming throughout Ohio. With this in mind, the celebration of being Irish will hopefully expand to all months of the year, and not just Saint Patrick’s Day.

6 Ann Dollman interview.
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Appendix A

Ancient Order of Hibernians Constitution Preamble and Introduction (1872)

PREAMBLE: The members of this Order do declare that the intent and purpose of the Order is to promote FRIENDSHIP, UNITY, AND TRUE CHRISTIAN CHARITY among its members, by raising or supporting a stock or fund of money for maintaining the aged, sick, blind, and infirm members, and for no other purpose whatsoever.

These laws, though human,  
Spring from Love divine:  
Love laid the scheme—  
Love guides the whole design.

Vile is the man  
Who will evade these laws,  
Or taste the sweets  
Without sufficient cause.

INTRODUCTION: The motto of this Order is: “FRIENDSHIP, UNITY, AND TRUE CHRISTIAN CHARITY.”

UNITY, in all uniting together for mutual support in sickness and distress.  
FRIENDSHIP, in assisting each other to be the best of our power.  
TRUE CHRISTIAN CHARITY, by doing to each other and all the world as we would wish they should do unto us.

Brethren: It is beyond all doubt that the Supreme Being has placed man in a state of dependence and need of mutual support from his fellow-man. Neither can the greatest monarch on earth exist without friendship and society. Therefore the Supreme Being has implanted in our natures tender sympathies and most humane feelings toward our fellow creatures in distress, and all the happiness that human nature is capable of enjoying must flow and terminate in the love of God and our fellow creatures. So we, the members of this Order, do agree to assist each other and conform to the following rules.¹

¹ Copy of the original is located at: Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.
Appendix B

Ancient Order of Hibernians Constitution Premable (c. 2000)

It is hereby declared and decreed that the purpose of this organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc., is:

(1) To promote friendship, unity, and Christian charity.

(2) To foster and sustain loyalty to country and community.

(3) To aid and advance by all legitimate means the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people for complete and absolute independence.

(4) To foster the ideals and perpetuate the history and traditions of the Irish people.

(5) To promote Irish culture.

(6) To encourage civic participation

(7) To encourage an equitable U.S. Immigration law for Ireland, and to cooperate with all groups for a fair American Immigration policy.

(8) To accept and support, without prejudice, the concept of free expression of religious practice for the people of the world.

Its membership is confined exclusively to practicing Roman Catholics of Irish birth or descent, who are citizens of the United States or who have declared their intentions to become citizens of the United States, and to citizens of the Commonwealth of Canada, or any other country in the Western Hemisphere.¹

¹ Copy of the original is located at: Uncatalogued materials, Ward M. Canaday Center, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.