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Albion Knights of Columbus est. in 1908

CATHOLIC FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION: Council first led by Grand Knight Thomas Kirby, Deputy Grand Knight John Cleary

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Established on June 2, 1908, the Albion Council #1330 Knights of Columbus was first led by Grand Knight Thomas A. Kirby and Deputy Grand Knight John Cleary.

This Catholic fraternal organization was first established by Fr. Michael J. McGivney at New Haven, Conn. in 1882. During a time when Catholics were excluded from unions and other fraternal organizations, Fr. McGivney noticed a need for an alternative fraternal organization that could provide mutual benefits to members. In particular, those members with families were insured in case of death, reducing the financial burden placed on widows and orphans. By 1909, the Order consisted of more than 1,300 councils with more than 230,000 knights, including those members of the newly established council at Albion.

It is possible that these men participated in the May 9, 1910 3rd Degree ceremony held at Albion for Orleans



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This image, taken around 1910, is believed to show members of the Albion Council #1330 Knights of Columbus. When this image was taken, Thomas Kirby was serving his final term as leader of the organization and was replaced by James Kennedy the following year. Seated from left: Unknown, James Mathews, Michael Mathews, William Hayes, Unknown, William Finn, Unknown. Standing from left: Mardin Britton, Thomas Moffat, Unknown, Franklin Allen, Unknown, Skip Glenn, Roger Madigan, Unknown, Arthur Eggleston, Samuel Griffin, and Unknown. James Mathews, a local Democratic nominee for Orleans County Sheriff in the 1920s and long-term trustee of the council, is the only known charter member of the organization pictured here; that may explain the boutonniere.

County Catholics participated in the ceremony. With over 400 men present, the degree conferred on 65 men; the

first degree ceremony since the council was established nearly two years earlier. At that time, Albion's Council contained over 100 members with nearly one-third of its membership holding insurance through the national organization. This made Council #1330 one of the largest insurance councils in New York State.

As a Catholic fraternal organization established in the 1880s by an Irish priest, the organization as a whole remained largely Irish through the turn of the century. In a 1908 photograph of Albion's charter membership, Frank Jablonski of Albion is the only known non-Irish member. It was not until the early 1920s that Polish Catholics found themselves in positions as officers within the organization and another 10 years before Italian Catholics served in similar capacities. William Sigismondo and Guido Monacelli were two of the first Italians to serve as officers of the council.