

THE WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

REGISTER: Knights of Equity Records  
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The Knights of Equity (f. 1895) is a Roman Catholic Irish social group first established in Cleveland, Ohio, as the Knights of Equity Supreme Council which then grew into a national organization. The group's purpose, stated in their articles of incorporation, is "to create and foster a spirit of mutual helpfulness among its members; to advance them intellectually and socially; and by co-operation among them, to promote their material interests and well-being." The Cleveland group was active from 1895 to 1905. Three courts were founded in Cleveland, one of which eventually had 5,000 members. After 1905 the group disintegrated in Cleveland, but it continued to grow in other cities, having fifty-six courts across the United States.

The ruling body of the Knights of Equity is known as the Supreme Council, which is made up of all the elected supreme officers. The council has the power to make rules and regulations in conformity with the constitution of the organization. A general assembly or national convention is held each year, and the supreme officers and the delegates from each court discuss issues important to the Knight of Equity.

In 1954, at the national convention, a decision was made to draw up a set of bylaws to include women in the organization. In 1960 at the national convention held in Buffalo, New York, the National Daughters of Erin were officially accepted by the Knights as an auxiliary. Their aims and objectives were "to aid the Knights of Equity financially and socially, and to further its aim, principles and causes; to participate in Catholic action; and to contribute to charity and to foster Americanism." Both groups have continued over the years and are still active in several states. Its present day goals and objectives are to promote Irish heritage and Catholic values and promote peace and a united Ireland.

The Knights of Equity Records, 1896, 1945-1995, consists of copies of the articles of incorporation, constitution and bylaws, ritual and installation ceremony program, an anniversary booklet, and miscellaneous newsletter copies.

The collection is arranged by document type, and then alphabetically.

This collection is of interest to the researcher interested in the history of Irish immigrants and Irish Americans in the Cleveland, Ohio, area, including information on social groups, religious affiliation, patriotic and fraternal groups, and ceremonial rituals. The collection also gives insight into the changes in women's social roles as evidenced by the establishment of the auxiliary, the National Daughters of Erin. Notable Clevelanders Patrick D. Day and Gerald M. Crain are listed as Supreme Sir Knights, leaders in this Irish American group.

Provenance: Knights of Equity / James Butler, Supreme Sir Knight, 2000.

Number of Containers: 1      Oversize Folders: 0      Oversize Volumes: 0

Size: 0.20 linear feet / 0.06 linear meters

Restrictions: None.

Container

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Folder

1: Articles of Incorporation, Knights of Equity Supreme Council, May 29, 1896, change of address of statutory agent form and certificate of custody of records, photocopies, January 20, 1998.

Folder

2: Booklet, "History of the Knights of Equity, 1895-1995", and membership card, undated.

Folder

3: Constitution and Laws and By-laws, photocopies, October 1946.

Folder

4: Miscellaneous documents, "Origin and Objects of the Knights of Equity" flyer, and Knights of Equity stationery sheet, 1945 and undated.

Folder

5: Miscellaneous newsletters, photocopies, 1976, 1983, 1993, and undated.

Folder

6: Program, Ritual and Installation Ceremony, photocopy, undated.