

**Ancient Order of Hibernian in America, Inc.®**



**DIVISIONAL  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
PACKAGE**

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Judge James F. McKay III

**NATIONAL SECRETARY**

Jere E. Cole, Jr  
PO Box 539  
West Caldwell, NJ 07007-0539  
973.575.0050  
[Jcole4838@gmail.com](mailto:Jcole4838@gmail.com)

**NATIONAL ORGANIZER**

Timothy McSweeney  
14 Anna Court  
Selkirk, NY 12158  
518.961.1588  
[Newjack12007@Yahoo.com](mailto:Newjack12007@Yahoo.com)

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®



## Division Organizational Package

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note: Some items listed below are electronically linked to the AOH website.  
Please click on the underlined hyperlink for access.

- A. Division Organizational Package Instructions
- B. [The Preamble to the AOH National Constitution](#)
- C. [FORM 9 - Certificate of Election](#)
- D. [FORM 10 - Application for Charter](#)
- E. [FORM 28 - Permission to Form a Division](#)
- F. [FORM 32 - Transfer Card](#)
- G. [FORM 40 - Computer Data Form](#)
- H. [FORM 41 - Application for Membership](#)
- I. [Recurring Use Form Instructions](#)
- J. [National Board Order Form](#)
- K. Division Installation Procedures
- L. Initiation Pledge
- M. British Penal Laws
- N. AOH Record of Achievement
- O. Assignment of Membership Numbers
- P. Letter from National Secretary

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®



The Ancient Order of Hibernians was founded in America on May 4, 1836, at St. James Church in New York City. Its roots, however, are found in Ireland, dating back some 300 years. Since then, it has continued to grow and prosper and has become the largest and most influential Irish Catholic men's organization in the world.

## *The Preamble to the AOH National Constitution*

**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, promoting peace and unity for all Ireland;
- (4) To foster the ideas 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 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; and
- (9) To protect and defend all life, born and unborn.

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.<sup>®</sup>

## Division Organizational Package Instructions

To be eligible for membership one must: **A.** Be a male residing in the United States; **B.** Prove his Irish ancestry or that he has been legally adopted by those of Irish ancestry, or be a member of the Catholic Clergy, or be enrolled as a Seminarian, regardless of ancestry if they meet all other requirements; **C.** Be a practicing Roman Catholic<sup>1</sup>; **D.** Be of good character; **E.** Be not less than sixteen (16) years of age; and **F.** Complete an Application for Membership (Form 41).

- 1 Be sure that everyone (New and Transfer members) understands the purpose of the AOH. Make copies to distribute.
- 2 The first step in organizing a Division is to have 15 NEW members who qualify and are ready and willing to become members of the AOH. After the 15 NEW members have been identified, the Permission to Form a Division form (Form 28) should be completed. Read the oath that is on the form carefully and have each new member print or type his name (minimum of 15 NEW members). **PUT ONLY THE FIFTEEN (15) OR MORE NEW MEMBERS ON THE FORM 28. DO NOT PUT ANY OTHER NAMES (i.e., Transfers) ON THIS FORM.**
- 3 Fill out an Application for Membership (Form 41) for each potential member. This form is intended for division use only to assess new candidates for membership. Retain the application for division records.
- 4 Mail (or e-mail) the Permission to Form a Division form (Form 28) to the County President (if applicable), State President (if applicable) or National Organizer and National Secretary. Where a State Board does not exist, the Form 28 should be sent directly to the National Organizer ([aohorganizer@aoh.com](mailto:aohorganizer@aoh.com)) and National Secretary ([aoh.forms@aoh.com](mailto:aoh.forms@aoh.com)).
- 5 Wait for approval from the National Secretary (and lower jurisdictions) to form the Division. While this is happening, an Organization Meeting should be set up to familiarize the NEW members with the AOH hierarchy, its duties, the purpose of the Order, and the duties of the Officers and its members. If there are Transfer members involved, they should be involved in the Organization Meeting as well. (An Orientation Packet should be created and individualized for each Division with many items of interest, including the British Penal Laws and history of the AOH, among other items that will enlighten and educate the new members about the AOH and the individual Division should be included.)
- 6 After approval is given to form the Division, an Initiation and Installation Meeting should be called. ALL NEW and TRANSFER members shall go through the Initiation and Installation process.
- 7 TRANSFER members will be Initiated and Installed at the same time as the NEW members. Holding a meeting with the County President, State Officer, or National Officer present to administer The Shamrock Degree and The Pledge is desirable. They shall also supervise the nomination and election of Officers if this has not already been done. They will swear in the newly elected Officers. ALL members are eligible to hold office (NEW or TRANSFER). It will also be helpful at the swearing-in if each member is given a copy of The Pledge, so that they can read along.
- 8 Once the Initiation and Installation process is completed and the election of Officers has been accomplished, SEND to the National Secretary the following ASAP:
  - a. **Certificate of Election (Form 9)** - List new Officers (Names, Addresses, phone, & e-mail).
  - b. **Computer Data Form (Form 40)** - List ALL members (New and Transfer). **Contact the Division Financial Secretary** for the assignment of membership numbers.
  - c. **Application for Charter (Form 10)** - Fill out ALL appropriate information. This form should be a high priority. You need a Charter to exist!
- 9 The National Secretary shall furnish, without cost to new Divisions, the following supplies: One Charter, One Warrant Book, Six Manuals and Six copies of the National Constitution.

**ALWAYS retain copies of all FORMS & PAPERWORK for Division Records.**

Distribute Recruitment Materials to Churches, Irish Centers, Irish Stores, etc.

Place Notices in Church Bulletins and other Area Publications.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "Roman" Catholic for purposes of AOH membership should be taken in an inclusive rather than exclusive sense. This means that the word "Roman" should be given a broad interpretation, meaning any Catholic who belongs to one of the Churches of Rites in communion with the Church of Rome with our Holy Father as the Supreme Roman Pontiff. There are about twenty-four different Rites in the Catholic Church. They are divided into Western and Eastern Rites. In the United States, the most common Western Rite would be the Roman Rite or Latin Rite. The most common Eastern Rites in the United States would be the Byzantine Rite, The Ukrainian Rite, the Maronite Rite and Melkite Rite.

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®

## Division Installation Procedures



### **Materials:**

Blue Books: (Manuals) Ideal number to have is five (5)

American Flag

Irish Flag

Copies of The Purpose, AOH History, and the Pledge

1. Superior Board(s) should always be involved in the formation of new divisions to ensure that prescribed formulas are honored. Where no County or State Board exists, the National Board is the Superior Board.
2. Ask ALL (**NEW** and **TRANSFER** members) present if they have any questions about **The Ancient Order of Hibernians in America**. Pass out copies of the **AOH Purpose** and **The History of the Order**. (*STEP 1 of the meeting can also be accomplished at an Orientation Meeting prior to Initiation and Installation Ceremony*).

### **ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS WITH GREAT CANDOR.**

- Emphasis that the Order's foundation is deeply based and rooted in the practice of the **Catholic** faith.
- Our position on **Pro-Life** should be answered positively. (**Cardinal O'Connor** was a recipient of the **AOH John F. Kennedy Award**.)
- That the **AOH** is dedicated to the free practice of religion. (**Freedom of Religion**), this is because the Irish people were denied this right.
- Emphasis that the Order is dedicated to a **Free and United Ireland by all peaceful means**. (Questions about Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams and John Hume, who were co-recipients of the **AOH John F. Kennedy Award**, and Irish Political Prisoners, should be answered positively.) Former Irish Prime Minister and author of the Peace Process, Albert Reynolds, received the **AOH Sean MacBride Award**.
- Questions about the **IRA** should be answered by stating that our Constitution states the word "**peaceful**" very strongly.
- Other questions should be answered to the best knowledge of the Installing Officer. If needed, superior officers should be called upon for questions outside of the Installing Officer's purview.

## Division Installation Procedures (*Continued*)

3. When the question-and-answer period is finished, ask all present if they are willing to take the Oath and become a member of the Organization. **If they are not ready, ask them to leave at this point.**
4. Read the paragraph at the top of **FORM 28** (*Permission to Form a Division*). All those present should have their names affixed to this document.
5. Read the "**Opening Prayer**," in the Blue Book. Also pray an "**Our Father**" and "**Hail Mary**."
6. **Pledge of Allegiance** is then recited.
7. **Shamrock Degree. NEW and TRANSFER** members should go through the Shamrock Degree **TOGETHER**. Because of this, **ALL NEW and TRANSFER** members of the new Division can start on equal footing. (It is understood that the Transfer members have already gone through the Shamrock Degrees, and many may have already gone through the Major Degrees of the Order). Read the "**Initiatory Preamble**" in the **Blue Book**. Copies of **The Pledge** should be available so that those being initiated can read along. The room should be set up as in the diagram posted in the Blue Book.
8. Proceed with **The Shamrock Degree** and/or **The Pledge** (in the Blue Book).
9. Once **The Shamrock Degree** and/or **The Pledge** has been given, ask if the **New Division** (*now installed*) has agreed on Officers. Nominations and Elections of the Officers should take place at this time. Once elections or appointments have been agreed upon, then **the Installation of the new Officers should take place**. The Installing Officer should take the role of the **State or County President** in the Installation. Preparations are stated in the Blue Book.
10. Follow the **Installation Procedure** (Blue Book) Installing Officers (use "**The Circle**" (Blue Book) if possible, it is much more impressive than a line of Officers, especially if all Offices are filled).
  - Officers' Duties** – Read this page to the Division
  - Circle** – Read this if you have formed a Circle
  - Obligation** – Read this to those assembled
  - Investiture** - Read the Officer's Pledge
  - Officers** – Assume their stations (*Read this to complete the ceremony*)
11. Because this will be the first ceremony that the new members will have seen and/or participated in, answer any questions which the members have on the ceremony.
12. **Closing Prayer - Prayer for Vocations, "Our Father" and "Hail Mary"**  
Read the Statement at the top of page eight (8) in the Blue Book.

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®



## Initiation Pledge



**President:** "Gentlemen, I welcome you. It is necessary that I should remind you before giving our pledge that if you entertain any mental reservation regarding any part of the pledge you are about to take; if you are actuated by any unworthy motive in joining our society; if you nurture in your heart(s) any bitterness, hate and malice against any worthy member of our Order, it is your duty to proceed no further. If, however, you fully appreciate the true spirit of "Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity" and are pure in the mind and heart, you are entitled to seek admittance here. Candidate(s), if you take our pledge, will you be loyal in letter and spirit?"

**Candidate(s):** "Yes."

### **NOTE: ALL MEMBERS STAND TO TAKE THE OATH TOGETHER**

*(This gesture connects all the members as true brothers and reaffirms each member's commitment to the Order.)*

**President:** "Gentlemen, place your right hand on your heart(s) and repeat aloud after me the following pledge."

### **ST. PATRICK'S PLEDGE**

I (**Name**), / do declare and promise / that I will keep inviolate / all the secrets of the Ancient Order of Hibernians / from all but those / whom I know to be members in good standing, / except the Roman Catholic clergy, / and that I will support the Constitution and Bylaws of this organization / to the best of my ability.

That I will be true and steadfast / to the brethren of this organization, / dedicated to St. Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland, / and that I will duly conform myself / to the dictates of my legally elected officers / in all things constitutional and lawful, / and not otherwise.

That I will not provoke or quarrel / with any of my brethren. / If a brother should be defamed, / or be treated unjustly, / I will espouse his cause. / give him the earliest possible advice / and aid him when in distress.

I also promise that I will not propose / nor assist in admitting / any person of a bad or suspicious character; / and that I will at all times be zealous / for the interests of this organization, / and will not knowingly wrong a brother.

That I will not countenance by my presence / nor support any performance / that may reasonably be interpreted / as caricaturing or debasing the Irish people, / or the Catholic Faith / whether in public or in private, / in song, recitation or story, / on the stage or on the screen.

That I will ever be true to the Constitution of my country / and will combat any and all attempts / that would tend to destroy its spirit.

All this I pledge / my sacred word and honor / to do and perform.

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®



## British Penal Laws



Professor Lecky, a Protestant of British blood and ardent British Sympathizer, says (in his history of Ireland in the 18th Century) that the objective of the Penal Laws were threefold:

- 1. To deprive the Catholics of all civil life.**
- 2. To reduce them to a condition of most extreme and brutal ignorance.**
- 3. To disassociate them from the soil.**

He might, with absolute justice, have substituted Irish for Catholic and added:

- 4. To expire the race.**
  - **The Irish Catholic was forbidden to practice their religion.**
  - **Forbidden from receiving an education.**
  - **Forbidden from entering a profession.**
  - **Forbidden from holding public office.**
  - **Forbidden from engaging in trade or commerce.**
  - **Forbidden from living in, or within five (5) miles of a corporate town.**
  - **Forbidden from owning a horse of greater value than five pounds.**
  - **Forbidden from purchasing land.**
  - **Forbidden from leasing land.**
  - **Forbidden from accepting a mortgage on land in security of a loan.**
  - **Forbidden from voting.**
  - **Forbidden from keeping any arms for their protection.**
  - **Forbidden from holding a life annuity.**
  - **Forbidden from buying land from a Protestant.**
  - **Forbidden from accepting a gift of land from a Protestant.**
  - **Forbidden from renting land worth more than thirty (30) shillings a year.**
  - **Forbidden from reaping from their land a profit exceeding a third of the rent.**
  - **Could not be a guardian to any children.**
  - **Could not, when dying, leave their infant children under Catholic guardianship.**
  - **Could not attend Catholic worship.**
  - **Was compelled, by law, to attend Protestant worship.**
  - **Could not educate their children themselves.**
  - **Could not send their children to a Catholic teacher.**
  - **Could not employ a Catholic teacher to come to their children.**
  - **Could not send their children abroad to receive an education.**

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®



## AOH Record of Achievement



- The AOH, jointly with the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, encourages and promotes vocations to the priesthood and religious life through its **Project St. Patrick program**.
- The AOH through monetary, political and other means has supported humanitarian and civil rights works in the North of Ireland and advocates, through all legitimate means, for a united Ireland.
- The Order established the first chair of Irish Studies at Catholic University in 1894.
- The Order awards the prestigious J.F.K. and Sean MacBride Humanitarian Awards to outstanding individuals.
- The Order donates millions annually to charitable causes, and provides thousands each year in scholarships through our National, State, County Boards and Local Divisions.
- The AOH successfully lobbied to have Commodore John Barry recognized by the Congress as the First Flag Officer of the United States Navy, and memorialized the Wexford immigrant at the United States Naval Academy.
- The AOH supports fair and equitable American **Immigration** policy for the Irish and for those of other nationalities as a matter of social justice, in accordance with the United States Council of Catholic Bishops.
- The Order has sponsored and supported feiseanna, as well as traditional Irish music, dance and song.
- The AOH has recognized, honored and supported Irish American achievement in theater, education, law, medicine, music, business, and the arts.
- The AOH, as a Catholic organization, stands for **Respect of Life**, from birth to natural death, and actively advocates a ban on abortion on demand.
- The Order has supported the Gaelic Athletic Association and all traditional ancient sporting games of Ireland.
- The AOH has recognized the contributions of the Irish in the American Civil War through history, lectures, films and monuments at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Sharpsburg, Maryland (Antietam).
- The Order has fostered the instilling of our Irish culture, history and traditions in our youth through the AOH Irish Way Scholarship Program for the sons and daughters of its members.
- The AOH has recognized the contributions of Irish Americans and Irish born who received the Medal of Honor, and has erected a monument in their honor at the Valley Forge Medal of Honor Grove.
- The AOH has consistently promoted and tried to preserve our ancient language, Gaelic-Irish.
- The AOH recognizes March 17th as one of the legal holidays of the Order, thus preserving the teachings and ideals of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, and the Catholic Church.

# Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc.®



## Assignment of Membership Numbers



This is the responsibility of either the Division President or Financial Secretary working together with the State President.

When assigning numbers, type up a list of the Members' names followed by their Membership number.

An example of a membership number: **52XX010006**.

1	2	3	4
State	County	Division	Member
52	XX	01	0006

- 1. State:** The "52" represents the state identifier.
- 2. County:** The two letters represent the County (usually the first two letters of the county, unless there is a conflict with an existing county).
- 3. Division:** The next two numbers represent the number of Divisions within the county. For example, 01 represents the first Division established in that County. The second Division receives the digits 02, the third Division 03, etc.
- 4. Member:** The last four digits represent the individual members. When issuing these digits, the following guideline should be followed:
  - a) 0001-0005 are reserved only for Chaplains.
  - b) 0006-9999 are assigned to the members.

**OFFICE OF THE  
NATIONAL SECRETARY**

PO Box 539  
1120 Bloomfield Ave.  
West Caldwell, NJ 07006  
Office Phone: (973) 575-0050  
Office Fax: (973) 575-0051  
E-mail: [jcole4838@gmail.com](mailto:jcole4838@gmail.com)



Dear AOH Officer,

Our organization, just as any other group, must maintain an effective and efficient line of communication between all levels of its jurisdiction. With this in mind, the starting point within our organization is the very important FORM #9. This form indicates the names and addresses of the Officers of your jurisdiction and **MUST** be filed immediately after any election. I would recommend that the responsibility for filing the FORM #9 be that of the incumbent Recording Secretary.

The membership list of each Division must be kept up to date by the Division Financial Secretary and should be reviewed at least every couple of weeks. This Officer must submit a FORM #40 for each and every change within the membership of the Division. Any change of address, new members, any terminations, regardless of the reason, must be submitted to the NATIONAL SECRETARY as soon as possible.

Regarding NEW DIVISIONS, the Financial Secretary will assign the membership numbers to these new members. In the case of new members coming into an existing Division, the Division Financial Secretary must assign the numbers, which will remain the same as long as the individual maintains his membership in the Order. Division Financial Secretaries should keep the membership numbering system in a consecutive numerical ordering system. If a member resigns, or for any reason gives up his membership, then his number should not be reused.

The Office of the National Secretary has available many different forms that will assist the Officers in their duties and in carrying out their responsibilities. I hope that you will make use of these forms, and in doing so conduct the business of your Division in a professional manner.

The Office of the National Secretary is always available to assist all of the Officers in the performance of their duties. It is the responsibility of this office to assist any Officer in any way that we can to make your job easier. This office is the direct link with the National Board and the State and County Boards and the Division. Please do not hesitate to call upon me at any time and for any reason.

Fraternally & Sincerely,

Jere E. Cole, Jr.  
National Secretary