

William Patrick O'Brien

4th State Deputy of Oregon 1913-1915



W.M. P. O'BRIEN

William Patrick O'Brien was born June 3, 1879 in Clare County, Ireland and immigrated to the United States in 1898.

Married Anna Agnes Brady on June 4, 1902 in Astoria. In 1904 William and Agnes had a daughter, Agnes M., who died a few months later. They eventually had three more daughters, Margaret, Elizabeth and Catherine.

On Sunday March 1, 1908 the Astoria council was instituted. William was installed as the first Grand Knight. 200 Knights, mostly from Portland, marched through the streets of Astoria to St. Mary's Church for the mass and ceremony. Rev. John Waters presided. William was elected and served two terms as State Deputy.

William work in the lumber industry and was in partnership in his own companies, United Box Company and the Clatsop Box Company.

At about 2 a.m. on December 8, 1922, a fire began which destroyed up to 30 blocks in central Astoria, Oregon. Approximately 2,500 residents lost their homes, with one death, and damages exceeded hundreds of millions of dollars. The business that William was in partnership with was also destroyed. The fire is considered to be one of the worst in Oregon's history. William had to rebuild.

William led a crusade against the Ku Klux Klan and the lies it told regarding the Catholic Church in Astoria by sending letters to the local newspapers; addressing his concerns regarding the Klan's intimidation tactics. William clearly revealed to the Astoria public how the Klan used its power to remove citizens from their employment simply because of their nationality or religious background. This anti-Catholic rhetoric led to his resignation of the Astoria Chamber of commerce.

"We have been continually attacked by our enemies of religion and the disrupters of the true principle of this Republic. They have taken a grain of truth and used it to flavor an ocean of falsehood."

William P O'Brien - 6th State convention, May 12, 1914, Portland, OR



Agnes died in 1961. William died December 5, 1962 in Astoria and is buried in the Ocean View Cemetery, Warrenton, OR

(State Historian's note: Which current State Warden does William resemble?)



William P O'Brien's grave in Warrenton