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## FREE PDF FORMAT EVROMEDIA LET US LIVE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE US FAITH FAMILY AND THE CONTOURS OF MANHOOD AMONG THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY CONNECTICUT FREE MOBI



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Like many men of the late nineteenth century, James T. Mullen was a veteran of fraternity. In the Civil War, he fought alongside his Connecticut brethren in the 9th Connecticut Volunteer Regiment. After the war, Mullen joined other Catholic veterans who continued military service through membership in the Sarsfield Guard, an exclusively Irish-Catholic militia unit that was part of the National Guard of Connecticut. In 1874 he was among the Catholic men of the Sarsfield Guard who founded the Order of the Red Knights, a primarily-social fraternal organization named for the red blankets the first Knights had used to cover themselves in their initiation ceremony. Prior to its demise in 1880 the Red Knights had evolved into a fraternal society with strong Irish ethnic identifications, secret rituals, and limited sick and death benefit functions. On February 2, 1882, Mullen again participated in a fraternal founding. This time, sitting among fellow Irish-Catholic men--most of them former Red Knights--in the basement of St. Mary's parish in New Haven, Mullen took part in the creation of a Catholic fraternal order that would experience unparalleled success in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, far outpacing all other Catholic fraternities and growing in a brief ten-year time span to a membership of some 6,500 "sound and good" Catholic men. On that cold February night Mullen and his brethren voted to "organize a purely original organization": they named it the Connecticut Knights of Columbus. (1) Mullen was not unusual among his fellow townsmen, both Catholic and non-Catholic. In Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America, Mark Carnes argues that in the latter third of the nineteenth century, between fifteen and forty percent of American males belonged to fraternal orders. (2) These figures are even more impressive when one realizes that Carnes eliminated a sizable portion of American males--Catholics--from these calculations. In the opening passages of Secret Ritual, Carnes' sole reference to Catholic men states that "Relatively few Catholics belonged to the orders, which were repeatedly proscribed by papal edicts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." (3) To be sure, James Mullen did not belong to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, or the Improved Order of Red Men (though some Catholic men did), but neither was he without access to fraternal societies. In fact, late nineteenth-century New Haven was a tangle of Catholic fraternal orders, both ethnic and benevolent: New Haven's Irish Catholic men could choose among the Knights of St. Patrick, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, the Sons of Erin, the Catholic Order of Foresters, the Red Knights, The Irish Catholic Benevolent Union, the Hibernian Society, the Catholic Benevolent League, the Ancient Order of Foresters, the St. Vincent's Death Benefit League, any number of local parish TAB (total abstinence) societies, as well as the Knights of Columbus.

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