

**Edgar N. Ganster**  
1870 - 1959  
(State Deputy 1915 – 1918)



By the year 1985, Ned Ganster was still the only man in the history of the Knights of Columbus in Maryland to have served as Grand Knight, Faithful Navigator, Chapter President, Master of the Fourth Degree and State Deputy. He was a professional tailor and operated out of his shop at 208 N. Gay Street, he lived at 2528 E. Baltimore Street before moving to Guilford in later years. Ned Ganster was an usher in his parents' wedding party and that Ned signed up his father in the Knights of Columbus.

When Grand Knight Joseph M. Smith, of Maryland Council No. 370, first proposed an Orphans' Santa Claus Party in 1905, it found immediate favor with the five existing councils in Baltimore. Philip C. Mueller of Baltimore Council No. 205 was the first Chairman and the first Santa

Claus. Ned Ganster of Maryland Council No. 370 was Secretary for the party. The first party was held on Christmas Eve, 1905 at the old Ford's Theatre. The councils donated \$490.00 which allowed 600 orphans to attend. All of the children were transported in trolley cars to and from their homes. His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons addressed the children and gave them his blessing. Secretary of the Navy Charles J. Bonaparte and Mayor E. Clay Timanus also spoke to the children. The entertainment consisted of a movie and several acts of vaudeville. A magnificent Christmas tree decorated the stage, and each child walked up to Santa Claus and received a pair of stockings, a handkerchief, an apple and an orange, a pound of hard candy and a box of assorted nuts. Each girl received a doll and each boy a mechanical toy. The spirit in which the children sang "Adeste Fidelis" and other Christmas Carols clearly showed their delight. St. Mary's Industrial School Band provided the music. The sick and crippled children in the homes, who could not attend, were not forgotten, as their gifts were sent to them before the other children returned home, so that all could enjoy them together.

Ned Ganster served on every Orphans' Santa Claus Party thereafter. He became chairman of the party in 1913, and with the exception of two years in 1918 and 1919, he served as chairman until his death on October, 9, 1959 at the age of 89. His home was packed with Brother Knights for the recitation of the rosary. The U.S. and Papal Flags flanked his casket, upon which rested his golden Master's sword. The multitude of Mass cards and floral arrangements attested to the love that all bore for him. His council sent a floral bouquet of purple flowers in the shape of an anchor. His Requiem Mass at St. Ignatius Church was filled with those who remembered him. The Grand Knight and five Past Grand Knights of Maryland Council No. 370, each in tuxedo, white gloves, and jewel of office, were his pall bearers. A large turnout of Sir Knights in full regalia from the Charles Carroll of Carrollton General Assembly provided the honor guard. But the greatest tribute of all was the fact that the nuns brought a contingent of over fifty orphans to his Funeral Mass. They had not forgotten him.