

2015-4

Catholic-Protestant Relations in 19th Century Cincinnati

Charles Rosebrough
Xavier University - Cincinnati

Follow this and additional works at: <http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/hab>



Part of the [Classics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rosebrough, Charles, "Catholic-Protestant Relations in 19th Century Cincinnati" (2015). *Honors Bachelor of Arts*. Paper 4.
<http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/hab/4>

This Capstone/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate at Exhibit. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Bachelor of Arts by an authorized administrator of Exhibit. For more information, please contact exhibit@xavier.edu.

Catholic-Protestant Relations in 19th Century Cincinnati

By: Charles Rosebrough

Capstone Thesis

Thesis Director: Dr. Anderson

Thesis Readers: Fr. Kennealy and Dr. O'Hara

Course Director: Dr. Hogue

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i> –	3
<i>CHAPTER 1</i> – “The Era of Foundations and Dialogue: 1818-1832”	9
<i>CHAPTER 2</i> – “The Era of Hatred and the Know Nothing Party: 1833-1858”	17
<i>CHAPTER 3</i> – “The Era of Religious Debate 1867-1877”	29
<i>CHAPTER 4</i> – “The Era of Ecumenism 1878-1886”	39
<i>CHAPTER 5</i> – “Conclusion 1887-1900”	60

INTRODUCTION

The field of American anti-Catholicism, particularly anti-Catholic sentiment in the 19th century, has come to such a consensus as to sustain a counter movement. From the field's inception, most scholars have seen the relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism as one of hate. These works of scholarship are not written with intentional biases.¹ Authors' focus on the animosity of the time is well supported by newspaper articles, pamphlets, sermons, comics and actions. These historians' bias is not in the material that is chosen but in the material that is left out. These works lay so much stress on the hatred that they eclipse even the possibility of any ecumenism or solidarity between Catholics and Protestants in the 19th century. In this thesis I hope to bring to light at least a few examples during this time when Catholics and Protestants interacted in constructive or positive ways.

I do not deny the existence of hateful episodes. Yes, angry Boston Protestants burned down a Catholic convent in 1834. Yes, the Know Nothing party gained both prominence and power in the 1850s on an anti-immigration and anti-Catholicism platform. And yes, the American Protective Association managed an even greater influence, running on an almost identical platform some 30 years later. But such facts are not the only facts. At this exact time, Protestants and Catholics worked side by side to erect Catholic churches. Reasonable debates were organized between Protestant ministers and Catholic clergy. And good American Protestant citizens attended the funeral of a Catholic Bishop.

A quick concession must be made before continuing any further. The tendency in anti-Catholic scholarship has been to isolate the "true" factors generating this animosity. As Kyle E.

¹ Billington's *The Protestant Crusade* and Kinzer's *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* are early works which established the 19th century as a time of hatred between the two religions

Haden points out in a meta-article about the field itself, there are three main approaches to understanding anti-Catholicism: Catholicism as a cultural and or political threat, Catholicism as a “counter-subversive phenomenon” and Catholicism as a religious threat.² These are important distinctions and frequently carry a great deal of explanatory power. For instance, the Know Nothing Party was a nativist movement which feared the threat of the immigrant or European vote. The Know Nothing Party was anti-Catholic, but more so because the Catholic church was comprised of many immigrants at the time, especially Irish immigrants fleeing the Potato Famine. In this way its grievance was not so much with the religious beliefs of Catholics as it was with their ethnicity.

This paper will not take up the mantle of any one particular field. It will of course make use of precise language. When the issue at stake is something like the cultural value of temperance and not of the nature of Christ, it will be noted. But often, these facets will be treated as they would have been treated by their contemporaries, which is as inseparable. To the 19th century Protestant, Irish was frequently synonymous with Catholic, Catholic was frequently synonymous with anti-democracy and so on. These modern distinctions of race, social standing, culture, religious beliefs and political tendencies are helpful to an extent, and to that extent they will be respected. But, there will be times within this paper when these lines begin to blur.

This thesis sets out to examine what could be called a new field of study: 19th century Catholic Protestant *relations*, as opposed to anti-Catholicism. I argue that the relationship between these two denominations was not unilaterally one of prejudice but was a more complex ebb and flow of tension. This give and take between the religions has caused some scholars to correctly call the most virulent periods of anti-Catholicism “revivals,” but these same scholars do

² Haden 2013: 27-28

not go so far as to say those periods that intersect the revivals are ecumenical, only less aggressive.³ This paper intends to show that the polarity ranged from wrathful murder to gracious charity.

In terms of sources, my thesis draws extensively from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used for this paper are predominantly articles from Cincinnati newspapers. This heavy reliance on newspapers is both a practical decision and an artistic decision. It is practical because, despite the 19th century being so recent in American history, many sources from this time period such as diaries, pictures, letters, pamphlets, etc. are lost. The great exception to this rule is newspapers. Newspapers dating all the way back to the beginning years of Cincinnati have been preserved on microfilm. So, the prevalence of newspapers as a source within my thesis reflects a prevalence within the sphere of available resources. The decision is an artistic decision because newspapers offer a day-to-day insight into the lifestyle of 19th century Cincinnatians. Because of their pertinence as authentic depictions of contemporary life, newspapers are an effective scholarly decision as well as a practical decision. The secondary sources were chosen based on the authority of the respective books or articles. Many of the sources referred to in this work are seminal within their area of expertise. Authors like Billington, Franchot and Lamott are well respected within their field, and for this reason are used as support for my claims.

In terms of scope, my thesis will deal only with Cincinnati in the 19th century. The reasons for this limitation being feasibility and aptitude. If the goal is a more nuanced understanding of Catholic-Protestant relations, the view will have to be narrowed from the United States as a whole to the city level and even at times to the level of individual. Formally,

³ Dannenbaum 1978: 128; Ramet and Hassentstab 2013: 575

the paper is broken down into four time periods: 1818-1832, 1833-1858, 1869-1879, 1880-1886. The breaks are of course modern distinctions but they coincide with the major events in Catholic Protestant Cincinnati history. The time period 1859-1868 is not included within this paper. Undoubtedly there is very interesting research to be done on the two denominations during the Civil War era. However, the Civil War penetrated every facet of American life. Primary sources such as newspapers and journals which record day-to-day at this time focus principally on the war and less on religious tensions. It is outside the scope of my research to disentangle religious sentiments from a time period consumed by civil war.

The chapter for 1818-1832 is titled “The Era of Foundations and Dialogue” and will describe the beginnings of Catholicism in Cincinnati and the reaction of the native Protestants. This chapter will focus specifically on the erection of Christ Church in 1818, Cincinnati’s first Catholic Church, the first influx of immigrants into the city and the founding of the Catholic Telegraph, the city’s Catholic newspaper.

The chapter for 1833-1858 is titled “The Era of Hatred and the Know Nothing Party” and will describe what is considered the peak of anti-Catholic sentiment both in Cincinnati and in American history. The section begins with the arrival of the Beecher family at the Lane Seminary in Cincinnati in 1833. Lyman Beecher and his son Henry Ward Beecher, through sermons and articles, are largely responsible for the heightened enmity in Cincinnati at this time. Specifically, this section will give an account of Lyman Beecher’s *A Plea for the West* and its reception, Henry Ward Beecher’s management of the *Cincinnati Journal*, the beginning, zenith and end of the Know Nothing Party and the Bedini Riots.⁴

⁴ De Palma 2004: 76

The chapter for 1869-1877 is titled “The Era of Religious Debate” and will describe the waning political anti-Catholicism in the mid-century and the rising religious differences. This section will focus specifically on the so-called Cincinnati Bible Wars and the figure of Rufus King. The Bible Wars were a collection of debates surrounding the question of whether Cincinnati should have Bibles within the public schools. The Cincinnati Bible Wars were not a disagreement between Catholic and Protestant per se, but were framed as a debate about religious freedom. The debates were taken to the Cincinnati courts and then to the Ohio Supreme Court. A main character throughout these debates was Rufus King. Rufus King was a Cincinnati Protestant lawyer, who argued for the preservation of the Bible within the public schools. He is an important figure for this paper because of his generous donations to St. Xavier Church years later after a tremendous fire.

The chapter for 1878-1886 is titled “The Era of Ecumenism” and describes Cincinnati at a time when the major events involving Catholics and Protestants were encouraging and not destructive. Specifically this chapter will detail three episodes of ecumenism. The first is the failure of the Purcell bank and the gentle response of the Protestant papers. The second is the burning and rebuilding of St. Xavier Church in 1882. After this church burned to the ground on April 7, 1882, Protestant aid flooded in beside Catholic aid. Most remarkable was the donation of the stained glass window by Rufus King, which hangs in the church today. The third is the death of Bishop Purcell and the enormous procession and funeral, attended by members of all denominations. These episodes are not meant to be in any way comprehensive and they are not meant to exclude any examples of anti-Catholicism. These events are merely posed as a counterpoint to the overwhelming amount of research dedicated to proving the hate between these two denominations.

This thesis will conclude with a final point demonstrating the variability of Catholic-Protestant relations in 19th century Cincinnati. The conclusion will briefly relate the rise and fall of the American Protective Association, a political movement founded on anti-Catholic tenets. After it has been shown that the pendulum of hatred and ecumenism swung back and forth multiple times throughout the century, I will end with an attempt to bring some sense of cohesion. I hope to do justice to both sides of history, to the times of prejudice and the times of peace. In that sense the paper is my fresh attempt to write about the 19th century without bringing in the bias of assuming these denominations operated only on the basis of hate.

CHAPTER 1: “The Era of Foundations and Dialogue: 1818-1832”

Catholicism in Cincinnati began in earnest with the building of Christ Church in 1818. Prior to this time, the Catholic population was small and was served by itinerant priests. These priests were Bishop Flaget, who operated out of Bardstown, Kentucky, Fr. Badin and Fr. Edward Fenwick, who was to become pastor of the church in 1818 and then later the Bishop of Cincinnati in 1822. In contrast to the meager Catholic population, there were already multiple Protestant denominations established within the city, the foremost being the Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists.⁵ Cincinnati’s religious foundations are Protestant. Charles Goss says, “It appears that the majority of the early settlers of Cincinnati were Presbyterian. The first church here was Presbyterian.”⁶ The arrival of Catholics in the city hailed the beginning of religious diversity within Cincinnati.

The arrival of Catholics was accepted with open arms. The lot used to build the first church was purchased from James Findlay, who gave his name to the Findlay Market in Cincinnati. Findlay was not a Catholic but was eager to do business with the budding Catholic community. Originally, he asked \$1,200 for the lot, a fair price, but on the day of signing the mortgage, he cut the price to \$750. This reduction displays two things: first, the overwhelming poverty of the early Catholic community, which could not afford the land, and second, the willingness of non-Catholic men to do business with Catholics. Margaret De Palma has pointed out that Protestants, in the formative years of Catholicism in Cincinnati, played the important role of encouraging Catholic settlers to buy land in Cincinnati. De Palma refers to a letter from

⁵ Lamott 1921:50

⁶ Goss 1912:468

some Cincinnati Catholics to Archbishop Marechal of Baltimore which speaks of Bishop Fenwick and his relation to the surrounding wealthy Protestants. She says,

Even though Fenwick had no money, he did have the goodwill of his Protestant neighbors. A letter from a group of Catholics to Archbishop Ambrose Marechal, dated September 25, 1820, conveyed the message that several Catholic families had purchased land from William Lytle, who because he wanted to “encourage settlers of our faith,” granted a “considerable tract of land for the use and benefit of a Roman Catholic church to be established there...” Furthermore, it was believed that the Protestants would contribute generously to the establishment of the see, “as they well realize the importance of having a Catholic Bishop for the advancement of the their city, and to induce Catholics to settle the neighborhood.”⁷

While the decision to promote Catholic growth may have been more of a financial decision than religious, the openness of Protestants to deal with Catholics in 1820 is indicative of an inclusive relation. The idea that a Catholic church could increase the value of an area of land would be scoffed at a mere 15 years later by the same class of Protestants. For now however, the two denominations saw themselves as being on the same side in promoting the construction of a new city.

The lot that the Catholics purchased from James Findlay was outside the city limit of Cincinnati. Much has been made of this fact in the various histories of Catholicity in Cincinnati. Prominent authors such as Charles Goss and J.G. Shea have mistakenly attributed the location of the church to a law that prohibited the construction of a Catholic church within the city limits.⁸ John Lamott and Margaret De Palma refute this statement saying that there is no hard proof that the church was forbidden to build within the city. They propose that the church was built farther away due to the congregation not being able to afford the more expensive and desirable land and wanting to cater to the Catholic community which was spread out beyond the city.

⁷ Wilson 1820, as quoted by De Palma 2004:51

⁸ Goss 1912:528; Shea 1892:337-338

The church itself was a very humble structure, made out of wood and measuring 55' by 30'.⁹ To put this in perspective, the average dorm room size is around 12' by 20.' This would mean the first Catholic church in Cincinnati was only slightly larger than two dorm rooms put together. Nevertheless, the church sufficed for the population at the time, which was only around 250-300 families.¹⁰

At this point in Cincinnati's Catholic-Protestant history, the relationship between the two denominations was one of mutual respect. I offer three reasons why this age was not marked by the hatred which would follow in the pursuing decades. First, the Catholic population was small. Catholicism would grow rapidly in the next few years, but at its beginning, it posed no real cultural threat to the dominant Protestant denominations within Cincinnati. The one Catholic community in Cincinnati was isolated outside the city limits and had little contact with the city., The values of Catholicism had not yet clashed with Protestantism, because of their small numbers. Second, Catholicism was not established as any sort of institution within Cincinnati. Not only were the numbers of Catholics low, but there were no schools, churches, parades, sodalities or funerals yet being held where the Protestant public could see them. And third, early life in Cincinnati was difficult. Many residents in Cincinnati were farmers and did not have formal education. The Cincinnati Public School system wasn't founded until 1829 (coincidentally the same year as the first Catholic parochial school).¹¹ It seems that the primary concern for denizens of the city during the 1800s and 1810s was merely establishing some type of livelihood. In short, the citizenry did not yet have the convenience within the city to allow for an expansive growth or heated debate around Theological or political minutiae. All three factors

⁹ Lamott 1921:38

¹⁰ Flaget 1819: 13

¹¹ Hamant 1963:239-240

were to change in the 1820s and 1830s. The Catholic population grew, Catholic institutions were founded and Cincinnati as a city flourished.

In conjunction with a massive increase in the population of Ohio, the Catholic church grew exponentially between 1818 and 1820. In 1810, Ohio had 230,760 residents. By 1820, the number had skyrocketed to 581,295. Of this number, Catholics comprised 6,000, a large increase but still less than 1%. Accompanying this population growth was the structural growth of Catholicism. In 1822, Bishop Fenwick and the parishioners of Christ Church, moved the church on log rollers into the city. The small wooden church was only moved a few blocks, from Liberty and Vine to 7th and Sycamore, but the symbolic movement was much larger. This physical shift demarcates the shift from Catholicism being an isolated religion beyond the city, to its being a conspicuous institution within Cincinnati.

Catholics founded three vital institutions founded between this time, 1822, and the beginning of the era of hatred in 1833: the building of Cincinnati's first cathedral, the erection of the Athenaeum and the founding of the *Catholic Telegraph*, the city's Catholic newspaper. As soon as the church was moved to the corner of 7th and Sycamore Street, Bishop Fenwick began forming plans for the foundation of a permanent cathedral and a seminary. Bishop Fenwick had big plans, but he had no money. The Catholic diocese could barely afford the lot of land on which they had built Christ Church, only four years prior. What is more, the diocese had to pay \$1,800 for the lot within the city at 7th and Sycamore.¹² Fenwick, knowing he was out of funds and knowing the poverty of his parish, turned to Rome for financial help. Borrowing \$300 from a layman in the parish, he sailed to Rome in 1823, in order to plead his case before Pope Leo XII. Of his time before the Pope, Fenwick wrote,

¹² Lamott 1921: 53

He assured me that he would cause to be given to me all the necessary assistance. Indeed, he accorded me two young priests of the Propoganda, 1,200 dollars for our traveling expenses; church utensils, sacred vessels, ornaments, books, linen, etc., to the value of nearly 1,000 dollars. As a result, I left Rome well satisfied in having venerated the tomb of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul.¹³

But the assurances of the Pope would be only the beginning. Fenwick toured Italy and finally arrived in Lyons, where he met with the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. He brought the promises that the Pope had made before the Association, which gladly gave the requested amount and more. By the time Fenwick sailed back to his diocese in Ohio, he had gathered around \$12,000 from Europe.¹⁴

Fenwick put the money to work. He arrived in Cincinnati in 1825. Construction on the cathedral was begun that year, and by 1826 a new stone cathedral was completed. The edifice was 90' by 45' and sported a 30' tall spire. The Catholic community now had a church whose stature and elegance equaled the aspirations of its parishioners. Fenwick had created great stability for Catholics in the construction of the cathedral, but the church had only Bishop Fenwick and one assistant to care for it. Fenwick may have provided for the physical needs of the parish, but the spiritual needs would require a steady stream of priests and religious members. To accomplish this goal, Fenwick set out on his next major project, the establishment of a seminary.

While Fenwick had been in Europe requesting aid for his struggling community, a temporary seminary had been set up in his small home.¹⁵ The seminary was served by an itinerant priest, who returned to his native diocese of New Orleans upon the arrival of Fenwick in 1825. This left Bishop Fenwick with a seminary based in his own house, run by no one. But never one to be dismayed by obstacles, Fenwick turned again to the Association of the

¹³ Fenwick 1826

¹⁴ Lamott 1923: 55-60

¹⁵ Ibid: 61

Propagation of the Faith. This time he was granted \$3,000.¹⁶ With this money Fenwick purchased a lot north of the church and on May 14, 1830, the cornerstone of what would become the Athenaeum was laid. Although the Athenaeum would eventually become too expensive for the diocese and would pass into the hands of the Jesuits, its foundation in 1830 provided a consistent source of educated Catholics in the city. In addition to the increased wealth of knowledge, the school was an important source of prestige for Catholicism in Cincinnati. The seminary, church, and then the Bishop's residence which intersected the two buildings made up a stately appearance.¹⁷

Fenwick's final addition to Cincinnati's Catholic population and what might aptly be called his most crucial and lasting contribution was the creation of the *Catholic Telegraph*. The *Catholic Telegraph* printed its first issue on October 22, 1831.¹⁸ From this point on, Catholics were able to add to and to debate about religion in Cincinnati on equal footing with Protestants. The *Catholic Telegraph* is an important historiographical source today because it has immortalized the zeitgeist between Catholics and Protestants. The first page of the *Catholic Telegraph*'s first issue was a full cover article on "Fundamental Principles" of Christianity, namely the truth of the existence of God. As one can tell from the title, the front page was not specifically Catholic. In fact, it would appear that Fenwick could not have picked a more common point of agreement between all denominations of Christians than the belief in the existence of God. The full-page article on "Fundamental Principles" became the standard for the first page of the *Catholic Telegraph*, and for about a year Fenwick published articles on topics which varied from things such as the existence of God, here, to the "Proof of the Authenticity of the Gospels." These front page articles could well be read as an olive branch extended to the

¹⁶ Ibid: 62

¹⁷ Appendix 1

¹⁸ *Catholic Telegraph* Oct. 28, 1831

various Protestant denominations of Cincinnati. Supporting this is the fact that the words “Catholic” and “Protestant” appear nowhere in any of the first page articles, suggesting that Fenwick was hoping to reach the broader crowd of Christians and not just Catholics with his paper.

However, the charitable nature of the cover page was quickly lost in the second page. On the inside page, the *Catholic Telegraph* often printed articles in defense of Catholicism. An excellent example of this is an article printed in the very first issue, directly after the article on the existence of God. In this article, Fenwick quoted from a Protestant preacher, Reverend L. Murray. In the quote, Reverend Murray lamented the divisions within Lutheranism. In response to the sermon of Reverend Murray, Fenwick wrote,

Here we have facts attested by Protestant authority, that wherever Protestantism became established, it has led to Heresy and Infidelity, in a very short time; and, with such facts staring us in the face, we ask, is it meet in them to reproach us with being infidels and anti-christians?¹⁹

The article is not overly harsh (we must remember that terms like heresy and infidelity were more commonly used at this time and therefore did not have the same sting with which they bite today, albeit they were still insults), but it does defend Catholicism in no uncertain terms.

Fenwick went on to answer his own question saying, “they may call us infidels; but we shall console ourselves with the reflection that we have kept the sacred deposit of faith whole and entire.”²⁰ The *Catholic Telegraph*, as it did with the full page “Fundamental Principles” section, adopted the second page apology section as a standard.

These second page defenses were often responses to articles written by the *Cincinnati Journal*. The *Cincinnati Journal* was a non-denominational Christian newspaper run at the time

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

(1831) by Amos Blanchard.²¹ His paper routinely published anti-popery articles. These writings, like the response, did not have the same venom that would become typical in a few years, but they did charge Catholics as being things such as “anti-christian.” It is telling that Fenwick used his first issue to argue with Blanchard, thereby setting a precedent that Catholics would take religious debates to the paper. This debate shows us that while Catholics were growing and attempting to fit into the city, they encountered a few antagonistic voices.

The two juxtaposed articles in the first issue of the *Catholic Telegraph* teach us two definite things about Catholic-Protestant relations in early Cincinnati. First, that it was not always marked by hatred. In Ray Allen Billington’s seminal work in anti-Catholicism, Cincinnati is not even mentioned until the year 1836. Billington ignores the early years of Cincinnati Catholicism, in which Catholics bought land, built churches and schools and even began a newspaper with the support, both passive and active, of the surrounding Protestants. The article on the first page of the *Catholic Telegraph* is a testament to these years. Second though, the inside page of the *Catholic Telegraph*, written in defense of Catholicism, gives us a slight foretaste of the next period of Catholic-Protestant relations: the period of hate. This article shows us that the massive growth of Catholicism in the 13 years between 1818 and 1831 did not pass unnoticed by the Protestant community. What was at first hailed as a harmless group of religious men and women, congregating outside the city, was now becoming a powerful and visible institution. These 13 years saw a shift from an impoverished parish gathered in a small wooden building to three stone structures, a church, the Bishop’s residence and a seminary complete with the *Catholic Telegraph*. Catholicism was on the move and some Protestants tracking its rise were not happy.

²¹ De Palma 2004: 70; It should be noted here that by non-denominational I mean to say no specific denomination of Protestantism. This non-denominational paper still excluded Catholicism, although Catholicism is technically a Christian denomination.

CHAPTER 2: “The Era of Hatred and the Know Nothing Party:1833-1858”

The time period between 1833 and 1855 contains the high point of anti-Catholic behavior in the 19th century. There is no discrepancy among scholars. The 1830s through the 1850s were colored by anti-Catholic riots, by anti-immigration or nativist agendas, often aimed at Catholic immigrants, and even by anti-Catholic literature. *Cincinnati* was not excluded from these sentiments. If anything, the opposite is true. *Cincinnati* was a hotbed for many significant anti-Catholic episodes during this era. There are of course more to discuss, but only three influential episodes will be explored here: the Beecher family in *Cincinnati*, the rise in immigration and the accompanying rise of the Know Nothing Party and the Bedini riots of 1853.

The Beecher Family

Lyman Beecher moved his family to *Cincinnati* in 1832 in order to take up the presidency at Lane Theological Seminary on Gilbert Avenue in Walnut Hills. Here, together with his numerous children, notably including Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher (later Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*), Lyman Beecher set to work promoting Presbyterianism in the city. Lyman’s main tool, and that of his peers as well, was the press.

Anti-Catholic literature and newspapers were wildly popular between 1833 and 1855. In both genres, the first publications were realized by the Beecher family. In 1834, Henry Ward Beecher briefly took over as editor of the *Cincinnati Journal*. During his time he began a short editorial piece called “Beta.”²² Through this piece, Henry Ward Beecher launched virulent attacks against Catholics. These attacks were not based on religious differences, but on political differences. He says in the *Cincinnati Journal* that the Catholic relation with Protestants was so bad that it should “make the free born sons of our fair land, arouse themselves and shake off the

²² Ibid: 82

drowsy stupor that has long blinded their eyes to the fact that Catholics are assuming a stand prejudicial to the liberties of our country.”²³ Henry Ward Beecher wanted to rouse Protestants in Cincinnati to defend against what he saw as a Catholic attack on democratic ideals. It was not uncommon in the late 1820s to see similar newspaper articles arguing against or even deriding Catholics. The shift in Henry’s publication is that he is not concerned with the doctrine of the Catholic Church, but with its political presence.

One does not have to go very far to learn where Henry Ward Beecher adopted this mindset. His father, Lyman Beecher, had been preaching against Catholics on a political platform for years in Boston, prior to his coming to Cincinnati. But, it was in 1834-1835 that Lyman Beecher rose to real prominence. In 1834 Lyman Beecher traveled back to Boston in order to give a series of lectures. Ray Allen Billington records the content of these lectures in his *Protestant Crusade*. Billington writes,

On the night of Sunday, August 10,[Lyman Beecher] delivered three violent anti-Catholic sermons in as many churches in Boston, exhorting overflowing audiences to action against Popery...Most of the city’s pulpits that Sabbath were given over to denunciations of Catholicism and many of the sermons were directed especially against the Ursuline convent.²⁴

Beecher’s sermons were apparently successful, because on the following day, a mob formed which marched on the Ursuline convent and burned it to the ground.

On returning to Cincinnati, Lyman collected and edited his sermons into a book called *A Plea for the West*, which became the foundational work of anti-Catholic literature in the United States. Although later eclipsed in both popularity and publication, *A Plea for the West* stands as the first nationally-popular piece of anti-Catholic invective. It could be appropriately quoted at

²³ *Cincinnati Journal* May 2, 1834

²⁴ Billington 1952: 73

any portion to prove its vehemence, but for the purposes of this paper, I quote only those parts which reveal Lyman's specific concern with Catholicism. Lyman attacked Catholicism in America on the grounds that it was a European, not native, force and on the grounds that it was a political threat.

Lyman Beecher viewed foreigners as enemies of the Republic of the United States. In the same breath he scorns uneducated men and groups immigrants into this category saying,

this danger from uneducated mind is augmenting daily by the rapid influx of foreign emigrants, unacquainted with our institutions, unaccustomed to self-government, inaccessible to education, and easily accessible to prepossession, and inveterate credulity, and intrigue, and easily embodied and wielded by sinister design.²⁵

This "prepossession" and the "sinister design" to which Lyman refers are the plans of the Catholic Church. Lyman Beecher disapproved of immigrants because he claimed they were mindless voters under the power of the Catholic hierarchy. In the end, then, Lyman's complaint about immigration is not so much a cultural or religious unease, but a political fear. He makes this point clear later in the book when he says that the influx of immigrants "would be the union of church and state in the midst of us."²⁶ And, as if statements like these were not clear enough, he even says "It is to the political claims and character of the Catholic religion, and its church and state alliance with the political and ecclesiastical governments of Europe... that we call the attention of the people of this nation."²⁷ For Lyman Beecher, being anti-Catholic was not a religious movement but a political movement. For this reason, he saw himself not as anti-immigrant or anti-Catholic but as pro-Republic.

²⁵ Beecher 1835: 49

²⁶ Ibid: 54

²⁷ Ibid: 66

Lyman Beecher's message resonated in the U.S. and in Cincinnati. This is evidenced not only by the large number of copies of *A Plea for the West* published, but by the genre which grew out of Lyman's book. In 1836, Maria Monk released her famous *Awful Disclosures*. This alleged autobiography detailed her time spent in the Hotel Dieu convent. Maria purported to relate tales of murdered nuns, forced sexual relations with priests and pits of aborted fetuses. The book was shocking to the Protestant public, but also read with unprecedented fervor. *Awful Disclosures* sold over 300,000 copies, placing it as the second most popular book in the United States before the Civil War, second only to Harriet Beecher-Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Maria Monk's book pushed Catholicism outside of accepted society. As Marie Anne Pagliarini puts it, *Awful Disclosures* "establishes normative standards of sexuality not through explicit instruction...but implicitly through the creation of the 'deviant' or 'unnatural' sexuality."²⁸ Catholicism began to be viewed as "deviant" or "unnatural" both in its sexuality (i.e. the celibacy of Catholic priests, the seclusion of women in convents) and in its politics. *Awful Disclosures*, feeding off the hype of works like *A Plea for the West*, helped create a picture of what a "good" or "normal" American looked like, and this stood in stark contrast to Catholics.

The Beechers' arrival in Cincinnati greatly changed the way Catholics and Protestants interacted in the city. Prior to their arrival, Catholics and Protestants, although arguing over religious points, were at least on equal footing as citizens of Cincinnati and citizens of the United States. Henry Beecher's articles in the *Cincinnati Journal* and Lyman Beecher's *A Plea for the West*, which sparked an outpouring of anti-Catholic writings, served to position Catholics as second-class citizens within Cincinnati and within the broader context of the Republic. The

²⁸ Pagliarini 1999: 99

Beechers' arguments were a prelude to the coming political movements of nativism and ultimately the Know Nothing Party.

Immigration and the Know Nothing Party

Europe between 1833-1855 underwent famines and tumultuous revolts. From 1845-1852, the Irish Potato Famine plagued Ireland. In 1848, there were revolts in Germany, France and Austria sparked by growing social and political upheaval. These events drove crowds of immigrants to the United States. Cincinnati became a popular destination and was soon the home of two ethnic groups in particular, the Irish and the Germans. Combined, these two ethnicities made up 40 percent of Cincinnati's population by 1850, with Germans comprising 28 percent and the Irish 12 percent.²⁹

The Catholicity of these two ethnic groups varied. The Irish were predominantly Catholic, at least in the eyes of Protestant America which depicted them in newspapers and cartoons as ape-like creatures under the rule of the pope.³⁰ The Germans were less Catholic. Scholars Henry and Kate Ford put the distribution for Germans at around 60 percent Catholic.³¹ The difference between the two ethnicities was that many German immigrants were political refugees, fleeing the Revolution of 1848. These so-called "48ers" were "frequently agnostic, anti-clerical, and socialist" according to Jed Dannenbaum.³² The Irish, on the other hand, emigrated out of financial necessity, often caused by the famine in Ireland. The two reasons for emigration play heavily into how these two groups were viewed by mainstream, white, Protestant culture.

²⁹ Dannenbaum 1978: 126

³⁰ See Appendix 2

³¹ Ford and Ford 1881: 91

³² Dannenbaum 1978: 126

The Irish were at the bottom of the social pyramid, higher only than Africans and often depicted in cartoons as similar.³³ The Irish were poor when it was noble to be wealthy, foreign when it was beneficial to be native and Catholic in a Protestant land. That the Irish were poor is evidenced by their numbers who attended the poor houses. Dannenbaum writes, “in 1848 official records showed that Irish, only 12 percent of the city’s population, made up 40 percent of the cases of indoor relief.”³⁴ A strong argument based on material evidence is Stephen Brighton’s article studying the remains of medicine bottles in various neighborhoods of New York. He finds that Irish parts of the city had disproportionately high amounts of proprietary, or over the counter drugs which were more often narcotics than a specific cure. White Protestant neighborhoods had a higher percentage of ethical or prescription drugs. His proposed reason for the disparity is that the Irish could not afford doctor visits while the Protestants could.³⁵

The Irish were not only poor but also foreign. Robert Dunne in his book *Antebellum Irish Immigration and Emerging Ideologies of America* claims that being Irish was the worst type of foreign one could be. He argues,

that the nativist movement caught on so successfully throughout the United States because the religion and ethnicity of the Irish Catholics in particular were deemed so deviant from mainstream society that this group could effectively serve as a scapegoat that everyone could feel good about.³⁶

Dunne’s claim that the Irish were especially persecuted is supported by events throughout the time period. The best examples of pointedly Irish persecution are the Philadelphia Riots of 1844. In 1844 white Protestants, angered by U.S. Catholic Bishops demanding a portion of the public school fund for parochial schools, resorted to mob violence and arson. They went throughout the

³³ See Appendix 2

³⁴ Ibid: 127

³⁵ Brighton 2008: 142

³⁶ Dunne 1964: 46

city setting fire to exclusively Irish homes and churches. Protestant Irishmen had to hang a sign outside their door which read “Native America” in order to avoid the flames.³⁷ Anti-Irish feelings never reached this fever pitch in Cincinnati, but the Irish did suffer the stereotypes and crushing poverty that afflicted the Irish all over the United States.

The Germans in Cincinnati did not endure the same fate as the Irish. The main complaints levied against the German people were that they remained segregated and that they were intemperate in their use of alcohol. William Baughin has argued that the Germans “tended to group together, and accordingly formed an integral foreign society within the native population.”³⁸ Indeed, the Germans remained so secluded and centralized that their neighborhood became known as “Over-the-Rhine.” This area was also known later as the brewery district, due to its numerous breweries. The rampant beer drinking of Germans scandalized some Protestants, especially women. Their drinking was viewed as a moral lapse. And, what was worse, they drank on the Sabbath. Dannenbaum puts it perfectly when he says, “[The Germans] openly and unapologetically violated the American Protestant conception of a solemn Sabbath. Germans particularly liked to enjoy their one free day a week, and Sunday afternoon was a time of boisterous revelry in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood.”³⁹ The seclusion and debauchery of the Germans did not sit well with Protestants and caused them to be cast out of mainstream society. The perceived otherness of the Irish and Germans led to the growth of a political movement in Cincinnati and elsewhere, founded on racist and nativist principles, known as the Know Nothing Party.

³⁷ Billington 1952: 224-225

³⁸ Baughin 1964: 249

³⁹ Dannenbaum 1978: 128

The beginnings of the Know Nothing Party (KNP) are unclear, an unsurprising fact when taking into account that it was originally founded as a secret society. Billington places its inception in 1849 with a society named the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, which became the Order of the United Americas (OUA) in 1852.⁴⁰ The OUA quickly gained followers and in 1854 held a national meeting attended by representatives from thirteen different states. The meeting was held in order to give a national structure to the party. The OUA acquired the name of the Know Nothing Party as a reference to the “I don’t know” response given when a member was asked about the secret society.

The main tenets of the KNP are visible in the two oaths the order required of its members. Billington writes that the ritual of initiation

provided for initiation into two degrees of membership. To be eligible for the first degree, a candidate had to assure the order that he was of proper age, that he had been born in the United States, that his parents were Protestants, and that he was not married to a Roman Catholic. This first obstacle passed, the objects of the order were then explained to the candidate: “Are you,” he was asked, “willing to use your influence and vote only for native-born American citizens for all offices of honor, trust or profit in the gift of the people, the exclusion of all foreigners and Roman Catholics in particular, and without regard to party predilections?”⁴¹

As is visible in the oaths, the party was strictly anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic. Many specific suggestions have been given for the impetus for the KNP, but the most likely reason for a political embodiment of xenophobia and anti-Catholicism was the clash of cultures now playing itself out in the United States following the spike of immigration in the preceding decade. These sentiments of racial and religious prejudice amongst white Protestants found a fertile ground already prepared for them by authors such as Lyman Beecher and Maria Monk and it was not long before the KNP came to power.

⁴⁰ Billington 1952:380-381

⁴¹ Ibid: 384

Although secret at first, the KNP rapidly expanded to a prominent role in American politics. The party entered the political sphere in earnest in 1854 and at its height in 1855

the party elected its candidates to the governorships in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Kentucky, and dominated state legislatures in Massachusetts, California, Maryland, Tennessee, and Texas, and even elected 75 of its candidates to the U.S. Congress.⁴²

While Cincinnati did not experience the same political hegemony of the KNP as cities in other states saw, it did experience a far greater share of political violence.

The KNP made its public appearance in Cincinnati on May 28, 1854 when the *Cincinnati Enquirer* printed an article on the secret ritual of the local chapter.⁴³ A short six months later, the KNP completely swept the fall election in Cincinnati. The KNP of Cincinnati had a peculiar position. The party was of course decidedly anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic. Yet, Cincinnati at the time had an enormous German and Irish population which supported an equally vibrant Catholic population. These ethnic and religious groups would seem to preclude the existence of a strong KNP in Cincinnati. Indeed, this would be the case if the KNP had not modified itself to stay alive. Baughin argues that the Know Nothings in Cincinnati subverted their anti-immigration policy in order to appeal to a German Protestant demographic. The efficacy of this plan is evidenced by the crushing defeat of the Democratic party, which was popular among immigrants and especially Catholic immigrants, in the fall of 1854.

But the KNP's victory was short-lived. German Protestants soon realized that the KNP could not so easily be divided from its anti-immigrant position and began to return to the Democratic Party. The KNP, quickly losing favor in the city, viewed the coming April elections of 1855 as crucial to their maintaining power. Historian Margaret De Palma has shown that in

⁴² Ramet and Hassenstab 2013: 571

⁴³ *Cincinnati Enquirer* May 28, 1854; De Palma 2004: 109

order to help ensure a victory the party brought in “three hundred Kentucky toughs to protect the polls.”⁴⁴ Rumors of ballot stuffing were tossed around on both sides and soon the rumors escalated into gunfire. Both nativists and Germans opened fire on mobs forming around the ballot boxes. The Germans barricaded the bridges over the Miami Canal which bordered the Over-the-Rhine area. Nativists stormed the barricades only to be driven back by musket fire. The violence became known as the Election Day Riots of 1855 and marked the end of any serious influence of the KNP in Cincinnati. The party went out of existence in a manner as sudden and as spectacular as it had entered, leaving only a brief period of influence and no lasting legislation as its legacy.

The Bedini Riots

Archbishop Gaetano Bedini arrived in New York on June 30, 1853. Bedini came as a nuncio, or messenger sent by the Pope to ascertain some information or to work out some political dealings. The specific reasons for Bedini’s visit remain unclear. David Endres explains that nominally, Bedini had been sent to the United States in order to “remedy abuses, especially disunion in the Church caused by discord between Germans and Irish.”⁴⁵ Yet, Protestant politicians and citizens were not satisfied with this vague reason. They feared that the nuncio intended to create some permanent *political* institution of Catholicism on American soil.

Amid these fears Archbishop Gaetano Bedini began his tour of the United States, traveling from Pittsburg to Louisville to Cincinnati. He arrived in Cincinnati on December 21, 1853. Leading up to his arrival in Cincinnati, a trail of fabricated stories about Bedini’s past had cropped up all throughout the U.S.. These stories claimed that Bedini oversaw the execution of

⁴⁴ De Palma 2004: 110

⁴⁵ Endres 2003: 5

numerous revolutionaries and criminals during his time as governor of Bologna in 1849. The truth was that at the time Bologna was under the control of Austrian troops, and Bedini never truly held power. However, despite Bedini's innocence in these charges, rumors of his being a murderer and political agent of the papacy spread like wildfire. One newspaper in Cincinnati even printed "Reader, dost thou know who Bedini is? There is blood on his hands – human blood! A murderer, a butcher of men."⁴⁶ The tension in Cincinnati at Bedini's arrival was high and it is unsurprising that it culminated in violence.

On Christmas night, 1853, a German society, *Die Freimänner* (The Free Men), an anti-Catholic group devoted to free thinking, marched toward St. Peter in Chains church on 8th and Plum. The crowd carried signs and an effigy of Bedini. The police, seeing such a large crowd and fearing some sort of outbreak responded with violence. The Germans were broken up by force. In the end, Endres writes, "one protester was killed, fifteen were wounded, and sixty-three were arrested."⁴⁷ The riots became known as the Weihnacht Riot or Christmas Riot, and resulted in court rulings which were favorable to the Germans. The rioting within Cincinnati is yet another example of how Catholic-Protestant relations at this time period crossed over from political or religious differences into outright hatred. The effect of the Bedini riots was felt for years, not only in Cincinnati but in the entire U.S., and another nuncio wasn't sent to the United States until 1877.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The years 1833-1855 were troubling times for Catholic-Protestant relations in Cincinnati. The growing influence of the Catholic Church as an institution coupled with the massive influx

⁴⁶ Reprinted in the *Pittsburg Catholic*, January 14, 1854

⁴⁷ Endres 2003: 8

⁴⁸ Dolan 1994: 4

of German and Irish immigrants led to the reactionary works of the Beecher family and the Know Nothing Party. Riots such as the Christmas riots of 1853 and the Election riots of 1855 display just how virulent ethnic and religious prejudices ran. The time period between 1833-1855 differs from 1818-1832 and the subsequent decades because, while the prejudices do exist at other times, they never reach the same levels of violence and hatred which we see actualized here.

The era of hatred was cut short by what is debatably the most influential domestic event in U.S. history, the Civil War. During the Civil War, Catholic nuns nursed under Protestant doctors and hospitals and clergy of all denominations administered to soldiers. It is near impossible to write about Catholics and Protestants at this time period because, for close to a decade, the defining ideology of men and institutions was not their religion but their stance on slavery. Because of the complexities and divisions imposed on Catholics and Protestants by the issue of slavery, I will not be treating this decade in Catholic-Protestant history. Instead, I will pick up the narrative in 1868, when Cincinnati once again saw the relationship of the two religions as the primary concern of the city.

CHAPTER 3: “The Era of Religious Debate 1867-1877”

By 1869, four years after the United States completed what has remained to this day as its deadliest war, the religious face of Cincinnati had changed. In 1868 Catholics owned more churches than any other single religious denomination in the city. Although the number of Catholic churches was still dwarfed in comparison to the number of churches that fell under the Protestant umbrella, they now held a place of distinction in Cincinnati. What is more, it was not only Catholics who were thriving. There were more than twenty-five religious denominations in the city, ranging from Catholics to Episcopalians to Jews.⁴⁹ Cincinnati was becoming a cosmopolitan city.

The Vickers-Purcell Debate

The intolerant and hateful response of the early to midcentury was becoming less and less popular. Protestants were founding objections less and less on nativist and anti-Catholic doctrines, and in their place, an educated religious and philosophical grievance appeared. An important thing to note is that these complaints did not so much represent a change in ideology as a change in tone. An excellent example of this is found in a comparison between two debates held by Bishop Purcell. The first took place in 1837 between Bishop Purcell and Alexander Campbell, author and co-founder of Christ’s Church.⁵⁰ The second occurred 30 years later in 1867 and was between Purcell and Reverend Thomas Vickers.

The first debate has gained much notoriety in scholarship, which is appropriate considering its popularity in Cincinnati at the time. To briefly put this debate in context, it should

⁴⁹ Michaelsen 1969: 202

⁵⁰ Christ’s Church is a Protestant denomination. It defines itself primarily in opposition to the Baptist faith. It rejects the tenets of communal living and communal celebration while advocating for baptism by immersion and autonomous parishes.

be noted that it took place in the midst of Cincinnati's most vehement period of anti-Catholicism. The Beecher family had arrived five years earlier and were by now influential within the city. The convent in Boston had been burned only three years prior and the Know Nothing Party was still yet to come. It was among these events that Alexander Campbell and Bishop Purcell took the stage to defend their respective religions.

The event was publicized in the local papers; tickets were sold, and in total it lasted seven days. The debate was held at the Athenaeum, the first Catholic seminary in Cincinnati. There was a panel composed of five members, two of whom were chosen by Purcell, two by Campbell and the fifth member was chosen by the other four panel members. The debate was proposed by Alexander Campbell and for its purposes he brought forward seven points of issue. Each point reflects the normal religious differences between Catholics and Protestants, including criticisms such as, "The Roman Catholic Institution, sometimes called the 'Holy, Apostolic, Catholic, Church' is not now, nor was she ever, catholic, apostolic, or holy;" and "Her notions of purgatory, indulgences, auricular confession, remission of sins, transubstantiation, supererogation &c., essential elements of her system, are immoral in their tendency."⁵¹ The first six charges are similar to these two, but the seventh charge was curious. Campbell wrote,

The Roman Catholic religion, if infallible and unsusceptible of the reformation, as alleged, is essentially anti-American, being opposed to the genius of all free institutions, and positively subversive of them, opposing the general reading of the scriptures, and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the whole community, so essential to liberty and the permanency of good government.⁵²

The seventh charge levied against the Bishop Purcell was a political complaint, arguing not only that Catholicism was theologically incorrect, but also that it was politically incorrect. This charge

⁵¹ Campbell 1837: vii-viii

⁵² Ibid: viii

foretold the coming rise of nativist politics and was indicative of the harsh tone between Catholic and Protestant relations.

The debate between Reverend Thomas Vickers and Bishop Purcell was similar in many ways to the Bishop's debate with Campbell. A remarkable difference between these two debates is their context. While Bishop Purcell's debate with Alexander Campbell took place in an environment hostile toward Catholics, the debate with Reverend Vickers was more equitable. Perhaps it was this equitability and the fact that a debate between a Catholic and a Protestant in 1867 was not as incendiary as in previous decades, but this debate has been largely ignored by scholarship and was far less popular in its time. Although it did not have the same attention in the city, nor in scholarship, it remains an important tool of comparison for these separate time periods.

The debate between Reverend Vickers and Bishop Purcell took place through newspapers and at speeches given at the founding of churches. The debate began with Reverend Vickers giving a speech at the laying of the cornerstone for St. John's German Protestant Church.⁵³ This speech criticized Catholicism for allegedly suppressing free thought. Vickers preached that

the Church ought to be, and must be, a sanctuary for free thought – a place of refuge, a home, for the spirit... the [Catholic] Church was for centuries almost the only representative of science and culture; but the world has, after all, little to thank her for, except the preservation and transmission of the spiritual treasures of antiquity. It was never possible for the mind to develop itself under her dominion.⁵⁴

Vickers contended that the Catholic Church controlled its members, extending its reach all the way to their very ideas.

Vickers's complaints were nearly identical to Campbell's. Vickers argued against an extension of the Catholic Church into matters which he claims overstep the boundaries of

⁵³ Purcell and Vickers 1868: 7; Vickers had prepared the speech in English but seeing a crowd of German faces he effortlessly switched to German, for the convenience of the crowd

⁵⁴ Ibid: 10

religion. His focus was on free thought, but it takes little stretching of the imagination to envision this complaint as a critique of the Catholic Church's involvement in political life. Campbell also raised complaints against the Catholic Church overstepping its bounds. But the difference is that Vickers remained calm and brought forth historical examples to defend an assertion. There is no real enmity. Campbell preached with fire and urgency. He harkened back to the days of the Inquisition saying,

putting to death those denoted as heretics by the church, shows in what a state of subserviency and pliancy, political princes were held by the popes. That is just the *terror* of the church and state – the very supremacy which we fear, and which is so antipodal to our institutions.⁵⁵

Campbell referenced the Inquisition and then drew a connection to the modern day, talking about “our institutions” as if the day where heretics were burned at the stake could be upon him at any time. Vickers and Campbell shared concerns but they differ in degree of concern, tone and method of argument.

The Cincinnati Bible Wars

As is visible from the discrepancy between the tone of the two debates, the late 1860s and the 1870s were not marked by outspoken discrimination in the form of political parties but rather by more discreet and educated views. And indeed the major episode between Catholics and Protestants around this time took place in the field of education, specifically the public schools. In 1869, Cincinnati's Board of Education recorded that of all the students enrolled in schools, 60.8 percent attended public schools, 34.7 percent were in Catholic parochial schools and 4.5 percent in private schools.”⁵⁶ The number of children attending Catholic parochial schools, 34.7

⁵⁵ Ibid: 348

⁵⁶ Hamant 1963: 242; Board of Education Annual Report, 1869

percent, was staggering to members of any religion on the Board. The percentage was so high that all members feared the failure of the public school system.

To combat the dropping enrollment, a Catholic member of the Board, F.W. Rauch, approached Fr. Edward Purcell, the brother of Archbishop Purcell, with a plan to consolidate the public schools and the parochial Catholic schools. It is interesting to note that this plan was put forth by a Catholic, not a Protestant, suggesting that concern for the public schools was a civic duty, surpassing religious differences. But, the consolidation would have to have conditions attached. For the previous 40 years since the founding of the public school system in Cincinnati, the schools had been decidedly Protestant, complete with readings from the King James Bible in class, Protestant hymns sung at the beginning of the day and the use of the King James Bible as a textbook for spelling or vocabulary.⁵⁷ The conditions for consolidation required by Purcell were that the public schools must secularize.

After having discussed with Fr. Edward Purcell, F.W. Rauch brought the proposal before the Board of Education. The proposal had already begun to draw some backlash from both Catholics and Protestants and perhaps seeing the possibility of ensuing difficulties an amendment was proposed to the plan by Samuel Miller.⁵⁸ Miller proposed the removal of Bibles from the public schools. His plan read,

Resolved, that religious instruction and the reading of religious books, including the Holy Bible, are prohibited in the common schools of Cincinnati, it being the true object and intent of this rule to allow the children of parents of all sects and opinions, in matters of faith and worship, to enjoy alike the benefit of the Common School fund.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid. 239; Hamant says that since the inception of the public school system “Religion was viewed as an integral component of education”

⁵⁸ Samuel Miller’s religious affiliation is up for debate. He is listed as both Catholic and non-Catholic. The *Cincinnati Gazette*, which was notorious for printing anti-Catholic pieces, lists him as not Catholic, suggesting that he was indeed not Catholic since the *Gazette* of all papers would have been most eager to capitalize on his Catholicism.

⁵⁹ Board of Education Annual Report, 1869

Miller's plan was less radical than Rauch's plan and therefore more feasible. It was Miller's plan that would come under serious consideration and that would eventually spark what is known today as Cincinnati's Bible Wars.

To further both the integration plan and the plan to remove Bibles from the public schools, Rauch proposed to form a committee, made up of seven members from the Board whose role it would be to meet with Archbishop Purcell. The proposal was passed, and the seven men and Archbishop Purcell soon began talks. The meetings had no sooner begun than Purcell made it apparent that he was unwilling to dissolve the parochial schools. He was, however, quite willing to support the removal of Bibles.

The position of Archbishop Purcell on these two issues reflects the division that spread throughout all of Cincinnati. Robert Michaelson rightly notes that the division in the city was between those who saw the plans as religious issues and those who saw them as civil issues.⁶⁰ Fascinatingly, the civil-religious divide split Protestants and Catholics. In the first proposal, a Catholic, Rauch, suggested the union of parish and public schools. Rauch viewed this as a civil issue necessary to save the public schools. However, Archbishop Purcell viewed this as a religious concern and fearing the removal of Catholicism in disbanding parish schools rejected the union. The second proposal was just as divisive, but saw a flip in sponsorship. Many Protestants viewed the move to withdraw Bibles from the schools as a religious issue. Radical Protestants, like "Deacon Dick" Smith, the editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, blamed Catholics as attacking public schools. His newspaper stated that the removal of Bibles was a "Jesuitical scheme on foot."⁶¹ On the reverse side, most members of non-Protestant faiths, including

⁶⁰ Michaelson 1969: 206

⁶¹ *Cincinnati Gazette*, August 27, 1869

Catholics and Jews, viewed the removal of Bibles as a civil concern. Added to these was a group that would become more important as the debate wore on, namely liberal Protestants.

Archbishop Purcell's rejection of the integration plan effectively ended any possibility of the two school systems being merged, but Miller's Bible plan began gathering steam. At the meeting of the Board on November 1, 1869, the Miller resolutions were passed by a 22 to 15 vote. Notable individual votes include Reverend Vickers, the man who had debated with Purcell two years earlier, and Amory D. Mayo. Both men were religious liberals and both were anti-Catholic.⁶² Yet, Vickers voted in favor of removing Bibles and Mayo voted to retain them.⁶³ The rift between these two like-minded men shows the difference in opinion that ran through the city. However, despite arguments on both sides, the plan was enacted, at least for the time being.

The pro-Bible side, unhappy with the passing of the proposal, sued the Board of Education, on the grounds that religious education was necessary for proper moral education, which was in turn required for good government. The pro-Bible party argued that the removal of the Bible contradicted the intended purpose of the public schools and therefore should be repealed. This side was defended by Cincinnati's best lawyers: William Ramsey, George Sage and Rufus King. King's presence on the side of the plaintiffs, or pro-Bible group, is especially interesting given his later generosity toward the Catholic Church in the 1880s. On the defense side, the anti-Bible party viewed the Bible in the schools as a violation of the separation of church and state, ironically a charge that Protestants repeatedly levied against Catholics. The anti-Bible side argued that retaining the Bible in the schools ignored the religious pluralism in

⁶² The term religious liberals is somewhat of a technical term. Vickers self-identified as a religious liberal. In reality Thomas Vickers was a Unitarian Universalist which is not attached to any specific religion. Instead of having a set creed or god-figure, Unitarian Universalists subscribe to ideas of free thought and love. Perhaps the best way to describe Vickers would be to say he was a religious Humanist.

⁶³ Michaelson: 207

Cincinnati and that although religious education was important, it need not take place in the public schools. The lawyers for the defense were equally impressive sporting Stanley Matthews, who was to become a U.S. Senator; George Hoadly, later governor of Ohio; and Johann Stallo, future minister to Italy.⁶⁴ The trial only lasted five days but it wasn't until February 18, 1870, over two months after the Board of Education had enacted the Miller plan and been subsequently sued, that a verdict was returned. The Cincinnati Superior Court ruled two to one in favor of overturning the Board of Education's decision to remove Bibles from the school.

That the Miller plan was overruled is a testament to the supra-religious nature of this case. The judges hearing the case were Bellamy Storer, a Catholic, Marcellus Hagens, a Methodist, and Alphonso Taft, a member of the Unitarian Universalist church run by Reverend Vickers. Storer and Hagens voted to overturn the Miller plan and Taft voted in its defense. The common vote by a Methodist and Catholic on a civil issue exhibits enormous progress from the 1840s and 1850s. Although Catholicism was still drawing reproach from radical figures like "Deacon Dick" Smith, it had begun to exercise power in the public sphere without wide-spread rebuke.

However, the story of Cincinnati's Bible Wars does not end with the ruling of the Cincinnati Superior Court. The anti-Bible side appealed the decision and the case was sent to the Supreme Court of Ohio. The Supreme Court of Ohio ruled unanimously in favor of upholding the Board of Education's decision to remove Bibles from the school. Their rationale for overturning the decision of the Cincinnati Superior Court was that the public schools did not require religious education and that the courts did not have the right to interfere with decisions

⁶⁴ Helfmann 1951: 382

made by the Board of Education. The decision of the Supreme Court of Ohio was enacted and Bibles were finally removed from Cincinnati schools.

The Bible Wars of Cincinnati can teach us two things about Catholic-Protestant relations in Cincinnati. First, the contention teaches us that Protestants held less and less of a cultural monopoly in the city. The presence of Catholics at every stage of the conflict shows their status. Catholics had power based on the large number of parochial schools. Catholics had power within the Board of Education. Catholics had power as members of the legal defense. And Catholics had power as judges. Notable in all of this was the lack of accusation drawn by the active role of all of these Catholics. The ideology of the Protestant core of Cincinnati had not changed, proven by their adamant position on retaining the Bible, but the tone had. There was little to no anti-Catholic backlash for the thorough involvement of Catholics imbedded in the process. Had these Bible Wars taken place a few decades earlier, much would have been made of the religion of these Catholics and their proposals would have been ignored or discarded.⁶⁵ Second, the Bible Wars teach us that in Cincinnati the religious beliefs in a man's life began to take a secondary position, behind his civic beliefs. The Bible Wars divided Cincinnati in new ways. The pro-Bible side, which in the past would have been exclusively Protestant was supported by Catholic Board members and a Catholic judge. The anti-Bible side, which would seemingly be made up of only non-Protestants, contained important Protestant figures like Stanley Matthews and various judges. Throughout the entire debate, people put aside their religious differences in an attempt to make a civic decision that would benefit Cincinnati as a whole. A decision based solely on secular concerns would have been impossible in earlier times. The late 1860s and 1870s mark the

⁶⁵ In fact, Archbishop Purcell in the mid 1850s had begun a movement to remove Bibles from the public schools. The movement met with fierce opposition and culminated only in a law that allowed students to bring in their own translation of the Bible, instead of forcing all to read from the Protestant, King James Bible. The Protestant side saw this as a large concession, the Catholics did not.

beginning of a time of peace and understanding between Catholics and Protestants and they foreshadow the coming years, which would be the highpoint of friendship between the two religious groups in the city.

CHAPTER 4: “The Era of Ecumenism 1878-1886”

By 1880 the Catholic Church in Cincinnati was no longer a floundering compilation of immigrants. Gone are the days where the Catholics could not afford to build churches. Gone were the days where desperate immigrants flooded parochial schools and poor houses. Gone are the days when Catholicism had no public voice. A new era was dawning for Catholicism in Cincinnati, but it was not an era of reversed power relations, in which Catholics dominated a previously Protestant culture. This new era was to be one of respect. The outstanding episodes between Catholics and Protestants in the early 1880s were the failure of the Purcell bank, the burning and rebuilding of St. Xavier church downtown, and the funeral of Archbishop Purcell. Each represents an episode of companionship and comradeship within the city.

The Failure of the Purcell Bank

The Purcell bank was founded by Edward Purcell, the brother of Archbishop Purcell, around 1838.⁶⁶ The bank’s purpose was to provide a safe reservoir for the funds of both the parishioners of Cincinnati and the diocese itself. The bank throughout the years gave out substantial loans to the diocese’s St. Joseph Orphan Asylum and to various parishes to help with the construction of churches.⁶⁷ Despite Edward Purcell’s bank acting like a large and legitimate institution, the Purcell bank at its inception was never much more than a localization of money, lacking any form of legitimate investment besides diocesan buildings. A good indicator of this is Edward Purcell’s early efforts to recruit members to his “bank.” The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported after the collapse that, “to encourage depositors, he paid interest, at first but 4 per cent, but very soon thereafter 6 per cent, a rate as high as is paid by solid and well-managed Savings

⁶⁶ Hussey 1978: 8

⁶⁷ De Palma 2004: 142-143; Hussey 1978: 8-10

Banks to their depositors, yet he at no time invested even a tittle of the funds in any way that would return him 6 per cent.”⁶⁸ This behavior was not malicious but overly earnest. Edward Purcell recognized that the Cincinnati Catholics were poor and were suffering from nationwide financial failures because of the Panic of 1837. In response to this he attempted to gather up funds to support the new diocese. But, for better or for worse, his fund collecting turned into something more professional than a collective safe and was soon considered a top bank in Cincinnati.

The bank succeeded throughout the middle of the century, it was even thriving. Edward Purcell was hailed as a financial genius after surviving market crashes which ruined other banks.⁶⁹ This trust was not entirely misplaced. Purcell had begun investing and his profits satisfied parishes and parishioners alike. But his success did not last. The bank’s first major blow came in 1875, “when the priest [Edward] lost some \$70,000 he had invested in the dry goods firm of John and James Slevin.”⁷⁰ The bank went on, but in 1878 a string of bank closings throughout Cincinnati led many members to demand their money from the Purcell bank. The bank was not able to repay the investors and members all at once and was forced into closing.

At first the closing of the bank was not a colossal failure. The Cincinnati diocese intended to make good on the accounts. The belief throughout the city was that the assets of the Purcell bank, once liquidated, would more than cover the demanded debts. Archbishop Purcell, acting on this belief, “conveyed certain real estate, estimated at about one million dollars, to the trustees in trust, for the purpose of securing \$700,000 worth of bonds, to be issued to pay off all the

⁶⁸ *Cincinnati Enquirer* March 2, 1879

⁶⁹ De Palma 2004: 142; Edward Purcell was hailed a genius after the collapse of Cincinnati banks in 1855 and 1873.

⁷⁰ De Palma 2004: 143

liabilities.”⁷¹ While gathering up the cash with which the diocese might repay the debts, the news broke that the liabilities amounted to \$3,874,371.57.⁷² The whole city, including Archbishop Purcell, realized a quick repayment of these debts was impossible.

Fearing the worst, Archbishop Purcell immediately signed over eight of the eleven properties he was intending to liquidate for bonds to John B. Mannix. Mannix was a young lawyer in the city and was to become essentially the interim bank while the debts were collected. It was his role to somehow pull \$3,874,371.51 out of the Cincinnati diocese and make good for the investors. The eight properties did not even come close to settling the balance and so on January 7, 1880, John B. Mannix sued the Cincinnati diocese, asking “for the sale of 211 churches, convents, schools, and orphanages, to liquidate the debt.”⁷³ Catholics throughout the city were terrified.

Archbishop Purcell soon hired three lawyers Alexander Long, Timothy Lincoln and Stanley Matthews, who had defended the anti-Bible side in the Bible Wars ten years back. These men were promised \$15,000. Presumably, the lawyers hired by the Cincinnati diocese were paid, since the Catholic diocese in Cincinnati still exists, but a payment promised by a bankrupt institution is always suspect at the time, a fact that proves the goodwill of these lawyers. The three lawyers for the defense argued that the distinct churches, convents, schools etc. belonged to their respective parishes or board of trustees. Further, any money received by these institutions on loan from the Purcell bank for purposes of building or improvement had been repaid, and if it had not been repaid, the institutions were willing to pay back the difference. The plaintiff argued simply that the Archbishop held the title to all institutions of the Catholic Church in Cincinnati.

⁷¹ Lamott 1921: 191

⁷² Ibid: 191

⁷³ De Palma 2004: 147

The trial began on Holy Week of 1880 and lasted 66 days. At the end of the proceedings the court found that all intuitions, except St. Joseph Cemetery, were held only in trust by Archbishop Purcell and therefore could not be given to Mannix. However, the courts did find that some five or six parishes had not fully repaid their debts to the Purcell bank. The courts ordered that these debts and the money collected by selling the remaining lots of the St. Joseph Cemetery should be given over to John B. Mannix.

The money gathered from these institutions came to around \$140,000. This paired with the property originally signed over to Mannix was still woefully short of what the bank owed. At first, the sum was boosted by the donations of the diocese when it was believed that the debt was only \$1 million and could be easily erased. But, as time wore on and the debt seemed insurmountably large, donations dried up. The Catholic Church in Cincinnati made payments on the debt until 1903, when the final dividends were finally given to the investors. During this time, 1879-1903, no new parishes were begun.

The financial collapse of the Purcell bank came close to ruining all of Catholicism in Cincinnati. Despite the embarrassment of the collapse, an embarrassment almost entirely caused by the mismanagement of Edward Purcell, the Protestant public did not attack the Catholic Church as being corrupt or detrimental to Cincinnati. De Palma notes the charity shown by the Protestant press saying,

The *Commercial*, the *Daily Gazette*, and the *Western Christian Advocate* all remained very subdued in their reporting. In fact, during the first year of the crisis, the Methodist [*Western Christian Advocate*] paper only published reprints from other papers and these were confined to the back page.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Ibid: 146

All three of these papers had a history of personal attacks on the Catholicism in Cincinnati. Their restraint in the failure of the Purcell bank attests to the improving relations of the Catholics and Protestants in the city.

The Fire of 1822

While still in the throes of the economic crisis caused by the failure of Purcell's bank, the Cincinnati diocese suffered another financial blow. On the night of April 6, 1882, Holy Thursday, an enormous fire gutted St. Xavier church. The fire is described in beautiful detail by an article in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, published the next day.

High in the air shot the brilliantly hued flames, and as it gradually ate away the wooden foundation of the surmounting cross, showing its glare through the burning beams, it appeared like a huge pyrotechnic piece. Soon the cross began to sway back and forwards, and at twenty minutes past two, with a resounding crash, it disappeared through the steeple, leaving naught but the burning ruins yet erect to show its former abiding-place. As it passed down through great clouds of flames, sparks were shot upward, adding wondrously to the beauty of the sight.⁷⁵

The fire destroyed over 200 pews, numerous paintings in the church, the main altar, a recently bought grand organ, the clock on the clock-tower, and five bells, two of which were brand new. The damage has been estimated at anywhere from \$90,000 to \$300,000 done in a single night. To put this in perspective, the same amount of money would equate to anywhere between 2 million and 10 million dollars today.⁷⁶ The Jesuit community, which oversaw both the church and adjacent college, received \$20,000 in insurance, a sum not nearly sufficient to cover the massive task of rebuilding. But the community rallied around St. Xavier Church and after only thirteen months of reconstruction, the new church was opened.

⁷⁵ *Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 7, 1882. "St. Xavier Burned"

⁷⁶ The *Historia Domus* estimates the damage at \$90,000, which is authoritative since the author of that year, James O'Meara, likely saw firsthand how much reconstruction cost. The sum of \$300,000 was suggested by *Die Freiepresse* and *Times-Star* the following day. Their estimate is high but not outlandish if you consider the costs beyond just the material and labor, for example the opportunity cost of having no church for a full year.

This fire has gone down in history as an accident, mainly due to the testament given by Fr. William Poland, a member of the Jesuit community at St. Xavier church, to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* not long after the fire. Fr. Poland is quoted as saying, “I ask the favor of your columns to give publicity to the following: The cause of the fire is unknown.”⁷⁷ But another Jesuit at St. Xavier, Fr. Theodore de Leeuw, had suspicions of arson. He wrote,

Nocte Coenam Domini inter et Parasceven- diem 6^{tam} inter et 7^{mam} Aprilis hujus 1882 anni- maximum incendium primum in nostrâ ecclesiâ, deinde in turri fuit. Causa quidem incendii non certo scitur; opus autem fuisse incendiarii plurima indicare videntur

On the night between the Supper of our Lord and Good Friday, the 6th and 7th of this April in the year 1882, there was a huge fire, first in our church, then in the steeple. The cause of the fire is not known with any certainty; however many things seem to indicate that this was an act of arson.⁷⁸

The story of the fire would be important for understanding Catholic and Protestant relations simply because of the allegations of arson, but there is more to the story. After the fire, relief came flooding in from all corners of Cincinnati, and even beyond. On April 9th, two days after the fire, a meeting was held by leaders in the parish community. They created a council in charge of rebuilding the church, and after the meeting they began to collect funds. In one day alone, the Catholic community raised \$22,998, more than was received from the insurance.⁷⁹ In addition to the money given by members of the parish, St. Xavier church received \$3,505 “*etiam ex protestantibus et infidelibus*” “even from Protestants and non-believers,” according to de Leeuw.⁸⁰ On top of the monetary donations, the parish received two stained glass windows from Rufus King, the man who a decade ago acted as the lawyer against the Catholic position of removing Bibles from public schools. Rufus King donated these windows in memory of his

⁷⁷ *Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 8, 1882. “The Burned Church”

⁷⁸ *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore de Leeuw (150)

⁷⁹ *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore de Leeuw (158)

⁸⁰ *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore de Leeuw (159)

mother, a convert to Catholicism.⁸¹ This breadth of benefactors led Fr. de Leeuw, the man who accused the Protestants of arson, to write in the *Historia Domus*,

Merito igitur dici potest, quod omnes, - catholici et acatholici – clerici et laici – religiosi et saeculares – divites et pauperes – senes et pueri, - alii multâ magnâque quidem pecuniâ, alii duobus tantummodo minutis, quisque pro suâ facultate, concurrerint ad damni reparationem et reaedificationem ecclesiae nostrae.

Deservedly, then, it can be said, that everyone – Catholic and non-Catholic, clergy and laity, religious priests and secular ones, rich and poor, old and young, some with much and a lot of money and others with only two lesser coins, each to their own ability, came together for the repairing and rebuilding of our church.⁸²

Before any definite conclusions about Catholic-Protestant relations can be drawn from this, it is crucial to understand each facet of the fire. The sources recording the fire, the various parties involved in the destruction and rebuilding of the church and of course the actual events of the fire all weigh in on how we can appreciate the relationship between the two groups. After the circumstances surrounding the fire are clear, conclusions can be drawn about how Catholics and Protestants interacted based on their respective actions.

The story of the burning and rebuilding of the fire is complicated by the reliability of the sources. It will be of use to first discuss the different perspectives and characters which record the fire before going through the actual events. There are two main sources that preserve the history of the fire, the *Historia Domus* and the local newspapers, especially the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and the *Catholic Telegraph*. It is important here to keep in mind the final goal of studying the fire, to understand how Catholics and Protestants viewed each other. These sources may record things that are not factual. These falsehoods or mistakes are just as important as the

⁸¹ *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore De Leeuw (185)

⁸² *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore De Leeuw (165)

facts, if not more so, because they reveal an agenda or an opinion. The purpose is to zero in on those opinions and agendas.

The most important source, which conveys both the previously unknown suspicions of arson and the generous Protestant donations, is the *Historia Domus*. The *Historia Domus*, or in English, *The House Histories*, is a collection of annual reports, written by Jesuit communities. These reports are sent first to the head of a community, the Rector, then to the head of a province, the Provincial, and finally to an archive in Rome. These annual reports are paired with the *Litterae Annuas*, or *Annual Letters*. These two sources allow the superiors within the Jesuit hierarchy to stay abreast of occurrences throughout the extensive reach of the Society of Jesus. For clarity's sake, the following is a list of rules, detailing how the *Historia Domus* should be written:

II.

Concerning the History of the House

A thing to be observed

Those things which concern the annual letters, also for the history of the house should be understood; in the history of the house then, not the same things which were contained in the annual letters should be repeated, but those things which should be noted of another kind, such as, the origin of the college or the house, the growth, and how they arranged it all. gen. cap. I. §5.

Points for the History of the House

- I. The catalogue of members and of offices, as above in the letters to the 1st.
- II. It should briefly be explained at what time, on what occasion, with what means he took up a beginning if he has not yet told so.
- III. The generosity of friends in furniture, the church, the library, increases and dissolutions of the debt.

IV. What buildings were made, what was changed in the church, the house, the atrium, the garden, etc.

V. Major purchases and expenditures, the addition of pieces of land.

VI. Occurrences with principle men which are able to be divulged.

VII. Persecutions of the college, the fruits and effects of these and other things of this type.

Note. From this information, it is seen that the annual letters should treat more with the spiritual and intellectual matters, and the history of the house truly should treat more with the temporal matters.⁸³

The *Historia Domus* at St. Xavier in Cincinnati was written by different authors throughout the years, depending on who was present or capable in the Jesuit community at the time. In 1882, at the time of the fire, the author was Fr. Theodore de Leeuw. Little is know about the Fr. de Leeuw. The following is a short obituary of his as it appeared in the *Historia Domus*,

Nov 24 – Obiit Pater Theodorus De Leeuw aetate 73, post 47 annos vitae vere religiosae. Coadj. Spiritualis Formatus ab anno 1847, officio Ministri functus fuerat 15 an. in Coll. Bardstown et Praef. Spirit. 25 in illo et in hoc Collegio. Parabat se ad mortem per 13 annos.

On November 24, Father Theodore De Leeuw died at the age of 73, after 47 years in the religious life. A Spiritual Coadjutor by the year 1847, he performed the duty of minister for fifteen years in the College of Bardstown and the duty of Spiritual Prefect for 25 in that College and in this one. For thirteen years, he was preparing himself for death.⁸⁴

Judging by Fr. de Leeuw's last name and birth year, 1809, he was probably Belgian, as many Jesuits in the United States were at this time, and he was probably whisked away shortly after joining the Society of Jesus, since America was desperate for religious men from Europe. De Leeuw would have lived long enough to have seen the height of anti-Catholicism in the 1840s and 1850s. By the same token, Fr. de Leeuw would also have seen the fall of this anti-Catholicism, the new era of debate surrounding Bibles in the public schools and even the failure

⁸³ Formula Scribendi c.1840 by John Roothaan S.J. kept in Xavier University Archives; see Appendix 1 for the Latin text

⁸⁴ *Historia Domus* 1882-1883, Fr. James O'Meara (181)

of the Purcell bank and the city's mild reaction. In short, de Leeuw would have been witness to the ups and downs of Catholic Protestant relations in Cincinnati. This makes him a credible source. de Leeuw was less likely to automatically assume ill-will from Protestants because his ethnicity, Belgian, was not discriminated against and because he would have seen Catholic-Protestant relations as improving. But, we must keep in mind that as he wrote he had seen the full potential of Protestant anti-Catholicism, which included arson.

From November 1882 through the reconstruction of the church, the author was James O'Meara. There is more extant information on Fr. O'Meara since he composed an autobiography just before death. James O'Meara was born in Nenagh, Tipperary, a town in Ireland, on September 29, 1845.⁸⁵ He had a difficult childhood. At the age of three, his father died.⁸⁶ When the Great Famine struck Ireland, his mother moved the family to a suburb of Liverpool, England. Here, O'Meara was able to attend a Jesuit high school. After some schooling, O'Meara joined the Society of Jesus and traveled to Roehampton, a suburb of London. In Roehampton he came into contact with the famous Fr. de Smet, a Jesuit traveling through Europe recruiting young men to go to the United States and administer to the Native Americans. O'Meara was moved by Fr. de Smet's speeches and at the ripe age of 20 he left his family, never to return to Europe again.⁸⁷

O'Meara's life as a young Irishman in 19th century America would have no doubt influenced his perspective on the burning of his church. To some degree it can be said that O'Meara would have had at least an unconscious bias. O'Meara did not have an agenda or some vendetta against Protestants in the city, but it would be safe to assume that he was aware of the persecution his ethnicity had suffered throughout the years. Irish history could well have taught

⁸⁵ Autobiography of James O'Meara, c. 1923 I.1

⁸⁶ Ibid: 1

⁸⁷ Ibid: 4

him that arson is within the range of possibility for enemies of the Irish. For this reason we must be if not suspicious, at least diligent when reading from the *Historia Domus*.

The second source or group of sources is the local newspapers. The newspapers are so varied that a thorough examination of their publications and editors would be a chapter by itself. It will suffice here to say two things. First, by the 1880s much of the biased and fabricated writing that occurred in the early and middle part of the 19th century was dying out. O'Meara even comments in the *Historia Domus* that "*Ephemerides urbis multam benevolentiam erga nos calamitate afflictos exhibebant*" "The newspapers of the city extended much kindness towards us who had been afflicted by calamity."⁸⁸ It is safe to credit the accounts of the fire, given by these newspapers as unbiased. However, there is one notable exception among the newspapers of the day, the *Catholic Telegraph*. The *Catholic Telegraph* was Cincinnati's Catholic paper started under Bishop Fenwick while the parish was still young. By the 1880s, this paper, like the other papers, did not knowingly print false or biased information. Yet, the paper maintained an unabashed Catholic position, for obvious reasons. Therefore, similar to reading O'Meara's account in the *Historia Domus*, it is important to at least be aware of the *Catholic Telegraph's* position in the city when reading its account of the fire.

Armed with background information on the sources dealing with the fire, we can now approach the events of the fire and the rebuilding. The fire occurred the night between April 6, 1882, Holy Thursday, and April 7, 1882, Good Friday. On April 6th, Fr. O'Meara claims,

3 men were observed entering the church, of whom one quietly went upstairs above the choir loft into the tower; but the other two sought the Brother sacristan to show them around the church and, engaging his attention, they asked him to show what was in Repository."⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *Historia Domus* 1882-1883, Fr. James O'Meara (171)

⁸⁹ Autobiography of James O'Meara, c. 1923 IV.2

Fr. O'Meara records this not in the *Historia Domus* but in his personal autobiography. This autobiography would only have been read by other Jesuits in his community and likely by the Provincial. O'Meara's autobiography is the only source to document these men being in the church.

Night came and the Jesuit community prepared the church for closure. There is some discrepancy in the sources as to whether or not every light in the church was extinguished. The account given to the *Times-Star* by Fr. William Poland, the man acting as the spokesman for the community, reported that the repository light, the light left on to indicate the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, was left lit. Fr. Poland said,

Yesterday it was asked if the repository should be kept lighted during the night. In this case there would always be watchers on hand taking turns every half hour, and no one to go on watch twice, in order that there would be no possibility of any one going to sleep. It was decided, however, to have no adoration, and to extinguish all the lights, which was done. The gas was put out by Mr. Woodward and the other lights about the altar by himself and assistants."⁹⁰

Good Friday is an exceptional day for the Catholic faith because it is the only day of the year on which there is no Eucharist consecrated. Generally on Good Friday, the consecrated hosts are moved from the tabernacle to a side altar. Sometimes the accompanying candle or light will go with these removed consecrated hosts and sometimes it will be extinguished. If the light is left lit, often there will be a vigil held throughout the night before the consecrated hosts. Fr. Poland stated here that the Jesuit community decided to extinguish this repository light and not to hold a vigil.

Fr. O'Meara's autobiography reports that there was a single flame left on, a pilot light for the gas lamps within the church. His autobiography reads, "The Blessed sacrament was in the

⁹⁰ *Times-Star*. April 7, 1882. "St. Xavier Church Destroyed by Fire this Morning"

Repository; and all lights were extinguished except a low gas light behind the main altar.”⁹¹ This small gas lamp later became the primary suspect as cause for the fire. This account by O’Meara and Poland’s account in the *Times-Star* are the only two firsthand accounts of the lights in the church. As such, we have no real way of knowing which account is accurate. One possible explanation is that Fr. Poland did not consider the pilot light a lamp which needed to be extinguished. Yet this explanation seems to conflict with his statement that “the gas was put out by Mr. Woodward.”

After the lights were extinguished, Brother Woodward, whose job it was to act as the Sacristan or assistant to the church, went to bed. Woodward slept in a small room to the right and above the main altar. Around 1:00 a.m., Brother Woodward awoke “*quâ nescit ratione*” “for which reason he does not know.”⁹² Likely he awoke to the smell of the accumulating smoke, for after he woke up, he looked out his window to see flames and smoke billowing up from the main altar. Br. Woodward rushed downstairs to rouse the community. Once awake, the Jesuits snapped into action. Some were sent to raise the alarm for the firehouse, and others began going into the church to save valuables. The Jesuits were able to save the consecrated hosts, a few relics of martyrs, precious chalices and vestments. The alarm was sounded at Box 41, located on Sycamore Street between 7th and 8th Street. The engine house, Engine House No. 4, whose area included Box 41, happened to be located on the corner of Sycamore and 8th Street.⁹³ Because of the proximity of both the alarm and the fire house, the firefighters were able to arrive on the scene quickly.

The firefighters fought the fire from both inside and outside the church. Those on the outside threw water onto the roof of the church. Those inside attempted to fight the spreading at

⁹¹ Autobiography of James O’Meara, c. 1923 IV.2

⁹² *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore De Leeuw (151)

⁹³ Fire log at Cincinnati Fire Museum

the main altar. Both the accounts given by the *Historia Domus* and the newspapers agree with facts up to this point, but then the stories diverged. In the *Historia Domus*, Fr. de Leeuw wrote that a piece of the roof collapsed, luckily not hitting any of the members of the community or firefighters. At this point, de Leeuw claims that the firefighter chief suddenly exclaimed “*opus est incendarii!*” “This is an act of arson!”⁹⁴ De Leeuw’s account of this exclamation is recorded only in the *Historia Domus* and not by any of the newspapers. It is likely that this exclamation either did not occur or was a momentary, and therefore not credible shout by the chief, since he did not report a similar belief to the papers following the fire.

Following the collapse of the ceiling, the fire chief ordered both his men and the members of the Jesuit community out of the church. From outside there was little else to do other than throw more water on the roof and watch the church burn. The fire soon spread to the choir loft and then the steeple, which acted as a flue of sorts. It was not long before the bells within the tower, the clock and the iron cross surmounting the steeple were all destroyed. In the morning the ashes still smoldered, but the fire was out, leaving St. Xavier church in ruins.

The work of rebuilding began while the fire was still raging. As the church burned, Mr. Patrick Poland, a wealthy parishioner of St. Xavier, wrote a check for \$5,000 and gave it to the pastor, Fr. Charles Driscoll.⁹⁵ The next day, Driscoll called an assembly of the leaders in the parish. The purpose of this assembly was to decide what to do with the ruins and the future of St. Xavier Church. They agreed unanimously to rebuild and began to collect money that day. In addition to the money they received then, the entire parish and school collected money with a tireless energy. The school put on a play whose proceeds went to rebuilding the church. The parishioners went door-to-door asking for alms. The sodalities, or religious clubs, donated

⁹⁴ *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore de Leeuw (151)

⁹⁵ Autobiography of James O’Meara, c. 1923 IV.3

money as well. And, as has already been stated, even Protestants and non-Catholics donated significant amounts. The *Historia Domus* documents the generosity of the city,

Pecunia in commodum ecclesiae nostrae collata, die 30^{mā} Junii summam, - minime exspectatam, - \$56,775 expleverat – indicium evidens religiosi contribuentium animi necnon benignitatis Dei eum inspirantis. Vere, Dominus reddet! Vere, Dominus jam reddidit!

The money collected for the cause of our church, on June 30 came to the unexpected sum of \$56,775 – clear evidence of the religious spirit of contributors and also of the compassion of God inspiring that spirit. Truly, the Lord will give back! Truly, the Lord already has given back!⁹⁶

The money was put to good use and the work of clearing the rubble and rebuilding the church was begun on April 10, only three days after the fire.

The suspicions of arson also began soon after the fire. These suspicions were apparently public knowledge, based on the account of Fr. Poland in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. In his account he says, “Some of the daily papers of this morning’s issue tend, in their accounts of the disaster at St. Xavier, to leave on the minds of the public a false impression regarding the origin of the fire.”⁹⁷ Fr. Poland did not go into detail as to what this “false impression” might be, but the *Catholic Telegraph* made it explicit. The paper claimed that if the allegations of arson are true “it would be better for that person [the arsonist] if he had never been born.”⁹⁸

There are really only two viable causes for the fire besides arson. They are the gas light left on behind the main altar and a candle left lit next to the main altar. Both of these causes were suggested by the newspapers and even the Jesuit community. When asked the cause of the fire,

⁹⁶ *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore de Leeuw (165)

⁹⁷ *Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 8, 1882. “The Burned Church”

⁹⁸ *Catholic Telegraph* April 13, 1882.

Fr. Tracy, a Jesuit, blamed “a number of small oil lamps.”⁹⁹ The *Freipresse*, a German newspaper wrote,

Das Feuer ist aus bis jetzt noch nicht ermittelten, fast unerklärlichen Ursachen im westlichen Theil der Kirche ausgebrochen. An dem holzwerk im innern fand es reichliche Nahrung, und bald leiten die Flammen bis zum Dache der Kirche hinauf

The cause of the fire is as of now not established, having erupted almost inexplicably in the western part of the church. From the wood in the interior there was plenty of food, and soon the flames passed up to the roof of the church.¹⁰⁰

The *Times-Star* reports that,

From appearances the fire seems to have originated on the left side of the main altar, which was especially decorated by numerous artificial wreaths and flowers for Easter services. Amongst them were placed thousands of small oil lamps and candles, and it is thought that in not snuffing one of them sufficiently at the close of the services last evening, when the whole altar was lit up, the same smoldered slowly but steadily until it communicated itself to the highly inflammable drapery surrounding them.¹⁰¹

All of these suggestions are possible and the verdict of the fire being an accident seems to have become the official cause, based on the fact that there were no criminal charges or episodes of backlash within the city.

Despite the cause being publicly attributed to an accident, Fr. de Leeuw and Fr. O’Meara still seemed skeptical. They brought forth evidenced which they believed pointed toward arson. Fr. de Leeuw wrote that the case for arson was supported by “*virii ignoti in Coenâ Domini Sanctuarium perlustrantes- explosio in turri- varii coloris flammae- janua ecclesiae, pessulo intrinsecus clausa, mane aperta inventa, etc. etc.*” “unknown men wandering through the sanctuary on the Supper of our Lord, an explosion in the steeple, flames of various colors, the doors of the church, which were locked on the inside with a bolt, and then found open in the

⁹⁹ *Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 7, 1882. “St. Xavier Burned”

¹⁰⁰ *Freieipresse*. April 7, 1882. “Die St. Xavier-Kirche nur noch eine Ruine”

¹⁰¹ *Times-Star*. April 7, 1882. “St. Xavier Church Destroyed by Fire this Morning”

morning, etc. etc.”¹⁰² De Leeuw’s points do raise questions, but each can be answered simply without necessitating his charge of arson. The unknown men cannot be substantiated by other sources, the explosion could have been natural, the flames of the church would likely have been of various colors as they were burning paint, metal, plaster and wood and the doors would have been broken open by the firefighters in their attempt to save the church.¹⁰³ More convincing than Fr. de Leeuw’s proposal of arson was Fr. O’Meara’s account.

Fr. O’Meara not only offered motive and means for Protestant arson, but refuted any opposing possibility as well. His account of the fire and allegations of arson are important enough to bear full repeating here. He said,

About the origin of that fire, Ours were in the dark; they spoke of spontaneous combustion from the oil rags kept behind the altar; naturally, some suggested doubts about the Repository. But, after the fire, the oil rags were found untouched in the brick recess behind the main altar; and the small gas jet behind the altar was found still burning low—the only light left in the church on Thursday night. Moreover, the side altars were not much damaged by the fire, being separated by a solid wall from the main altar.

The circumstances of the three strange men going round the church was not thought of as a link of evidence, it was too vague and known to a few.

In the Catholic Telegraph of a week before, the Editor, Mr. Garland, had exposed and scored a secret A.P.A. society as having 8 to 10 lodges in the city. And they were maddened to revenge the publicity thereby given them. To connect them with the fire was far from our thoughts. But some of our people working with their men in the factories had heard strange remarks, such as “There will be fun in your church to-morrow”, which they did not understand at the time, but which they reported later to some of our fathers. It was clearly a case of incendiarism.¹⁰⁴

O’Meara was certain that the fire was arson and supplied seemingly fitting evidence. Yet, upon closer inspection, even O’Meara was not entirely convincing. The secret society known as the A.P.A. or American Protective Association was not founded until 1887. It is possible that there

¹⁰² *Historia Domus* 1881-1882, Fr. Theodore De Leeuw (150)

¹⁰³ Fr. De Leeuw is the only source to claim that there was an explosion in the steeple.

¹⁰⁴ Autobiography of James O’Meara, c. 1923 IV.3

were underground groups active before the society was officially founded. It is also possible that A.P.A. stands for something besides this society. However, both of these seem improbable. The A.P.A. was a large and influential group with documents origins on March 13, 1887 and “A.P.A.” was a common acronym for this society. Moreover, there is no record of these secret lodges being exposed by the *Catholic Telegraph* and the line “There will be fun in your church to-morrow” is about as credible as the fire chief yelling “this is an act of arson!” It is possible that O’Meara, since he was writing this account of the fire almost 40 years in retrospect, simply made an error.

In the end, we are left with only guesses and suspicions. But fortunately this is all that is necessary to draw conclusions. What concerns the illuminating of Catholic-Protestant relations is not whether this was an act of arson or not, but merely what each side believed and how each reacted. This information has now been laid out in detail and we are able to answer the bigger question: What can the fire of 1882 teach us about how Catholics saw their Protestant neighbors and visa versa?

Two definite things can be inferred from the fire. First, relations between Catholics and Protestants were at the very least still strained from decades of distrust and abuse. The case for arson does not appear to be very strong. The fire was unusual in its origin but not so much so as to indicate arson powerfully. These allegations were a remnant of bygone eras when a catastrophe such as the fire would have sparked heated debate or accusations in the city. After the fire, the only record of any distrust was limited to a brief paragraph by Fr. de Leeuw and the autobiography of Fr. O’Meara. A possible reading of these facts is that these two Jesuits did not represent the opinion of the majority and were voicing only their personal thoughts.

Nevertheless, their opinions did exist. This proves that for at least some members of the city, old grudges were dying hard.

Second, Catholics and Protestants felt that ties with their community, be that Cincinnati or the surrounding parish of St. Xavier, were stronger than the differences in their faiths. This is a large step away from the relationship these religions shared in the middle of the century, and a move which was foreshadowed by the bipartisan support for removing sectarianism from the public school system. Previously, one's religion, ethnicity, or social class defined and divided these two groups. Now there was a new bond forming. Perhaps that bond was only born from necessity. It is true that these acts of kinship surrounded tragedies, the collapse of the Purcell bank, and the burning of St. Xavier church were dire events. But previously these tragedies were celebrated or even caused by Protestants. Now, the response to these catastrophes was generous aid and compassion. The relationship displayed in the good-will shown to the collapse of the bank and the funds donated to St. Xavier church indicates that the times had changed and that now the citizens of Cincinnati defined themselves not so much by their religion or ethnicity as by a common identity as neighbors and Cincinnatians.

This new stance is personified in the figure of Rufus King. King was a devout Episcopalian and a member of St. Paul's Church. He donated generously to this church, up to the sum of \$3,000 at one point to help relieve their debt. Besides being a good parishioner, Rufus King was an exceptional statesman. He helped found the Cincinnati Public Library and was the president of the Bar association and then the University of Cincinnati's Law school. In between these positions he seemed to have his foot in every important civic institution or building program occurring in Cincinnati. The *Historia Domus* claims that Rufus King donated two stained glass windows in memory of his Catholic mother. This would be enough to explain his

donation. But, it is possible that there was more motivating King to rebuild St. Xavier Church, a civic duty as well as familial one. St. Xavier Church was the tallest building downtown and undoubtedly a landmark in Cincinnati. Perhaps Rufus King was thinking not only of his mother but of his city as well. If this is indeed the case, then Rufus King was a new breed of Protestant, one who defined himself not as Episcopalian or Methodist but as a Cincinnati.

The Funeral of Archbishop Purcell

Archbishop Purcell is likely the most important figure in Catholicism for Cincinnati in the 19th century. His 50 years as Bishop and later Archbishop of Cincinnati between 1833-1883 saw both tremendous growth and tremendous controversy. His role as bishop served to bring Catholicism out of obscurity and into prominence. The services and funeral held in his honor were a testament to the true power of his character. He died on July 4, 1883, no doubt weakened by the failure of his brother Edward's bank and the possible collapse of his diocese. A procession was held on July 8, 1883, which lay his body in the bishop's residence where he would lie in state for three days receiving visitors from all over the city. Finally, on July 11, 1883 a funeral mass was held at the cathedral.

Both the procession and funeral were attended by many members of all religions. The procession was escorted by sixteen officers furnished by the mayor of Cincinnati, Thomas J. Stephens. Such a political showing would have been unthinkable when Purcell took up his role as bishop in 1833. Behind the sixteen-officer convoy followed a crowd of around 30,000 people. The procession was so large that it effectively shut down the city until it reached its destination.¹⁰⁵ The archbishop's funeral mass was just as momentous. In attendance were 200 priests, eighteen bishops, five archbishops and even the children who lived in the orphanages

¹⁰⁵ *Daily Commercial*, July 8, 1883

which Purcell had founded throughout the city.¹⁰⁶ In terms of Protestants, the funeral mass was attended by William S. Groesbeck, a member of the Ohio House of Representatives; A.T. Goshorn, a prominent businessman and leader of the United State's first World's Fair; Leopold Burckhardt, a wealthy businessman and George Webb. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* claimed that Protestants and Catholics agreed that Archbishop Purcell was not only "a holy priest but a good citizen, who loved his country next to his God, and a man whose patriotism was as sublime as his piety was sincere."¹⁰⁷ This is high praise indeed, and represents a comfort with religious plurality that even today's papers would be hesitant to display. Archbishop Purcell's procession and funeral are excellent examples of how far Cincinnati had come in religious relations between Catholics and Protestants from when he took office 50 years earlier. When he began as bishop, Catholicism was a suspicious and dangerous religion and by the end of his tenure, it was an acceptable institution both in the religious sphere and the civic sphere.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ *Cincinnati Enquirer*. July 12, 1883. "Last Scenes"

CHAPTER 5: “Conclusion 1887-1900”

In 2004, Phillip Jenkins released his book *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. The next year, Marc Massa came out with *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. These works argue that American culture was and is fundamentally Protestant. They echo Billington’s *Protestant Crusade*, written 50 years earlier. Between these works, numerous authors have viewed anti-Catholicism through different lens, as a social issue, ethnic issue or religious issue, but despite the variance in viewpoints one thing remains constant, scholars’ argument that a consistent, antagonistic relationship between Catholics and Protestants existed in the United States dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Such a view is a simplification of what in reality is a complex and dynamic relationship.

This thesis has been merely a glimpse into the intricate relationship between these two branches of Christianity in the U.S.. Even this 65 year span between 1818-1883, limited to only Cincinnati, shows how the relationship was ever changing, never wholly social, ethnic or religious in nature, yet never wholly devoid of these factors either. The relationship was never fully trusting, yet never the intrepid hatred presented by so many scholars. The truth is that the Catholic-Protestant relationship has been as varied as the relationship between any two individuals and as changing as the context in which they found themselves.

Cincinnati is an excellent case study, originally showcasing cooperation and teamwork between Protestants and Catholics in founding Christianity in a young city. Then Catholicism gained a foothold and its growth began to challenge the status quo of dominant Protestant society. By the 1850s, this angst blossomed into the political party, called the Know Nothings, a political conglomerate founded entirely against immigrants and Catholics. But it was short lived

and no sooner had it appeared in Cincinnati than it was gone and the relationship between Catholics and Protestants changed again. The century wore on and saw heated religious and philosophical debate centered on the Bible in the public schools. Scholars have attempted to draw equivocations between the time of the Know Nothings and the Bible Wars of 1869, saying things like “The board’s proposal of September 6 [to remove Bibles] touched off a no-popery crusade in the ‘Queen City’ of a fervor equal to the fanatical bigotry of the Know Nothingism of a generation before.”¹⁰⁸ But a close reading of this time period reveals that the predominant sentiment within Cincinnati was not one of hatred, like in the 1850s, but one of debate. The question of whether or not Bibles should be allowed in the public schools not only split some Catholics and Protestants but even split Protestants and Catholics among themselves. This issue did not spark a war between Catholics and their Protestant neighbors but between those with a civil stance and those with a religious stance. Following the Bible Wars, Cincinnati saw a period of religious unity. The failure of the Purcell bank and its reception in the city, the burning and rebuilding of St. Xavier church and the procession and funeral of Archbishop Purcell display unprecedented progress in ecumenism. All three of these events would have been unfathomable a short 30 or 40 years earlier. Now, they found an audience in moderate Protestants and Catholics, willing to work together.

I would like to conclude this thesis by offering a single, final example of the changing nature of Catholic-Protestant relations in Cincinnati. On March 13, 1887, only four years after the funeral of Archbishop Purcell, which was so beautifully attended by all denominations within the city, the American Protective Association (A.P.A) was founded. This association, like so many of its kind around this time, concerned itself with “patriotism” and the well-being of the

¹⁰⁸ Helfman 1951: 373

nation. The difference between the A.P.A. and other groups of its genus was that the A.P.A. believed that the main threat against the nation was Catholicism and to a lesser extent immigrants. This body was a sort of Neo-Know Nothing Party, holding as its primary tenet that Catholicism was diametrically opposed to the principles of democracy. The A.P.A. was outspoken, sporting over 80 newspaper organs, which clearly demonstrated its ideals. In one such newspaper, *The North American Review*, the leader of the A.P.A. at the time, a W.J.H. Traynor wrote an article entitled “The Aims and Methods of the ‘A.P.A.’.” This article was mostly a response to an article printed a month before by a Catholic supporter, George Parsons Lathrop. George Lathrop asks the question: “Why should Catholics not enjoy equal freedom, as citizens, to hold opinions on morals or education, to engage in politics or government, to advance them?”¹⁰⁹ Traynor in response wrote that,

there is no obscurity in the position taken by the United States in the matter of allegiance; the State requires most perfect and complete fidelity and obedience to the Republic. The voice of the Papacy is no less uncertain; it demands the unqualified obedience of its adherents to the Pontiff... Thus we see that the Papal hierarchy declares its complete sovereignty over the state.¹¹⁰

The American Protective Association made no secret of its position toward Catholics. It stood for the complete removal of Catholics from all aspects of political life in the United States.

The A.P.A. gained a prominence even greater than the Know Nothing Party. At its peak, Traynor claimed that it contained 2.5 million members, nearly 100 of whom were members of U.S. House of Representatives and 20 of whom were Senators.¹¹¹ The power of the A.P.A. was felt in Ohio through the election of governor McKinley in 1893. McKinley won his election

¹⁰⁹ Lathrop 1894: 567

¹¹⁰ Traynor 1894: 67-69

¹¹¹ Traynor 1896: 663, 666

mainly because of the support of the A.P.A. during his campaign.¹¹² Despite the supposed widespread influence of the A.P.A. the society effected little to no real policy. McKinley is an excellent example of a politician with an A.P.A. facade, but no real affiliations. McKinley gained his governorship nominally through the A.P.A., but while in power he implemented no A.P.A. legislature. He was called upon by the A.P.A. to remove two Catholics from positions within the prison system, but refused to do so, claiming that religious affiliations should not affect political choices. Similar to the KNP, the A.P.A. grew quickly to prominence, claimed a massive membership and numerous posts, realized no legitimate legislation and faded from the public consciousness all within a decade. By the 1900s the A.P.A. was no more.

It is somewhat difficult to draw any conclusions based on the emergence of the A.P.A.. That the A.P.A. even came about is perplexing. When the Know Nothing Party began in the 1850s, its impetus was evident. Increased immigration due to the social and political upheaval of Europe at the time brought on a wave of new cultures and religions that clashed with mainstream Protestant America. The KNP was a reactionary body. The A.P.A. has no clear stimulus, against which it might react. Many authors, when dealing with the historical context of the A.P.A., will begin with the Know Nothing Party and segue into the American Protective Association as if there were no significant episodes between Catholics and Protestants between 1850 and 1887.¹¹³ Yet, this paper has shown that there were many important incidents between the time of the KNP and the A.P.A. that would suggest relations between the two denominations were improving.

Marc Massa writes that the A.P.A. came about “in reaction to the mushrooming numbers of parochial schools, the massive tides of Irish immigrants, and the American Catholic Church’s

¹¹² Kinzer 1964: 119, 149

¹¹³ Kinzer in his book *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* begins with the KNP as his historical context and Massa in his book *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* has the paragraph explaining the A.P.A. directly follow his paragraph on the KNP.

newfound organizational maturity following the Third Plenary Council in 1884.”¹¹⁴ These incidents do to some extent account for an increase in nativist thought. However, their timing and impact do not allow for an outright explanation of the appearance of the A.P.A.. The “mushrooming number of parochial schools” to which Massa refers was occurring in Cincinnati as early as 1869, when the Board of Education feared for the future of the public schools. The “massive tides of Irish immigrants” was caused by the second potato famine or “The Mini-Famine” that took place in 1879. And the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore is more indicative of the organizational power of the Catholic Church in the United States than it is responsible for it. These episodes do offer suggestions as to how a political body, that was as anti-Catholic as the A.P.A. might come about, but they all predate the incidents of ecumenism in the early 1880s and therefore still do not appear as causes.

In the end, the only real conclusion to be drawn is that Catholic-Protestant relations are ever changing. Perhaps there is no good reasons that the A.P.A. should come to exist. Perhaps the only reason is that cultures transition through times of inclusivity and exclusivity. The A.P.A. marks a time when American culture once again excluded Catholicism as foreign and therefore dangerous. But the A.P.A. died out and once again Catholics and Protestants did more than just coexist. The cycle continues, never fully a relationship of hate and never fully a relationship of understanding. Although reasons may be unclear, what is important to learn is that the relationship between Catholics and Protestants is nuanced and more complex than simply hate.

¹¹⁴ Massa 2004: 29

Appendix

1. Image of (left to right) St. Xavier Church, Bishop's Residence and the Athenaeum in 1831

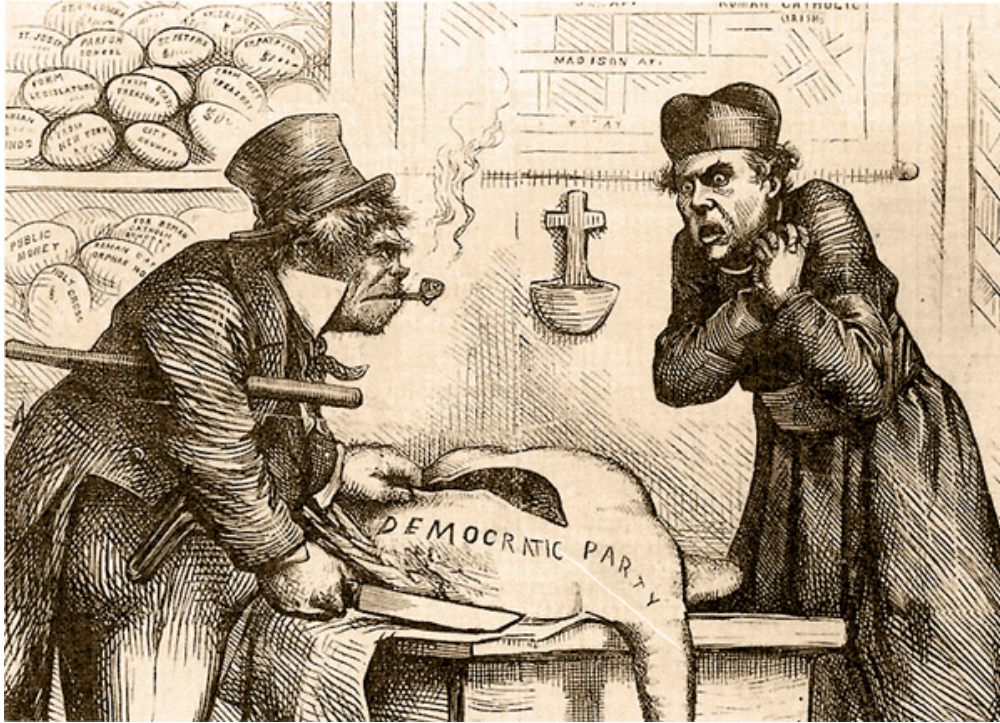
2. Cartoons printed in Harper's Weekly

3. Formulae Scribendi, the rule for composing the *Historia Domus* and *Littorae Annuas*

1.



2. The figure on the left is Irish, as indicated by his hat and ape-like appearance



This image depicts Irish immigrants sailing to America in a “Poor House”

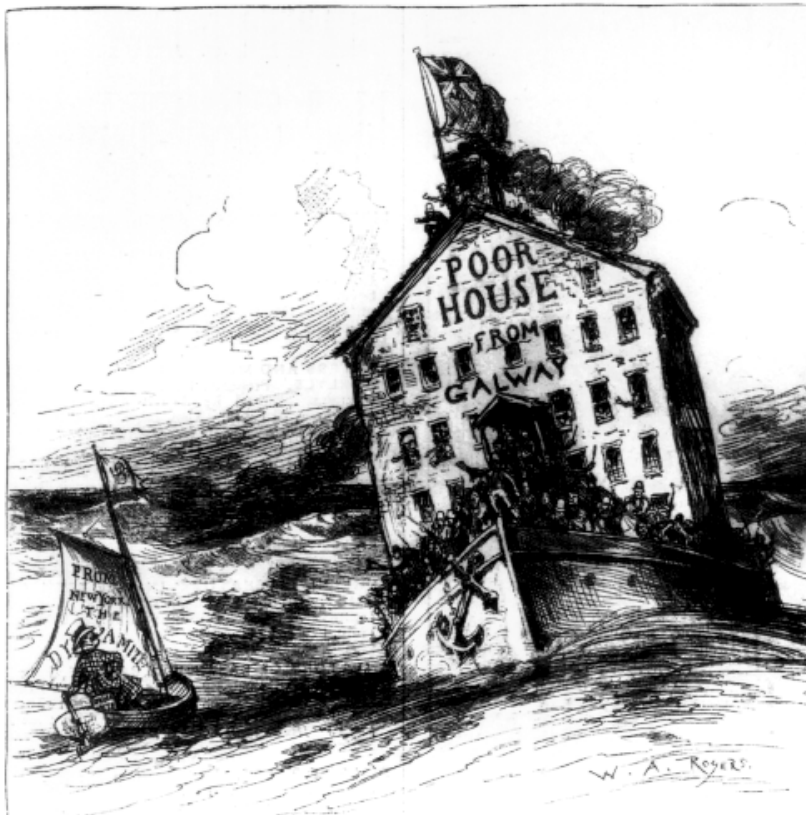


Image of Irish, “White” and Black men, arguing that Irishmen are more similar to “the African race” than “Whites”. This cartoon was printed in 1899, almost four decades after the Civil War.



The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low, prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.

3.

“II.

De Historia Domus

Observandum.

Quae de litteris annuis, item de historia domus intelligenda sunt’ in qua quidem non ea quae in litteris continentur repetenda sunt, sed ea adnotanda quae alterius sunt generis, scilicet, de collegii seu domus origine, incremento, ut ordinat. Gen Cap. I, § 5.

Puncta Pro Historia Domus

I. Catalogus sociorum et officiorum, ut supra in litteris ad 1^m.

II. Breviter explicetur quo tempore qua occasione, quibus modis exordium sumpserit, si nondum narraum fuerit.

III. Liberalitas amicorum in suppellectilia, templum, bibliothecam, redituum augmentum, dissolutionem aeris alieni.

IV. Quae aedificia facta, quae mutata in templo, domo, atrio, horto, etc.

V. Emptiones et expensae majores, fundorum accessio.

VI. Acta cum principibus viris quae possunt vulgari.

VII. Persecutiones collegii, harum fructus et effectus et alia hujusmodi.

Nota. Ex istis informationibus, videtur tractandum esse in litteris annuis magis de spiritualibus et intellectualibus, in historia domus vero de temporalibus.”

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Beecher, Lyman. 1977. *A Plea for the West*. New York, NY: Arno Press.

Board of Education Annual Report. 1869. Cincinnati, OH

Campbell, Alexander. 1837. *Battle of the Giants*. Cincinnati, OH: C.F. Vent J.S.; Chicago, IL: Goodman & CO

Fenwick, Edward. 1826. Letter to the Secretary of Association of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyons Annales, 2:92

Flaget. Oct. 18, 1819. Letter to Cardinal Litta, Propaganda archives, America Centrale 4:124

John Roothmaan S.J. c.1840. *Formulae Scribendi*. Xavier University Archives.

Monk, Maria. 1892. *Awful Disclosures*. Philadelphia, PN: Jordan Bros

Morse, Samuel. 1835. *Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States*. Levitt, Lord and Co.: New York, New York. Accessed online at <https://archive.org/stream/foreignconspiracy00morsrich#page/6/mode/2up>

O'Meara, James. c. 1923. *Autobiography*. Xavier University Archives.

Purcell, John. Vickers, Thomas. 1868. *The Roman Catholic Church and Free Thought*. Cincinnati, OH: The First Congregational Church

Varia. 1862-1892. *Historia Domus*. Xavier University Archives.

Wilson, Samuel Thomas. Mar. 6, 1820. Letter to John Augustine Hill, Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, 1818-1820, 4:138

Newspaper Articles

- Catholic Telegraph*. August 15, 1834
- Catholic Telegraph*. March 13, 1835
- Catholic Telegraph*. April 23, 1853
- Catholic Telegraph*. April 30, 1853
- Catholic Telegraph*. May 28, 1853
- Catholic Telegraph*. September 10, 1859
- Catholic Telegraph*. February 8, 1877
- Catholic Telegraph*. February 15, 1877
- Catholic Telegraph*. March 10, 1960
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. March 2, 1879.
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 7, 1882. "St. Xavier Burned"
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 8, 1882. "The Burned Church"
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. April 10, 1882. "Laying the Foundation"
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. May 4, 1883. "St. Xavier"
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. May 16, 1883. "St. Xavier Church"
- Cincinnati Enquirer*. July 12, 1883. "Last Scenes"
- Cincinnati Gazette*, August 27, 1869
- Daily Commercial*, July 8, 1883
- Freiepresse*. April 7, 1882. "Die St. Xavier-Kirche nur noch eine Ruine"
- Times-Star*. April 7, 1882. "St. Xavier Church Destroyed by Fire this Morning"
- Times-Star*. April 8, 1882. "St. Xavier Church Fire"
- Times-Star*. April 10, 1882.
- Pittsburg Catholic*, January 14, 1854

Secondary Sources

- Baughin, William. 1964. "The Development of Nativism in Cincinnati" *The Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin* 22:240-254.

- Billington, Ray Allen. 1952. *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860; a study of the origins of American nativism*. New York, Rinehart: Macmillan.
- Blaschke, Olaf. 2013. "Anti-Protestant and Anti-Catholicism in the 19th Century a Comparison" *European Studies: A Journal of European Culture, History and Politics* 31: 115-134
- Brighton, Stephan A. 2008. "Degrees of Alienation: The Material Evidence of the Irish and Irish American Experience, 1850-1910." *Historical Archaeology* 42:132-153.
- Dannenbaum, Jed. 1978. "Immigrants and Temperance: Ethnocultural Conflict in Cincinnati, 1845-1860" *Ohio History* 87:125-139.
- De Palma, Margaret. 2004. *Dialogue on the Frontier*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- Dolan, Timothy. 1994. "'Hence We Cheerfully Sent One Who Should Represent Our Person': A Century of Papal Representation in the United States." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 12:1-9
- Dunne, Robert. 1964. *Antebellum Irish Immigration and Emerging Ideologies of 'America' A Protestant Backlash*. Lewingston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Endres, David J. 2003. "Know-Nothings, Nationhood, and the Nuncio: Reassessing the Visit of Archbishop Bedini" *U.S. Catholic Historian* 21:1-16.
- Ford, Henry; Ford, Kate. 1881. *History of Cincinnati 1789-1881*. Cincinnati, OH: L.A. Williams and Co.
- Franchot, Jenny. 1994. *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism* Berkely: University of California Press.
- Goss, Charles F. S.J. 1912. *Cincinnati, the Queen City, 1788-1912*. Cincinnati, OH: Clark Publishing House

- Haden, Kyle E. OFM. 2013. "Anti-Catholicism in U.S. History: A Proposal for a New Methodology." *American Catholic Studies* 124:27-45.
- Hamant, Nancy R. 1963. "Religion in the Cincinnati Schools, 1830-1900." *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 21:240-241.
- Helfman, Harold. 1951. "The Cincinnati Bible Wars 1869-1870" *Ohio State Archaeological and history Quart.* 60:369-386.
- Hussey, M. Edmund. 1978. "The 1878 Financial Failure of Archbishop Purcell." *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin.* 36: 6-41
- Kinzer, Donald L. 1964. *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association.* Binghamton, N.Y.: University of Washington Press
- Lamott, Rev. John. 1921. *History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.* Cincinnati, OH: Frederick Pustet Co.
- Lathrop, George Parsons. Doane, William Crosswell. 1894. "Hostility to Roman Catholics" *The North American Review* 158:563-582.
- Massa, Mark. 2003. *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice.*
- Michaelsen, Robert. 1969. "Common School, Common Religion? A Case Study in Church-State Relations, Cincinnati, 1869-70" *Church History* 38:201-217.
- Pagliarini, Marie Anne. 1999. "The Pure American Woman and the Wicked Catholic Priest: An Analysis of Anti-Catholic Literature in Antebellum America." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 9:97-128.

Ramet, Sabrina. Hassenstab, Christine. 2013. "The Know Nothing Party: Three Theories about its Rise and Demise" *Politics and Religion* 6:570-595.

Raphael, Mark S. 2007. "Americanism as Seen through the *Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph*: Two Editors, Two Perspectives." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 25:51-73.

Traynor, W. J. H. 1896. "Policy and Power of the A. P. A." *The North American Review* 162: 658-666.

Traynor, W. J. H. 1894. "The Aims and Methods of the "A. P. A."" *The North American Review* 159:67-76.