

Nativists in Newark:

Radical Protestant Reaction to the

Appointment of a Catholic Bishop

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Abstract: The appointment of the first Roman Catholic bishop of Newark in 1853 led to ferocious criticism from the city's newspapers, street preachers, and visiting Catholic dissidents. The visceral anti-Catholic, anti-Vatican rhetoric in Newark foreshadowed the Know Nothing movement's successes in 1854, the high tide of antebellum nativism in the northeast.

Catholics have been in New Jersey since at least 1680, when the first general assembly of the Province of East Jersey was held in Elizabeth.

William Douglas of Bergen had been elected a member of that assembly but was refused his seat because, as a Catholic, he could not take the required oath.¹ In 1673, Parliament had passed an act, entitled, "An act for preventing dangers which may happen from popish recusants," requiring all who were about to enter into a public office to state that they did not believe in transubstantiation, the Catholic doctrine that the bread and wine of the Eucharist truly become the body and blood of Christ.² But Catholics were never very numerous in the state until the great influx of Germans and Irish in the middle of the 19th Century. Along with the rest of the country, New Jersey Catholics were under the pastoral care of the bishop of Baltimore

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from 1789, when the United States received its first bishop, until 1808, when the growth of the Catholic population led to the establishment of new Sees, including the Dioceses of Philadelphia and New York, between which New Jersey was split, the dividing line roughly following the old East Jersey/West Jersey line. By 1853, the growth of the Catholic population in New Jersey led to the establishment of a separate diocese for New Jersey, with its seat at Newark.

As long as Catholics were a small minority of the state's population, relations with Protestants were relatively peaceful, and at times even cordial. When the members of Saint John's parish in Newark wanted to sponsor a lecture to raise funds for a new church building, they approached officials at Trinity Episcopal Church, who offered the use of the sanctuary without requiring any payment.³ That sort of ecumenical cooperation, however, changed with the arrival of German and Irish Catholics in the years before the American Civil War.

One of the greatest sources of tension arose over laws which forbade the selling and consumption of alcohol on Sundays. Newark was founded in 1666 as a Puritan theocracy. For close to two hundred years, the city's laws reflected the Puritan temperament. When habits began to change as the city became home to large numbers of beer-drinking Germans and whiskey-

drinking Irish, the city's leaders saw a challenge to Newark's Puritan-based traditions. The *Newark Mercury* of June 16, 1853 contained an editorial entitled "Insubordination in Our Cities." Representing the views of the city's civic establishment, the editorial began, "There is no truth more apparent than that our cities are becoming filled with riotous and disorderly elements which require the strong arm of public restraints." It went on to condemn the rum holes and lager beer saloons, in one of which they witnessed "a wretched German absolutely covered with blood, of course intoxicated, making night hideous with his cries." They called for strict legislation that would "avert from us the evils that now threaten the prosperity of our city."

In the same issue, "A Subscriber" wrote to defend the Germans, charging that the Common Council's response to a German petition to open saloons on Sunday was "an orthodox essay upon our social government and Sabbath observance, full of pomp, patriotism and eloquence, which might better grace of Fourth of July oration than such a document" and in which the Council reiterated "the stereotyped falsehoods and denunciations which issue from orthodox pulpits, which though a thousand times answered and refuted, are still repeated with the freshness of new truths." After remarking that a "blind and servile attachment to laws and customs on account of their antiquity" is "folly and obstinacy," the correspondent reminded the Council

that “they may find on their statute books, laws compelling all to go to church, under fines, imprisonment and torture: relics of the good old puritan times.” The writer also brought to the attention of the Council the fact that “lager-bier houses, saloons, &c., are frequented by a considerable portion of native born citizens, young men who are fast imbibing these exotic habits, which are spreading, and unless speedily checked, will before long become interwoven with the habits of our own people, making an addition to our many social evils.”

In its issue of June 25, 1853, the *Mercury* editorialized about the trusteeship controversy, which was then playing out in New York State. A bill then under consideration in the New York Senate would have vested all Roman Catholic property in the hands of the Bishops, “who” as the *Mercury* went on to observe, “being subject to a foreign Pontiff, the effect would be essentially the same as if this vast amount of property were vested in the Pope of Rome.” It quoted approvingly the Albany *Register*’s objections to the bill, which “vests the property . . . in a single trustee, who is appointed . . . by [a] foreign power, a power not subject to our laws, who has no sympathy with our people or our institutions.” If the bill were passed, the writer asserted, “religious freedom is at an end.”

Like most Protestant churches, individual Catholic churches in the United States were, at the time, legally owned by a Board of Trustees. While this was a benign situation for the most part, it did cause trouble in some instances. One such instance occurred at the Church of St. Louis in Buffalo, where the trustees asserted their authority over the wishes of their Bishop. They claimed that it was their right under American law to own and manage the temporalities of the parish. The Bishop, on the other hand, wanted to obtain title to all of the parishes. Within the church, this debate was seen as a conflict between civil and ecclesiastical law. To the Protestant observer, however, it appeared to be a question of American democracy and freedom against Vatican monarchialism.⁴ This controversy led to the visit of a papal nuncio, Gaetano Bedini, who came to investigate the controversy and make known the position of the Vatican. Bedini's visit became the occasion of a great deal of anti-Catholic comment throughout the country.

Tensions in Newark grew with the arrival in the city of the Hungarian freedom fighter, Louis Kossuth. Kossuth was a Protestant and a very public critic of Catholicism. Rev. Dr. Scott (presumably James Scott, pastor of the First Reformed Dutch Church) welcomed him on behalf of the Protestant clergy, and, in his speech, observed that "the Protestant Clergymen, with few exceptions, have been in all ages the friends of civil and religious liberty." In

his reply, Kossuth said that “he believed that civil power and religion should be separate” and he warned his listeners “of the influence of Catholicism and Jesuitism at the West, where it might subvert our institutions, having already attained great power.”⁵

Not surprisingly, the Catholic hierarchy condemned Kossuth’s positions. In Newark, Kossuth was denounced in no uncertain terms by the Austrian-born pastor of St. Mary’s Catholic Church on William Street. This led a group of Kossuth supporters to attack the church.⁶

The appointment of James Roosevelt Bayley as the first Bishop of Newark in 1853 brought these tensions to a head.⁷ Inflammatory speeches in public halls as well as itinerant street preachers kept the animosity at a high level. An apostate Catholic identified only as “Mr. Leo” attacked auricular confession (that is, the Catholic practice in which lay people confess their sins to a priest) in a speech at Washington Hall.⁸ A former Barnabite priest named Alessandro Gavazzi delivered a speech entitled “Warning to America” at Library Hall. The Italian-born Gavazzi devoted his life to, in his own words, “stripping the Romish harlot of her garb.”⁹ In his speeches he told his audiences about papal plots and designs on America, and he called Bedini, the papal envoy, the “Bloody Butcher of Bologna,” a reference to the accusation that Bedini, as Apostolic Governor of Bologna, ordered the

execution of another Barnabite priest, Ugo Bassi, who supported Giuseppe Garibaldi, the proponent of Italian unification. Bedini, Gavazzi claimed, was intent on undermining American liberty during his visit to the U.S.

There were twenty-five such anti-Catholic lectures in Newark in late 1853, according to the *Newark Advertiser*.¹⁰ In June of 1854, the *Advertiser* observed that Protestant street preaching had made riots “almost epidemic” in northern cities, Newark included.¹¹ The Know-Nothing movement was at the height of its power that year, electing local and federal officials throughout the country, especially in areas of high immigration.

Tensions in Newark actually were evident even before the announcement of Bayley’s appointment, thanks to the visit of the papal nuncio. This visit, which nativists saw as the beginning of a papal invasion, had brought about an anti-Catholic reaction throughout the country. Gavazzi, who had been spiritual advisor to Garibaldi, toured the country, warning of the nuncio’s agenda. The October 19, 1853 issue of the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, the newspaper that would have been the least unfavorable to the Catholics, reported that Gavazzi had lectured in Cincinnati before a full house, and observed: “No disturbance occurred.” It is telling that the lack of a disturbance had to be noted in a city that was drawing many German Catholics at the time.

The same issue also reported on an item that appeared in the New York *Freeman's Journal*, a newspaper it identified as “the Catholic organ”-- a not entirely inaccurate characterization, although the *Journal* was not an official Catholic paper. *The Freeman's Journal*, according to the *Daily Advertiser*, “says a plot was concocted among the Italian refugees of [New York] to assassinate Mr. Bedini” because of his role in the Ugo Bassi affair. Throughout the 1850s the *Daily Advertiser* often simply reported facts or newsworthy events about the Catholic Church without comment. The facts and events it chose to write about, however, would have encouraged the animosity of those who were already unfavorable to the Catholic Church. After noting that the *Journal* defended Bedini, the Newark paper went on to observe that the *Journal* offered “no proof of its charge against the Italian refugees, and no other paper appears to have the news.”

In its issue of Monday, October 31, the *Daily Advertiser* described in great detail the ceremony in New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral in which Bayley was consecrated as Bishop of Newark. It mentioned that “the imposing ceremonies of [the Catholic] church” were performed by “Monsignor Bedini, the Pope's Nuncio to Brazil.” A little later, it described Bedini “walking under a canopy of crimson velvet, nearly six feet square,

lined with green silk, and supported over him by four trustees of the cathedral.” The newspaper made an observation that surely would have made many readers cringe: “The spectators uncovered their heads as they passed, and many knelt on the ground.” Catholics, of course, were portrayed as not fully American because, critics said, they retained an allegiance to the Pope and other Vatican officials who represented a monarchical foreign power.

The paper went on to describe the ceremony itself, and printed a translation of the oath that the new bishops swore in Latin. Parts of the oath certainly would have aroused the suspicion of many readers. After pledging obedience to Peter the Apostle, to the holy Roman Church, and to the Pope and his successors, the bishops pledged to “assist them to retain and defend against any man whatever, the Roman Popedom.” This was not the only pledge that would have struck critics as un-American and un-democratic. Each bishop also pledged: “With my whole strength, I shall observe, and cause to be observed by others, the rules of the holy fathers, the decrees, ordinances, or dispositions, and mandates of the Apostolic See.” One other pledge would have been seen as relevant to the trustee controversy: “I shall not sell, nor give away, nor mortgage ... nor in any way alienate the possessions belonging to my table without the leave of the Roman Pontiff.”

The trustee controversy continued to brew during the remainder of Bedini's visit, and on November 3, the newspaper reported on this controversy as it played itself out in Buffalo. The paper spoke of the long-standing dispute between the members of St. Louis Church, “who claim the right to appoint their own trustees, and manage their own temporal affairs” and “the Bishops who claim the right to take the management into their own hands.” Bedini had told the trustees that they should submit to the bishop, but, the *Advertiser* reported, the trustees responded that Bedini’s answer was simply a repetition of the demands of the Bishop “that they should submit, that the act of their incorporation should be annulled, and a committee be appointed by him” to replace the Board of Trustees. In response to the board’s statement that they had never meddled in spiritual affairs and that they “have no thought of annulling their act of incorporation,” Bedini sent a final reply in which he said that “your answer is truly painful, especially to an Envoy of the Holy Father” and that the trustees were disregarding “Catholic principles”.

On November 23, 1853, less than a month after Bayley’s installation, the Newark *Daily Mercury* ran an editorial commenting on growing controversies involving public schools and Catholic complaints – “the claims of a growing sect,” the newspaper wrote – that the schools included

anti-Catholic interpretations and theories in their curricula. This controversy had been played out in New York in the early 1840s, leading the city's Bishop, John Hughes, to begin a major effort to construct a separate school system for Catholics. The *Advertiser* clearly feared a similar outcome in Newark, for it argued that all children should attend common schools, "where all the children of the poor may be fitted to rightly use the privileges of this free land." The editors made particular note of the lecture recently given by William E. Robinson, whom they praised for his ability and eloquence, but faulted because his lecture was "full of radical error, and unfortunately tending to strengthen a blind faith, at the expense of the lessons and truths of history." Robinson, an Irish-born Presbyterian who studied at Yale, was a prominent journalist, poet, lawyer, and served several terms in Congress. He argued for the rights of Catholics in Ireland.¹² On 13 January 1853 he had married a Catholic, Ellen Dougherty, daughter of George Dougherty of Newark. Bishop John Hughes witnessed the marriage.¹³

After admitting that there were some Protestants who were bigoted and overzealous, the editorial defended the majority of Protestants who "recognize the full and complete right and privilege of every man to worship God according to the faith he professes." But it went on to note that "true

and enlightened views of liberality ought to be taught” in the common schools, and it questioned whether this could be done by the Catholic Church, “What sympathy have the Catholics of the United States with the struggling patriots of Europe? None! Because they place their religion and its interests before the spread of human liberty.” The editorial writer criticized Catholic prelates’ treatment of Kossuth and a man identified only as Meagher -- presumably a reference to the Irish patriot Thomas Francis Meagher, who had recently come to the United States and was delivering fiery anti-British lectures. The paper asked where the greatest amount of religious liberty existed. “Of course,” came the answer, “Protestant countries would be named.” At the end, the writer argued that “investigation and knowledge” were needed “to clear away the bigotries of a blind faith.” The writer concluded: “In the Catholic church faith is made to take the place of an intelligent understanding of Bible truths.”

Over the next few days, the pages of the *Daily Mercury* presented letters and counter letters arguing over whether Catholics or Protestants committed more outrages since the Reformation, and whether Catholic or Protestant countries are more tolerant. “Veritas,” one of the correspondents, found fault with one of Robinson’s arguments. “The facts of history must find an abler defender than one who will declare St. Patrick to have been

sent to Ireland by the Pope, whereas, he died A.D. 460, about 150 years before the existence of the first of the Popes.”¹⁴

The November 29 issue of the *Advertiser*, in reporting on Robinson’s lecture “in defense of Popery” noted that he said a great deal about foreign influence, “but did not say a word concerning the mission of Cardinal Bedini to this country, who is doing more to spread the seeds of foreign influence than any other man in the country.”

On December 2, commenting on a lecture by Rev. Mr. Leo, a writer noted that the crowds who had gathered on the street “by the strong feeling which pervaded the city” manifested a disposition to maintain order, which the writer attributed to the city’s Protestant founders. “There is no city in the Union where the true spirit of a free people is more fully developed than in our own. Settled by men of the right stamp, who were nurtured in the principles of religious and civil liberty, *their* children have been rightly educated” (emphasis in the original).

The same W.E. Robinson who had been giving lectures in defense of the Catholics, wrote a long letter to the Newark *Daily Advertiser*, which was published in the issue of December 5, 1853. Robinson wrote that he wished to correct misrepresentations of his lectures by the newspaper’s correspondent, who attributed to him “sentiments and language which [his]

heart never conceived and [his] lips never uttered.” In his lectures, he said, he “dared to take bloated bigotry by the throat, and to choke it with the grasp of truth.” He noted that, for weeks and months before he spoke, “the city had been filled by the vilest calumnies on a large and respectable portion of our citizens.” He reversed a familiar anti-Catholic argument – that Catholics could not appreciate republican government because of their supposed devotion to the papacy. Rather, Robinson said, Protestant radicals were of suspect loyalty because they were pro-British. “Toadies of England,” he wrote, “and old fogey monarchists may spend as much breath and as much money as they please in sending emissaries here to make us pray for England, but the genuine spirit of youthful Americans grows up with an inflexible hatred of English hypocrisy and a lasting scorn for those who would introduce her spirits of bigotry into this free country.”¹⁵ Referring to his lecture, he said that he “summarized the different persecutions, martyrdoms and massacres recorded in history, and . . . found as many attributed to such Protestants as Henry VIII and Cromwell, as were ever charged to Catholics.” His hope was that both sides would “forget the past” and “resolve to wash out each other’s sins in mutual forgiveness, rather than in each other’s blood.” He took it upon himself to speak because he thought his ideas would be better received since he himself was not Catholic, and he

noted that “the Catholics of Newark had delivered no lecture against the Protestants, while the lecture rooms, the churches and the secular papers had been filled for weeks and months with tirades, and (I grieve to say) downright misconstructions and misrepresentation of the belief of Catholics.”

That same day, under the heading “Protestants and Romanists: The Contrast,” the *Daily Mercury* published a letter by a correspondent who used the signature “America.” While Protestants favored free discussion, the writer asserted, this was not the case with Catholics. Whatever they claim, do they encourage reading, investigation and free discussion among their own people, and encourage it respecting their religion? Are the Scriptures every where disseminated as they are by the Protestants? While they have many schools and some of these of a high order, do their people present anything like the intelligence and reading habits of Protestants? Is not everything here in almost entire contrast?

Protestants, the writer states, were far more open to free discussion than were lecturers favorable to Catholicism who, despite their “misstatements, gross falsehoods and vulgar libels, on the living and the dead,” were listened to without interruption. On the other hand, “no sooner is it announced that the papacy is to be discussed than a crowd assembles,

and with many threats invade the freedom of discussion, violently interrupt and actually meditate assault on the person of the speaker.” The writer asked if Catholics will “consent to be the uneducated and passive recipients of dogmas you neither examine nor understand? Will you be shut out from the privileges and light common in this country to all other denominations?”

The writer argued that Catholic converts who “changed their sentiments,” including Bishop Bayley, had been allowed to speak in Newark freely, and “no Protestant has ever been known to disturb them in the least.” By contrast, critics of Catholicism were “reviled, denounced, and insulted; yea, violently assaulted in public assemblies and dogged in the streets.” The writer ended with what could be interpreted as a threat: “We say this must cease. It will not do to trespass farther on the rights of men who know their rights and will vindicate them.”

The next day, “A True American” answered the charges of “America.” He turned the nativist argument on its head by noting that the city’s anti-Catholic lectures were given primarily, if not exclusively, by foreigners. “Catholics have . . . enough to do when they discharge their duties to God and their country” without going abroad to lecture Protestants, “A True American” wrote. “If Protestants and their lecturers would let us and our church alone, they would seldom hear from us.”

“America” responded in the *Mercury* on December 8: “No one at all versed in history will question the fact, that no Roman Catholic country has ever yet encouraged freedom of Speech, free discussion, a free conscience, and a free and open Bible. Addressing himself to the city’s Catholics, he wrote: “Were you educated and enlightened, you would not be enslaved Were you allowed to think for yourselves, to form your own opinions, and to feel your own responsibility, and act out your own manhood, your condition would at once be improved and elevated.”

Two ubiquitous anti-Catholic lecturers, the Rev. Leo and the former priest Gavazzi, spoke on consecutive nights, Dec. 6 and 7, in Newark. According to the *Advertiser*, Leo took issue with the Catholic doctrine of plenary indulgence and its worship of Mary, mother of Jesus.¹⁶ The editor noted that “the lecture was felt by the large audience to be very eloquent and conclusive.”¹⁷

The same issue of the *Advertiser* reported on Gavazzi’s lecture of the following night in Library Hall. Commenting on his delivery, the *Advertiser* noted that “no report . . . can convey all of his style, which is characterized by every variety of rhetoric, while a profusion of Italian gestures conveys almost as much of his meaning as his words.” Gavazzi identified himself as neither Catholic nor Protestant, but a “Christian of the Church of Rome.”

This, he said, was not the Church of the Pope, said to be established by Peter who, Gavazzi said, was never in Rome, but the Church established there by St. Paul. He was not a Protestant, he said, because protesting did not go far enough. “His mission was not to protest, but to *destroy* both Pope and Popery,” the newspaper reported. He made reference to one of the popular canards of the day, that there was an active Catholic conspiracy to extend the Pope’s rule to the United States to make up for the Vatican’s loss of territorial authority in Europe. But that was not the extent of papal designs. “Papacy,” he said, “is the antagonism of republicanism, and its aggressions are against not only religions, but the civil liberties of America.” He went on to note the country’s bishops once were mostly native-born, but now were mostly immigrants “selected because having less sympathy with American institutions, they will more readily pander to the desires of the Pope.” On a seemingly unrelated topic, he noted that two of the country’s newest bishops were converts from Protestantism. Those in the audience would not have missed the allusion to the newly appointed convert Bayley. Throughout his speech, the writer incorporated references to most, if not all, of the popular Protestant criticisms of Catholicism: the opposition to common schools, the role of Bible reading, the designs of the women religious in teaching upper-class Protestant children, and, of course, the perfidious Jesuits.

“Roman Catholic Bishops can do America no good, for they hold despotic principles and are the agents of the greatest despot on earth,” he said. He went on to speak of the opposition of many Catholics to the common schools. That opposition, he argued, did not originate with the people in the pews, but with the bishops. Ordinary Catholics, he said, were “merely puppets” of the Church’s hierarchy. He raised the issue of Bible reading, another hot topic of the times, and saw the issue of excusing Catholic students from Bible reading in the public school as simply the first step in a plan to make public schools Catholic. “If they get the Bible excluded, they will want the Lord’s prayer excluded, and then want to substitute their Catholic literary works for yours.” Like many of the other preachers of the time, he saw the common school as the only way to insure that children of immigrants become Americans: “Try to Americanize all. Foreign potentates will not send you Americans, but you must make them for yourselves in the common schools. Fear no foreign invasion, but fear the interior invasion of ignorance.”

Next up for attack were the Jesuits:

There are also many Jesuits in this country. Some people say they know the Jesuits, and they are learned, pious, kind and sweet-

hearted. Very well; but they are Jesuits, and that is enough for me.

They are gentlemen—but then they are Jesuits. And if they are Jesuits, they are all bad, always have been bad, and always will be bad.

And the women religious, especially those who ran schools that educated the upper class Protestant children, were not immune from attack. While they, too, are well educated, and can teach the piano-forte, and French and Italian, Gavazzi warns his audience to stay away from them. “It would be much better for your daughters to read the English Bible, as all good republicans should. These ladies are in this country simply for the purpose of educating the higher classes of society, with the purpose of making them papal, in order to secure more easily the lower classes.”

The *Daily Mercury* of December 8 reprinted an article from the *Philadelphia Register* that referred to the threatened riot at one of Rev. Mr. Leo’s lectures, and commended those who had invited Leo, as well as the municipal authorities, for disappointing “the hopes of those preferring a resort to shillelaghs instead of syllogisms, arms rather than argument.”

The Newark *Daily Advertiser* of December 10 reported on another anti-Catholic event in the city, Nicholas Murray’s lecture entitled “The Genius and Tendencies of Popery.” Murray, born in Ireland to Roman

Catholic parents, left for America when he was young, and found work with the printing firm of the Harper brothers. The Harpers were Methodists and intense anti-Catholics, who would later publish the infamous *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, although they set up a dummy company for the purpose, not wishing their reputation be sullied.¹⁸ Murray, who would later become the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, traced the rise of popery “to fanaticism in regard to the character of Christ.” “From this fanatical reverence for Christ,” the newspaper reported, “he traces the doctrines of transubstantiation, relics, saints’ days, and purgatory.”

Leo and Gavazzi continued to give lectures in Newark in early December. Both charged that Catholicism was incompatible with liberty and freedom, charges that were commonplace in the 1850s, during the height of Know-Nothing power in the northern states. Gavazzi made this appeal explicit, linking Catholicism with the nation’s growing immigrant population. “Does America belong to her sons or to foreigners?” he asked. “Then be on your guard, whenever Catholicism triumphs there will be the inquisition, and wherever the inquisition is there is destruction of liberty.”

Even as Leo and Gavazzi incited fears of Catholicism in the city, The Rev. Dr. Scott, the clergyman who welcomed Kossuth to Newark on behalf of the Protestant clergy, gave a series of lectures on the religious history of

various countries. On Sunday, December 11, he spoke on the religious history of Switzerland, praising the Swiss for opposing the Papacy centuries earlier.

As local newspapers continued to report on anti-Catholic lectures in Newark, a voice was raised across the Hudson River. New York Bishop John Hughes, a man who rarely backed down from a fight on behalf of his flock, issued a letter in mid-December advising Catholic clergy and the laity to “keep away” from anti-Catholic street preachers who, he said, “are exciting against them the hatred of other citizens.” He said that people should be free to listen to them, but warned what might happen “if conspiracies should arise” that are left “unrebuked by the authorities,” so that property or institutions are “menaced with destruction.” Hughes advised clergy and laity “to be prepared in God’s name to stand by the laws and the authorities in defence of their rights and property.”

Despite Hughes’ intervention, street preaching in Newark continued for more than a year after Bayley’s installation. One of the most colorful of the street preachers was James Orr, who was known as “The Angel Gabriel.” Orr was born, it seems, in Guyana, the son of a Scot father and a mother of mixed race.¹⁹ He received his nickname because he dressed in white, and blew a horn to announce himself. He also wore a hat on which was

emblazoned “Rule Britannia, Hail Columbia and Down with the Mother of Abomination,” the latter phrase a common reference to the Catholic Church and the Papacy.²⁰ He was already famous before he reached Newark, having spent time in Great Britain and then in several U.S. states, most notably New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York. His preaching helped to fan the flames of animosity that had been building between native-born Americans and the mostly Irish Catholic immigrants. In Manchester, New Hampshire, his preaching followed close on a violent confrontation between a Manchester native and an Irish immigrant. On June 11, 1854, John Marshall, the Manchester native, and Michael Calin, an Irish immigrant, got into an argument about a rented carriage. The confrontation turned deadly when Marshall landed a blow which killed Calin. Orr brought his anti-Catholic (and implicitly anti-immigrant) lecture to Manchester about two weeks later. Marshall was arraigned on murder charges on July 3. The next day, a riot broke out when, according to the Manchester *Union Democrat*, authorities extinguished an Independence Day bonfire which a group of Irishmen built “a safe distance from any building.” “An excitement followed,” the newspaper noted, and the Irish responded with rock throwing and a riot that lasted for two days. It seems fair to say that Orr’s preaching helped to set up the atmosphere for such an occurrence.²¹

The war of words in Newark was not without consequence. In 1854, as the Know-Nothing movement achieved its greatest electoral successes throughout the north, nativists in Newark took matters into their own hands. On September 4, 1854, in a typical Know-Nothing show of strength, a large crowd of marchers passed through a neighborhood filled with Irish Catholic workers, playing blatantly anti-Catholic songs, instigating the reaction that in their eyes would justify violence. In response to the stones and insults thrown at them the marchers burst into the church and disfigured or destroyed statues and other church property. The marchers would later insist that they simply were defending themselves from the Irish who had barricaded themselves in the church and were firing out the windows, but an official inquiry found that the only person in the church at the time was a housekeeper armed with a broom. In the melee that resulted, one man, Thomas McCarthy, would be shot dead at point blank range, although no one was able to identify his assailant, and another man, Michael McDermott, would later die of cholera, at least according to the medical report, even though he had several stab wounds in his back.²² The governor promised a reward for information leading to the arrest of the person responsible for McCarthy's death, and for those responsible for the riot. No one ever came forward to identify the assailants.²³

The attack on St. Mary's was the culmination of more than a year of anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant rhetoric in Newark. It is impossible to understand why the mob assailed the church, and killed an innocent civilian, without understanding the poisonous atmosphere created by street preachers and clerical agitators who whipped up anti-Catholic sentiment in the city. While overt and violent nativism reached a peak, both in New Jersey and throughout the country, in 1854, tensions would continue in the city as new immigrants sought to prove that they could be good Americans while remaining true to their religious faith.

¹ Raymond J. Kupke, *Living Stones: A History of the Diocese of Paterson* (Clifton: Diocese of Paterson, 1987), 4.

² John Raithby (editor), "Charles II, 1672: An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants," *Statutes of the Realm: volume 5: 1628-80*, British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=47451> (accessed 2 April 2012).

³ Paul V. Flynn, *History of St. John's Church, Newark* (Newark, 1908), 33.

⁴ Patrick W. Carey, *People, Priests, and Prelates: Ecclesiastical Democracy and the Tensions of Trusteeship* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987) 271-276.

⁵ *Newark Daily Advertiser*, April 23, 1852.

⁶ *Newark Mercury*, April 27, 1852.

⁷ M. Heldegarde Yeager, *The Life of James Roosevelt Bayley, First Bishop of Newark and Eighth Archbishop of Baltimore, 1814-1877* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 95-96.

⁸ Newark *Daily Advertiser*, November 29, 1853.

⁹ Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1952, c1938), p. 301.

¹⁰ Schwartz, Joel. “‘The Overturnings in the Earth’: Fireman and Evangelicals in Newark's Law-and-Order Crisis of the 1850s” in *Cities of the Garden State: Essays in the Urban and Suburban History of New Jersey*, ed. Joel Schwartz and Daniel Prosser. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1977, p. 28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹² O'Donoghue, David J. *The Poets of Ireland: A Biographical Dictionary, with Bibliographical Particulars* (London: The author, 1892-93), p. 216; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, on-line, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=R000355>.

¹³ Elmira *Daily Republican*, 26 January 1853, quoted in Joyce M. Tice, “Tri-Counties Genealogy and History”, <http://www.joycetice.com/clippings/elr1853a.htm>, accessed 2 April 2012.

¹⁴ Newark *Daily Mercury*, November 24, 1853.

¹⁵ Newark *Daily Advertiser*, December 5, 1853.

¹⁶ Pius IX's encyclical *Ubi primum*, proposing the declaration of the immaculate conception of Mary, was promulgated on 2 February 1849. In it, he states: “God has committed to her the treasury of all good things, in order that everyone may know that through her are obtained every hope, every grace, and all salvation. For this is his will, that we obtain everything through Mary.” The text is available at: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P9UBIPR2.HTM> (accessed 7 April 2012).

¹⁷ Newark *Daily Advertiser*, Thursday, December 8, 1853.

¹⁸ Samuel Irenaeus Prime, *Memoir of the Rev. Nicholas Murray, D.D. (Kirwan)* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1862), 13-16; *Veil of Fear: Nineteenth-Century Convent Tales by Rebecca Reed and Maria Monk*. Introduction by Nancy Lusignan Schultz. (West Lafayette, Indiana: NotaBell Books, 1999), xvi-xvii .

¹⁹ She is referred to as “coulored” by Guyanese historian Odeen Ishmael in his on-line essay, “The ‘Angel Gabriel’ Riots of 1856, <http://www.guyana.org/features/guyanastory/chapter58.html> 7 April 2012).

²⁰ John T. McGreevey, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York and London: Norton, 2003), p. 60.

²¹ Mark Foynes, “Manchester’s ‘Disgraceful Riot’ July 3 and 4, 1854,” <http://www.nhhistory.org/edu/support/nhimmigration/disgracefulriot.pdf> (accessed 7 April 2012).

²² *The New York Times*, September 20, 1854.

²³ For a discussion of the attack, see Augustine J. Curley, “The 1854 Attack on Saint Mary’s Church, Newark: A Typical Know-Nothing Incident,” *American Benedictine Review*, 64:1, December 2010, pp. 387-406.