OHIO'S "KNOW-NOTHING ACT" OF 1857

By Donald M. Schlegel

The year of our Lord 1855 was a tense one for immigrants and Catholics in Ohio, and especially for the many who were both foreign-born and Catholic. Nativist feelings of antagonism toward the foreign-born and Catholic were at their zenith. On the spring municipal election day in Cincinnati, the polling places in the four predominantly German, Democratic wards were attacked by mobs which succeeded in destroying the votes of two wards. (1) The rioting continued the next day, when the Germans turned their "over the Rhine" district into an armed camp and opposed the advances of the nativist crowds; two died as a result of the fighting. (2)

In Columbus, the German Turn-verein or athletic association was accosted in May by a crowd of nativists who believed that the group's flag with its German mottoes (3) was the "Red Republican Flag of Germany." A more serious affray, again the result of a nativist crowd attacking a Turner parade, occurred on Independence Day, in which one young man was killed. (4) The same year, the frame building in Sidney, in Shelby county, which had been converted for use as a church by the town's Catholics, was blown up with powder and stone during the Know-Nothing excitement there. (5)

In the state-wide Ohio elections in October, the ruling Democratic party was soundly trounced by its opposition, the "fusion party," which was variously called the People's Movement, the Anti-Nebraska party, Republican party, or Know-Nothing party, which was united only in its opposition to the Democrats. The nine state-wide offices were captured by this party, with eight of the nine men elected to these posts being acknowledged Know-Nothing. (6) This party also wrested control of the Ohio Legislature from the Democrats, who held onto only a handful of seats in each house, the largest contingent representing Hamilton county. (7) Though the power of the Know-Nothing movement waned rapidly after 1855, the new legislature's term began in January, 1856, and lasted two years; the nativists thus were able to effect their designs long after their popular support had faded.

Despite their strength in the legislature, the anti-Democratic forces passed only two resolutions and two laws of an obviously partisan nature, all in 1857, the second year of their term. Both resolutions and one of the laws, befitting the title of Republican which was more and more uniformly applied to this party, were anti-slavery in nature. The legislature prohibited the jailing of persons on the sole basis of their being fugitive slaves; the resolutions deplored the U.S. Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision and favored the extension of the antislavery provisions of the Ordinance of 1787 (which had established the Northwest Territory) to all U. S. Territories. (8)

The second piece of partisan legislation passed in 1857 was directed against the Catholic Church's practice of placing all Church property in the name of the
bishop of the local diocese. The law, which was passed and became effective on April 14, contained the following provisions: grants, conveyances, etc., of real or personal estate made to any person and his successor in any ecclesiastical office were invalid; future grants and conveyances of real estate for use in religious worship, for the use of any congregation, or for cemetery purposes were to be invalid unless made to a corporate body organized under state law. At the death of any ecclesiastic, real estate held by virtue of his office would be vested in the religious society using the property, if incorporated; if the religious society had not been previously incorporated, title to the real estate would vest in the state, as if the ecclesiastic had died with neither will nor heirs. Upon later incorporation of the religious society, the governor would then give title to the property to the new corporation. (9)

At best, this law would have forced the Church in Ohio into a system of lay trusteeism: conflicts between trustees and bishops over the appointment of pastors, conflicts between trustees and pastors, and conflicts among ethnic groups for control of a parish, for example, which at times had led to schism in the Church. At worst, if a bishop died with his parishes unincorporated, the Church property would be in the hands of the state government, which in theory would have the legal right to use or alter the property in any way it saw fit until the parishes became incorporated. One could imagine even the destruction of church buildings, since the law made no provision for the state to hold the property in trust, but made it absolute owner until the parish became incorporated. The legislation was first introduced in February of 1856, passed the Senate that year, and passed the House in 1857, with the votes going strictly along party lines. The law was obviously nativist-inspired and was based on a similar law passed by the Know-Nothings in New York State in 1855.

It has been argued that under the New York law, "religious corporations, having endless succession, shall not roll up, generation after generation, real and personal property into an anti-republican, over-shadowing wealth." Reference was made to Great Britain's efforts, over a period of six centuries, "to save the landed property of the Kingdom from being swallowed up by ecclesiastical bodies." (10) The law had been passed over the objections of Archbishop Hughes of New York, the most powerful Catholic in the country, and remained in force until 1863. (11)

Despite Hughes' objections, the Church in New York, when compared with the Church in Ohio, was in a potentially much better position to survive undamaged because of its previous experience. New York law had allowed Church property to be taken over by trustees since 1784 and lay trusteeism was common in Catholic parishes well into the 1840's. (12) In Ohio, Church property had been held by ecclesiastics from the outset; by 1851 only three congregations and a dozen Catholic institutions had been incorporated in the entire state. (13)

Ohio's bishops, John Purcell in Cincinnati and Amadeus Rappe in Cleveland, certainly began to breathe easier when the Democratic party got control of the state legislature in the 1857 elections. One of the new legislature's first items of business was to repeal the "act in relation to conveyances and devises of property for religious purposes," effective February 17, 1858. (14) Archbishop Purcell spelled out his relief in his pastoral letter of Shrove Tuesday, 1858:

The present legislature of Ohio has set a wise example to governing bodies of this and other states. It has repealed an odious and unjust law, on the conveyance an devise of Church property, which was passed almost exclusively against Catholics
by the last legislature. As the law now stands it does not disenfranchise a Catholic Bishop, or deprive him, as such, of a right which he does and ought to enjoy in common with every citizen to acquire and hold property in few simple. (15)

As the nativist element in the Republican party died out and the country became involved in the bloody Civil War, the Archbishop became reconciled with the party and came to support its president, Abraham Lincoln, and its policies in prosecution of the war and freedom for the slaves.

(3) The mottoes it bore were: Frisch, Frülich und Frei (Blithe, Merry and Free) and Durch Uebung zur Kraft; durch Forschung zur Erkenntnis, Bahnfrei (Through exercises, strength; through investigation, knowledge. Freedom.)
(6) Kremm, Thomas W., The Rise of the Republican Party in Cleveland, 1848-1860; Kent State University, 1974; page 155.
(10) The Buffalo Democracy, quoted in the Ohio State Journal, April 4, 1855.
(11) See also Ellis, John Tracy, American Catholicism; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967; pages 45-47.
(13) The churches and years of incorporation were: St. Peter's Catholic Church, of Bolivar (Tuscarawas County), 1839; Jesus Heart Church, in Vernon Township (Richland County, 1842; First Roman Catholic Church, in Glandorf (Putnam County), 1844. Other bodies were: The Literary Society of St. Joseph's (Perry County), 1825; St. Mary's Female Literary Society (Somerset), 1832; St. Peter's Benevolent Society (orphan society in Cincinnati), 1835; Cincinnati Catholic Society, 1842; German Catholic Cemetery Association (Cincinnati), 1843; St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum (Cincinnati), 1843; German Catholic Cemetery Society (Cincinnati), 1843; German Catholic Library Association (Cincinnati), 1845; Young Men's Catholic Association, of Cincinnati, 1850; Catholic Orphan Asylum, of the City of Dayton, 1851; St. Augustine Catholic Orphans' Institute (Minster, Auglaize County), 1851; and German Catholic St. Stephen Cemetery Association (Hamilton), 1851.
Baptisms (Concluded)

1890
April 29: Julia Edna WARNER, b. 17 Feb., dau. of Michael and Caroline. Sprs: William and Julia Grassbaugh. JMJ
April 29: Anna L——— KRONAPLE, b. 19 Feb., dau. of Anthony and Adeline. Sprs: Joseph and Mary Kronaple. JMJ
May 27: Mary Odelia DERIER(?), b. 14 Feb., dau. of Ferdinand and Catharine. Sprs: Philip and Anna Miller. JMJ
May 27: Mary Mabel HEFT, b. 2 April, dau. of Joseph and Margaret. Sprs: Joseph and Mary Phillips. JMJ
May 27: Helen PHILLIPS, b. 4 May, dau. of Albert and Adeline. Sprs: Joseph Grassbaugh and Catharine Pye. JMJ
Oct. 21: Albert GRASSBAUGH, b. 9 Sept., son of James and Catharine. Sprs: James and Mary Daugherty. JMJ
Nov. 30: Charles Louis KRONAPLE, b. 1 Sept., son of Joseph and Mary. Sprs: George and Mathilda Vogel. JMJ

1891
April 21: Philip Alfred MILLER, b. 17 March, son of Philip and Anna. Sprs: Anthony Lentz and Mary OUt. JMJ
April 21: Mary Agnes WATSON, b. 22 Feb., dau. of Henry and Margaret. Sprs: Andrew McGrady and Mary McDevitt. JMJ

1892
Jan. 1: John Romanus WEAVER, b. 29 Oct., son of John and Mary. Sprs: James and Julia Grassbaugh. JMJ
Jan. 31: Raymond Walter LOWER, b. 29 Nov., son of John and Mary. Sprs: John Lower and wife. JMJ
Aug. 30: Raymond Andrew KRONAPLE, b. 3 Aug., son of Joseph and Mary. Sprs: Anthony and Adeline Kronaple. JMJ
Sept. 27: Agnes H——— HEFT, b. 27 July, dau. of John and Margaret. Sprs: James Daugherty and wife, Mary. Rev. ANTHONY LEININGER.

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SACRAMENTAL RECORDS, ST. DOMINIC'S
McLUNNEY, PERRY COUNTY, OHIO

Burials - From the parish register
Note. For the history of St. Dominic's, see "Bulletin", June, 1980.

1849
Aug. 9: Catharine Chapman, dau. of S. Chapman and Elisabeth Connor; b. 25 June, 1844. At St. Louis church, Rehoboth.

1850
Jan. 7: Edward, son of Patrick McVay and N.N. Aged c. 46Y.
June 14: Godfrey Moon. c. 91Y.
July 11: Sarah Mullin, c. 85Y.
Aug. 16: John Curren, son of Patrick. c. 56Y.

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Burials - St. Dominic's, McLuney, (Continued)

1850 (cont.)
Oct. 16: Charles McNamee, c. 70Y.
Dec. 22: John Landers, c. 65Y.

1851
Feb. 20: Edward Friel, son of Francis, c. 104Y.
Feb. 28: Catharine Friel, dau. of Hugh, c. 45Y.
April 9: Margary McConnell, dau. of James, c. 80Y.
May 22: Infant dau. of James Snider and Elisabeth Snider.
Aug. 8: Elisabeth, wife of Myles Greene, c. 60Y. Buried at St. Joseph's, Somerset.
Sept. 25: Mary Elisabeth, dau. of James Snider and Catharine Swartz, c. 16M
Oct. 4: Edward, son of Daniel McEwlee and Mary Sweeney, c. 26Y.

1852
Jan. 4: Catharine Hays, c. 55Y. Holy Trinity cemetery.
Jan. 16: Edward, son of John Tague and Catharine O'Neil, c. 3Y 2M.
Jan. 24: Rosa, dau. of Patrick Nugent and Mary Martin, 25Y.
April 13: James Harvey, c. 63Y.
May 11: Alice O'Rourke, wife of James Dolan, 45Y.
Aug. 15: Mary Dou, wife of Bernard Dolan, c. 25Y.
Oct. 29: John Cooke, c. 45Y.
Nov. 1: Infant son of Louis Snider and Arnez(?) Dean.

1853
Feb. 1: Patrick Nugent, son of Patrick, c. 24Y.
Feb. 11: Infant son of Patrick McMullen and Emily Gibbons, 10D.
Feb. 14: Infant son of John Giles and Rebecca Hillis, 1D.
March 13: Catharine McGoldrick, dau. of Edward and Catharine McCaffrey, c. 25Y.
April 16: James, son of John Giles and Rebecca Hillis, c. 3Y.
April 22: Martin Smith, b. Ireland, c. 40Y.
April 24: (ex via ferrea) Infant dau. of Matthew Collins and Mary Maghon.
May 25: Michael Gary, c. 38Y.
May 26: John Hartken (via ferrea near McLuney), son of John Hartken, 9M.
May 30: John Humphrey, son of Richard, c. 50Y.
Aug. 25: Mary Theresa, dau. of John Tague and Elisabeth O'Neil, c. 16M.
Aug. 28: John, son of John Tague and Elisabeth O'Neil, 2Y 10M.
Aug. 29: Sarah, dau. of Edward Delong and Ruth Laky, 11M.
Sept. 18: Stephen, son of Peter Snider and Helen Dean, 18M.
Oct. 3: Alexander, son of Daniel McMullen, 55Y.
Oct. 12: Bernard Dominic, son of Bernard McNulty, 2Y 10M.
Oct. 13: Catharine, dau. of Dyonisius Kelly, 8Y. (via ferrea)
Dec. 9: Peter, son of Cornelius Coyle and Anne Fieltly, 7D.
Dec. 13: Catharine, dau. of Michael Fitzgerald and Mary Greild, 8D (via ferrea)

1854
Jan. 1: Marian, son of William Mullen and Rose McGoldrick, 4Y.
Jan. 13: (via ferrea) James, son of Michael Flinn and Mary Liney, 2Y.
March 24: Samuel, son of Nicholas Hammond and Mary Joanne Davis, c. 10M.
March 27: Anna, dau. of Edward McGoldrick and Catherine McCaffery, c. 20Y.
April 10: Catharine, dau. of Thomas Hurley and Ale Aleghorley, 4Y. (via ferrea)
April 11: Anna, dau. of John Friel and Sara Friel, 4Y.
Burials - St. Dominic's, McLuny (continued)

1854
April 27: Mathilda, dau. of Robert Hammond and Mary Anna Snider. c. 2Y.
April 28: Bernard, son of Hugh Friel and Bridget Fealty. 31Y.
May 6: Joseph Foy. 17Y.
May 18 Aneas (Andreas?), son of John Friel and Catharine Rogers. 40Y.
July 21: Mary Anna, dau. of Francis O'Rourke and Mary Hart. c. 13M.
July 21: Henry, son of Henry Warthon. 17Y.
Aug. 2: Anna, dau. of Patrick Ryan and Helen (?). 1Y. (via ferrea)
Sept. 21: John, son of Patrick Friel and Sophia Friel. 4D.
Oct. 25: Thomas Mulloy, son of William Mulloy and Mary Coony.
Oct. 28: Richard Humphrey, son of Richard. 35Y.
Nov. 9: Amilia Joanna, dau. of John Snider and Mathilda Malone. 1Y 4M.
Nov. 13: Helen, dau. of Daniel Cummings and Margaret McFadden. c. 10Y.
Dec. 17: Magdalen, dau. of Joseph Pfieger and Frances Bush. 5Y 3M.
Dec. 21: Catharine, dau. of Joseph Pfieger and Frances Bush. 8M.

1855
Jan. 2: Frances, dau. of Joseph Pfieger and Frances Bush. c. 7Y.
Feb. 25: Sarah, dau. of Patrick Smith and Mary McCann. 27Y.
Feb. 25: Infant dau. of John Spellman. 3M. (via ferrea)
March 22: Edward McGoldrick. 70Y.
May 1: John, son of Stephen Murray and Mary Hoban. 15Y. (via ferrea)
June 6: (via ferrea) Andrew Foy, son of Bernard. 59Y.
July 5: Helen Tague. 56Y.
July 26: (via ferrea) Catharine Cary. c. 21Y.
Aug. 17: (via ferrea) Margaret Reilly, dau. of Martin. 25D.
Aug. 26: (via ferrea) Mary, dau. of Hugh Shea. 11M.
Aug. 26: John, son of Hugh Friel and Sarah Delong. 7Y.
Sept. 3: (via ferrea) John Brannan. 22Y.
Sept. 12: (via ferrea) Daniel Gay. 1Y 10M.
Sept. 30: Bernard Dolan, son of James. c. 30Y.
Nov. 13: Edward, son of Peter Fealty and Anna Sweeny. 20D.

1856
Jan. 19: Hugh, son of Hugh Friel and Sara Delong. 16M.
Feb. 1: Margaret Clevin, wife of Patrick Friel (in Uniontown).
Feb. 19: Francis Albert Snider, son of John and Anna Mathilda Malone. 7M.
March 24: Bridget Fealty, wife of Hugh Friel. c. 75Y.
April 16: Hugh Friel, son of Patrick. c. 42Y.
July 18: Infant son of Anea Friel and Mary Friel. 2 hours.
Aug. 19: James, son of John Forsigh and Anna Hackerd. 3M 9D.
Oct. 30: Margaret, dau. of William Smith and Grace Gibbons. 1Y 4M.
—— 31: Charles McBride. Middle of 3rd year.

1857
Jan. 1: Bridget Cecilia, dau. of Patrick Friel and Sophia Friel. 1M.
Jan. 12: Benedict, son of Lawrence Pearl and Susanna Nicholas. 25Y.
Feb. 7: Catharine, dau. of John Coyle and Anna Call. 4D.
March 13: Catharine Dolan, dau. of Bernard and wife, Joanna O'Rourke. 43Y.
March 22: Infant son of Adam Miller and Anna Albach.
March 29: William Smith. c. 35Y.
April 4: Michael Friel, son of Hugh. 41Y.
April 17: Michael Shields, son of Caius. 40Y.
April 27: Nicholas Mulloy, son of William. 63Y.
Aug. 16: Margaret Fitzgerald. 35Y. (via ferrea)
Sept. 15: Januarius David Noon, son of Charles and Anna Fealty. 12M.
Burials - St. Dominic's, McHenry (Continued)

1858
Jan. 26: William Landers, son of John. c. 46Y.
Feb. 15: Sarah Delong, widow of Hugh Friel. 35Y.
March 17: Infant son of Nicholas Hammond and Susanna Davison. 3 hours.
March 18: David, son of John Giles and Rebecca Hillis. 14D.
March 27: Mary, dau. of John Callahan and Margary Griffin. 7Y.

1857
Aug. 7: James, son of Filmon Delong and Cecilia Snider. 11Y.
Aug. 13: Mary Elisabeth, dau. of Andrew Snider and Prescilla Dean. 2M.
Aug. 16: Matthew Crosby. c. 72Y.
Aug. 23: Elisabeth, dau. of Filmon Delong and Cecilia Snider. c. 15M.

1858
Aug. 19: John, son Filmon Delong and Cecilia Snider. 6Y.
Sept. 7: Frances, dau. of Filmon Delong and Cecilia Snider. 8Y.
Oct. 17: John, son of Darby Friel and Catharine Friel. c. 2Y.
Oct. 22: Michael Hart (advena) c. 35Y.

1859
Feb. 7: Patrick McGoldrick, son of Edward and Catharine McCaffrey. 27Y.
--- 14: John Fealty, son of Peter and Anna Sweeney. 14D.
March 16: Peter Nugent, son of Patrick and Mary Martin. 27Y.
April 9: Caroline Cecilia, dau. of James Snider and Catharine Swartz. 7Y.
May 25: Joseph Binder, 35Y. Deavertown cemetery.
June 24: Near Roseville. Patrick, son of Michael Flanagan and Mary Cahn(?) 9M.
Oct. 10: Michael Fealty. c. 15Y.

1860
Feb. 7: Catharine Coyle. c. 13Y.
John Friel. c. 10 minutes.
June 3: Mary Hoover. c. 79Y.
June 20: Patrick Friel. c. 58Y.
July 30: Fr. Ant. Flayer. c. 3M.
Aug. 1: Ell. Dougherty. c. 45Y.
Aug. 7: Martha Anna Delong, dau. of Edward. c. 6Y.
Sept. 24: Mary Crosby. c. 84Y.
Nov. 11: Hugh Friel. c. 90Y.

1861
April 21: Rosa Giles. c. 80Y.
May 25: James Dolan.

1862
Feb. 6: Mrs. Mary Smith. 70Y 1M 6D.
March 4: Mrs. Bridget Mulroy. 3Y.
March 19: Sarah Coyle. 19Y.
-------: Patrick Conely. 68Y.
-------: Margaret McGoldrick. 24Y.
-------: Stephen Longstreth. 5Y.

1863
Feb. 23: James Walsh.
Feb. 25: ----- Hammond. 9Y.
Feb. 25: James Mackin. 28Y.
Burials - St. Dominic's, McLuny (concluded)

1864
March 6: Catharine O'Neil Tague, wife of John Tague.
March 13: Infant, son of John Tague and Catharine O'Neil. 7D.
-------: Edward Tague, son of Peter Tague and Elisabeth Slinger, wife.
-------: James Dougherty (advena).
Sept. 23: Thomas Longstreth. 11Y.
Sept. 27: Margaret Longstreth. 17Y.
Sept. 28: Mary Longstreth. 2nd year.
Oct. 2: John Longstreth. 14Y.
Dec. 6: Alice O'Rourke. 11Y.

1865
Jan. 3: Francis O'Rourke. 20Y.
March --: Francis McShane. 65Y.
May 8: Catharine Mulloy. c. 65Y.
July 10: Patrick Nugent. 70Y.

1866
Feb. 12: Agnes Tague. 11Y.
March 18: Margaret Diss. 11Y.
March 16: Anna Friel. 19Y.
April 17: Patrick Smith. 88Y.
April 17: Catharine Rainsay. 90Y.

1868
May 23: Mrs. Mary Greely. c. 35Y.
Oct. 30: Lawrence Pearl. c. 77Y.

Confirmations - St. Dominic's, McLuny.

Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati was at St. Dominic's for Confirmation in 1856. However, the register gives no date and no list of names. He was back again Aug. 6, 1860, and confirmed the following:

Lewis McLaughlin
Michael Mulvey
Joseph John Snider
William James Camp
Susan Gorman
Mary Frances Welch
Elisabeth A. McLaughlin
Mary Frances Smith
Sarah Cecilia Deaver
Mary Frances Mullen
J.J. Joachim Dean
Edward Patrick Sweeney
Thomas Smith
Mary Cordelia Coyle
Margaret Emilia Gudin
Martha Ellen Gorman
Margaret Frances Coyle
Agnes Mary Diss
Catharine Dickes

Martin Paul Ramsey
David Joseph Greely
Filmon(?) Joseph Delong
James Vincent Snider
May F. McGilligan
Susan Friel
Catharine Mary Cary
Elisabeth Snider
Helen Regina Snider
Hugh Thomas Deaver
Peter Albert McNulty
James J. Retalick
Peter Paul Fieger
Ann E. May Deaver
Mary Ann Gorman
Isabel Friel
Anastasia F. Coyle
Ann Mulroy

Charles Joseph Coyle
Thom. John Greely
Sylvester J. Longstreth
Lydia Ellen -------
T.C. Helen Smith
Mary Ann Sweeney
Catharine Isabel Diss
Mary Frances Nugent
Cora May Elder
Thomas Martin
Albert Andrew Nevin
John William Gorman
Caroline C. Camp
Lizzie Marie Dickier
Sarah E. Longstreth
Mary Adeline Snider
Rose Ann Agnes Fealty
Elisabeth Mary Goodin

(To be continued)