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NATIVISM AND THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN OHIO, 1854-1860

The Ohio State University

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NATIVISM AND THE BIRTH OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY
IN OHIO, 1854-1860

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

John Bennett Weaver, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1982

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INTRODUCTION

The noted nineteenth-century English historian Edward A. Freeman summed up a widely held point of view in the profession of his day when he wrote, "History is past politics, and politics is present history." The conviction crossed the Atlantic and was characteristic of the first generation of professional historians in the United States. Freeman's dictum was emblazoned over the entrance to Herbert Baxter Adams's famous seminar room at Johns Hopkins University. Subsequent generations of American historians, reacting against the narrow dimensions imposed by exclusively political and institutional history, broadened the scope of professional historical studies into a multitude of areas. While it has never regained the preeminence it once had, political history has nonetheless maintained its key role, and in recent years a new generation of American political historians has brought new questions and new techniques to the field. ¹

The "new political history," as it is sometimes called, seeks to understand politics as an aspect of human behavior closely related to the underlying social, economic,
and cultural environment in which human beings live and act. While not ignoring the traditional historical method of descriptive narrative, it prefers to emphasize the underlying structure of politics, the attitudes and motives of political actors, and the role of political masses as well as political elites. In place of colorful description of dramatic episodes and personalities, it pursues systematic analysis of persistence and change in both short-term and long-term political behavior. Socio-economic, demographic, and voting data become as important as the campaign speech, the great debate, the details of secret deals in smoke-filled rooms. Its methods have deepened, extended, and in some cases profoundly altered traditional interpretations of political history.  

The differences in emphasis and interpretation among political historians can be illustrated by looking at specific questions and problems they have addressed. The antebellum United States (1820-1860) is a case in point. Political historians have debated, among other things, the nature of "Jacksonian Democracy" and the reasons for political realignments in the 1850s. Scholars of the "new political history" have rejected a purely economic interpretation of Jacksonian politics and instead have pointed to the ethnic and cultural differences among Americans which played a key role in their political behavior. In looking at the politics of the 1850s scholars
have debated the relative importance of sectional conflict between North and South and ethnocultural conflict within Northern society. Emphasis on sectional conflict based upon struggle over the expansion of slavery characterized the writings of Allan Nevins and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. in the 1940s. More recently Eric Foner, David Potter, and Richard Sewell have also argued that sectional discord is critical to understanding the politics of the 1850s. Foner has advanced this interpretation significantly by exploring the ideology of the antebellum Republican party. Opposition to the expansion of slavery was part of a larger Republican critique of Southern values and institutions. This general interpretive framework also characterizes Stephen Maizlish's study of antebellum Ohio politics.

In contrast, another group of historians, many of whom have used quantitative analysis in their research, argue that the development of the Republican party before the Civil War was more closely related to ethnic conflicts than to sectional ones. They generally share the view of Joel Silbey, who had chided historians for "looking first at the fact of the Civil War and then turning back to view the events of the previous decade in relation only to that fact." Working from the premise that local rather than national issues had the greater importance for voters in the 1850s, these scholars have pointed to the growth of a nativist movement in that decade and the
conflicts between immigrant Catholics and native-born
Protestants over temperance, Bible reading in the public
schools, and voting requirements for naturalized citizens.
Ronald Formisano has examined the ethnocultural dimensions
of Michigan politics in the antebellum period, while Paul
Kleppner's analysis of Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin
politics runs from 1850 to 1900. Michael Holt and Thomas
Kremm have detailed the relationship between ethnicity and
politics in the 1850s for Pittsburgh and Cleveland,
respectively. In a more recent work Holt has described
the 1850s as a time when Americans lost confidence in the
ability of the established political parties to deal
effectively with several critical problems, including
slavery as well as ethnocultural conflict.

From the viewpoint of this latter group of historians
accounts of the 1850s which stress national issues such as
slavery underestimate the role of nativism in motivating
the individual voter and bringing about party realignment.
Nativism, the belief that traditional American values
were threatened by the influx of foreign immigrants, grew
with sudden intensity in the early 1850s. Thousands of
Protestants joined various secret societies and clubs,
beginning with the "Order of the Star-Spangled Banner"
in New York City in 1849, dedicated to the protection of
the United States from the "foreign peril." The immediate
context for this thinking was the large increase in the
number of European immigrants, especially Irish and German Catholics, coming to the United States in the 1840s. The nativists stressed that the immigrants brought with them different (and somehow "un-American") values, beliefs, and ways of living, and insisted that a growing Roman Catholic Church in the United States would lead to dangerous "papal influence" on American politics.

Some nativists began to express their fears in specifically political ways. They pledged themselves not to vote for any foreign-born candidates for public offices, and demanded stiffer naturalization laws designed to lengthen the time required for immigrants to become citizens and acquire the franchise. Maintaining organizational secrecy, these nativists commonly replied "I know nothing" when asked about their movement. Hence the name "Know-Nothings" came to describe collectively the various nativist political organizations. In 1853 Know-Nothings formed the American Party as a national organization in order to coordinate their political activities and extend their political power.

The emergence of the American Party indicated that the two major parties, Whigs and Democrats, did not meet the needs or express the views of a sizable number of voters. Holt suggests that initially the Know-Nothings had a strong appeal among native Protestant laborers, artisans, and shopkeepers experiencing economic dislocation and competition with newly-arrived immigrants. When these
groups turned to the political parties, they found the Democrats were actively seeking the immigrant's vote and espousing a degree of cultural tolerance, while the Whigs failed to pay much more than lip service to nativist views, and in fact sought the immigrant vote as well in the presidential election of 1852. Dissatisfied with both major parties and with the established political leadership, the Know-Nothings set out on their own. Their secret lodges, elaborate ritual, and militant platform provided the opportunity for a group of relatively inarticulate individuals to vent political and social frustrations and seek public power.12

Early Republicans interested in making the party a vehicle for antislavery sentiment could not imagine a nativist movement based on prejudicial fear and resentment as forming any basis for a stable long-term party; it was too much at odds with the optimistic hopes for the future which America signified.13 Horace Greeley, the influential editor of the New York Tribune, sarcastically remarked that the Know-Nothing Party was "as devoid of the elements of persistence as an anti-Cholera or anti-Potato Rot party would be."14 In a more sober analysis, Republican Congressman Joshua R. Giddings of Ohio deplored the nativist spirit, but could view the rise of Know-Nothingism with some detachment because to him it was:

...a screen, a dark wall, behind which members
of old political organizations could escape unseen from party shackles, and take a new position, according to the dictates of judgment and conscience.\textsuperscript{15}

To Giddings, Know-Nothingism was only a temporary phenomenon, the result of the more general breakup and realignment of political parties then going on.

Despite the thrust of Greeley's satire or Giddings' appraisal, however, it has been argued that nativism was a more salient issue to many northern voters in the 1850s than was slavery, and that after the rapid rise and fall of the Know-Nothings in the middle of the decade the Republican party became the political home for countless voters of nativist persuasion. In this interpretation, Catholic voters perceived the nativist aspect of Republicanism and so remained basically loyal to the Democratic party throughout the 1850s. To Catholic immigrants the early Republican party seemed more clearly anti-Catholic than antislavery. Traditional conclusions that Lincoln received the German immigrant vote in 1860 have been challenged by George H. Daniels in his study of Iowa and by Paul Kleppner in his study of Pittsburgh.\textsuperscript{16} Kleppner's data reveal that Lincoln received the votes of some German Protestants, but not German Catholics. This is an example of how different methodologies can produce different historical conclusions. The older studies drew inferences on the behavior of German-Americans from the public
statements of some prominent German-American leaders, such as Carl Schurz and Gustave Koerner, most of whom were Republican and few of whom were Catholic.17

The role of nativism in the formation of the Republican party is clearly a question of major historical importance. Despite the existence of a strong nativist current in the politics of the 1850s, one can hardly ignore the other issues of that decade, largely related to the slavery controversy, which contributed to the rise of the Republican party. The purpose of this study is to examine the origins of this party in one northern state, with special attention to the attitudes of Republicans toward nativists. Those attitudes ranged from outright hostility through indifference and mild support to fervent advocacy. Equally important is the way in which Ohio Republicans viewed nativism in relation to other issues, notably slavery-related ones. Did they give it a greater, an equal, or a lesser priority? Did they believe nativism was mainly a symbolic issue, a way to express personal feelings and frustrations, or a substantive issue embracing a definite program of legislative action? Ohio provides a good case study because it included all the elements that came together to form the new Republican party--former Whigs, anti-Nebraska Democrats, former Free Soilers, Know-Nothings--and had a significant immigrant population in both rural and urban locales. Ambitious and able politicians in
the new party eagerly sought electoral success, and in so doing faced the perennial political problem of how to build a winning coalition out of many separate groups, each with a somewhat different set of interests and perspectives.

This study will posit two arguments about Ohio politics in the 1850s: first, that political nativism and cultural nativism were separate and distinct phenomena; and secondly, that the actions and goals of both Republican and Know-Nothing leaders undermined nativism as a political force, leaving genuinely nativist voters unable to achieve their desired political results. In coming to this conclusion this study concurs with the general assessment made by Foner (Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men, p. 260), and disagrees with the opposite interpretation found in Holt (The Political Crisis of the 1850s, p. 179).18

Political nativism refers to the effort to translate nativist ideas into specific legislative proposals and then to enact them into law. Some political nativists sought political power for the American party; others worked through the Republican party in an effort to bring about stricter temperance legislation, more substantial residency requirements for voting, and greater restrictions on the methods of incorporating church property. Cultural nativism refers to the expression of nativist beliefs and prejudices apart from any attempt to embody them in law. The cultural nativist evaluated immigrants
on the degree to which their beliefs, values, and behavior corresponded to his own. Thus the Protestant immigrant was accepted more readily than the Catholic, the English-speaking immigrant than the one who retained his native tongue, the immigrant who shunned ethnic social groups than the one who joined them, the immigrant who abstained than the one who drank, the immigrant who observed a quiet church-going Sunday than the one who made it a day of merriment, and the immigrant who sent his children to public schools than the one who sent them to parochial schools. Cultural nativism found expression in private, personal attitudes and behavior. The culturally nativist businessman might be indifferent or even opposed to proscriptive legislation, but at the same time favor a Protestant employee over a Catholic one, or contribute to a Protestant charity but not a Catholic one.

All political nativists were also cultural nativists, although some of them were more interested in building up Republican or Know-Nothing political power than they were in the cultural expressions of nativism. But not all cultural nativists were political nativists. Those who did not seek to translate nativist ideas into practical political measures either did not see political action as an appropriate way to advance nativism or else did not want nativism to overshadow the more immediately pressing problem of slavery.
Republican leaders and those Know-Nothing leaders who cooperated with them undermined political nativism by failing to agree upon and enact a comprehensive program of nativist legislation. Other issues came to be more fully emphasized in the formative building process of the Ohio Republican party. As only one of several groups which the Republicans sought to unite in a new political party the nativists had to be content with symbols more than substance, with rhetoric more than tangible results. Nativism in Ohio, while present, was not sufficiently powerful to serve as the sole basis for a successful major party. Ambitious Republican politicians were more interested in counting votes than in being ideologically pure.

The difference between political and cultural nativism explains why a non-nativist Republican leader such as Salmon P. Chase could accept Know-Nothing support for his party. The majority of Ohio Know-Nothings could be persuaded by their own leaders to support a party which promised little of substance in the way of nativist policies. On the other hand, Chase and his associates did not object to the expression of cultural nativism, and they tried to dissuade anti-nativist Republicans from opposition to this "harmless" form of nativism. When one looks at the major Ohio Republican leaders in the 1850s one finds them primarily interested in the growth of their party and in maintaining opposition to the
encroachments of the "slave power." One does not find them interested in making the Republican party a vehicle for nativism. Whatever their varied attitudes were toward nativism as a cultural force, they did not advance it as a political one. After 1856 political nativism was more and more the means by which old-line Whigs upheld nationalism and opposed Republican "radicalism," and not a vigorous platform for anti-Catholicism and anti-foreignism.

Finally, the conflict in the Ohio Republican party between anti-nativists such as Joshua Giddings and those like Chase who welcomed Know-Nothing support illustrates the conflict between the political ideologue and the political realist. The party ideologue is firmly committed to a program which for him is synonymous with the purpose of the party itself. For the party even to water down that program or combine it with other, perhaps conflicting, programs offends the ideologue, and in some circumstances may provide the basis for a decision to bolt the party. The pragmatist may indeed have firm commitments to basic party goals, which he does not abandon, but in pursuit of those goals he is willing to accept and work with viewpoints other than his own on issues and concerns he deems secondary. Above all, the political pragmatist wants to win, and he is willing to accommodate himself sufficiently to the popular mood of the moment in order to do so. 19 The growth of the Ohio Republican party in the
1850s is the story of success based on pragmatic coalition politics. To the extent that Ohio Republicans had a common ideological focus it was not nativism, nor even antislavery. It was anti-Southernism, a concept sufficiently ambiguous to admit of multiple meanings and emphasis.
NOTES: INTRODUCTION


15. Joshua R. Giddings, "Address to the People of the 20th Congressional District of Ohio," *Ohio Columbian* (Columbus), April 4, 1855.

17. A selection of articles illustrating this historiographical development may be found in Frederick C. Luebke, ed., Ethnic Voters and the Election of Lincoln (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971).

18. A recent article based on quantitative analysis, Dale Baum, "Know-Nothingsism and the Republican Majority in Massachusetts: The Political Realignment of the 1850's," Journal of American History, LXIV (March 1978), pp. 959-86, supports Foner's position. Baum argues that the Massachusetts Republicans did not make concessions to win Know-Nothing support, and that as a political force nativism remained distinct from Republicanism, the Massachusetts Know Nothings becoming the Constitutional Union Party in 1860. In other words, those who were only culturally nativist may have become Republicans, but in so doing they gave up the hope of achieving a nativist political program. Politically-minded nativists remained outside the Republican fold, although by 1860 even they were stressing conservative nationalism more than anti-foreign or anti-Catholic proscription.

A NEW PARTY IS BORN, 1854

Political institutions, processes, and attitudes are best understood in relation to the underlying social, economic, and cultural environment in which they are rooted. While political behavior may become routine and static, lagging behind changes in the social environment, sooner or later social change does impinge on the political process. In the antebellum United States, for example, the anti-slavery movement of the 1820s and 1830s produced a slow, often tortuous process of change in northern attitudes and perceptions regarding slavery and the South which by the 1840s and 1850s had begun to alter the political process, even if not in the way all antislavery advocates had envisioned.

To understand political change in Ohio in the 1850s, therefore, it is important to consider the immediate social and intellectual background to such change. Although it is difficult to correlate the political response to social change with complete precision, still there can be no doubt that by the late 1840s and early 1850s Ohio was undergoing the kinds of change that would be reflected in
politics.

As the first state to be carved out of the Northwest Territory Ohio received streams of westward-bound settlers in the early nineteenth century. Geographical and political factors helped to shape the patterns of settlement in this new frontier land. Northeastern Ohio, originally claimed by Connecticut, was designated as the "Western Reserve" for that state, and its towns and villages were in large measure originally settled by New Englanders. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 made the Western Reserve even more accessible to New Englanders and the transplanted Yankees of upstate New York. Central and Southern Ohio became the home of thousands of settlers from the Middle Atlantic and Southern states, who followed the natural transportation system of the Ohio River and its tributaries to their destinations. Northwest Ohio, the last part of the state to be settled, was still rather lightly populated by 1850. The site of Indian wars as late as the 1790s, its greater distance from the older centers of population as well as its swampy, heavy-soil terrain ensured that its settlement would be a slower, more demanding process.¹

By the 1840s and 1850s new trends in Ohio's population and economic patterns were evident. Although Ohio was still overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, a few signs of incipient industrialization and urbanization were beginning to appear. Cincinnati, the "Queen City of the West," had
been the leading city of the Old Northwest since its founding in 1790, and by 1850 had a population of 115,438. Its varied industries, especially meat packing, brewing, metal products, and clothing, turned out products for both local and national markets, and it was the commercial and transportation hub for a large area extending throughout the Ohio Valley. Extensive immigration, especially from Germany and Ireland, brought the Queen City's foreign-born population to 51,171 in 1850, or about 44% of Cincinnati's total population and about 23% of the total foreign-born population in the state of Ohio. The presence of this sizable immigrant group in Cincinnati had a definite impact on that city's politics in the 1850s.²

Other Ohio cities, especially Cleveland, Columbus, and Dayton, were also beginning to develop as centers of population and industry in the 1840s and 1850s. Proximity to water transportation (river, canal, or Lake Erie) and Ohio's distance from eastern manufacturing centers encouraged the commercial growth of the state's towns and cities in the 1840s, and in the 1850s the development of railroads presented another stimulus. In the 1850s southeastern Ohio witnessed vigorous growth in the coal and iron industry, taking advantage of that area's rich natural resources.³

Ohioans were also involved in social and cultural developments taking place throughout the United States in the antebellum years. Two of these in particular, antislavery
and nativism, had relevance for political upheaval in the
1850s. Antislavery sentiment had made its presence felt
in the late 1830s in the U.S. House of Representatives,
through the struggle over the gag rule on antislavery
petitions, and in national presidential politics beginning
with the campaign of the Liberty Party in 1840. Ohio had
been the scene of the dramatic Lane Rebels incident in
1834, when antislavery theological students withdrew en
masse from Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati and
enrolled at Oberlin College in the Western Reserve, contrib-
uting to that school's reputation as a center of antislavery
in antebellum America. Theodore Dwight Weld, one of the
Lane Rebels, and his band of fellow antislavery lecturers
crisscrossed the state in the 1830s, converting thousands
of Ohioans to antislavery and hardening countless others
in their hatred of this "fanatical" cause. The Western
Reserve became an important center of antislavery sentiment
in the North, regularly supporting antislavery candidates
for state and national office in the 1840s and 1850s. From
Ashtabula County in the northeast corner of the Reserve
came Joshua Reed Giddings, U.S. Congressman from 1840 until
1858, a courageous spokesman against slavery first in the
Whig, then Free Soil, and finally Republican parties; and
his one-time law partner Benjamin Franklin Wade, U.S.
Senator from 1851 until 1869, as fiercely a partisan Whig
and then Republican as he was fiercely antislavery.
Settled by persons of various geographical background, including New England but largely Middle Atlantic and Southern, the central and southern regions of Ohio were divided on the question of slavery. Citizens of all persuasions, from abolitionist through moderately antislavery to decidedly proslavery, resided there, with perhaps the dominant sentiment in the 1840s and early 1850s one of caution, compromise, and distrust of "radicals" on either side of the issue. Since the Free Soil party had little appeal in southern Ohio, the Whig party retained strength there longer than it did in the Western Reserve. After 1854 those Ohio Whigs who thought the new Republican party too radical on slavery and who hesitated to join it came mainly from central and southern Ohio.5

Nativism as an organized force first appeared in Ohio in the 1830s, when various Protestant clergymen in Cincinnati began to proclaim that growing numbers of Catholic immigrants would pose a threat to Protestant traditions and values in America. Part of the motivation for the founding of Lane Theological Seminary had been the desire to insure the triumph of Protestant orthodoxy in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Lyman Beecher, the seminary's first president, was extremely hostile to Catholicism (as well as any other "unorthodox" belief), and raised the specter of its danger in his famous address, "Plea for the West."6 These sentiments gradually filtered into Cincinnati
politics, so that by the 1840s anti-foreign and anti-Catholic voters comprised a recognizable element of the Whig party in Cincinnati, while Catholic immigrant voters were mainly to be found on the Democratic side. As increasing numbers of Catholic immigrants arrived in the later 1840s and early 1850s, nativism intensified, not only in Cincinnati but also in Cleveland. A less politically predictable group of immigrants, liberal and radical Germans fleeing from the abortive revolutions of 1848, the "48ers," began to arrive in Cincinnati and Cleveland in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The presence of these German immigrants, many of them Protestant or atheist, often rabidly anti-Catholic, added a new dimension to ethnocultural political patterns in these cities in the 1850s.7

Social, economic, and cultural change in mid-nineteenth century Ohio provides the background for understanding the transformation in Ohio politics in this period. By the late 1840s a relatively stable period of Whig-Democratic party competition was coming to a close. In Ohio the years from 1845 to 1853 witnessed the disintegration of the Jacksonian, or Second, Party System. During those years the Whig party weakened and then almost collapsed as a major party; the anti-slave extension Free Soil party emerged as a viable independent force; nativists gained strength, laying the groundwork for the sudden rise of the Know-Nothing party in 1854 and 1855; and the Democrats, although politically
dominant in Ohio in this transition period, were plagued by factional disputes and uncertainty over the direction their party would take. Overall, dissatisfaction with "politics as usual" increased in those years. More and more voters came to believe that differences between the two major parties were unimportant and that both existed mainly for the personal benefit of the politicians. The thousands of voters who turned to the Free Soil and somewhat later to the Know-Nothing parties believed that only through an alternative to the existing party structure could their point of view be heard.  

Close examination of Ohio politics in these years of political transition shows that the Free Soil party played a major role in undermining the existing political structure. Nationally the Free Soilers made their greatest achievement in 1848, capturing over 10% of the popular vote for their presidential candidate Martin Van Buren. By 1852, after the Compromise of 1850 had supposedly settled the slavery issue once and for all, the party could garner only 4.9% of the total national vote for its candidate, Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire. Despite its feeble national showing, however, the Free Soil party remained a key factor in Ohio politics after 1848. In 1849 it held the balance of power in a closely-divided Ohio legislature, and in a politically bold move aligned with the Democrats to elect Free Soiler Salmon P. Chase of Cincinnati to the U.S. Senate.
Since most Ohio Free Soilers came from a Whig background, however, the persistence of this third party cut more heavily into Whig strength than into Democratic numbers. In 1853, the last year of its independent existence, the Ohio Free Soil party broadened its program beyond that of opposition to slavery extension to include support for temperance legislation, black suffrage, and free trade. It made its best statewide showing ever that year, winning 17.8% of the vote in the governor's race while the losing Whig candidate was held to only 30.2%.\textsuperscript{9}

On January 4, 1854, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Democrat from Illinois and chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, introduced a bill to organize a portion of territory lying between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, encompassing present-day Kansas and Nebraska. This "Kansas-Nebraska" bill became controversial because it left the question of slavery in the territory to the residents themselves, according to the principle commonly described as "popular sovereignty." Since the territory in question was part of the Louisiana Purchase lying north of the 36°-30' line, Douglas's bill provided the opportunity to expand slavery into an area where it had been prohibited by the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Whatever were Douglas's precise motives in reopening the sensitive question of slavery in the western territories, his bill had immediate political repercussions. Northerners of Whig,
Democratic, and Free Soil persuasions condemned the bill as a violation of the Missouri Compromise, a threat to national peace, an affront to the principles of freedom and equality, and an aggressive move by slavery interests to expand their power and influence.  

One of the first formal protests against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill came on January 25, 1854, when there appeared the "Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress to the People of the United States." Written by Chase, it was signed by six Free Soil members of the House and Senate, including Ohioans Chase, Joshua Giddings, and Congressman Edward Wade of Cleveland. "Independent" or "Free Democracy" was the way Chase preferred to describe the Free Soil party ever since he had been sent to Washington in 1849 through a Democratic-Free Soil coalition. Chase had insisted that the best hope for Free Soilers was in a coalition with antislavery Democrats, and in pursuit of this he had even supported the Democratic candidate for Ohio governor in 1851 over the Free Soil candidate, to the anger of many Ohio Free Soilers. By the beginning of 1854, however, Ohio Democrats had an absolute majority in the state legislature and were not interested in a coalition with Free Soilers. While Congress debated the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in Washington, the Ohio legislature elected regular Democrat George F. Pugh to replace Chase in the Senate. However, the Free Soilers were about to enter
into another coalition movement that would eventually result in the new Republican party.

As opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill grew throughout the North, it began to take a definite organizational form. Protest meetings brought together Whigs, Free Soilers, and "anti-Nebraska" Democrats. There they found that their common opposition to the bill and to any further extension of slavery could form the basis for a new political movement. In Ohio such meetings occurred throughout the state in the late winter and spring of 1854, and plans were made for a state "Anti-Nebraska" convention to meet at Columbus on July 13. That date, sometimes called "Liberty Day," had symbolic importance to Ohio antislavery men, because on July 13, 1787 Congress had passed the Northwest Ordinance prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory.14

Although Democrats loyal to Douglas and the Democratic Pierce administration succeeded in enacting the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in May, 1854, the Anti-Nebraska movement continued to grow, and was on its way to becoming a major rival to the Democrats in the North, especially in light of the transition of many northern Whigs to the new coalition. On May 25 Ohio's leading Whig, Senator Benjamin F. Wade, announced his decision to join the anti-Nebraska movement.15 Already there was speculation on whether this movement was the beginning of a permanent new political party, and if so what form that party would take. William C.
Howells, editor of the Free Soil Ashtabula Sentinel, spoke for many Free Soilers from Whig backgrounds when he predicted that the new party would bring about the "total obliteration of distinctive lines between the old Whigs and Free Soilers," lines which had weakened both parties and prevented a strong unified antislavery party from taking shape.\textsuperscript{16} Chase, on the other hand, had no particular use for the Whigs. He thought it "vain" to expect a reconstruction of the Whig party on an antislavery basis, and instead continued to put his faith in an "independent democracy" made up of Free Soilers (or "Free Democrats" as he called them), regular Democrats now disgusted with the direction their party was taking, and perhaps some "liberal" Whigs.\textsuperscript{17} Chase realized that the party would have to move beyond simple opposition to a particular law: "No faith must be put in a mere AntiNebraska movement. We must adhere to a democratic organization, such as will bring in the German strength."\textsuperscript{18} Chase knew that up to this point the growing German population had been overwhelmingly Democratic, and he hoped that the new party could win over as many of the German immigrants as possible on the basis of an antislavery appeal. Yet Chase's later willingness to accept Know-Nothing support made achievement of this objective more difficult.

The state Anti-Nebraska convention meeting on July 13 nominated two candidates for state office, Joseph R. Swan, a Democrat with Free Soil sympathies, for justice
of the State Supreme Court, and Jacob Blickensderfer, a Whig, for the Board of Public Works. But the real test for the new movement would come in the state's twenty-one congressional races in 1854. One Democratic, five Whig, and two Free Soil incumbents received the nominations from Anti-Nebraska conventions in their districts. Four Democratic incumbents who had voted against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill nevertheless refused to leave their party and ran for re-election as regular Democrats. For doing so they were condemned by the Anti-Nebraska forces as no better than the four Democratic congressmen who had voted for the bill.\(^{19}\) Although the new movement included every Free Soiler in the state, the inclusion of scores of Whigs and Democrats with a variety of attitudes on slavery (apart from slavery extension) and race meant that the Free Soilers had to accept a general position which from their point of view was somewhat watered-down. Joshua Giddings, for example, had more difficulty obtaining renomination than would have been the case if he had been renominated strictly by the Free Soilers of his district.\(^{20}\)

The results were probably as astounding to the Anti-Nebraska men as they were to anyone else. The new movement swept the election, winning every congressional seat as well as the two state offices. Only six of Ohio's eighty-eight counties gave the Democratic congressional candidate a majority. When the results of the 1852 and
FIGURE 1

OHIO CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, 1854,
AND OHIO CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, 1852-1862

- County with Democratic majority

- County with Anti-Nebraska majority

FIGURE 2

STRENGTH OF PARTY PREFERENCE IN OHIO COUNTIES,
1832 - 1852

- 40 Most Democratic Counties (70%-40% Democratic)
- 39 Most Whig Counties (76%-52% Whig)
- 9 Counties Reporting in less than half of elections, 1832-1852 (Counties formed after 1832)

1854 congressional elections are compared the magnitude of the anti-Nebraska victory becomes more apparent. The Democratic percentage of the total state congressional vote declined by 13.1% from 1852 to 1854; all but five counties registered a Democratic decline. Further comparison of the 1852-1854 shift with the political trends of the preceding twenty years reveals that the anti-Nebraska coalition had an even more disruptive impact on the traditionally Democratic counties than it did on the traditionally Whig ones. The Democratic decline in the former group was 17.6% while in the latter group it was only 8.2%.

**TABLE 1**

**PARTISAN SHIFT IN OHIO CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, 1852-1854**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Democratic in</th>
<th>&quot;Democratic&quot; Counties</th>
<th>&quot;Whig&quot; Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is interesting to note also that the only five counties in which Democrats increased their congressional percentages from 1852 to 1854 were all located in the strongly Whig and Free Soil Western Reserve, and were also
the five counties in Ohio which had given a plurality to the Free Soil Congressional candidate in 1852. In 1854, with a two-man instead of a three-man race, Free Soil Congressmen Edward Wade and Joshua Giddings successfully ran for their seats on the Anti-Nebraska ticket, and their districts, the 19th and 20th respectively, included four of these five counties. With no separate Whig candidates running, possibly some conservative Whigs in these counties who could not support the "radical" Wade or Giddings either stayed home or cast their ballots for the Democratic candidate.

In selecting their congressional candidates in 1854, the Anti-Nebraska forces showed political acumen in their effort to woo former Democrats as well as former Whigs and Free Soilers. For example, Timothy C. Day, a popular and well-known Cincinnati Democrat, ran in the 1st District, which included the eastern half of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. He had taken the lead in exposing corruption in the Hamilton County Democratic Party, especially the existence of a secret "Miami tribe" of politicians and courthouse officials who conspired to exclude naturalized citizens from running for office as Democrats. The "anti-Miami" Democrats naturally attracted support from foreign-born Democrats in Cincinnati, especially from the German "48ers," and swept the county elections in 1852. In 1854 Day and a number of other "anti-Miami" Democrats broke with their party over the Kansas-Nebraska bill and joined
the new coalition. Thus Day appeared to be the ideal candidate to win over disgruntled Democrats and the foreign-born in Cincinnati in 1854.\footnote{21}

In three other strongly Democratic congressional districts the anti-Nebraska forces also refrained from nominating old Whigs in 1854. In the fourth district in western Ohio Democratic Congressman Matthias H. Nichols of Lima, who had received 53.8\% of the vote in 1852, bolted from the Democratic party over the Kansas-Nebraska bill and received the anti-Nebraska nomination. In the adjoining fifth district in northwest Ohio a political novice, Richard Mott, was the successful candidate. He was a Quaker businessman from Toledo, a man of decided antislavery leanings who became a strong supporter of Salmon P. Chase.\footnote{22} In the sixth district in southern Ohio, comprising four counties east of Cincinnati and just north of the Ohio River all of which had been predominantly Democratic from 1832 to 1852, the anti-Nebraska nominee was Jonas Emrie of Hillsboro, former editor of the Democratic Hillsboro Gazette.\footnote{23}

Even as the anti-Nebraska movement was enjoying its first success, ostensibly because Ohioans were outraged by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Know-Nothings were increasing in number in Ohio, and nativism was fast becoming political issue. Democratic newspapers had raised the issue in the 1854 campaign, charging that the anti-Nebraska coalition
endorsed nativism, and in fact most Ohio Know-Nothings did support the anti-Nebraska candidates in 1854.\textsuperscript{24} Of the twenty-one successful anti-Nebraska congressmen, all but six were identified with the Know-Nothing bloc in the 34th Congress (1855-57).\textsuperscript{25} Nativism presented both an opportunity and a threat to the emerging anti-Nebraska or Republican party: an opportunity to bring in those thousands of Ohio Protestants who now gave their political allegiances to Know-Nothingsm, a potential threat to drive away the foreign-born who might otherwise join the Republican party on antislavery grounds. The 1854 congressional returns gave mixed signals on this question. In Cincinnati, three of the six wards where German or Irish immigrants constituted a sizable percentage gave the Democratic congressional candidate a majority, while the other three gave the anti-Nebraska candidate the majority.\textsuperscript{26} It was the question of nativism and the role of the Know-Nothings in the Ohio Republican party which preoccupied the minds of the party leadership in 1855.
NOTES: CHAPTER ONE


pp. 156-72. The most comprehensive study of the founding of Lane Seminary is Lawrence T. Lesick, The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1980).


11. Ohio Columbian (Columbus), February 1, 1854. The Ohio Columbian was a Free Soil newspaper which supported Chase's concept of a Free Soil-Democratic alliance.


15. Trefousse, p. 91.

16. William C. Howells to Samuel Galloway, June 12, 1854,
Samuel Galloway Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio (hereafter cited as OHS).

17. Chase to Norton Townsend, February 10, 1854, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (hereafter cited as HSP); Chase to James W. Grimes, April 29, 1854, Chase Papers, HSP.

18. Chase to Norton Townsend, March 9, 1854, Chase Papers, HSP.


24. Thomas W. Kremm, "The Old Order Trembles: The Formation of the Republican Party in Ohio," Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin, XXXVI (Fall 1978), p. 211. The Anti-Nebraska press recognized the support Know-Nothings gave to the fusion movement in 1854, but there was no mention of nativism in any of the resolutions adopted by the state Anti-Nebraska convention that year. At least in 1854 the cooperation between nativists and others in the new party was informal and unofficial. See Smith, I, 21-26; Ohio State Journal (Columbus), July 8, 1854.

Lorain, and former Free Soilers Edward Wade and Joshua Giddings.

THE CHALLENGE OF NATIVISM, 1854-1855

Recent political historians have noted that often the political attitudes and concerns of elite and mass groups at any given time may be quite different, and that the methods of traditional political historiography overemphasize elite perceptions and viewpoints. If one views Ohio Republican politics in 1854 and 1855 solely from the perspective of the leadership elite, the issue of slavery and the effort to prevent its expansion appear dominant. Men such as Salmon P. Chase, Joshua Giddings, and Benjamin Wade were tireless in their enunciation of the antislavery goals of the new party, and they, unlike the party rank-and-file, have left to historical researchers full records of their thoughts and actions. Extending this dichotomy between elite and mass opinion to another group of interest to early Republicans, the German-American immigrants, one again finds antislavery ideology among an elite, articulate, and politically sophisticated group, the liberal and radical "48ers," including Cincinnatians Charles Reemelin, Friedrich Hassaurek, and Stephen Molitor. It is more difficult to ascertain the viewpoints of the typical German-American
immigrant. The ballot box was in many instances the only way he could leave his imprint on the historical record, and even through analysis of election returns the researcher cannot know an individual's precise feelings and perceptions, but can only surmise the general outlook of a large group of people.

Nevertheless the Ohio Republican leadership elite, including elected officials, members of party committees, and editors of several leading newspapers, did devote considerable attention to the rise of the Know-Nothing movement in 1854 and 1855. They sought to understand its origins, its ideology, and its probable political impact. They considered whether or not the movement seemed justified in its goals and in its methods. Their reactions were varied and complex, but three broad positions emerged. One view looked upon Know-Nothingsm with considerable favor, while another was harsh with opposition. Many former Whigs from central and southern Ohio took a positive attitude, while former Democrats and Free Soilers in northern Ohio generally had a negative viewpoint. Between these two approaches a third position developed which found a way to make Republicanism attractive to nativists while yet keeping a clear distinction between the aims and goals of the Republicans and Know-Nothings. Salmon P. Chase, together with his close political associates James M. Ashley of Toledo and Oran Follett, editor of the Ohio State Journal, formulated
this mediating position and saw it come to be the working approach of Ohio Republicans to the challenge of nativism. Adherents of the more positive and more negative positions gradually moved toward the middle ground staked out by Chase, but for different reasons. Former Democrats and Free Soilers generally trusted and admired Chase, and proved willing to cooperate with the Know-Nothings once they saw that to do so would lead to Chase's election as governor without jeopardizing the antislavery extension position of the party. Former Whigs who had warmly praised Know-Nothingism in 1854 became more circumspect after the Cincinnati election riot of April 1855, an event which somewhat altered their perception of the Know-Nothings.

In general the Know-Nothing party of the mid-1850s lacked leadership of a caliber equal to that of the emerging Republican party. At least in the North it was initially a movement of the politically inarticulate, typically native-stock Protestants of modest means who had previously voted, usually Whig, but who had little political influence or power.² Disillusioned with the existing parties, perhaps under personal economic pressure, and convinced that the Catholic immigrant was the source of threatening social change, the Know-Nothing voter reacted by joining a new party where his point of view could be aired and where his presence seemed to count for something. Completely bypassing the existing political structures, the secret
Know-Nothings directly nominated their own members as candidates for local office, and in some states began to build effective state organizations. The Know-Nothings saw danger from the immigrant in two broad areas, politics and culture. In politics they insisted that the Roman Catholic hierarchy, up to and including the pope, would exercise undue influence on the votes of the Catholic immigrants, but then rather paradoxically they also charged that corrupt Democratic politicians manipulated the immigrant vote, rushing to the polls newly-arrived immigrants without proper naturalization papers in order to insure Democratic victories. For remedies they proposed more stringent residency requirements for voting, some going so far as to demand a waiting period of twenty-one years before naturalized citizens could vote. Personally Know-Nothings pledged themselves not to support any Catholic or foreign-born candidate for public office. 3

In the area of culture the Know-Nothings were incensed by Catholic criticism of the public schools as Protestant in character and by the Catholic preference for parochial schools. Know-Nothings regarded the public school as almost sacred institutions, the ideal setting for indoctrinating immigrants into "true Americanism." They also objected to immigrant fraternal societies as hindrances to full assimilation, and clashed with German and Irish immigrants over the rising issue of temperance. The image of
a German beer garden full of customers enjoying Sunday as a
day of relaxation was culturally threatening to the Protes-
tant determined to enforce upon the whole society his ideal
of total abstinence and the stern "Puritan" observance of
the Sabbath. 4

Although the major thrust of Know-Nothing nativism was
anti-Catholic, there was also another strain, that of anti-
radicalism, and this was usually directed at one particular
group of immigrants, the German "48ers." 5 As a secondary
concern of nativists, anti-radicalism was somewhat muted in
1854, and in fact it was in the interest of the anti-
Nebraska coalition to excise this issue because of the wedge
it could drive between two parts of that coalition, the
Know-Nothings and the "48ers." For the great majority of
Know-Nothings these two perspectives, anti-Catholicism and
anti-radicalism, were always more important than anti-
foreignism per se. Few Know-Nothings objected to Protestant
immigration from the British Isles, for example, and in
fact some English, Welsh, and Scottish immigrants joined
Know-Nothing lodges. 6 The real demand of the Know-Nothing
concerning the immigrant was not his exclusion, but his
full assimilation into the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant
way of life, which the Know-Nothings regarded as "truly
American." Immigrants who already conformed to that
pattern, such as British Protestants, or who might do so
with only a few adjustments, such as German Protestants
(excepting political radicals), could win Know-Nothing acceptance.

For the Know-Nothings, "anti" positions were to some extent symbolic protest against social change which they deplored but could neither fully understand nor control. Know-Nothings, especially in an urban setting such as Cincinnati, nostalgically yearned for an older, simpler way of life, one of social and cultural homogeneity, personal economic security, and the support of traditional human roles and relationships. James (Pap) Taylor, ardent nativist and editor of the Cincinnati Times, spoke for thousands when he recalled rugged pioneer days and reminded women that their duties and responsibilities were in the home.² He lamented that inflation was a particular burden upon the small businessman and shopkeeper, and sharply attacked all sorts of "sharp speculators" who benefited from inflation.³ The Lancaster Gazette nostalgically described the "real America": "The old farm house, the lawn, the fields, the lowing cattle on a summer's eve."⁴ Trying to understand why things were not quite right, the editor came up with a typically nativist answer: while "Americans" were divided and weakened by party and factional disputes, the Roman Catholic Church in America was unified, strong, and growing.⁵ Thus the nativists projected their inchoate fears and apprehensions upon a readily identifiable "foreign" entity which they made the source of all that was
unsettling. As David Brion Davis has observed, the Know-Nothing in his zeal to purge the supposed source of his discontent took on the very qualities he criticized in his foe, the Catholic Church: rigid dogmatism, unconditional loyalty, and intolerance.11

Finally, the Ohio Know-Nothings witnessed the same phenomenon found often in other political groups: the divergence in point of view and strategy between leader and follower, or between elite and mass. The original Ohio Know-Nothing leadership in 1854 and 1855, including men such as Thomas Spooner and Thomas Ford, lacked the prominence and prestige of Chase, Wade, or Giddings, but they had something Republican leaders considered valuable: influence on voters. Spooner, the head of the state organization in 1854 and 1855, was important enough to the anti-Nebraska coalition to win its endorsement in a race for county office in Hamilton County (Cincinnati) in 1854, and by 1855 he emerged as an important political broker, conferring frequently with Chase on how Know-Nothings might support the Republican state ticket in 1855.12 That ticket included Thomas Ford as the candidate for lieutenant-governor and Know-Nothing candidates for all other state offices except governor, which went to Chase. By the end of 1855 Spooner, Ford, and other Know-Nothing leaders had abandoned the American party, fully integrating their supporters into the new Republican party. They were Republicans because
of their genuine opposition to the expansion of slavery, and because they anticipated receiving a measure of influence and power in the new party.\textsuperscript{13} With but a few exceptions all the Anti-Nebraska Congressmen seeking re-election in 1856 as Republicans tried to minimize their Know-Nothing connections, arguing that the Republican party was based upon opposition to slavery, not the immigrant. For this they were severely censured by the \textit{Cincinnati Times}, and in a number of districts separate Know-Nothing congressional candidates ran against Republicans in 1856.\textsuperscript{14}

Even as the original Know-Nothing leadership was deserting the little tugboat of Know-Nothingism for the larger Republican battleship, a new leadership group rose to influence within Know-Nothing ranks. Beginning with the gubernatorial candidacy of Allen Trimble, a Whig, in 1855, the Know-Nothing party became the means for conservative Whigs who despised "abolitionists" like Chase, Wade, and Giddings to maintain a separate political identity. This group rallied diehard Whigs and Know-Nothings in Ohio to the presidential candidacy of former Whig President Millard Fillmore in 1856, and in 1860 a small number remained to carry on old Whiggism under the banner of the Constitutional Union Party.\textsuperscript{15}

Ohio Republicans outside the ranks of Know-Nothingism reacted variously to this movement. Sometimes individuals had ambivalent perceptions and feelings, for nativism
as expressed through the Know-Nothing movement was a complex set of beliefs touching upon cultural values, political structures, and social and economic patterns. Nativism could be perceived differently by different people: as a means of cultural preservation, as a by-product of political instability, or as some other process. In examining Republican attitudes, however, three broad categories emerge: 1) positive support and approval; 2) negative condemnation and disavowal; and 3) a qualified acceptance based upon the premise that Republicans would accept Know-Nothing support without thereby incorporating a nativist ideology. Within each of these three categories individuals differed among themselves on specific points; each of the categories should be viewed as a range of opinions rather than a fixed point. Some Republicans who supported Know-Nothing concepts in a general sense were nevertheless quite critical of specific aspects of the movement, and some who boldly denounced political Know-Nothingism nonetheless gave evidence from time to time of cultural attitudes and assumptions similar to those of the nativists. Finally, Republicans who defined their position as one of qualified acceptance of Know-Nothingism, the most prominent of whom was Salmon P. Chase, held attitudes that are somewhat hard to comprehend completely, possibly reflecting genuine ambivalence or conscious political posturing, or some combination of both.
As the Know-Nothings came more and more to the attention of Ohio politicians in 1854, three leading anti-Nebraska newspapers all had positive things to say about it. The *Cincinnati Gazette* and the Columbus *Ohio State Journal*, two well-established Whig journals edited respectively by William Schouler and Oran Follett, and the newer *Cleveland Leader*, a Free Soil newspaper edited by Joseph Medill, all praised the Know-Nothings, with the *Gazette* being the most outspoken. According to Schouler the Know-Nothings represented a fresh, beneficial force in an otherwise dismal political environment. By counteracting the demagogic political behavior of the Democrats, who had encouraged immigrant bloc voting (sometimes fraudulently), abused political patronage, and lowered the standards of political discourse, the Know-Nothings would perform a vital service, ridding the public of incompetent and corrupt officials, restoring truth, integrity, and virtue to political rhetoric, and promoting the necessary assimilation of immigrants into the political mainstream as individuals and not as groups.\(^16\)

If the Know-Nothings could "sweep" Cincinnati politics it would be a "God-send," giving the "powers that be a touch of the broom handle."\(^17\) The *Ohio State Journal* likewise applauded the Know-Nothings for their "idealism" and their demand for truth and integrity in the political process, while the *Cleveland Leader* emphasized that Know-Nothingism would rid politics of corrupting "outside
influence."\textsuperscript{18} All three editors would have agreed with the observation of the \textit{Sandusky Commercial-Register} that the Know-Nothing movement would "crush out demagogues who made a trade of politics."\textsuperscript{19}

The "outside influence" of which the \textit{Cleveland Leader} spoke particularly included the Roman Catholic Church, usually in the form of an unproven but persistent charge that the Church influenced the way its members voted in an improper and "unAmerican" way. In its ecclesiastical structure Catholicism was "despotic," hence it was naturally the ally of political absolutism and monarchism, not of democracy, asserted the \textit{Ohio State Journal}.\textsuperscript{20} Whatever the merits of the religious teaching of the Catholic Church, its political orientation was at odds with "traditional American" values, and so its political influence was pernicious. Ideally, immigrants should be rapidly assimilated into the American ethos of democratic individualism and Protestant social morality, and not be encouraged to maintain a separate ethnic identity or presume that they had perfect freedom to carry on distinctive cultural styles of life.\textsuperscript{21} This was the heart of nativist ideology, whether expressed by a Know-Nothing or by a nativist-minded Republican.

Even Republicans basically sympathetic to the Know-Nothings recognized some disturbing aspects of the movement, especially its penchant for secrecy and for approaching every issue in an absolute, dogmatic way. However,
Know-Nothing secrecy could be justified (or excused) by pointing to secrecy within the Catholic Church, reasoning that "it takes fire to fight fire."\textsuperscript{22} To nativists the term "Jesuitical" was a special term of opprobrium for the Church, and the "secrecy" of the Jesuit order was singled out for particular denunciation. Know-Nothing secrecy was necessary to counteract the secrecy of its opponent, and in fact was its "natural result."\textsuperscript{23} The \textit{Ohio State Journal} warned immigrants who objected to Know-Nothingism that their own "clannishness" was partly to blame, and that the remedy was for them to seek full and rapid assimilation into the native majority.\textsuperscript{24} The \textit{Cleveland Leader} was confident that secrecy would not be a permanent feature of Know-Nothingism: "when [its] enemies are put down the order will exhibit the machinery that accomplished the work."\textsuperscript{25}

Pro-nativist Republicans reflected the values and perspectives that were articulated in Ohio Protestant churches in the mid-1850s. The increasing interest of northern Protestant churches in the slavery controversy in the 1850s has been noted, along with the moral support many church spokesmen gave to the Republican Party in its first national campaign in 1856, causing Democrats like Stephen A. Douglas to condemn church "meddling" in politics.\textsuperscript{26} However, these same churchmen who were antislavery could also be pro-nativist. The Methodist Episcopal Church was the largest Protestant denomination in Ohio in the 1850s,
and the editors of its weekly journal, the *Western Christian Advocate*, seldom hesitated to venture political comment if the issues were of concern to them. The Know-Nothings, declared the *Advocate*, "are calculated to do much good in saving the country from Popish misrule." The editor thought it acceptable for Protestants to join the Know-Nothing party in order to protect "American principles." Ohio Methodists appointed a "Committee on Romanism" to assess the growing danger. The *Advocate* argued that one could not be a good Catholic and a good American citizen at the same time, because the principles defining each position were so different. Protestant (or "American") and Catholic perspectives clashed on a variety of points - on Bible reading in the public schools, on temperance legislation, on Sabbath observance, and on the ownership of church property (whether in lay or clerical hands). On one point the *Advocate* took a strong position on which most Republican leaders demurred: it condemned the free-thinking German agnostics and atheists about as strongly as it condemned Roman Catholics.

Republican support for the Know-Nothing movement in 1854 and early 1855 can be understood in light of the anti-Catholic overtones in the evangelical Protestantism of the day, and as a pragmatic response of somewhat frustrated practical politicians who welcomed any way to counteract a formidable Democratic party. Whigs and Free
Soilers saw that the Democracy had been more successful in wooing immigrant votes; and that as a result the strength of antislavery and protemperance sentiment had been blunted. The Ohio State Journal wondered why most Catholics would support "slave Democracy," and concluded that both groups must be against true republican government.\textsuperscript{34} Compared to the Know-Nothings, however, these Republicans could still take a somewhat more detached and discriminating view of political events, seeing that every immigrant was not immune to the appeal of the Anti-Nebraska, anti-slave extension cause, and that everything the Know-Nothings did was not admirable.\textsuperscript{35}

Republican support for Know-Nothings continued in 1855, but it cooled noticeably following the Cincinnati election day riot in April of that year. In the course of municipal elections in the Queen City, which included a heated race for mayor between Democrat James Faran and Know-Nothing James (Pap) Taylor of the Cincinnati Times, charges of ballot box fraud led to street fighting between nativists and immigrants. Nativist gangs, which even the Gazette admitted included some rather unsavory types, invaded the German neighborhoods destroying ballots and attacking bystanders. Gradually the police restored order, but the incident cast the Cincinnati Know-Nothings in a somewhat altered light.\textsuperscript{36} As early as January 1855 the Gazette had warned that "Party hackism" was creeping into the
American Reform Party, the official name of the Know-Nothing-dominated anti-Democratic coalition in Cincinnati. Aspiring politicians were lining up for favors, demanding places on the ticket, and disregarding the "high moral plane" that should characterize the movement. Shocked by the "disgraceful" election day rioting, the Gazette was disappointed that the Know-Nothings had been soundly defeated, but admitted that nativists had largely themselves to blame. The ticket was not attractive to foreign-born Protestants, nor to the "high-toned conservative men" of Cincinnati. Furthermore, "it had not the gloss or the order of pure truth. It bore a hackneyed look. It smelt of the shop. There were office seekers upon it. It was not composed of the best men of the city . . . ." The Western Christian Advocate saw the problem to be one of "bad office seekers [who] crept into the otherwise morally outstanding American party." The Ohio State Journal deplored the violence, and hoped that in its wake the Know-Nothings would see the need to discriminate among different classes of foreigners, not condemning all of them equally, and the need to go beyond the Know-Nothing membership in selecting and endorsing candidates for office.

The reactions of these heretofore very sympathetic Republicans to the Cincinnati riot is instructive regarding the nature of Know-Nothingism. The behavior of the Cincinnati Know-Nothings suggests that they were politically
inexperienced, not of high social standing in the community, indiscriminately hostile to all foreign immigrants (except perhaps British Protestants), "anti-establishment" in outlook, and willing to countenance violent methods in the pursuit of party goals. These attributes, even if true of only a portion of the Know-Nothings, were definitely not those of the prominent, respectable Whig-Republican admirers of Know-Nothingism. After the riot they tempered their enthusiasm, emphasizing that the Know-Nothings were welcome in the Republican coalition, and that their general concerns were still valid, but also calling more forcefully upon the Know-Nothings to be rid of their secrecy, their "fanaticism," and their wholesale proscription of all foreigners. Editors Schouler and Follett still defended the Know-Nothings against bitter criticism now coming from some Republicans as well as from Democrats, but the thrust of their argument was that Know-Nothings were politically vital to the success of Republicanism and should not be driven out of the fold. The slave power, rather than Catholicism, was now the greater threat to the republic, and Know-Nothings could be mobilized against one as well as against the other.

From the beginning of the Know-Nothing movement in Ohio some Republicans had little respect for it, either as a corrective to "unAmerican" forces or as a prospective ally in a new political party. These anti-nativist
Republicans came largely from Free Soil or Democratic backgrounds; thus their intense opposition to Know-Nothings grew out of their goals and aspirations for the new Republican party. Compared to Whig-Republicans, their opposition to the Democrats was more sharply focused on slavery issues, and they were more prone to see the Republican party, at least initially, as a one-issue party, solely devoted to blocking any further expansion of slavery. They wanted the new party to have the broadest possible appeal to anti-slavery men of whatever ethnic, religious, social, or political background, and did not want the party to be encumbered with any "extraneous" positions which would drive potential adherents away. More ideological than the former Whigs, the anti-nativist Republicans were not comfortable with the prospect of political brokers putting together a fusion of several distinct anti-Democratic parties. This was too reminiscent of the old politics, in which parties lacked clear ideological focus and were built on compromise and on the drawing power of personality. In an exchange with Oran Follett, Joshua Giddings expressed the position of the anti-nativist. Giddings held that Republicans must rid themselves of all previous political affiliations and must be single-mindedly devoted to the containment and eventual destruction of slavery. Follett argued for a more pluralistic party, in which differing perspectives on non-slavery issues could be maintained and promoted.
The anti-nativist attack upon the Know-Nothing party centered on three basic points: first, that the nativist philosophy was fundamentally wrong on principle; secondly, that Know-Nothing tactics and methods, such as secrecy, intimidation, and wholesale proscription of all immigrants, were reprehensible; and finally, that the Know-Nothing party was at best an unwitting, and at worst a conscious ally, of the southern slaveholder in his attempt to blunt the force of opposition to slavery as expressed in the Republican party. Not everyone who is considered in this study to be an anti-nativist expressed all three of these criticisms. Some were fervently opposed to the Know-Nothing party as an allegedly insidious device of the slaveholders, but expressed anti-Catholic views almost as strongly as Know-Nothings. Former Free Soiler Edward Wade saw Know-Nothings as an unwanted intrusion into Ohio politics, but then added that after defeating slavery "we will then easily take care of the papists, and whoever else may be dangerous to impartial civil liberty." Other Republicans opposed to Know-Nothings as a full-fledged political party nevertheless endorsed or at least expressed willingness to consider some of the specific Know-Nothing proposals on voting procedures, ownership of church property, and other issues. They simply wanted these things to take a back seat to slavery for the time being. Likewise, opposition to Know-Nothings, even on philosophical
grounds, did not imply that these Republicans were particularly sympathetic to Catholicism as a religion. Largely Protestant and thus influenced to some degree by the general tenor of evangelical anti-Catholicism, they often showed a lack of understanding or generosity toward their Catholic neighbors. The editor of the *Ohio Columbian* prefaced a general rebuke of Know-Nothingism by stating that as a Protestant he had "no special love for Catholics," and that he, too, was "wary of Jesuitism and intolerance." Anti-nativist Republicans could also become alarmed at the success Democrats had in winning immigrant support. Joshua Giddings was led to exclaim that "many ignorant, dissipated, vicious foreigners reach our country." He hastened to add that the solution was not the proscriptive measures advocated by Know-Nothings, but rather the slower task of changing immigrant attitudes and voting patterns.49

It is nonetheless true that antinativist Republicans often denounced the Know-Nothings. E.S. Hamlin, editor of the *Ohio Columbian* and close personal friend of Salmon P. Chase, called the nativist position "fundamentally wrong." It was a direct assault on the very basis of American liberty, which was complete "civil, political, and religious equality."50 He further charged that Know-Nothings were fanatical and distorted the truth, greatly exaggerating the increase in the immigrant and Catholic populations and arousing groundless fears in the minds of Protestant
citizens. Joshua Giddings described Know-Nothings as being "out of touch with the moral progress of the nineteenth century." Democrat-turned-Republican Timothy C. Day of Cincinnati expressed his opposition to Know-Nothingism in eloquent terms:

If an ardent love of freedom and free institutions and antagonism to the extension of the area of slavery, makes me an American, I am one. If a true, unselfish love of this Union, as framed and destined by its fathers, makes me an American, I am one. . . If, on the contrary, it required, to constitute an American, that I should be a bigot in religion; that I should look coldly upon the liberal foreigner who seeks our shores to escape the crushing tyrannies of his native land - that I should subscribe to dogmas, either political or religious, with which I have no affinity; if it requires that I should forget the living present and blind myself to the dawning future in old womanish fears, which I do not feel, then I am not an American. If the American [Know-Nothing] party of the free states, designs to be the Pharisee of organizations, then its fate is sealed. With such a design it cannot be the ally of the Republican party.

The Ashtabula Sentinel worried that the triumph of a nativist mentality would make the United States appear hypocritical in the eyes of the rest of the world, proclaiming the moral superiority of American democratic institutions but practicing the politics of intolerance, prejudice, and fear. The Sentinel ridiculed the Know-Nothing claim that it stood for patriotism and high moral principle, and predicted that Western Reserve voters would not be deceived into supporting such a narrow-minded platform. Nevertheless the Sentinel also felt uncomfortable with immigrant bloc
voting as one sign of ethnic consciousness, and urged full assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream of politics as individuals, making decisions for themselves and not on the basis of group preferences.\textsuperscript{54}

Anti-nativist Republicans were even more likely to criticize the Know-Nothings for their tactics than for their overall philosophy. The \textit{Ashtabula Sentinel} strongly objected to the secrecy of the Know-Nothings and to their practice of taking binding oaths from members. One part of the oath pledged members to favor preservation of the Union at any cost, which the \textit{Sentinel} regarded as evidence of proslavery influence. How could other Republicans deal on an equal, forthright basis with a group having such arbitrary practices?\textsuperscript{55} Using Biblical imagery, the \textit{Ohio Columbian} observed that "only evil shuns the light of day" while "truth is proclaimed openly from the housetops," and that "everything that is hidden shall be revealed."\textsuperscript{56} Nor were anti-nativist Republicans particularly impressed with the alleged political clout of the Know-Nothings. They charged that the Know-Nothings drove away as many potential anti-Nebraska voters in 1854 as they added, and that their presence in the coalition "prejudiced the moral effect of the victory" by making it less than a purely antislavery triumph.\textsuperscript{57} Antislavery immigrants would hesitate to join a Republican party with such a nativist tinge. The \textit{Ohio Columbian} pointed to the Cincinnati municipal elections
in April, 1855 as proof of this, and warned that the riot there gave even more reason for Republicans to hold the Know-Nothings at arms-length. 58

Finally, anti-nativist Republicans focused their attack upon what they saw as the central problem of Know-Nothings, its potential to turn the Republican party away from the issue of slavery. Hamlin of the Columbian observed that the Know-Nothings' "fundamental principles" were the same as those of the "slave power," and that the movement could not be trusted to be genuinely opposed to slavery, but was in danger of becoming a tool of southern interests.59 Anti-slavery Republicans were suspicious of any movement such as Know-Nothingsm which could flourish in both North and South despite the growing sectional antagonism. This led them to fear that the Know-Nothings would suppress debate on slavery within their ranks in order to keep a unified national party. The Sentinel hoped that if Ohio Know-Nothings were genuinely antislavery they would come to see the proslavery character of the national party and make a clean break over to authentic Republicanism.60

The anti-nativist Republicans often assumed a tone of moral superiority in condemning Know-Nothingsm, and regarded themselves as the conscience of the emerging Republican party, keeping it true to high ideals and forthright principle. "We are to the Republicans what the Liberty men were to the Free Soil party in 1848, and will
not be driven out," declared the **Ashtabula Sentinel**, referring to a parallel situation in which "true" antislavery men had tried to keep a broader and less "pure" coalition committed to its principles.\(^{61}\) By contrast, **Know-Nothings** was a "low, mean scheme of demagogues and office hunters."\(^{62}\) To the Republicans more sympathetic to the Know-Nothings the stance of these Free Soil, anti-nativist Republicans seemed one of Puritanical self-righteousness. W.B. Fairchild of Xenia, a Whig-Republican friendly to the Know-Nothings described the antinativists' self-concept this way: "The earth is the Lord and belongs to his saints. We are his saints, etc."\(^{63}\) Perhaps the Know-Nothings did not have a monopoly on self-righteous pride and "fanaticism."

Discussion of anti-nativism in the Ohio Republican party would be incomplete without reference to the views of the German-Americans in the party, especially the liberal and radical "48ers." Men such as Friedrich Hausserek, Charles Reemelin, and Stephen Molitor in Cincinnati and John Klippart and Christian Essellen in Cleveland spoke out forcefully against the Know-Nothings' intolerance, fanaticism, wholesale proscription of all foreigners, and efforts to enforce a Protestant social morality (temperance, school Bible reading) upon all. Klippart and Essellen chided the nativists for their seeming ignorance of the international roots of American culture, and reminded them that American nationality was based upon
"devotion to common principles," and not upon blood lines.\textsuperscript{64} These German-Americans wanted to keep the focus of the new party firmly on the slavery question, avoiding issues like temperance which would only divide immigrants and natives.\textsuperscript{65} However, it should also be noted that this particular group of immigrants was as fervently anti-Catholic as it was anti-nativist, and so could easily form links with other Republicans who were anti-nativist and anti-Catholic.

The leaders of the Catholic Church in Ohio in the 1850s condemned these radical German immigrants as strongly as they did the Know-Nothings. The Catholic Telegraph of Cincinnati warned that the "48'ers" were both atheist and socialist in their thinking, and therefore hostile to two traditional American values, belief in God and belief in private property. As evidence the Telegraph cited the manifesto issued by a Cincinnati meeting of these radicals, which among other things demanded the exclusion of religion from all public activities, such as prayer at swearing-in ceremonies or Bible-reading in public schools, and the taxation of all church property.\textsuperscript{66} The editor of this journal, Edward Purcell, brother of Cincinnati's archbishop John Purcell, even blamed the German radicals for some of the Know-Nothing mob violence in the Queen City. He maintained that the "48'ers" incited Protestant nativists to harrass Catholics and destroy church property.\textsuperscript{67}
The rise of nativist activity in the 1850s deeply distressed the Purcells, who emphasized that Catholics were sober, hard-working, patriotic Americans who wished to live in peace with their Protestant neighbors. They maintained the right of Catholics to choose a parochial school education for their children, but were not opposed to taxation for the support of public schools. They encouraged Catholic immigrants to cultivate a sense of being citizens of a new country and turn away from preoccupation with their European heritage.\(^{68}\) On state election day in 1857 the \textit{Telegraph} pointed out that all priests in the archdiocese were away on their annual retreat, and therefore not meddling in politics or even voting, quite unlike many Protestant clergymen.\(^{69}\) There was perhaps a certain note of defensive-ness in all this, a determination to prove that Catholics were just as "American" as Protestants, and therefore socially and politically conservative. Indeed the Know-Nothings, not the Catholics, represented the real threat to social and political stability, because the Know-Nothings represented mob spirit, anti-law and order, and anti-property. That the \textit{Cincinnati Gazette}, long a spokesman for the city's middle-class Whigs and formerly rather tolerant of Catholics, would now find favor with Know-Nothingism was disturbing.\(^{70}\) The \textit{Telegraph} warned:

\[\ldots\] there are many of another class who look with indifference on this course of the bigots,
because, first they have no love for the Catholics; and secondly, think, very foolishly, that when these are out of the way there will be an end to violence. They act thoughtlessly. The mob-spirit does not make distinctions; and they will find, in the end, that where they were encouraging it in order to be rid of Catholics, they were cheering men for scuttling the vessel in which they themselves were riding over the waters of the political ocean. . . . Either a love of justice, of moderation, a respect for law and attachment to right, must be promoted, or else our citizens must make up their minds to pass through the terrors of anarchy to the stagnancy of military despotism. Republicanism and a spirit of riot are incompatible. 71

It would be a mistake to conclude that opposition to the Know-Nothings thereby implied tolerance toward the Catholic Church. Anti-Catholicism in the early Republican party was a broad but shallow stream, present but not decisive in shaping the party ideology. Republican attitudes toward Know-Nothingism were distinct from their attitudes toward Catholicism. In deciding either to support or oppose Know-Nothingism, Ohio Republicans considered political and ideological factors unrelated to their attitude toward the Catholic Church and toward immigrants per se. They considered the probable impact of Know-Nothingism upon the strength and character of the Republican party as they wanted it to develop. That is why a Republican like Joshua Giddings could agree with Know-Nothings that laws regarding ownership of church property could be "improved," or foreign criminals excluded from the United States, but remain unalterably opposed to the influence of Know-Nothingism
in the Republican Party. 72

No Ohio Republican was more concerned about Know-Nothings than Salmon P. Chase. The solution Chase worked out, one of qualified acceptance of the Know-Nothings into the new party without major concessions, was the one which most Ohio Republicans finally accepted. As a United States Senator, likely Republican candidate for Ohio governor in 1855, and prospective Republican presidential candidate in 1856, Chase was easily the most prominent Ohioan in the emerging party. His past political behavior revealed sturdy adherence to antislavery, strong personal ambitions, and a flexibility in partisan association which to some bordered on opportunism. 73 By the beginning of 1854 Chase's grand strategy of converting the Free Soil party into a "Free Democratic" party with the addition of thousands of Democrats had made little headway. True, the Ohio Free Soil party had survived through some lean years, and had begun to have some success in winning over anti-slavery Democrats in northwestern Ohio, but the great majority of Ohio Democrats, enjoying dominance over the faltering Whigs, had no desire for an alliance with Free Soilers. 74 Then the Kansas-Nebraska Bill had altered the political landscape, and Chase found himself at last in a movement with a real chance of gaining political dominance. He would have preferred a new party with more former Democrats and fewer former Whigs. Many Whigs had not forgotten the
way in which Chase had entered the Senate in 1849. However, it was the prospect of working with the Know-Nothings which Chase found the most distasteful.75

Chase, a devout Episcopalian whose uncle, Bishop Philander Chase, had been one of the founders of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, resolutely opposed nativism as a guiding philosophy and refused to join the Know-Nothing party.76 To condone their "shibboleths," their proscriptive spirit, would be to betray all his "antecedents and [his] democratic faith."77 After visiting a meeting of the party's national committee (or "Grand American Council") in Cincinnati in November, 1854, Chase was disturbed by the "southern influence" he had detected there.78 He lamented that the Republicans even had to be concerned about the Know-Nothings. As late as April, 1855 he still regretted that his dream of a Free Democratic party had not come true, writing:

The future has not a very satisfying look to me. The Whig Party may be set down as obsolete. The Old Line Democracy retains most of its numbers, a great deal of vitality, and the prestige of its name which is a tower of strength. The Republican Party seems to me not likely to last long. It is nothing but the Maine [Law] Party with accessions. Its name is badly chosen.79

Nevertheless, as a practical politician Chase had to face the probability that his political future lay with the Republicans, not with a nebulous "Free Democracy." He concluded that a successful antislavery movement would have to be a coalition of several diverse groups, one of which
would be the Know-Nothings. During the campaign in the
fall of 1854 he insisted that opposition to the expansion
of slavery had to be the "controlling element" in the new
party, but conceded that "other ideas" should also have
their place. By late 1854 he had resolved to cooperate
with those Know-Nothings who opposed slavery, provided he
could do so "honorably and without sacrifice of principle."

To make his position on Know-Nothingism clear, Chase
decided to publishize a reply he had made to Dr. John Paul
of Paulding, Ohio, a Chase supporter who had inquired about
his stand on nativism. Chase's answer was carefully crafted
so as to allay the fears of anti-nativist Republicans
that he was "soft" on the Know-Nothings while yet not
completely alienating potential Know-Nothing allies. He
began by asserting that since slavery was the "paramount
issue" of the day he could not "belong to any group which
ignores slavery, or reduces it to secondary consideration."
This was an indirect way of announcing that he would not
personally become a Know-Nothing. Then he went on to
review the past record of antislavery men who had cooperated
with either the Whig or Democratic parties when it served
their mutual purposes: "These cooperations between minorities
opposed to an ascendent majority are inevitable, and when
no principle is surrendered or hazarded, are free from
all reasonable objection." He pointed out that in the 1854
campaign Know-Nothings had willingly supported an
anti-Nebraska ticket which included both pro-nativists and anti-nativists.

When it came to the question of the place of the Catholic Church in American politics, Chase tried to strike a balance pleasing to both sides. He wrote:

I am well aware that in the action of certain Catholic priests and certain conspicuous foreigners there has been something justly censurable and calculated to provoke the hostility which has embodied itself in the Know-Nothing organization. But cannot what is wrong in that action be remedied without resort to secret political associations? Is it right to punish all for the faults of some? Can antislavery men especially join in the indiscriminate proscription of those Americans of foreign birth who stood shoulder to shoulder with us in the Anti-Nebraska struggle of last fall?

With the reference to "certain Catholic priests and certain conspicuous foreigners" Chase went about as far as he felt he could in appeasing Know-Nothings. He reiterated that personally he could not join a secret political organization, "proscribe men on account of their birth," or "make religious faith a political test." While he would not judge those who did do those things, he reminded the Know-Nothings that their acceptance in the Republican coalition was dependent upon their willingness to support candidates who were not members of the secret order. Should they adopt an "exclusive policy" in this matter, then the Republicans would go on without them.

When he wrote to Dr. Paul, Chase was already thinking about his presidential prospects in 1856, and he regarded
Senator William Henry Seward of New York as a likely competitor for the nomination. Seward was well-known for his strong opposition to nativism, and Chase calculated that he would risk losing support from a sizable number of Republicans nationally should he appear to be too friendly to the Know-Nothings. But James M. Ashley of Toledo, one of Chase's closest political confidantes, worried that the effort to match Seward too closely would backfire in Ohio. He advised Chase to oppose nativism, but in a more "casual" way, not militantly as Seward did.83

Having decided that he was willing to accept Know-Nothings as political, but not ideological, allies, Chase then sought to preserve cooperation between Know-Nothings and other elements of the Republican party. He encouraged his Free Soil friends and supporters to stop their bitter attacks upon the Know-Nothings. "We have enemies enough in the slaveholders and their aiders," he wrote. "It seems to me you have been hard enough on the KNs and had better hold up."84 After all, he pointed out, a struggle between antislavery and proslavery forces within the Know-Nothing party was already developing, and indiscriminate criticism of the secret order might encourage the proslavery side. Chase foresaw the possibility of a liberalizing trend in the order, a gradual willingness to give up its more extreme positions, and if that happened cooperation with the Know-Nothings in future campaigns would be even
easier. The best thing for antislavery men to do was simply to ignore the Know-Nothings for the time being, and concentrate on the more important questions facing the party. 85

Chase's complaint against the anti-nativist Republicans was picked up by the Cincinnati Gazette and Ohio State Journal, newspapers which after the Cincinnati election riot moderated their pro-nativism and moved to a position very close to that of Chase. Oran Follett of the Journal thought it "unfortunate" that "ardent supporters of Mr. Chase are distinguishing themselves by persistent abuse of the Know Nothings." 86 William Schouler of the Gazette took the Ashtabula Sentinel and other Western Reserve newspapers to task for worrying too much about Know-Nothing influence on the Republican party in Ohio. 87 Yet even Schouler could not deny that Know-Nothingism was a force to be reckoned with in Ohio politics in 1855. The contest for governor that year offered the first real test of whether nativism or antislavery would be the dominant note in Ohio Republicanism.
NOTES: CHAPTER TWO


4. Lancaster (Ohio) Gazette, July 5, 1855.


6. Charles Reemelin, Life of Charles Reemelin (Cincinnati: Weier and Daiker, 1892), p. 214. Reemelin wrote: "In Know-Nothing times there was a tacit exception from the anti-foreign abjurations in favor of the Scotch and English Protestants. And Germans were (if not Catholic) allowed to come under the protectory wing. The foreign-born Presbyterians were, in fact, a sort of backstairs members of the Know-Nothing lodges."

7. Cincinnati Times, February 9, 1854.

8. Ibid., April 20, 1854.


10. Ibid., August 31, 1854.


12. Cincinnati Gazette, October 2, 1854; Eugene Roseboom,

14. Cincinnati Times, October 9, 1856.


17. Ibid., July 21, 1854.

18. Ohio State Journal, July 8, 1854; Cleveland Leader, September 1, 1854.


20. Cleveland Leader, October 7, 1854; Ohio State Journal, August 2, 1854.


22. Western Christian Advocate, May 17, 1854.


25. Cleveland Leader, June 21, 1854.


27. Edwin S. Gaustad, Historical Atlas of Religion in

29. Ibid., September 13, 1854.
30. Ibid., September 20, 1854.
31. Ibid., October 18, 1854.
32. Ibid., April 26, 1854; May 9, 1855; September 6, 1854.
33. Ibid., March 22, 1854.
34. Ohio State Journal, July 8, 1854.
35. Cleveland Leader, February 15, 1855; Ohio State Journal, August 16, 1854; March 30, 1855.
37. Cincinnati Gazette, January 13, 1855.
38. Ibid., April 4, 1855.
39. Ibid.
40. Western Christian Advocate, April 18, 1854.
41. Ohio State Journal, April 10, 1855.
42. Cleveland Leader, April 12, 1855; Cincinnati Gazette, May 8, 1855.
43. Ohio State Journal, April 21, 1855; May 18, 1855; Cincinnati Gazette, May 22, 1855, June 7, 1855.
45. Ibid.
46. Edward Wade to J.S. Wright, February 15, 1855, in Ohio Columbian, March 7, 1855.
47. Ashtabula Sentinel, April 19, 1855.

49. *Ashtabula Sentinel*, November 12, 1857.


54. *Ashtabula Sentinel*, March 8, 1855; April 12, 1855; February 8, 1855.

55. *Ibid.*, April 19, 1855; May 3, 1855; May 17, 1855.


57. *Ashtabula Sentinel*, November 2, 1854.

58. *Ohio Columbian*, April 11, 1855; January 10, 1855.


60. *Ashtabula Sentinel*, March 15, 1855.


63. W.B. Fairchild to Isaac Strohm, July 2, 1854, Isaac Strohm Papers, OHS.

64. *Cleveland American Liberal*, November 20, 1854.


66. *Catholic Telegraph* (Cincinnati), April 1, 1854.


68. *Ibid.*, August 5, 1854; September 2, 1854; April 24, 1858.

70. Ibid., October 21, 1854.

71. Ibid., June 10, 1854.

72. Ashtabula Sentinel, January 18, 1855; Ohio Columbian, April 4, 1855.


76. Although quite dated, the only complete biography of Chase is still Albert B. Hart, Salmon Portland Chase (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1899). For Hart's assessment of Chase's relation to Know-Nothingism see pp. 152-54.

77. Chase to Andrew M. Gangewer, February 15, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

78. Chase to E.S. Hamlin, November 21, 1854, Chase Papers, LC.

79. Chase to James W. Grimes, April 12, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

80. Chase to ?, October 27, 1854, Chase Papers, HSP.

81. Chase to Joshua R. Giddings, January 20, 1855, Giddings-Julian Papers, LC.

82. Chase to John Paul, December 27, 1854, Chase Papers, HSP. All of the quotations are taken from this letter. Gruber, "The Political Career of Salmon P. Chase, 1808-1861," pp. 235-37, analyzes the Dr. Paul letter.

83. James M. Ashley to Chase, May 29, 1855, Chase Papers, LC. For background on Ashley's role in the origins of the Republican party see Robert F. Horowitz,

84. Chase to E.S. Hamlin, February 9, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

85. Chase to Oran Follett, January 1, 1855, in Hamlin, ed., "Selections from the Follett Papers, V," pp. 61-62; Chase to Andrew M. Gangelwer, February 15, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.


THE OHIO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION OF 1855

After their overwhelming success at the polls in 1854, the Anti-Nebraska forces in Ohio faced the challenge of maintaining their momentum and solidifying their political base. The coalition, made up of disparate groups united only by opposition to the further expansion of slavery and divided on other issues, was a fragile one. Moreover, without continuing fresh examples of an aggressive "slave power" to warn against, the movement was vulnerable to the charge of being disunionist, or perhaps even worse, politically irrelevant. In 1855 the emerging Republican party would have to prove that it was more than just an ephemeral protest to a single provocative issue.¹

With a two-year term for governor and state elections in odd-numbered years, Ohio voters would elect a governor in 1855, the first opportunity for Ohio Republicans to contest a major state office. For obvious reasons speculation on a possible nominee quickly turned to Salmon P. Chase. Chase had the strong support of his former colleagues in the Free Soil party, and was also the choice of most Anti-Nebraska Democrats. His term in the U.S. Senate
would expire in 1855, and the Democratically-controlled Ohio legislature had already elected George F. Pugh as Chase's successor. A strong gubernatorial victory for Chase, his friends reasoned, would signify the permanence of the new party in Ohio and also clearly establish its primary commitment opposing the expansion of slavery.²

Chase himself realized that the importance of his election as governor was mostly symbolic. As a state governor he would not be dealing directly with national issues as he had done in the Senate, and would have to devote a great deal of time to state and local matters which were of little interest to him. "The office is not worth anything to me," he wrote, "except as an endorsement which I confess would be gratifying."³ Nonetheless, many Ohio Republicans urged him to make the race, citing the importance to the party of a victory by a man of Chase's prominence. It did not prove to be too difficult to convince Chase that he had more to gain politically by entering the fray at this point than by waiting until 1856. As he explained to Lewis Campbell, Republican congressman from the 3rd District and a Know-Nothing sympathizer, his election would encourage anti-slavery men throughout the nation as well as vindicate his own antislavery stand.⁴

Chase could expect the backing of several groups in the Republican coalition who agreed with him on slavery. These included the old Free Soilers, bolting antislavery
Democrats, the German-American "48ers," whose friendship and support Chase had cultivated, and some former Whigs who were firmly antislavery. However, the support of Know-Nothings and many conservative former Whigs was uncertain. Many old Whigs still distrusted Chase because of his past political maneuvering and his "abolitionism." They were receptive to Republicanism as a more effective vehicle for opposing the Democrats, but preferred "safe and sane" conservatives and moderates like former Senator Thomas Corwin, Supreme Court Justice John McLean, and Congressman Lewis Campbell as leaders instead of Chase or Benjamin Wade or Joshua Giddings. Some of these Whigs were also on friendly terms with the Know-Nothings, who were now reaching the peak of their strength in Ohio as an independent movement and inclined to seek maximum concessions from other Republicans as the price for their cooperation.

Chase felt keenly, even more than his Free Soil, Democratic, and German-American friends, the need to placate as many old Whigs and Know-Nothings as possible and win their acceptance, if not their overwhelming enthusiasm, for his candidacy. Therefore he took pains not to alienate the Know-Nothings from the Republican party, and warned his friends not to attack the Know-Nothings so vehemently. Along with the governor's race the offices of Lieutenant-Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, and member of the Board of Public
Works, as well as two seats on the state's Supreme Court would be up for grabs in 1855. Chase indicated that he was willing to accept Know-Nothings as candidates for these offices, provided that they agreed with him on slavery issues and did not require that he too become a Know-Nothing. In his own mind Chase had settled the question of nativist support for the Republican party. He would accept it on condition that no compromise of principles important to him be demanded. He would not personally endorse Know-Nothingism but neither would he repudiate it directly. By taking this approach Chase broadened his appeal in the party, becoming more acceptable for former Whigs and those Know-Nothings interested in a coalition with the Republicans.

Reports coming to Chase from several counties throughout Ohio in the spring of 1855 indicated that the party was beset with internal friction and factional dissent. The groups which had cooperated on a "one-issue" basis so effectively in 1854 were now fully cognizant of their differences on other issues and were contesting for dominance at the local level. From Lima in west-central Ohio, Republican Congressman Matthias H. Nichols, a former Democrat representing a traditionally Democratic district with a significant German Catholic population, reported that the political situation had "deteriorated" since 1854. Old Whigs and Know-Nothings did not want Chase to become governor, while anti-Nebraska Democrats and former Free
Soilers did. Nichols was especially concerned because the Know-Nothings, running separately, had done well in the spring municipal elections. Know-Nothingism had also become a divisive issue for the party in Lorain County in the Western Reserve, according to Congressman Philemon Bliss, another former Democrat. He pleaded with Chase not to cooperate with Know-Nothings in the upcoming campaign, asserting that "we cannot afford to lose our character whatever else we may lose." In contrast, James Walker of Bellefontaine and Israel Green of McConnelsville felt the problem lay more with the anti-nativist Republicans. They assured Chase that the Know-Nothings in their areas were in fact quite willing to support him, but only if the bitter attacks upon them from some quarters in the party stopped. As for Chase himself, he did not have to join the order himself, but neither should he come out against it too strongly.

Those Know-Nothings and former Whigs who did find Chase objectionable searched for an alternative candidate. Congressman Lewis Campbell, a former Whig representing a district in southern Ohio, led this effort. Campbell openly espoused Know-Nothingism, had joined the secret order, and hoped that the sudden emergence of political nativism would propel him to personal political triumph. Although relatively unknown on the national political scene, he had achieved some notice among fellow congressmen, and planned to be a serious candidate for Speaker of the
House when the 34th Congress convened in December, 1855. He even had some hope that this could be a steppingstone to a presidential bid in 1856. That a man of Campbell's limited stature should seriously entertain presidential ambitions was surprising. Perhaps it reflected the sense of uncertainty and instability surrounding the process of party realignment. Rutherford B. Hayes, then a young Cincinnati attorney, observed this activity with some amusement:

I have no knowledge of any tolerably conspicuous politician at Washington whose career is not colored and marred by his ambition to be President. I say this in all seriousness. It makes fools of all sorts from Webster down to Lew Campbell. 11

Campbell's personal ambitions depended upon the Know-Nothings and old Whigs achieving dominance in the Republican party, and upon the elimination of Salmon P. Chase as a rival. His decision to become a Know-Nothing in 1854 had in part reflected his political judgment that, at least in his district, Know-Nothings were "numerous" while only a "few" foreign-born voters would be lost as a result.12 Before 1855 Campbell had been a strong opponent of the expansion of slavery, enough so that the eleven votes he received for Speaker of the House in December, 1853 included that of Joshua Giddings.13 However, political ambitions caused Campbell to moderate his antislavery stand in 1855, in order to attract Chase's opponents in Ohio and to project a moderate image appealing to elements in both North and South should he become a presidential candidate.
in 1856.

Campbell and his supporters began to mention the name of Jacob Brinkerhoff as a potential Republican candidate for governor in 1855. In an unusual political odyssey, Brinkerhoff, of Mansfield, had been a Democratic congressman in the 1840s, had supported the Wilmot Proviso and then joined the Free Soil Party in 1848, and had since become a Know-Nothings.\textsuperscript{14} With such a background Brinkerhoff seemed to offer a unique appeal to Ohio Republicans, or so Campbell thought. Campbell suggested that old Whigs ought to support Brinkerhoff, despite his lack of Whiggish heritage, as an alternative to a "'milk and water' Yankee who plays the game of 'fast and loose' on all the great questions of the day" - a slightly-veiled reference to Chase.\textsuperscript{15} Campbell also wrote directly to Chase several times, pointing out that Know-Nothings support was essential to a Republican victory in the fall and suggesting that Chase accept a nomination for state supreme court justice instead of that for governor.\textsuperscript{16} Campbell's concept of the Republican party was one of fusion, with Know-Nothings and other elements in the party maintaining separate identities, and each receiving a due share of nominations and other political favors. He pointed out that old Whigs and Know-Nothings had some problems with Chase on slavery, nativism, and economic issues such as the tariff.\textsuperscript{17}
Chase had little patience with Campbell. He speculated that Campbell's conversion to nativism was motivated by political expediency, recalling that in the past Campbell had been a strong supporter of William Henry Seward, a firm opponent of nativism. Chase rejected the idea of "fusion" with the Know-Nothings, maintaining that the most he could offer Know-Nothings was a chance to cooperate in a movement premised upon opposition to the expansion of slavery. He warned Campbell that a Brinkerhoff nomination for governor would be unacceptable to the great majority of former Free Soilers and former Democrats in the party, because it would represent a "triumph" for nativism and would detract from the real mission of the party. With Brinkerhoff for governor, "The whole German vote is lost absolutely," he wrote. "The free soil vote, even if no separate ticket [of Free Soilers] be nominated, is alienated. The inspiration of the conflict is gone." Chase concluded that if the Know-Nothings got the upper hand in the Ohio Republican party he might feel constrained to leave the party altogether.

Chase's threat of withdrawal was echoed in even more forceful terms by many of his political friends; Chase's nomination was absolutely essential to their continued support of the party. As Joshua Giddings put it, "I would not vote for any man whose nomination does not make the issue of Slavery and Freedom." He insisted on a truly "Republican" convention, one not controlled by Know-Nothings,
and even one that "shall not recognize the existence of the Know-Nothings." If the upcoming state convention nominated any Know-Nothings, Giddings announced, he would leave the party, and if enough followed him, they would make their own nominations for state offices. He encouraged Chase to stand firm against Know-Nothing pressure, arguing that "We owe it to our own reputations." Norton Townshend, a former Free Soiler who as a state legislator had helped to form the Free Soil-Democratic coalition that sent Chase to the Senate in 1849, had his own strategy already planned. If there were any Know-Nothings on the state ticket he would refuse to campaign for it, and then only vote for the non-Know-Nothing candidates, such as Chase should he be nominated. Townshend's anti-nativism was so pronounced that he expressed a preference for "Hunker [i.e. pro-slavery] Democrats" to Know-Nothings. O. White of Maumee, concerned about Know-Nothing influence, noted that antislavery men had been betrayed before in coalitions with other groups and speculated that he might have to boycott the state convention. Congressman Richard Mott of Toledo and others suggested the possibility of a separate "Free Democratic" convention to nominate Chase for governor. Chase's friend Dr. John Paul worried about the loyalty of antislavery men to the party if the Democrats offered an "attractive alternative."
These threats to boycott the regular party organization and go a separate way exasperated the more pragmatically-minded Republican party operatives such as Oran Pollett and James M. Ashley. Pollett was rather more willing than Ashley to have Chase sacrifice the gubernatorial nomination for the sake of party unity and Whig and Know-Nothing cooperation, but both agreed that the anti-nativist attacks on nativism and the threats to walk out if Chase was denied the nomination were harmful and self-defeating. Ashley worried that the Republicans had inherited the spirit of "anti-partyism" which plagued Whigs in the Jacksonian era - a lack of proper regard for party loyalty and discipline, a predilection to put loyalty to some individual or some principle above steady partisanship. He noted that such intense partisanship, whether good or bad, had been the hallmark of "Hunker Democracy," and argued that if the Republican party were to survive it would have to roll up a string of victories at the polls and strive for long-term stability.

Despite the alarm of the anti-nativist Republicans over the prospects for Chase's nomination, political developments in the spring of 1855 gradually turned in Chase's favor. The most important of these were the fading resolve or ability of the majority of Ohio Know-Nothings to block Chase's nomination and the mutual willingness of Chase and Know-Nothing leaders to join together on a
compromise ticket for the fall campaign. The Cincinnati election riot in April, 1855 had not killed the Know-Nothing movement, but it had certainly lessened its prestige. Even Lewis Campbell admitted that the riot had been unfortunate. "The ticket was badly gotten up in Cincinnati," he wrote, adding that "Pap" Taylor had not been a good choice as a candidate because he lacked broad popular appeal. 33 While the anti-nativist Republicans lambasted the Know-Nothings in public, the more pragmatic political operatives like Ashley, Follett, and Joseph Medill were working behind the scene to deal with the Know-Nothing challenge. Their strategy centered on encouraging dissension between pro-slavery and antislavery Know-Nothings, and on encouraging antislavery Know-Nothings to give up secrecy and the wholesale proscription of all immigrants. To this end they worked with some antislavery Know-Nothings eager to support the Republican party in forming the "Know-Something" order in January, 1855. 34 This new organization, its very name a parody, included enough of Know-Nothing ritual and rhetoric to satisfy potential members, while stressing several new elements: antislavery, a less absolute secrecy, support for candidates outside the order, and admission of Protestant foreign-born citizens, such as antislavery German-Americans. As Medill put it, "it is the best that can be done to keep Know-Nothingism from doing mischief until the fever for secret societies is past." 35
The Know-Something movement spread rapidly in Ohio, soon having lodges in thirty counties. It represented an alternative to Know-Nothings for those who wanted to combine antislavery, anti-Catholicism, and fraternal solidarity, and who were content to keep nativism on the cultural level while adhering to Republicanism on the political level. Although the Ohio Columbian still did not see the need for Know-Somethings as opposed to Know-Nothings, other Ohio Republicans saw a useful role for the new movement in more firmly winning over a portion of Ohio's nativist-minded voters. Even Joshua Giddings, as much as he disliked nativism, recognized that Know-Nothings were not of one mind on slavery, and that Republican policy should be "to drive the wedge of division deeper." The Know-Somethings held a convention at Cleveland in June, 1855, and its platform included a strong antislavery stand. James Ashley, who had been working with the new movement all spring and who attended the Cleveland convention, reported to Chase that the meetings had gone well, support for Chase and the Republican party was strong, and the delegates had not engaged in the kind of extreme, demagogic nativist rhetoric that could prove embarrassing to Republicans in the fall campaign.

The creation of the Know-Something order drew off some nativists who might otherwise have joined or remained with the Know-Nothings. However, the Know-Nothings themselves
were about to make some critical decisions. Many Know-Nothings still preferred Brinkerhoff to Chase, but leaders of the order, feeling the sting of constant criticism from antislavery men and aware of the rise of the rival Know-Something movement, hesitated to break openly with other elements in the Republican party. "The course of the Ohio Columbian and many Free-Soilers for the last few weeks has intimidated the Know-Nothings," observed a Columbus Republican late in May.\(^{41}\) Perhaps the response of Hamlin, Giddings, and other anti-nativists had been sound after all. Early in June the Ohio Know-Nothings held a state convention, formally organizing themselves as the American Party of Ohio, but refraining from nominating a state ticket for the fall elections until the Republicans had acted.\(^{42}\) The party platform contained the usual nativist demands, such as the twenty-one year residency requirement for voting for naturalized citizens, no exclusively foreign-born organizations, Bible reading in the public schools, and an ambiguous call for freedom of religion for the "Americanized."\(^{43}\) To Republicans, however, the main significance of the Know-Nothing convention was the implicit offer of cooperation, leaving the way open for further negotiation on a slate of candidates for the fall election. Further evidence of Ohio Know-Nothing intentions came late in June at a national Know-Nothing council meeting in Philadelphia. When the national council, influenced by delegates from southern and
border states, adopted a pro-slavery statement, the Ohio delegates, led by Thomas Ford, joined those from other northern states in walking out in protest. 44

These developments put Chase in a very good mood as the time drew near for the state Republican nominating convention, set to open on July 13. He sensed that a significant number of Ohio Know-Nothings were yielding to the steadfast determination of antislavery men to make "slavery or Freedom" the major issue of the campaign. 45 Of the Know-Nothings, he forecast optimistically that "we shall hear no more of it as an organization," but he was correct in surmising that now nothing stood in the way of his nomination for governor. 46 The Republican convention issued a platform which condemned all efforts to expand slavery, but completely ignored nativist issues. However, most Know-Nothings were satisfied with the nominations, since all other nominees were members of Know-Nothing lodges, including Thomas Ford for lieutenant-governor. Jacob Brinkerhoff finally settled for nomination as state supreme court judge. 47

Chase believed that the course he had taken was politically and intellectually sound. He had preserved the cooperative support of thousands of Know-Nothings without surrendering to their leadership or ideology, and he looked forward to the ensuing campaign as a test for the new party on the issue of the expansion of slavery. Because
Chase had been nominated, the great majority of anti-nativist Republicans supported the entire ticket, although to accept the eight Know-Nothing candidates must have been difficult for some. To be honest with themselves, former Free Soilers had to acknowledge that the new party contained many whose antislavery zeal was quite modest and that in the eyes of the party's old Whigs the Western Reserve abolitionists were still very suspect. Nonetheless almost all of the latter followed the lead of Joshua Giddings in supporting the entire ticket. As his biographer has observed, such a course was consistent with Giddings' political strategy:

... he placed his own, more radical interpretation upon the creeds of his emerging party, acting as a lobbyist for advanced positions instead of compromising himself by becoming a regular politician.48

Even as Chase and his associates steered a middle course, trying to hold together as much of the 1854 coalition as possible, opposition developed on both ends of the nativist - anti-nativist spectrum. Some who had previously been strong Chase supporters simply could not tolerate any Know-Nothing presence on the ticket and went over to the Democrats or remained neutral. James W. Taylor, an anti-Nebraska Democrat who had urged Chase in May to revive the "Free Democratic" concept, was so disgusted with Know-Nothingism that he returned to his former partisan allegiance,49 while Charles Reemelin, one of the German-American leaders in Cincinnati and a good friend of
Congressman Timothy C. Day, decided not to endorse any of the candidates for state office. The Democrats encouraged the return of such anti-Nebraska dissidents by ignoring the question of slavery in their platform and emphasizing nativist influence in the Republican party.

Not all Know-Nothings accepted the coalition with the Republicans. Just before the July 13 convention, about 150 of them met in Cincinnati to plan an independent strategy for the campaign. Chase identified them as the same persons who had perpetrated the election day violence in April and was just as pleased not to have their support. With "Pap" Taylor's Cincinnati Times denouncing the "sell-out" in Columbus, discontented Know-Nothings and those old Whigs who could not bring themselves to support Chase met on August 9 to nominate an alternative candidate. Despite pleas from Spooner, the Know-Nothing state chairman, and the firm opposition of the American party state executive committee, the convention went ahead to issue a platform denouncing the results of the Republican convention, condemning the Republican party as sectional, and upholding the full range of nativist views. When Congressman John Scott Harrison of Cincinnati refused to endorse their position, the convention gave its nomination for governor to Allen Trimble of Hillsboro, a former Whig in his seventies who had been governor of Ohio in the 1820s. Trimble's nomination may have reflected the dearth of strong, attractive leadership
in this anti-Chase group, but it undoubtedly set well with the sizable Whiggish element in the convention. Trimble had not joined a Know-Nothing lodge, but he was sympathetic to nativism, and supported temperance legislation and Bible reading in the public schools. As for slavery, he opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and favored the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, but deplored "abolitionism and disunion." The specifically anti-Chase nature of this movement was underscored by the fact that only he among the Republican candidates was condemned; all others, as Know-Nothings, were endorsed. 54

Although the anti-Chase convention had selected a candidate who had once been part of Ohio's political "establishment," the same anti-party, anti-establishment themes present in Know-Nothingism were evident here as well. Pointing out that neither major party candidate truly reflected the views of Know-Nothingism, the Trimble supporters asked, "Are we, indeed, so enslaved by party bonds, that we cannot seek the welfare of country, through any other hand, than that which party prescribes?" 55 They suggested that many Know-Nothings supported Chase unwillingly, and questioned Chase's motives in running for governor. What could the governor of Ohio do to stop the expansion of slavery, which was a national issue? As Senator Chase could do nothing to stop slavery expansion, so how could he stop it in the governor's chair? His real motive, they charged, was
personal political ambition, and his election would help to strengthen a sectional party and further inflame sectional discord. Chase had shown his true feelings toward nativism, the attack went on, by supporting a national homestead bill which made public land available to immigrant and native-born citizen alike, and "soon the sons of American families will look in vain for their fair fields which have been taken from them, not indeed by conquest but by a policy as disastrous to them." The racism of these anti-Chase nativists was also apparent when they warned ominously that Chase favored "Negro children attending the same Public Schools with the whites."

The Trimble defection actually worked to the advantage of the Republicans in 1855. It lent credence to the idea, stressed by Republicans, that the Know-Nothing movement had split apart over the question of slavery and that only the antislavery Know-Nothings were supporting Chase. In Republican rhetoric the darker side of nativism, its intolerance, fanaticism, and penchant for violence, was associated with the proslavery Know-Nothings, and thus prospective immigrant voters, especially the German-American Protestants, were assured that Republican Know-Nothings were not the reprehensible bigots that the Democrats made them out to be. Some old Whigs concluded that a vote for Trimble would really be a vote for William Medill, the Democratic incumbent seeking re-election. Compared with
Medill, Chase was for these old Whigs still the lesser of two evils. From Xenia, W.B. Fairchild reported that "this nomination of Chase sets hard upon the stomachs of some of the men here . . . some are 'trimbling' - but nevertheless the Republicans offer the only real hope of defeating the Democrats."60 W.B. Thrall of Columbus, who supported Chase with little enthusiasm, disliked the Democrats even more, and admitted that Chase had been nominated "freely and fairly."61

The leading Republican newspapers, including the Cincinnati Gazette, Ohio State Journal, and Cleveland Leader, set the general tone of the campaign, which included warm appreciation for Spooner, Ford, and other cooperating Know-Nothings, and ridicule of the Trimble movement as "ante-diluvian," "old fogy," and "fossilized."62 The Ashtabula Sentinel was somewhat concerned when it discovered so many Know-Nothings in its own backyard, prominent in attendance at an Ashtabula County Republican convention,63 but that was the price of coalition politics, and even the Sentinel was finally prepared to say something positive about Thomas Spooner. Ohio Republicans were reaching for ways to make their views palatable outside the narrow circle of Free Soil crusaders.64 Joshua Giddings did not campaign for Ohio Republican candidates in 1855 because his radicalism was considered too much of a liability.65
While some Republicans may have assumed that the cooperating Know-Nothings had no intention of continuing as an independent party, not all Know-Nothings agreed. The Lancaster Gazette, a leading nativist journal, supported Chase somewhat reluctantly, but assured its readers that there should be "no fear that fusion will weaken a distinctive-ly American party . . . the people are too deeply devoted to American principles ever to abandon them before they have carried reform into every department of government."66 In some localities where Know-Nothingism per se was stronger than Republicanism the nativists ran their own candidates for local office.67

As the election drew near Ohio Republicans professed not to be worried about the Trimble candidacy or about the movement of antislavery immigrants toward the Democrats. Samuel Galloway estimated that Trimble would get no more than 14,000 votes statewide, and that one-fourth of those would come from Hamilton County (Cincinnati), where nativism had a strong local base, Chase had a reputation as an "abolitionist," and the business community had southern ties and interests.68 Galloway correctly estimated Hamilton County's proportion of the Trimble vote, but he greatly underestimated Trimble's overall strength. The returns for the election on October 9 gave Trimble over 24,000 votes, which reduced but did not destroy Chase's margin of victory. Table 2 indicates how much the various regions of
the state contributed to the total vote for each candidate. The Trimble vote was heavily concentrated in southern Ohio, with Hamilton County alone accounting for 26.9% of his statewide total.

**TABLE 2**

**VOTE DISTRIBUTION BY CANDIDATE, 1855 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region*</th>
<th>Chase (%)</th>
<th>Medill</th>
<th>Trimble</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Ohio</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Chase (%)</th>
<th>Medill</th>
<th>Trimble</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ohio</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                       | 100       | 100    | 100     |


*See Figure 3 on p. 98 for definitions of these regions.

Table 3 indicates the relative strength of each candidate in the various regions of the state. Chase's victory was based upon a landslide margin in the Western Reserve along with a clear majority in most other northern counties. Apart from the Western Reserve, Medill's support was rather
FIGURE 3
OHIO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, 1855

- County with Republican majority 60% or more
- County with Republican majority under 60% or Republican plurality and Trimble vote less than 15%
- County with Democratic majority or plurality and Trimble vote less than 15%
- County with 15% or more of total vote for Trimble

evenly distributed throughout the state, suggesting that the vote for him was not so much pro-Southern as it was traditionally Democratic. Apart from the Western Reserve and Hamilton County, Medill actually did slightly better in the northern counties, where fewer residents had Southern backgrounds, than in the southern counties with their large population of Virginia and Kentucky settlers. Trimble's support came overwhelmingly from the southern half of Ohio, and reflected both Know-Nothing strength there and the position of those southern Ohio Whigs who could neither support Chase nor break with the partisan habits of a lifetime and vote Democratic. Table 4 shows that the Trimble movement was above all an anti-Chase movement by comparing the results for the other state offices with the gubernatorial contest. In

TABLE 3

VOTE DISTRIBUTION IN REGION, BY CANDIDATE, 1855 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Chase (%)</th>
<th>Medill</th>
<th>Trimble</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

SOURCE: The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1856, p. 57.
each case the vote for the Republican candidate approximately equaled the combined vote of Chase and Trimble. The vast majority of the Trimble voters voted for the Republican candidates for the other state offices.

TABLE 4

VOTE FOR OHIO STATE OFFICES, EXCEPT GOVERNOR, 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Republican (%)</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant-Governor</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Auditor</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Treasurer</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court Judge (1)</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court Judge (2)</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member, Board of Public Works</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5 compares the results of the 1855 gubernatorial election with the traditional Whig-Democratic voting patterns of the 1832-52 period. On the whole Chase did better in the traditionally Democratic counties than Medill did in the traditionally Whig ones. The one glaring exception was Hamilton County (Cincinnati). Chase suffered dramatically in his home city because conservative Cincinnatians, sensitive
to the city's many commercial ties to the South and its position on the slave state-free state border, remembered Chase's antislavery activities there in the 1830s and 1840s. The Queen City also had a strong Know-Nothing element which refused to support the Republican gubernatorial nominee, encouraged in this by the widely-circulated *Cincinnati Times* and by the city's nativist tradition which was older and deeper than anywhere else in Ohio.

**TABLE 5**

**COMPARISON OF 1855 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION WITH PARTISAN TRADITION IN OHIO COUNTIES, 1832-1852**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Vote in 39 Traditionally Whig Counties (%)</th>
<th>Vote in 40 Traditionally Democratic Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medill</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimble</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCES:** Flinn, "Continuity and Change in Ohio Politics," p. 525; *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1856*, p. 57.

The evidence also suggests that the Republicans could not hold the gains they had made among Cincinnati's German and Irish immigrants in 1854 because of the immigrants' backlash against Know-Nothing cooperation. Table 6 compares the results from the 1854 congressional and 1855 gubernatorial races for six Cincinnati wards with large German or Irish immigrant populations. All six went Democratic in 1855. Chase thus felt the sting of the backlash, even if that
reaction was not primarily against him but against the other Republican candidates. Similar patterns appeared elsewhere in Ohio. John Walker of Wapakoneta reported that the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>1854 Congressional</th>
<th>1855 Gubernatorial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anti-Nebraska</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES: Flack, "Who Governed Cincinnati," p. 48; Cincinnati Gazette, October 13, 1854; October 14, 1855.
Republican - Know-Nothing connection had hurt the party among the numerous German immigrant farmers in Auglaize County in west-central Ohio, while James Ashley estimated that Chase had received no more than 120 to 130 German votes in Lucas County (Toledo).

The extent of the Republican slippage across the entire state from 1854 to 1855 is shown in Table 7. Republicans themselves expected some decline. They realized that the 1854 vote was a reaction to the Kansas-Nebraska Act and a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Congressional 1854 (%)</th>
<th>Gubernatorial 1855 (%)</th>
<th>Difference (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>-45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Southern Ohio</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>-17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>-21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Northern Ohio</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>-11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>-8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire State</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>-15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES: The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1855, pp. 59-60; The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1856, p. 57.

repudiation of the Democratic party, and reflected a rather loosely-defined aggregation of all anti-Democratic voters in the state. In the 1855 election the slavery expansion
issue had lost some of its urgency temporarily, extreme Know-Nothings on the one hand and some immigrants on the other had deserted the party, and Democrats had made strong appeals to their traditional constituencies to stay in the fold. The Republicans suffered a drop-off of support in all areas of the state, although by only a small percentage in the Western Reserve, which was well on its way to becoming a bastion of Republicanism. The Republican drop was greatest in the southern half of the state, which would have been expected.

The results of the election were satisfying to Chase, who concluded that his basic strategy had been sound. "The elements required for a Presidential election have been harmonized in my election in Ohio," he wrote, "and without that harmony I could not have been elected." Chase was pleased with the support he had received from Know-Nothings. "The liberal Americans (i.e. Know-Nothings) fought with us like brothers, and will not leave us." Joshua Giddings was also confident that the Know-Nothing phenomenon had ended. "The prestige of the Know-Nothings is gone I think forever," he wrote to Chase. "I hardly think they can survive." He reported that Lewis Campbell had told Ashtabula County Know-Nothings that they would remain as a separate party in 1856, but Giddings dismissed this possibility because he did not "place the fullest confidence in his [Campbell's] political sagacity." William C.
Howells, editor of the *Ashtabula Sentinel*, was more pessimistic. "What a glorious triumph we should have had it if had not been for Know-Nothingism," he wrote to Chase, adding, "But we must make the best of it—though I fear it will give us trouble yet." Other Ohio Republicans also looked ahead to 1856 and beyond, wondering if they had found the path to success at last, or if there would be "trouble yet."
NOTES: CHAPTER THREE

1. For analysis of how one example of Southern aggressiveness, the caning of Charles Sumner in the Senate in 1856, strengthened the infant Republican party, see William E. Gienapp, "The Crime Against Sumner: The Caning of Charles Sumner and the Rise of the Republican Party," Civil War History, XXV (September 1979), pp. 218-45.


3. Chase to ?, January 12, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

4. Chase to Lewis Campbell, May 25, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

5. W.B. Fairchild to Isaac Strohm, February 13, 1854, Strohm Papers, OHS.


7. M.H. Nichols to Chase, April 14, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

8. Philemon Bliss to Chase, June 6, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

9. James Walker to Chase, June 20, 1855, Chase Papers, LC; Israel Green to Chase, June 22, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.


12. Lewis Campbell to Isaac Strohm, September 9, 1854, Strohm Papers, OHS.


15. Lewis Campbell to Isaac Strohm, May 24, 1855, Strohm Papers, OHS.

16. Campbell to Chase, May 28, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

17. Ibid.; Campbell to Chase, May 31, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

18. Chase to E.S. Hamlin, February 9, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

19. Chase to Campbell, June 2, 1855, Lewis Campbell Papers, OHS.

20. Chase to Campbell, May 25, 1855, Chase Papers, LC; Chase to Campbell, May 29, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

21. Chase to Campbell, May 29, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

22. Joshua Giddings to Chase, April 18, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

23. Giddings to Chase, May 1, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Norton Townshend to Chase, June 9, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

27. Ibid.

28. O. White to Chase, May 3, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

29. Richard Mott to Joshua Giddings, June 2, 1855, Giddings Papers, OHS. See also J.H. Coulter to Chase, June 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

30. John Paul to Chase, May 30, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

31. Oran Follett to Chase, May 2, 1855, Chase Papers, LC; James Ashley to Chase, June 16, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

32. James Ashley to Chase, January 21, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

33. Lewis Campbell to Isaac Strohm, April 21, 1855, Strohm Papers, OHS.

34. Cincinnati Gazette, June 9, 1855; Robert F. Horowitz,


37. Ohio Columbian, April 18, 1855.

38. Joshua Giddings to Chase, April 18, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

39. Cleveland Leader, June 15, 1855.

40. James Ashley to Chase, June 16, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

41. J.H. Coulter to Chase, May 27, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.


45. Chase to James W. Grimes, June 27, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP; Chase to J.S. Pike, June 20, 1855, in Pike, pp. 295-96.

46. Chase to James M. Ashley, June 23, 1855, Chase Papers, CHS.


48. Stewart, p. 228.

49. Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873, p. 310; James W. Taylor to Chase, May 10, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.


52. Chase to ?, July 8, 1855, Chase Papers, CHS.

53. Cincinnati Times, July 5, 1855; W.B. Thrall to Isaac Strohm, July 8, 1855, Strohm Papers, OHS.

54. "Selections from the Papers of Governor Allen Trimble," pp. 199-206; Allen Trimble to Irad Kelley, August 11, 1855, Allen Trimble Papers, OHS.

55. "Address of the American Central Committee to the People of the State of Ohio," 1855, in "Scrapbooks on Ohio Politics and Other Subjects, 1850-1867," CHS.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.


59. Chase to Homer Goodwin, August 24, 1855, in Ohio State Journal, September 10, 1855; Ashtabula Sentinel, July 26, 1855; Salmon P. Chase, Speech of the Honorable Salmon P. Chase Delivered to the Republican Mass Meeting in Cincinnati, August 21, 1855 (Columbus: Ohio State Journal Co., 1855), pp. 16-17.

60. W.B. Fairchild to Isaac Strohm, September 6, 1855, Strohm Papers, OHS.

61. W.B. Thrall to Isaac Strohm, August 20, 1855, Strohm Papers, OHS.

62. Cincinnati Gazette, August 13, 1855, September 27, 1855; Ohio State Journal, October 4, 1855; Cleveland Leader, July 23, 1855; Ashtabula Sentinel, August 16, 1855.

63. Ashtabula Sentinel, September 6, 1855.

64. Ibid., August 9, 1855.

65. Stewart, p. 234.

66. Lancaster Gazette, September 20, 1855.

67. M.H. Nichols to Chase, July 7, 1855, Chase Papers, LC; Chase to L.W. Hall, October 25, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

68. Samuel Galloway to Chase, August 16, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

69. In the wards labeled "Irish," wards 1, 4, and 13, the
Irish-born percentage in each ranged from 10.0 to 14.9%. However these were still the highest percentage of Irish-born for any of Cincinnati's seventeen wards in 1860. Wards 10 and 11 had from 10.0 to 14.9% German-born and Ward 12 had from 15.0 to 19.9% German-born. These three wards had the highest percentage of German-born of any ward in the city. See Flack, "Who Governed Cincinnati?," p. 48.

70. John Walker to Chase, November 8, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

71. James L. Ashley to Chase, October 21, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

72. Chase to Kingsley S. Bingham, October 19, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

73. Chase to James W. Grimes, October 17, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

74. Giddings to Chase, October 16, 1855, Chase Papers, HSP.

75. Ibid.

76. William C. Howells to Chase, November 5, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.
"The question of slavery . . . transcends in present importance all other political questions of a national character."¹ With those words Salmon Portland Chase took the oath of office as governor of Ohio on January 14, 1856, signalling the beginning of a new Republican era in Ohio politics. Both houses of the Ohio legislature had overwhelming Republican majorities, and in March 1856 these Republicans elected Benjamin Wade to his second Senate term.² Wade was deeply impressed by the changes in public sentiment: "Who would have predicted that Wade the abolitionist would ever be elected Senator, with his credentials certified by Chase the abolitionist?," he wrote to the new governor.³

Paradoxically, the Republican victory in 1855 had also been in some sense a Know-Nothing victory, though individuals had different views of what role the Know-Nothings would now play in Ohio politics. Nativism continued to be an element, albeit a gradually weakening one, in Ohio politics until the Civil War. After 1855 Ohio Know-Nothings divided
and went in several political directions. Although it is difficult to determine exact numbers, probably a majority of them became Republican, a process that began in 1856 with the sectional division of the Know-Nothings and continued to 1858, when the last statewide organization of Ohio Know-Nothings ceased to exist. Some found the Democrats more congenial on slavery and sectional issues, while a small remnant kept separate American organizations alive on the local level, especially in Cincinnati. In the 1860 presidential election the Constitutional Union party attracted some Ohio Know-Nothings.

After 1855 Ohio Republicans could not completely ignore Know-Nothingism, although other issues and problems increasingly absorbed their attention. The basic questions to be asked of this period are the extent to which nativism was incorporated into the fabric of Republicanism and the extent to which voters perceived the Republican party as a "nativist" party. If ethnocultural division was the controlling or at least one of the most essential factors in American politics in the 1850s, then evidence of nativist influence in the Republican party would be expected.

Although Chase had not made an explicit bargain with the Know-Nothings to support their proposals concerning the immigrant and the Catholic Church, still there was no doubt that Know-Nothing influence would be felt in the newly-elected Republican administration. The question was
how far the Republicans would go in repaying the Know-Nothings for their support. Chase had completely ignored the subject of nativism in his inaugural address other than to condemn any discrimination on account of creed or place of origin. 4 But in his annual message to the state legislature in 1857 he alluded to one nativist demand, stricter controls on voting to eliminate alleged fraud:

Alleged abuses of the elective franchise will probably claim your attention. The right of suffrage is sacred. . . . Every citizen, native or naturalized, is entitled to the most absolute freedom and security in the exercise of it . . . . It will only be needful to beware lest the proposed remedy for one class of evils become the source of others still more grievous. 5

The Republican-controlled General Assembly enacted two laws in April 1857 affecting the immigrant. One stipulated that church property could not be owned directly by the clergy or church hierarchy, but only by the congregation through lay trustees. 6 This measure was directed specifically at the Catholic Church, since in other countries the Church property was usually under the direct and exclusive control of the bishops. The other law, of more immediate political importance, was "an act to preserve the purity of elections," which dealt with residency requirements for voting. To the standing requirements of one year's residence in the state and 30 days' residence in the county prior to election day, it added the requirement of 20 days' residence prior to election in the township or ward,
and made the penalties for violation of these requirements one to six months' imprisonment for the township-ward rule and one to three years' imprisonment for the county rule. "Residency" was more rigorously defined, and election judges were authorized to demand to see the naturalization papers of any immigrant whose citizenship or eligibility to vote was doubtful. This act was in response to charges from both Know-Nothings and Republicans that immigrants sometimes voted illegally, either because they were not citizens or were not actually residents of the electoral subdivision where they voted. Democratic politicians had been accused of rounding up unqualified immigrants and shepherding them to the polls en masse on election day. The voting on these two bills in the General Assembly went along strong party lines, with only a handful of Democrats voting for them and Republicans against.

Chase's endorsement of the elections act had been cautious and had been balanced with a warning not to go to the other extreme of denying citizens the reasonably opportunity to exercise their rights. Although he signed both measures into law, his private view was that the legislation was designed to appease the nativists within the Republican party. He considered the laws to be "neither wise nor beneficial," but a necessary sacrifice to maintain party strength and unity. The Ohio State Journal, now edited by William Schouler, was far more positive in its
appraisal of these laws, especially the elections act. It blamed fraudulent immigrant voting for the defeat of Republican Congressman Samuel Galloway of Columbus in a close election in 1856, and was disappointed that the lawmakers had not gone even further and added a one-year waiting period after naturalization before immigrants could vote.\textsuperscript{10} A constitutional amendment incorporating such a waiting period did pass the Ohio House of Representatives by a vote of fifty-three to fifty, but this fell short of the three-fifths majority required for approval. All fifty-three of the affirmative votes were cast by Republicans, but nineteen Republicans joined with the Democrats in voting against the measure.\textsuperscript{11} Examination of their places of residence reveals that twelve of these nineteen anti-nativist Republicans were from the Western Reserve, whereas only three of the fifty-three affirmative votes came from Western Reserve Republicans. This was another indication that the Free Soil tradition provided one of the strongest checks against unrestrained political nativism in the early Ohio Republican Party.\textsuperscript{12}

The \textit{Ohio State Journal} tried to drive a wedge between those immigrants who might be attracted to Republicanism on the one hand and Democratically-inclined immigrants on the other:

Intelligent citizens of foreign birth are as strongly in favor of having proper guards thrown around the elective franchise, as any other class of citizens.\textsuperscript{13}
FIGURE 4

VOTE ON NATIVIST CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, 1857

- County of Residence of a Republican voting for proposed constitutional amendment
- County of Residence of a Republican voting against proposed constitutional amendment
- County with no Republican Representative residing therein

The Cleveland Leader, in distinguishing between different groups of immigrants, was more blunt. Describing the Cuyahoga County Democrats as controlled by "corrupt politicians," it said:

... A great majority of these voting cattle are foreigners, mostly Irish Catholic ... There are Germans, there are other foreigners who are not to be classed with these, whose hearts throb with noble and true sentiments.¹⁴

The Leader's editor, Joseph Medill, had always had a strong anti-Catholic strain in his anti-Democratic rhetoric. Perhaps this contributed by 1857 to a decline in his reputation for journalistic and political integrity among Western Reserve Republicans of an anti-nativist persuasion. Congressman Edward Wade of Cleveland noted that true antislavery men were dismayed by Medill's opportunism and his newspaper's loss of "good character."¹⁵ Nevertheless, Medill was not the only Ohio Republican who continued to display anti-Catholic and anti-foreign prejudice after the successful campaign of 1855. The platform of the "Ohio State Republican Association," issued in April 1856, included calls to resist "ecclesiastical subversion" and to require "devotion to American institutions" as a requirement for office-holding.¹⁶ The Ohio State Journal, in listing various reasons why Benjamin Wade should be returned to the U.S. Senate for another term, pointed out that although Wade was not a Know-Nothing he was "against 'Jesuitism'" as much as the next fellow.¹⁷ In Cincinnati, Republican
Congressman Timothy Day, a friend of prominent German-Americans and a foe of Know-Nothingism, nonetheless felt that "freedom-loving" native-born citizens had "just cause to condemn foreign bloc voting which the Democrats have encouraged." He urged his immigrant friend Friedrich Hassaurek to "rid himself of the accident of [his] birth," and to oppose any appeal to the "German vote" as a bloc. The Western Christian Advocate, which had given many indications of its pro-Republican leanings, saw three great moral issues confronting the United States in 1856: temperance, "political Romanism," and slavery - in that order. It also endorsed the extreme nativist demand of a twenty-one year waiting period for naturalization.

Why did antislavery Republicans who opposed Know-Nothingism as a political rival hold such clearly nativist views, and what significance did this nativism have? One part of the explanation goes back to the common evangelical Protestant culture out of which most Republicans and almost all Know-Nothings came. Most Free Soilers, who came to constitute an important part of the Republican party, had also come out of such a cultural milieu; in 1853 the Ohio Free Soil Party had added temperance legislation to its platform. The Ohio State Journal suggested that differences between Republicans and Know-Nothings should not obscure the real points of agreement between them. Another reason for Republican hostility to Catholic immigrants was the obvious
preference of most of them for the Democratic party, which in the eyes of Republicans made these immigrants the allies of the "slave power." Chase, whose personal attitudes toward immigrants were relatively liberal for his day, criticized Irish immigrants on this point. Along with other antislavery men Chase greatly admired Daniel O'Connell, the Irish reformer and opponent of slavery, but was distressed that Irish-Americans did not generally follow O'Connell's great example. Instead they had aligned themselves "against the friends of liberty, through the influence of American demagogues, servile to the slave oligarchy." In a broad sense, most Ohio Republicans prized what sociologist Milton Gordon has called "Anglo-conformity," the assimilation of immigrants into an established Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, a culture which to antislavery Republicans had come to include opposition to slavery and the "slave power." As one Republican state senator who favored a waiting period between naturalization and the right to vote saw it, the goal of such a move would be to "produce an independent-minded naturalized citizen," presumably one whose thinking was more "American" than "foreign."

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to view Republicanism and Know-Nothingsm as somehow synonymous in Ohio after 1855. The two laws enacted to please nativists were far from constituting a complete nativist or Know-Nothing program. Ohio Republicans rejected other nativist-inspired
proposals such as restrictions on office-holding by naturalized citizens, an English literacy requirement for voting, public investigation of Catholic religious houses, and restrictive laws concerning indigent immigrants, to name but a few. Chase consulted on some of these issues with his friends in the German-American community. They told him in no uncertain terms that if Republicans wanted any immigrant support at all they would be well advised not to support such measures which the foreign-born could interpret as being inimical to their personal liberty.

The amount of time that the Ohio legislature spent on the two nativist laws was but a small fraction of the time spent on a host of other issues, including state banking and taxation, the great canal controversy of 1857 (involving fraud in contracts made for repair and maintenance), the state treasury fraud of 1857 (an embarrassment to both Republicans and Democrats), and the passage of a state "personal liberty law" to counteract the national Fugitive Slave Law. Governor Chase had little time to spend placating nativists in his party, burdened as he was with the weightier matters of state affairs, of budgets, departmental business, and a host of routine matters. Finally, whatever their personal affinity with nativist ideology might be, Ohio Republicans were determined that their party, and not an independent Know-Nothing movement, would be the chief rival to the Democrats in a two-party
system. Cooperation with Know-Nothings was fine, but only on terms favorable to the Republicans. Ohio Republicans applauded the demise of Know-Nothingism as a unified national movement, encouraged the assimilation of Ohio Know-Nothings into the Republican fold, and sought to portray the remnant of independent Ohio Know-Nothings as an essentially pro-slavery group.

Ohio Republicans realized that Know-Nothing support had been critical in Chase's election in 1855 and for the most part were willing to offer some recognition to the Know-Nothings for their role in the emerging Republican party. Some anti-nativist Republicans still did not relish involvement with the Know-Nothings, but even they accepted it as one of the realities of politics. Congressman Richard Mott still yearned for an "out and out democratic free soil party," but recognized this as impractical. "We may be obliged to submit to an alliance, which we don't believe in," he wrote, at least until the Republicans elected a president. Alexander Latty of Toledo was still wary of the damage Know-Nothings could cause, but Republican leaders like Chase, Wade, and Giddings had decided for better or worse to accept the presence of individual Know-Nothings in the party. Chase was willing to accept Know-Nothing support for his presidential bid in 1856. He also informed Congressman Lewis Campbell of his appreciation for Campbell's work in the 1855 campaign, and promised his
support should Campbell be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives.\textsuperscript{32} Benjamin Wade had received Know-Nothing support in his Senate re-election bid and had an eye on the Know-Nothings when he expressed concern about a report that potential Republican presidential nominee John C. Fremont and his wife were Catholics.\textsuperscript{33}

Joshua Giddings revealed his tolerance by accepting the election of Know-Nothing Congressman Nathaniel Banks of Massachusetts as Speaker of the House early in 1856. Banks ultimately moved from Know-Nothingism to full-fledged Republicanism, however, his election as House Speaker has been described as the "first northern victory" in the sectional conflict.\textsuperscript{34} Giddings was still somewhat troubled by the strong Know-Nothing influence in the 34th Congress, and though Banks had not been his first choice for Speaker he nevertheless regarded the Banks election as an important step forward in the antislavery cause. As he administered the oath of office to Banks in the "presence of 3000 cheering people," he must have felt that his long, often lonely crusade for justice was beginning to bear fruit at last.\textsuperscript{35}

On the state level Ohio Republicans continued to see the need to consider Know-Nothing reaction in selecting political candidates and making political appointments. When Congressman Day of Cincinnati decided not to run for re-election in 1856 he urged that the party's candidate for his seat be someone acceptable to Know-Nothings.\textsuperscript{36} James
Ashely, ever the consummate politician, urged Chase to consider highly two classes of people when making patronage appointments: antinativist former Democrats who were "least objectionable" to Know-Nothings, and "liberal Know-Nothings or Whigs" who were "least objectionable" to the German immigrants and former Democrats in the party. However, the Ohio Know-Nothings themselves took the lead in moving toward a posture of full cooperation with and integration into the Ohio Republican party. While it would be wrong to conclude that Ohio Know-Nothings received nothing in return for becoming Republicans, still what they received in the way of rhetoric and substance was less than what they gave up: independent status and the chance to become the dominant influence in an anti-Democratic party.

After the 1855 state elections Ohio Know-Nothings who had supported Chase and the rest of the Republican ticket took a series of actions which gradually brought them fully into the Republican fold. Strongly anti-slavery and increasingly inclined to give up practices which Republicans deplored, such as secrecy, the state's Know-Nothing leaders were in a cooperative mood early in 1856. Thomas Spooner made a number of conciliatory speeches, and his successor as head of the state council, Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Ford, followed Chase's lead by largely ignoring nativism in his inaugural address. Then in February fifteen of twenty Ohio delegates attending the national Know-Nothing
convention in Philadelphia walked out of the proceedings when the national council rebuffed a move to include a platform plank calling for restoration of the Missouri Compromise. They joined seceding delegates from other northern states in forming a separate "North American" party, which voted to delay making a presidential nomination until June, when the Republican national convention would meet. The remaining Know-Nothings, now predominantly but not exclusively southern, hereafter known as the "South Americans," proceeded to nominate former Whig president Millard Fillmore as their presidential candidate for 1856.40

Spooner had consulted with Chase concerning the actions which Ohio Know-Nothings should take at this convention, and although Chase's reply has not been preserved it is rather likely that the outcome pleased him for the Know-Nothings split was now permanent, and the "North Americans" were clearly offered the possibility of cooperation with Republicans on the national level in the 1856 campaign.41 Chase's friend Dr. Paul was in Philadelphia and observed a session of the Know-Nothing convention. He reported to Chase that he was "pleased at the way Ford and Spooner handled themselves" in leading the bolt of the majority of the Ohio delegation.42 Joseph Medill, who had been concerned that Ohio Know-Nothings would have to be more fully integrated into the Republican party or else they would do the party great harm, rejoiced in the outcome of the
Philadelphia convention, averring that his "confidence in the integrity of the Ohio Know-Nothings [had been] strengthened."\textsuperscript{43}

After the national division of the Know-Nothings in February the Ohio Know-Nothings repeated a similar separation on the state level, but with the pro-Republican forces holding a relatively larger share in Ohio than they held at the national level. When the state council approved the actions of the delegation in Philadelphia, an anti-Republican, pro-Fillmore minority, largely centered in Hamilton County and a few other strongholds in southern Ohio, moved to constitute itself as the official American Party of Ohio. They obtained a charter to that effect from the pro-Fillmore national council. In reality the pro-Republican majority was no longer a Know-Nothing body at all in the eyes of the pro-Fillmore Americans. The followers of Spooner and Ford now had no real identity except that of Republican.\textsuperscript{44}

The Cincinnati municipal elections in April 1856 revealed a stark contrast with the situation just one year before. Instead of rioting and vandalism the election passed quietly, with Democrats scoring a strong victory as they had done in 1855.\textsuperscript{45} Their opposition was the "American Reform" party, which continued to exist in municipal elections as a coalition of most of the city's Know-Nothings and Republicans.\textsuperscript{46} However, on the state and national levels Know-Nothings were making their decisions either
for or against Republicanism. Cooperation with Republicans while remaining organizationally independent was no longer a real option above the local level.

While the Know-Nothings struggled with the political direction they would take, the Republicans were considering how best to win Know-Nothing support without losing the good will of the antinativists in the party. With no major state offices at stake in 1856, Ohio Republicans had more opportunity in the winter and spring of that year to focus on national politics. At the first national meeting of Republicans, held at Pittsburgh in February, the delegates took no action regarding the Know-Nothings, either to announce cooperation with them or to go on record against them. Charles Reemelin of Cincinnati, who had rejoined the party, had proposed a resolution of disapproval of the Know-Nothings.47 The real activity came in June, when both the "North Americans" and the Republicans held presidential nominating conventions. The "North American" convention was held first, a deliberate effort to induce the Republicans to accept their nominee, but the Republicans were clearly in control and the plan failed. The "North Americans" were persuaded to nominate Nathaniel Banks, who by pre-arranged plan then withdrew when the Republicans nominated John C. Fremont a few days later. The "North Americans" had no choice but to accept Fremont's nomination in a second convention a few weeks later. Fremont had no
previous Know-Nothing identification, but he was less objectionable to them than William Seward, one reason why Seward was not chosen by the Republicans. Chase's hopes for the nomination were dashed not by nativist opposition but by strong opposition from former Whigs, who originally preferred Supreme Court Justice John McLean and then turned to Fremont when McLean withdrew his name. In the Ohio delegation Chase had the backing of Spooner and James H. Baker, Ohio Secretary of State, but the former Whigs preferred McLean. 48

At the Republican convention the delegates turned down a proposed antinativist plank, one favored by such Ohio Republicans as Giddings and Hausserek. 49 When the convention considered a motion to recognize an overture of cooperation from the "North Americans," Joshua Giddings stood up to protest. Giddings had seen some antislavery victories, like the elections of Chase and Banks, result from the help of Know-Nothings, and he had reluctantly accepted such arrangements as political necessity, but now he felt the time had come to draw the line. He had a "serious conviction," he explained, that Republicans "should hold no association, make no terms, have no arrangement, and enter into no understanding with any other political party." 50 After Giddings had made his eloquent plea, this motion, involving merely a symbolic gesture and not part of the larger strategy of Republican - North American integration, was voted down. Later, however, some delegates urged a reconsideration, citing
potential harm to cooperation on the local level, and the motion was finally approved. Giddings, as he had done before, accepted the fact that no Republican convention was likely to satisfy his radical convictions. At least now his conscience was clear, and he could support Fremont in the fall campaign. As he explained to his son-in-law George Washington Julian, a leading Indiana Republican, "my policy was to say nothing about the Know-Nothings, but others thrust it into the convention," and he "had to thrust it out."51

The Republicans left their national convention with the conviction, whether justified or not, that the nativist issue was behind them, and that the ensuing campaign would be fought solely over the issue of "slavery versus freedom." As the journalist Murat Halstead described it, "The spectre of Sam [i.e. Know-Nothings] which has hitherto frightened tens of thousands of honest foreigners from the Republican camp, is at last exorcised - the broad battle field is cleared for action."52 In Ohio the union of Republicans and "North Americans" was best symbolized on the 4th of July when Thomas Spooner spoke at a large Republican rally in Jefferson, home of Joshua Giddings, Benjamin Wade, and the Ashtabula Sentinel. There, in the very heart of Ohio's most antislavery region, Spooner pronounced the death sentence on slavery, and described as "true Americanism" not proscription on account of
birthplace but rather the principles of freedom and equality for which Joshua Giddings had labored so long.\textsuperscript{53} The impact of such an address by such an individual could hardly have been lost on the antislavery farmers and artisans who gathered there at the county seat on that hot summer afternoon.\textsuperscript{54}

As the 1856 campaign progressed, interest in Ohio centered on the presidential race and on the congressional races in the twenty-one Ohio congressional districts. Of the twenty-one anti-Nebraska congressman elected in 1854, seventeen sought re-election as Republicans, including among others Lewis Campbell, M.H. Nichols, Richard Mott, Samuel Galloway, Philemon Bliss, Joshua Giddings, and Edward Wade. Two congressmen, Timothy Day and Edward Ball, chose not to seek re-election, and two others, John Scott Harrison of Cincinnati and Oscar Moore of Portsmouth, left the Republican party and ran third-party campaigns as unreconstructed, pro-Fillmore Know-Nothings, or "South Americans." As one might expect, the \textit{Cincinnati Times} became the chief spokesman for the Fillmore "South Americans" in Ohio, and strongly endorsed both Fillmore and the twelve congressional candidates entered by the "South Americans."\textsuperscript{55} The \textit{Times} hurled indignation toward those Republican congressmen who had been clearly identified as Know-Nothings in 1854. Declaring them to be traitors for abandoning an independent nativist party, it threatened sure retaliation at the polls.
For example, in commenting on the race in the 8th District in western Ohio, it wrote, "Benjamin Stanton, now the Black Republican representative from the 8th District, was, when elected to office a third degree member of the American party. For this he deserves a severe rebuke." Similar warnings were issued to other unfaithful Know-Nothings. Yet the most bitter remarks were reserved for Republican radicals like Giddings:

The defeat of Joshua Giddings would be a blessing to the entire country. He is a most notorious abolitionist agitator. For years he has openly preached disunion in and out of Congress. We understand there is no prospect whatever of defeating him, and that his majority this year will be larger than ever. Giddings' district is the "woolliest" district in the state, and is altogether past redemption. We should not be the least surprised to see Frederick Douglass or some other African gentlemen yet represent this district in Congress. There are, however, some choice spirits in this district, who have not yet had the wool pulled over their eyes, and who will do all they can in behalf of Fillmore, Donelson [his vice-presidential running mate], and the Union.57

In addition to straight-out nativism, the third-party American campaign in 1856 also emphasized the theme of national unity, declaring the Republicans to be a sectional party and a fomenter of discord. "The country will hold the seventy or eighty Republicans in Congress answerable for something besides Kansas harangues," declared the Cincinnati Times, a reference to the way Republican orators had seized upon "Bleeding Kansas" as a weapon to dramatize the dangers of the aggressive "slave power."58 Fillmore
as a champion of national unity and peace attracted some of the same conservative Whigs who had supported Allen Trimble for governor in 1855, and in fact Fillmore himself was a conservative Whig with only minimal affiliation with the Know-Nothing movement. Former Whig Senator Thomas Corwin, who up to this point had remained aloof from Republican politics, supported Fillmore until October when he switched reluctantly to Fremont. Other old Whig leaders in Ohio, including that party's gubernatorial candidates in 1850 and 1853, endorsed Democratic candidate James Buchanan as the best hope for saving the Union, and there was some evidence of Democratic-American cooperation as the campaign drew to a close.

| TABLE 8 |

| COMPARISON OF REPUBLICAN VOTE BY REGION, 1855 GUBERNATORIAL AND 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS |
|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Region  | 1855-Chase (%) | 1856-Fremont   |
| All Southern Ohio | 42.2  | 42.2          |
| Hamilton County    | 19.4  | 33.3          |
| Rest of Southern Ohio | 46.3 | 43.7          |
| All Northern Ohio  | 55.2  | 55.1          |
| Western Reserve    | 63.2  | 65.8          |
| Rest of Northern Ohio | 51.4 | 49.8          |
| State              | 48.5  | 48.5          |

Analysis of the Ohio voting data for the 1856 presidential and congressional elections reveals that Republican percentages throughout the state generally were similar to those which Chase received in 1855. Fremont's statewide plurality of 48.5% was identical to Chase's share of the 1855 vote, and his percentages in the northern and southern halves of Ohio were also commensurate with the results of a year before. Fremont significantly outpolled Chase in

**TABLE 9**

**VOTE IN CINCINNATI ETHNIC WARDS, 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Fremont</th>
<th>Buchanan</th>
<th>Fillmore</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SOURCES: Flack, "Who Governed Cincinnati?", p. 48; Cincinnati Gazette, November 5, 1856.*

Hamilton County, not burdened by as much personal unpopularity there, although he still ran a distant second to Buchanan in the Queen City.⁶¹ Fremont won two German wards in Cincinnati, the 10th and 11th, which Chase had lost in
1855 because of immigrant discontent with Know-Nothingsm. One other German ward, the 12th, and the three Irish wards remained Democratic in 1856. The location of Protestant and Catholic churches in the German wards suggests that the 12th ward may have been predominantly German Catholic and the 10th and 11th wards mixed or predominantly German Protestant. If true, this would confirm the conclusion, widely established in recent historiography, that early Republicans had far greater appeal among German Protestants than German Catholics. 62

Fremont's vote in the rest of the state revealed only small changes from the pattern of 1855. The Republican presidential candidate improved slightly upon Chase's showing in the Western Reserve, but dropped back slightly in both southern Ohio outside Hamilton County and northern Ohio outside the Western Reserve. Figure 5 indicates concentrations of Republican strength in the traditionally Whig strongholds of the Western Reserve, the southeastern counties originally settled by New Englanders of the Ohio Company and the southwestern counties of the Virginia Military District. Democrats retained their traditional followings in the southwestern river counties, northwest Ohio, and counties in east-central Ohio below the Western Reserve known as the "Backbone." The pattern in Ohio voting in the mid-1850s reflected traditional partisanship combined with some increased polarization of the two parties between
FIGURE 5
PRESIDENTIAL VOTING IN OHIO, 1856

- County with Republican Plurality

- County with Democratic Plurality

- County with vote for Fillmore above his statewide total of 7.3%

the northern and southern regions of the state. The Republicans were somewhat stronger than the Whigs had been in the northern half of the state, and somewhat weaker than the Whigs in the southern half.\textsuperscript{63}

Millard Fillmore, like Allen Trimble, received the vast majority of his Ohio votes from the southern counties, where he strongly appealed to conservative former Whigs as well as nativists in Cincinnati. The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient (\(r_s\)) between the vote for Trimble and the vote for Fillmore is .77.\textsuperscript{64} In addition to Cincinnati the American party showed considerable strength in the 10th Congressional District, consisting of Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, and Scioto counties. Fillmore received 24.1\% of the vote in this district, almost matching the 24.9\% received by Congressman Oscar Moore, who was running for re-election on the American ticket after leaving the Republican party. The effect of this strong third-party showing was to give Buchanan and the Democratic congressional candidate pluralities in this once traditionally Whig region.

In the congressional elections patterns similar to the presidential results prevailed. Generally the Republican congressional candidates ran ahead of Fremont, perhaps because some of them were considered more moderate than Fremont and thus more acceptable to former Whigs. Republicans won thirteen of the twenty-one races, although one of them,
Lewis Campbell, had such a razor-thin margin (eighteen votes) that his victory was contested, and the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives awarded the seat to his opponent in 1857. The districts which the Republicans lost included the two Cincinnati seats (in one of them incumbent John Scott Harrison bolted to the American party), the 6th District centered on Hillsboro in southwest Ohio, the 10th

**TABLE 10**

**VOTE DISTRIBUTION IN REGION, BY PARTY, 1856 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Republican (%)</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>45.1*</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SOURCE: The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1857, p. 56.*

District, the 12th District in central Ohio where Samuel Galloway lost a close race to Samuel S. Cox, and the 15th and 17th Districts in eastern Ohio. The American party ran candidates in twelve districts, mostly in southern Ohio, with their results close to that of Fillmore. The Cincinnati
ward returns for the six ethnic wards show that the Republican congressional candidates won only the same 10th and 11th wards which Fremont carried.

Ohio in 1856 was a key Republican state, with a prominent Republican governor, an outspoken Republican senator, and Republican majorities in the state legislature and the state's congressional delegation. Events like "Bleeding Kansas" and the caning of Charles Sumner helped the party, as did the growing desire of many Ohioans and other northerners for a government policy friendly to the development of a vigorous commercial and industrial economy. Democrats viewed these trends with dismay. The Cleveland Plain Dealer scolded Western Reserve Republicans as the descendants of "those old blue law, blue bellied Presbyterians that hung the witches and banished the Quakers," adding that they "are determined to convert the people of this region into a race of psalm singers, using the degenerate dregs of the old Puritans remaining here to drive the Democracy out." But Joshua Giddings, descended from those "old Puritans," had another view. He wrote, "With careful management we may now maintain the ascendancy in our party so long as our power shall be wielded for justice."
NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR


2. Roseboom, *The Civil War Era, 1850-1873*, pp. 313-15. In the Ohio House there were 78 Republicans and 34 Democrats; in the Senate the respective numbers were 29 and 6.

3. Benjamin F. Wade to Salmon P. Chase, March 7, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP.


6. *Ohio Laws, 1857*, vol. 54, pp. 110-12. When the Democrats regained control of the state legislature in 1858 this law was repealed. (*Ohio Laws, 1858*, vol. 55, p. 8.)


8. Thomas Kremm, "The Old Order Trembles: The Formation of the Republican Party in Ohio," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin*, XXXVI (Fall, 1978), pp. 197, 205. The Catholic Telegraph naturally deplored the passage of the church property bill, pointing out that theoretically it could cause problems for the Methodists as well, since that denomination also had an episcopal (rule by bishops) form of church government. (*Catholic Telegraph*, April 18, 1857). The one Republican who voted against the church property bill was James Monroe of Oberlin in the Western Reserve, an alumnus of Oberlin College and an outspoken anti-slavery man. Monroe later served as a U.S. Congressman and as Oberlin's first full-time professor of history and political science. See John Barnard, *From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866-1917* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), pp. 53-55.


11. Ashtabula Sentinel, April 9, 1857; Ashtabula Sentinel, April 16, 1857.


13. Ibid., January 28, 1857.


15. Edward Wade to Chase, February 16, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP.


17. Ibid., January 21, 1856.

18. Timothy C. Day to Friedrich Haussaurek, March 25, 1856, Haussaurek Papers, OHS.

19. Ibid.

20. Western Christian Advocate, February 6, 1856.


27. Stephen Molitor to Chase, February 25, 1856, Chase Papers, LC; Molitor to Chase, March 27, 1856, ibid.


29. James Ashley to Chase, October 21, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

30. Richard Mott to Chase, February 20, 1856, Chase Papers, LC.

31. Alexander Latty to Chase, December 18, 1855, Chase Papers, LC.

32. Chase to ?, March 21, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP; Chase to Lewis Campbell, December 8, 1855, Campbell Papers, OHS.

33. Wade to Chase, March 7, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP; Wade to Mrs. Benjamin Wade, March 30, 1856, Benjamin Wade Papers, LC.


35. Joshua R. Giddings to Gerrit Smith, January 21, 1856, Giddings Papers, OHS; Giddings to Laura Giddings, February 1, 1856, Giddings-Julian Papers, LC; Steward, Joshua R. Giddings and the Tactics of Radical Politics, pp. 235-37.

36. Day to Haussaurek, June 24, 1856, Haussaurek Papers, OHS.

37. Ashley to Chase, February 19, 1856, Chase Papers, OHS.


39. Ibid., January 7, 1856; Cincinnati Gazette, January 15, 1856; Ashtabula Sentinel, January 24, 1856.

40. Roseboom, pp. 315-16; Potter, The Impending Crisis, pp. 254-55.

41. Thomas Spooner to Chase, February 5, 1856, Chase Papers, LC.

42. John Paul to Chase, February 24, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP.
43. Joseph Medill to Chase, February 14, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP; Cleveland Leader, February 27, 1856.

44. Ohio State Journal, March 21, 1856; Cincinnati Gazette, March 22, 1856; Cincinnati Times, February 21, 1856, April 24, 1856. The Catholic Telegraph did not see any real difference in the two Know-Nothing factions when it came to their attitudes toward Catholicism. It expressed doubt that the "North Americans" would be any more liberal or tolerant in their thinking than the "South Americans." In the sense of cultural as opposed to political nativism, at least, this was probably true. (Catholic Telegraph, March 15, 1856.)


46. Cincinnati Gazette, April 9, 1856.

47. Foner, p. 248; Proceedings of the First Three Republican National Conventions of 1856, 1860 and 1864, Including Proceedings of the Antecedent National Convention Held at Pittsburgh in February 1856, as Reported by Horace Greeley (Minneapolis, 1893), p. 11. (Hereafter cited as Republican Proceedings.)


51. Giddings to George W. Julian, June 28, 1856, Giddings-Julian Papers, LC; Giddings to Laura Giddings, June 20, 1856, ibid.; Steward, p. 240; Foner, p. 249n.


53. Ashtabula Sentinel, July 10, 1856.

54. George W. Julian believed that Know-Nothingism had much less influence on Ohio Republican politics than it had in his home state of Indiana. See Julian to Salmon P. Chase, July 22, 1856, Chase Papers, HSP.

55. Cincinnati Times, February 21, 1856, April 24, 1856.

56. Ibid., October 9, 1856.
57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., May 8, 1856.


60. Roseboom, pp. 319-21.

61. The 1856 presidential vote in Cincinnati itself was: Buchanan, 45%; Fremont, 33%; and Fillmore, 22%.

62. The location of Catholic and German Protestant churches within the three German wards can be determined from the detailed maps in R.H. Harrison, Titus' Atlas of Hamilton County, Ohio, From Actual Surveys (Philadelphia: C.O. Titus, 1869), pp. 76-109.

63. Comparing the Jacksonian era partisanship of Ohio counties (Map 2) with the 1856 presidential results (Map 6), the Republicans had a net gain of seven counties over the Whigs in the northern half of the state, and a net loss of eight counties under the Whig total in the southern half of the state. In all the traditionally Whig counties which the Republicans lost in 1856 the Fillmore vote was larger than the Republican-Democratic difference, indicating that the American party held the balance of power in these counties.

64. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is used when both variables consist of ranked data. In this instance the eighty-eight Ohio counties were ranked on a scale of one to eighty-eight according to the percentage vote for Trimble and Fillmore. This coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1, is a measure of the degree to which subjects held the same rank on two variables. Thus if the ranking of the counties was exactly the same in the two elections \( r \) would be +1. If it was exactly the reverse (the highest on one was the lowest on the other, etc.), \( r_s \) would be -1. For description and examples of this statistic see Dollar and Jensen, pp. 68-71.

65. Roseboom, p. 322.


67. Giddings to Samuel Galloway, October 13, 1855, Samuel Galloway Papers, OHS.
"UNBOWED TO BALL": THE KNOW-NOTHING REMNANT

IN OHIO POLITICS, 1857-1860

After the election of 1856 the American Party of Ohio entered the twilight phase of its existence. A formal statewide organization remained until 1858, and various city and county organizations continued to 1860, pursuing a variety of strategies to maintain a platform for nativist politics. The nativists, increasingly marginal to the concerns and interests of the Ohio Republican party, differed among themselves as to the proper course to follow. The "purists," unconcerned that the party steadily dwindled in size and influence, insisted on maintaining a completely independent organization, running as many separate candidates as possible, and shunning all contact with the major parties. They saw themselves as a "faithful remnant," refusing to sacrifice principle for the sake of political gain.¹ However, a more pragmatic attitude had emerged by 1858 among other Ohio nativists, especially those in Cincinnati. The "pragmatists" still held anti-Catholic and anti-foreign beliefs similar to those of the "purists." Politically, however, they were more interested in exercising real power. Thus they made alliances with non-nativists, usually
Republicans, in local elections where nativists were sufficiently numerous to affect the outcome.

Frequent nativist-Republican alliances characterized Cincinnati municipal politics in the late 1850s. It became a common practice for a united "Opposition" or "Citizens" slate of candidates to contest with the Democrats for city and county office. The Cincinnati Gazette encouraged this development and criticized Republicans who wanted to avoid cooperation with nativists. This newspaper held to the view that national political issues need not be injected into local politics.² For the April, 1857 municipal election Republicans and nativists had initially held separate nominating conventions, each producing a slate of sixteen candidates. Six of the sixteen nominees were the same on both tickets, and of the remaining ten five of the Republicans and five of the nativists were selected for a joint "Citizens Union" ticket by a combined nativist-Republican convention.³ This ticket enjoyed a complete victory, winning all five of the wards which had produced the highest percentages for Trimble in 1855 and Fillmore in 1856 (hereafter referred to as the "nativist wards"), as well as the two German Protestant wards.⁴

The gubernatorial contest in 1857 marked the last time the American party placed a separate candidate for any state office on the ballot. Diehard nativists were not appeased by the church property and election laws in the Republican-
dominated state legislature. The *Hillsboro American Citizen* reflected this sentiment when it pointed out that the Republicans had refused to include a one-year waiting period between naturalization and the granting of voting rights.\(^5\) Calling the Republicans "hypocritical," this nativist journal had nothing but scorn for the legislative session ending in the spring of 1857. It had been "wasteful," "extravagant," and guilty of a "salary grab" (in voting pay increases for its members), and its sudden adjournment in April, 1857 was "unexpected but welcome."\(^6\) Ohio nativists who wanted to continue an independent course on the statewide level could point to the Republican state ticket of 1857 as evidence that true nativists could expect little or nothing from that party. Governor Chase, whom militant nativists abhorred, was renominated for a second term, and all but one of the other nominations for state office went to new men in place of the Know-Nothings who had run with Chase in 1855. In place of Thomas Ford the Republicans nominated Martin Welker, of Protestant German ancestry, for lieutenant-governor. Nativists also balked at the prospect of supporting the Republican nominee for state supreme court judge, abolitionist and radical Free-Soiler Milton Sutliff.\(^7\)

Ohio Republicans had several reasons for bringing in new men to run with Chase in 1857, including the need to appeal to the non-nativist elements in the party coalition,
such as the German-Americans and the Western Reserve Free Soilers, and the need for a fresh political image to counteract the tarnishing effects of the canal and state treasury scandals of Chase's first term. The involvement of State Treasurer William Gibson, one of the Know-Nothings elected with Chase in 1855, in the treasury scandal especially incensed radicals who had always been cool toward Know-Nothing participation in the Republican party.  

Not all Republicans thought that this shuffling of the ticket was wise. Congressman John Sherman of Mansfield, later to achieve prominence in the United States Senate, warned Chase that Ford was angry at being dropped from the ticket. He reminded that Ford

    has been useful to the Republican Party. His being on the ticket drives off no one - yet attaches to it a large number and of a class that you and I could not in the least influence.  

Nevertheless, Ohio Republicans went into the 1857 campaign with little formal acknowledgement of the role Know-Nothings had played in the original formation of the party. Even the one Know-Nothing holdover from the 1855 ticket, Board of Public Works member Jacob Blickensderfer, was bitterly assailed by many Ohio Republicans for his role in the canal controversy, and was the only candidate on the Republican ticket who suffered defeat that fall.  

The Ohio American party nominated an old Whig, Philadelph Van Trump of Lancaster, as its candidate for governor. It produced a platform with the usual nativist
demands as well as a "middle-ground" position on slavery, decrying both the extension of slavery and the dangers of Republican "fanaticism" on the subject.¹¹ Their campaign proceeded with invective directed equally at Chase and at the former Know-Nothings who had "sold out" to the Republicans. Fusion with the Republicans had nearly killed a movement that had otherwise been on its way to success, according to the Lancaster Gazette.¹² The Cincinnati Times, still the bellwether voice for Ohio nativists, urged firm adherence to independent action in 1857, even though it acknowledged that the party's vote would be small.¹³

However, the logic of their situation encouraged at least some nativists to enter into political alliance with either Democrats or Republicans where their votes could help determine outcomes in local races. In some counties evidence of American-Democratic collaboration surfaced.¹⁴ A particularly interesting case of this occurred in Hamilton County (Cincinnati), where Protestant Democrats once part of the discredited "Miami tribe" fused with Americans while some Catholic Democrats endorsed those Republican candidates for county office whom they deemed acceptable.¹⁵ In other areas Republicans and American collaborated on the local level, as in Jefferson County (Steubenville) in eastern Ohio, where the local nativist newspaper, the True American, endorsed Chase for governor while supporting a Republican-American fusion ticket for county offices.¹⁶
The nativist endorsement of Chase in Steubenville was rather unusual, since most of the Americans who considered supporting one of the two major party candidates as election day drew near chose the Democrat Henry Payne over Chase.\textsuperscript{17} The Americans of Washington County (Marietta) decided that if Van Trump should withdraw they would throw their endorsement to Payne, and on election day reports indicated evidence of American support for Payne.\textsuperscript{18} Conscious of this possibility, the leading Republican newspapers scoffed at the logic of such an alignment. The \textit{Cincinnati Gazette} found it "inconsistent" that any nativist would support the candidate of a party that had vigorously opposed the church property law of 1857, and the \textit{Ohio State Journal} wanted to know how those old Whigs among the nativists could support a party that had so maliciously attacked the great statesman Henry Clay.\textsuperscript{19} Yet some militant nativists had come to the conclusion that "Republicans were no better than Democrats."\textsuperscript{20} One such militant, a former Whig who vowed never to join the Republicans, hoped that the Van Trump candidacy would result in the election of the Democrat Payne. He admitted that as a \textit{remnant group} the Americans were "potent only for mischief."\textsuperscript{21}

From a practical standpoint the results of the election disappointed the Americans who despised Chase, since the 10,135 votes received by Van Trump were insufficient to defeat Chase, who squeaked by Payne with a margin of only
1,481 votes out of 329,736 votes cast. (48.7% to 48.2)
The Americans had not run any other candidates for state office, but the fact that the total vote cast in these races approximately equaled the combined vote totals of Chase and Payne suggests that Americans who voted for Van Trump simply refrained from voting in these other races. 22 In the one race which Republicans lost, that of Blickensderfer, the chief factor was his unpopularity with some in the party stemming from his role in the canal controversy. 23

The county returns for the 1857 gubernatorial contest show that the pattern of Republican and Democratic counties established in the 1856 presidential race persisted to a great degree, with the most noticeable difference, as Table II indicates, being in the decline of the American party vote. The Cincinnati results presented in Tables 12 and 13 illustrate patterns in ethnic and nativist wards. As in 1856 the two German Protestant wards went Republican, while the three Irish and one German Catholic wards gave majorities to the Democrat Payne. The five Cincinnati wards which had had the highest Know-Nothing percentages in the 1855 gubernatorial contest gave far less support to Van Trump than they had to Allen Trimble. Republican percentages in these wards increased more sharply than Democratic ones, suggesting that at least in Cincinnati the Republicans were the chief beneficiaries of the nativist decline.
FIGURE 6

OHIO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, 1857

- County with Republican plurality

- County with Democratic plurality

- County with American Party vote higher than statewide total of 3.1%

TABLE 11

VOTE DISTRIBUTIONS IN REGION, BY CANDIDATE, 1856 PRESIDENTIAL AND 1857 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1856</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fremont</td>
<td>Buchanan</td>
<td>Fillmore</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1857</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Payne</td>
<td>Von Trump</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 12

VOTE IN CINCINNATI ETHNIC WARDS
1857 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Chase N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Payne N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Van N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Trump N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Cincinnati Gazette, October 15, 1857.

Van Trump's campaign marked the last statewide effort by an independent, strictly nativist third party. Although there continued to be those who demanded principle above expediency and who would not enter into political alliances, Ohio nativists who wanted to have a meaningful political impact turned to the prospects of joint action with other candidates. In 1858 such cooperation usually involved Republican-American coalitions. In Cincinnati, where the decline of nativism was chiefly benefiting the Republicans, candidates of that party for local office received nativist support, and even Chase found a warmer reception than he might have expected from nativists when he campaigned
for Republicans in the Queen City.24

TABLE 13

VOTE IN CINCINNATI NATIVIST WARDS,
1855 AND 1857 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS (%)

| Ward | 1855 | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
|      | Chase | Medill | Trimble | Total |
| 2    | 23.5  | 29.1  | 47.4  | 100   |
| 8    | 17.6  | 41.7  | 40.7  | 100   |
| 14   | 24.9  | 29.3  | 45.8  | 100   |
| 15   | 25.5  | 28.1  | 46.4  | 100   |
| 17   | 10.1  | 32.1  | 57.8  | 100   |

| 1857 | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
|      | Chase | Payne | Van Trump | Total |
| 2    | 48.6  | 37.4  | 14.0  | 100   |
| 8    | 38.1  | 47.7  | 14.2  | 100   |
| 14   | 44.6  | 36.7  | 18.7  | 100   |
| 15   | 41.8  | 36.5  | 21.7  | 100   |
| 17   | 22.7  | 40.4  | 36.9  | 100   |

Republican Gain 1855-1857
Democratic Gain 1855-1857

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1855-1857</th>
<th>1855-1857</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES: Cincinnati Gazette, October 14, 1855; October 15, 1857.
Ohio nativists did not run separate congressional candidates in 1858, but instead appear to have supported the Republican congressional candidates. The five top nativist wards in Cincinnati, of which only one had given the Republican congressional candidate a plurality in 1856, now all returned Republican majorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>1856</th>
<th>1858</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2*</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Republican plurality in 1856

SOURCES: Cincinnati Gazette, October 12, 1856; October 14, 1858.

Other southern Ohio counties with strong nativist elements, including Scioto, Lawrence, Gallia, Belmont, and Jefferson, all gave majorities to the Republican congressional candidates. Scioto, Lawrence, and Gallia counties were located in the 10th congressional district, where Republican nominee Carey Trimble had received the official endorsement of an American convention meeting in Portsmouth. In the
21st District, the Steubenville *True American*, which had endorsed Chase in 1857, now endorsed Republican congressman John A. Bingham for re-election: "Although Mr. Bingham is not quite American enough for us yet, he is infinitely better in this respect than any man from the Democratic ranks." On the state level Republicans made a successful bid for nativist support by nominating a southern Ohio conservative, William Peck, for supreme court judge. As one conservative Republican declared, it was an "admirable selection" because Peck, presumably unlike Milton Sutliff, was free of "ultra-isms," and would appeal to conservatives and nativists. The party apparently knew what it was doing in nominating Peck, for even the *Ashtabula Sentinel* thought he was a good choice. Thus the state's Republicans, who had made nominations in 1857 with an eye to the radical side of the party, now shifted slightly to protect and enlarge the conservative flank.

Despite the tacit cooperation of Republicans and Americans in 1858, one element in the Ohio American party continued to favor a separate nativist party completely independent of the Republicans. These separatists met after the 1858 election and called for a state convention and an independent campaign effort in 1859. Most of these nativists lived outside of Cincinnati. In the Queen City nativists divided into two factions, the larger one favoring cooperation (but not union) with the Republicans and a smaller
group, officially organized as the National American Association, preferring independence from all political alliances. The editor of the Cincinnati Times personally agreed with the larger faction but was careful to avoid offending the smaller group. He was convinced that a separate American ticket in 1859 would "fizzle" but would not say so publicly lest the "diehards" be angered.

The effort to maintain a separate American campaign in 1859 and thus avoid mere acquiescence to the Republican ticket and platform was strengthened by two actions Ohio Republicans took at their state convention in June. The Republicans refused to renominate state supreme court justice Joseph R. Swan for another term in retaliation for his vote to uphold the national Fugitive Slave Law in two cases arising out of the Oberlin-Wellington slave rescue of 1858. A number of Oberlin citizens (presumably Republican) had been indicted for violating this federal law when they rescued an escaped slave. Swan joined judges Peck and Josiah Scott in ruling against the Oberlinites, while Judges Sutliff and Brinkerhoff dissented. Angry Western Reserve Republicans succeeded in replacing Swan with William Cholson of Cincinnati, and in adding a call for repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law to the platform. This aroused the ire of some nativists who now suddenly felt great concern for the shabby treatment of Judge Swan, which was ironic since Swan had never had any ties to the
nativist movement.33

Another action by Ohio Republicans at the 1859 convention
caused even more consternation in the nativist ranks. Some
German-American delegates from Cincinnati demanded that
the platform include a statement condemning the nativist-
inspired naturalized voting amendment which Massachusetts
had just added to its state constitution. Conservative
Republicans, led by Lewis Campbell, objected, but the
German-Americans held firm in their position. A compromise
was finally worked out, in which prescriptive legislation
in general was condemned, but without mentioning the
Massachusetts amendment by name. Militant nativists could
hardly be pleased with this criticism of one of their
cardinal doctrines, and even the fusion-minded Cincinnati
Times described the compromise as a "hocuspocus shuffle to
avoid the issue and satisfy everybody."34

The initial hostility on the part of the nativists
to this platform plank was sufficient to arouse real concern
among Republican leaders. Congressman John Gurley of
Cincinnati, who kept a close watch on the nativist mood,
warned Chase that the nativists were not at all pleased.
"They are warlike," he reported, adding that some action
should be taken to appease them.35 Chase had already thought
of this, and had instructed Gurley to communicate to the
editor of the Cincinnati Times the real concern Ohio
Republicans had for the problem of fraudulent administration
of naturalization and voting laws. Within a few days Gurley had changed his mind about the danger of a split. He advised Chase to forget about the matter, feeling confident that the crisis had passed for the time being. He had persuaded the Cincinnati Times to endorse the Republican state ticket. Expediency had again overcome principle as far as Cincinnati nativists were concerned. Local nativist leaders were again eager to enter into coalition with Republicans for the fall county elections, and did not want to do anything that would disrupt this alliance. The Cincinnati Gazette also downplayed the importance of political principle by dismissing the party's platform as the "crude notions of resolution mongers." So what if the platform contained some sharp words against nativism and the Fugitive Slave Law? The platform meant nothing; what really counted was the election of Republicans to local and state office.

A few weeks after the Republicans met, the American Party of Ohio assembled for what proved to be its last statewide meeting. By mid-morning fewer than one hundred persons had gathered at the meeting hall in Cincinnati, although the organizers expected that the "noon trains" would bring in scores of additional nativists from throughout the state. Reconvening in the afternoon with a few additional participants, the division between the separatists and the fusionists quickly became evident. The president of the convention, Gilbert Kennedy of Dayton, criticized
the growing mood of sectional antagonism and the competition by both parties for the votes of the foreign-born, and called for the assimilation of "American" values by immigrants, tariff protection for American industry, and the administration of naturalization laws by a federal bureau instead of by the courts. Nevertheless after hearing several long nativist orations, calls for national unity, and expressions of disgust with the existing political parties, the convention voted not to make any nominations. They were too weak, the argument went, too few in number, and could only reasonably expect to poll about 5000 votes in a gubernatorial race. The fusionists suggested that the presence of an American candidate on the ballot could only help the Democratic hopeful, something they did not want to see happen. 

The nativists had indeed fallen upon hard times. A few days after this last state convention the National American Association of Cincinnati gathered for a dispirited meeting. The discussion gave a sense of being passed by in the sweep of political events:

A member, Dr. J. Truman, offered his resignation as a member of the Association. The editor of the Gazette stated that he was just naturalized, and was a Democrat, and that he came into the association to help the Democratic Party. He did not wish to remain under such imputations, and would therefore present his resignation. On being asked his reasons, Dr. Truman again rose and said, that before the vote was taken on his resignation he would like to ask a question. Would he be permitted if he remained in the Association to vote the Democratic ticket this fall? Chair: Any member of this
Association has a right to vote any ticket he pleases, as long as there is no regular American ticket on the track. (Applause) Dr. Truman: "Then I withdraw my resignation."

Mr. D.A. Ross thought as they had been insulted by a black sheet in this city, something ought to be done to stop it. They could at any rate sit with closed doors.

A.W. Churchill did not go in for gagging reporters, though he knew they sometimes left out important things, and thereby gave a false coloring to their proceedings.

A.W. Churchill then stated that as there was nothing for the Association to do during the summer, he thought there was no necessity for keeping up their meetings. He would offer the following resolution: Resolved, that when this meeting adjourns it adjourn to be called together at any time they saw proper.

Ford K. Martin hoped the Association would not disband. It was a most unpropitious time, just after the recent convention, to take such a step. He hoped they would keep together, and keep alive a little spirit of Americanism. Other members expressed an earnest desire that they should keep together as a forlorn hope. They hoped there were some true and tried men who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

The mover finally withdrew the resolution, after which the meeting adjourned for one week. 41

The separatists outside Cincinnati were not so inclined to give up the quest for independent action. J.C. Charlesworth, editor of the St. Clairsville Independent Republican and a leader of the strong nativist element in Belmont County, called the failure to nominate a separate ticket a "mistake," condemned the Cincinnati nativists, and urged independent action, suggesting the possibility of John Scott Harris as a gubernatorial candidate. 42 The separatists held a "convention" at the state fair in Zanesville in September, but limited their nominations to one, that of
Judge Swan for re-election. Swan did receive a scattering of write-in votes in the election, over 600 in Belmont County alone, but this was not enough to stop the election of Cholson in Swan's place.43

With no official American party candidates on the ballot in 1859, nativists had to choose between the two major parties if they voted at all. Examination of Ohio county and Cincinnati ward data does not offer clear patterns of either American-to-Republican or American-to-Democratic movement alone, but suggests that both may have occurred. Of the top nine nativist counties in 1855, seven gave the Republican candidate a majority in 1859, but in four of the nine counties the Democratic percentage increased more from 1855 to 1859 than did the corresponding Republican one. In Cincinnati the pattern of American-to-Republican movement is more pronounced, although it should be remembered that by this time many Cincinnati nativists had adopted a tacit policy of cooperation with Republicans, and so would support the Republican nominee in an election with no American candidate. Moreover, in 1859 Salmon P. Chase was not the Republican gubernatorial nominee, which removed an often-cited barrier to a strong Republican showing in the Queen City.

Throughout the late 1850s nativism in Ohio gradually merged into a diffuse "conservatism" which embraces old Whigs and conservative Republicans as well as nativists.
TABLE 15

COMPARISON OF 1855 AND 1859 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN COUNTIES WITH A SIZABLE NATIVIST VOTE IN 1855

1855 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belmont</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskingum</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scioto</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1859 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belmont</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskingum</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scioto</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 15 (CONT.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Republican Gain (+) or Loss (-) 1855-59</th>
<th>Democratic Gain (+) or Loss (-) 1855-59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belmont</td>
<td>+8.7</td>
<td>+13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>+3.8</td>
<td>+15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallia</td>
<td>+35.2</td>
<td>+12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>+29.0</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>+18.2</td>
<td>+14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>+16.6</td>
<td>+21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>+12.6</td>
<td>+4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskingum</td>
<td>+6.3</td>
<td>+11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scioto</td>
<td>+12.0</td>
<td>+5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This conservativism included a concern for the preservation of the Union and a resistance to radical antislavery sentiments as well as a degree of sympathy for the nativist philosophy. In 1860, as sectional tensions increased, conditions were ripe for a separate political organization of these conservatives. The Constitutional Union party incorporated their views, and in Ohio some Republicans, Whigs, and nativists joined this movement. Lewis Campbell, feeling "crushed out" of the Republican party, joined with John Scott Harrison, Allen Trimble, Oscar Moore, Philadelphia Van Trump, and others in supporting the presidential
TABLE 16
COMPARISON OF 1855 AND 1859 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN CINCINNATI NATIVIST WARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
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<th>Democratic Gain 1855-1859</th>
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</tr>
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<td>17</td>
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</table>

SOURCES: Cincinnati Gazette, October 14, 1855; October 16, 1859.

candidacy of John Bell. The remnants of the American party
in Ohio outside of Cincinnati generally supported Bell, but they did so as individuals, and not as an organization. Cincinnati nativists who were primarily committed to fusion with the Republicans generally shunned the movement. 45 To the consternation of these fusion-minded nativists, the Constitutional Union men went ahead and nominated a full slate of candidates for local and county offices in Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and for the 1st and 2nd Congressional districts in the Queen City. 46 Their campaign was one of preservation of the Union rather than the advancement of nativism. Nevertheless the election results indicated that at least some Cincinnati nativists were still prepared to turn their backs upon the Republican party in a showdown.

Bell received only 2.8% of the total Ohio presidential vote, and only Hamilton and Belmont counties gave Bell more than 10%. In Cincinnati, despite the lack of an official connection between the National American Association and the Constitutional Union party, the five "nativists" wards, 2, 8, 14, 15, and 17, were among the top ten wards for the Bell-Everett ticket. By contrast, the three German wards and the Irish ward thirteen comprised four of the five wards giving the fewest votes to Bell. 47 Cincinnati voters clearly received Bell as a "nativist" candidate in 1860.

The campaign of the Constitutional Union party in Ohio was a final antebellum expression of faith in a unified
conservative society. It was a society which would look to the peaceful resolution of the slavery question at some distant future time, and rather quietly assume the continuing dominance of Anglo-Saxon Protestant cultural ideals. Nativists who cast their lot with this party rather than with the Republicans may have made their decision out of fear of the possible disruption of the Union, or even out of spiteful animosity toward the party that had in some sense used their movement to get ahead. But in doing so they joined company with a remnant of the very elite whose moderation and lethargy they had decried some eight years before.
NOTES: CHAPTER FIVE


2. Cincinnati Gazette, March 17, 1857.

3. Ibid., March 5, 1857; March 17, 1857; April 6, 1857.

4. Ibid., April 8, 1857.

5. Hillsboro American Citizen, April 11, 1857.

6. Ibid., February 7, 1857; April 25, 1857.

7. Ibid., August 22, 1857; Ohio State Journal, August 13, 1857; Smith, History of the Republican Party in Ohio, I, 75-77.

8. James Ashley to Salmon P. Chase, June 16, 1857, Chase Papers, LC. Some former Know-Nothings in the Republican party were also in favor of dropping Gibson from the ticket. See F.L. Flower to Salmon P. Chase, July 1, 1857, Chase Papers, LC.

9. John Sherman to Salmon P. Chase, June 26, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP. Ford did realize that he was unpopular with radical Republicans. Thomas Ford to Salmon P. Chase, August 4, 1857, Chase Papers, LC.

10. Roseboom, The Civil War Era 1850-1873, p. 324. Blickensderfer, first elected to the Board of Public Words in 1854 on the Anti-Nebraska ticket, approved the contracts made with private contractors in 1855 for much-needed repairs and restorations of the deteriorating state canal system. When the contractors proved to be negligent in performing the work a legislative committee investigated and discovered fraud and collusion in the awarding of the contracts. Thus Blickensderfer was an embarrassment to the Republican party when he ran for re-election to the Board of 1857. See Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873, pp. 324, 326, and Scheiber, Ohio Canal Era, pp. 303-04.


12. Lancaster Gazette, August 13, 1857.


15. Ibid., September 30, 1857.


21. John F. Brasee to Salmon P. Chase, August 28, 1857, Chase Papers, LC.


23. **Cleveland Leader**, October 22, 1857.

24. **Ohio State Journal**, October 6, 1858, October 18, 1858.

25. **Cleveland Leader**, August 30, 1858.


27. Isaac Strohm to John M. Barclay, July 18, 1858, Strohm Papers, OHS; Roseboom, *The Civil War Era 1850-1873*, pp. 335-36.


29. **Steubenville True American**, December 8, 1858.

30. St. Clairsville Independent Republican, May 5, 1859, May 26, 1859; James Elliott to Salmon P. Chase, May 7, 1859, Chase Papers, LC.
31. John Gurley to Salmon P. Chase, June 13, 1859, Chase Papers, LC.
34. Cincinnati Times, June 30, 1859.
35. John Gurley to Salmon P. Chase, June 22, 1859, Chase Papers, LC.
36. Salmon P. Chase to John Gurley, June 20, 1859, Chase Papers, LC.
37. John Gurley to Salmon P. Chase, July 1, 1859, Chase Papers, LC.
38. Cincinnati Gazette, June 4, 1859.
40. Ibid., July 27, 1859; St. Clairsville Independent Republican, August 4, 1859.
41. Cincinnati Gazette, July 30, 1859.
42. St. Clairsville Independent Republican, August 4, 1859.
43. Ibid., September 22, 1859, October 13, 1859.
44. Cincinnati Times, April 26, 1860; Lewis Campbell to Isaac Strohm, July 18, 1860, Strohm Papers, OHS.
46. Cincinnati Times, August 16, 1860.
47. Ward election returns in Cincinnati Gazette, November 9, 1860.
THE OHIO REPUBLICAN PARTY: 1857-1860:
THE QUEST FOR UNITY AND POWER

When Salmon P. Chase took the oath of office as governor of Ohio in January, 1856, the state's Republicans were in a mood for self-congratulation. They had achieved remarkable political success in an exceedingly short time. Their pressing need then became one of maintaining party strength and unity and defining what it meant to be a Republican not only in response to immediate crisis but in terms of long-range policy goals as well. In Ohio, as in most other northern states where the Republican party flourished before the Civil War, struggles took place between radicals and conservatives on slavery, economic issues, and nativism. A "conservative" Republican was typically a former Whig who avoided harsh antislavery rhetoric, valued preservation of the Union and was willing to compromise with the South in pursuit of that end, hoped to see the Republican party take up a Whiggish economic policy, and had a friendly word for nativists seeking to protect "American" values. A "radical" Republican might have been Whiggish in economics and essentially anti-Catholic if not actually nativist, but above all he stressed
the party's opposition to slavery and Southern interests, and pressed to make Republicanism more radical in this stand. These differences gradually worked to the advantage of moderate Republicans, who successfully integrated diverse views into a well-organized, highly-partisan structure which became the Republican party in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Ohio.¹

The position which Ohio Republicans found most advantageous to discard in the late 1850s was extreme nativism. Republican radicals were adamantly opposed to it. All but a few conservatives were more interested in economic issues than in ethno-cultural ones, and the party found that it could attract more than a few nativists simply by nominating some carefully chosen conservatives, as it did in 1858 by nominating Judge William Peck. Andrew M. Gangewer, who had replaced Oran Follett as editor of the influential Ohio State Journal, optimistically concluded that the party was now strong enough without nativist voters that it no longer needed to cater specifically to their prejudices.² The Cincinnati Commercial, independent but inclined toward Republicanism, rejoiced that the Ohio Republican party had been "de-Know Nothing-ized," and predicted no more talk of a formal alliance of the two parties.³ Chase, who assumed that the hard-core nativists would turn to the Democrats rather than ever support him,⁴ was not overly concerned with pleasing the Ohio Know-Nothings. He regarded
Ohio Republicans as more loyal to the essential aims of the national party than Republicans in eastern states such as New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, who he thought too inclined to bargain away essential points in the effort to conciliate the Know-Nothings. Lewis Campbell sensed this changed mood in Chase and was distressed by it.

Discouraged by the defection of several leading nativists from the Republican party, notably John Scott Harrison and Oscar Moore, and bitter over his failure to be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, Campbell felt betrayed and vulnerable. He remarked that Chase had given Know-Nothings "a semi-endorsement two years ago; but now goes I presume for saying all he can for our 'Irish fellow citizens.'" Although Campbell stayed in the party for the time being, he bolted in 1860 to support the Constitutional Union ticket, and then became a Democrat after the Civil War.

One very important constraint operating to divide Republicanism from nativism was the influence of German-Americans in the party. German-American Republicans, consisting largely of Protestants and religiously-skeptical radicals, greatly admired Chase and other radical Republicans but had little use for the nativists who had run with Chase in 1855. This association had hurt Chase among Cincinnati German-Americans that year. The ticket shuffling in 1857 which provided Chase with a new set of running mates was therefore most welcome to this group. The Cincinnati
Volksblatt pointed out that German-descended Chase with a new set of running mates was therefore most welcome to this group. The Cincinnati Volksblatt pointed out that German-descended Martin Welker, the 1857 nominee for lieutenant-governor, had been considered for that office in 1855, but the convention that year had "contained too many unrepulican elements to secure his nomination." In 1857 the German-Americans could also note that enough Republicans voted against a proposed constitutional amendment requiring a one-year waiting period between the date of naturalization and the granting of suffrage to block its passage. Chase came out against the proposal when he realized its potential for bad political repercussions for a party seeking to attract a segment of the immigrant vote. Even some nativists came to similar conclusions, and thought that "it was about as well to 'let it slide.'"

It is difficult to generalize about the voting behavior of the rural foreign-born in Ohio during the 1850s. Table 17 presents demographic and political data for the rural counties with the highest foreign-born populations, but no clear patterns emerge from these areas. The two counties estimated to have the highest percentage of Catholics in their immigrant populations were at the opposite ends of the spectrum on a measure of Republican strength. Nor can the argument that German Protestants voted Republican be clearly made.
### TABLE 17

**POLITICAL BEHAVIOR OF RURAL OHIO COUNTIES WITH LARGE IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS, 1854 - 1860**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Foreign-Born Population in 1850 (%)</th>
<th>Estimated Catholic Share of Immigrant Religious Population, 1850 (%) (A)</th>
<th>Average Republican Percentage in Selected Elections, 1854-1860 (B)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auglaize</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>38.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<td>Lorain</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Mercer</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<td>Ottawa</td>
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<td>Tuscarawas</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59.2</td>
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**NOTES:** A. Catholic and Protestant percentages of the immigrant religious population were estimated by comparing the total seating capacity of Catholic churches and of a group of German Protestant churches - German Reformed, Lutheran, Moravian, and Tunker (Dunkard) - within each county.
TABLE 17 (CONT.)

NOTES: B. The "selected elections" include: Congress, 1854; Governor, 1855; President, 1856; Congress, 1856; Governor, 1857; Congress, 1858; Governor, 1859; President, 1860; Congress, 1860.

The Ohio Republican's drift away from nativist programs was also a reaction to disappointment with Know-Nothing allies. Two of the Know-Nothings who had been elected with Chase in 1855 figured prominently in the financial scandals which plagued Chase's first administration, William Gibson in the state treasury "fraud" and Jacob Blickensderfer in the canal contracts controversy. Chase's friends urged him to refuse renomination in 1867 if that were necessary to avoid further embarrassing association with these scandals and to preserve his future political career. However, it proved to be the Know-Nothings who were shunned in 1857. Of the 1855 nominees only Blickensderfer was renominated to run with Chase, and as noted earlier, a sizable number of the party faithful refused to support him, making him the only Republican on the 1857 state ticket to go down to defeat.

The Ohio Republican party virtually retreated from the politics of ethno-culturalism in the late 1850s. The party refused to go on record in support of temperance legislation, and took no steps to revive the repealed church property law when it regained control of the General Assembly in 1860. Party managers emphasized opposition to the expansion
of slavery as a unifying issue that could rally the largest aggregation of support - from old Whigs, Free Soilers, German radicals, and Know-Nothings. Issues that could divide this coalition, such as temperance or anti-Catholicism, were de-emphasized or even ignored. The Republicans still included thousands of Anglo-Saxon Protestant voters who could become galvanized around the symbols of cultural politics, as the history of the temperance crusade in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reveals. However, under the impact of the growing sectional crisis and the prospect of imminent political success on a grand scale Republican leadership in the late 1850s strove to focus the party upon the sectional issues as the keys to victory. In a similar vein a generation later Republican leaders reacted to the Panic of 1893 by focusing upon economic issues and downplaying the party's anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic image, thereby electing William McKinley in 1896 with the votes of thousands of ethnic workingmen.

As Ohio Republicanism matured ideologically and organizationally in the late 1850s, there was general agreement in the party that emphasis on sectional issues would be the best means to insure continued growth and success. However, radicals and conservatives emphasized different aspects of sectionalism. The radicals dwelt on the moral evils of slavery, arguing that this was an issue Americans were compelled to confront on moral as well as social and economic
grounds. The conservatives agreed that any Republican program had to include restoration of a limit upon the expansion of slavery, but they saw the real basis of sectional politics in the conflict over economic policy, with the Republicans in position to take up a Whiggish program of positive government support of economic growth, a program that the Democrats had forcefully blocked. Here were two visions of an American future, a nation unified on the basis of Republican ideology, although they were not necessarily incompatible visions and could be integrated into that particular combination of moralism and economic self-interest often found in Republican thought. Whether radical or conservative, Ohio Republicans were confident in the late 1850s that the future belonged to them, not the Democrats, whose bankrupt policies offered only despair and uncertainty while they dwelt on the faded glories of their Jacksonian past. "The moral and political tide is in the Republicans' favor," proclaimed the Ohio State Journal.16

Among the radicals, Salmon P. Chase thought carefully about the positive program Republicans should espouse. Frustrated at being bogged down in the routine day-to-day tasks of a state governor, he longed to return to Washington and play a role in the great moral struggle between slavery and freedom.17 His goal was patently obvious to all: the Republican presidential nomination in 1860, and for this he could count on the support of his friends in the radical wing
of the Ohio Republican party. Chase would have to have the strongest possible base of support in his home state because other states also had powerful and popular favorite sons, among them William H. Seward in New York and Edward F. Bates in Missouri. Thus Ohio radicals felt great chagrin in not being able to produce a greater margin of victory for Chase in 1857. The Western Reserve had delivered a predictably substantial Republican vote, but it was not as impressive as party leaders had hoped, and local party divisions and animosities were blamed. Then too, the voters had become infected with just a touch of complacency and apathy in 1857, and interest in the campaign had lagged.  

Radicals began to sense a problem with the electorate. In the absence of dramatic fresh outrages on the part of the "slave power" a more conservative brand of Republicanism seemed to be more attractive. By 1858 Chase sensed a different mood emerging in the Republican party, and he was concerned if not actually alarmed. He lamented to the abolitionist Gerrit Smith that some Republicans seemed to be tolerant of the prospect of Kansas coming into the Union as a slave state.  

Following the 1858 congressional elections he noted glumly that several of the Republican candidates had indicated a willingness to accept the principle of popular sovereignty. The Republicans had temporarily lost momentum in 1858 by letting Stephen Douglas and the anti-Lecompton Democrats occupy the kind of anti-Buchanan
position which Republicans should have monopolized. For Chase the lesson was clear: the Republicans must never surrender their claim to be the most forthrightly antislavery party in the political spectrum, and must never temporize on the issues or let a "craving for union" weaken their stand.

Other radicals sounded a similar theme. E.S. Hamlin saw the dangers of a convergence in outlook between conservative Republicans and anti-Lecompton Democrats, and warned of dire consequences for the party. Free Soil radicals might well bolt, because "the people are hungering for stronger meat than they get - and they will have it out of the party, if not fed within it." Joshua Giddings felt even more keenly the need to raise a prophetic voice of warning, and to keep the party true to "moral principles." Even in New York and New England he found an alarming tendency for Republicans to be "more interested in spoils than in principle." Like Chase he was concerned that congressional Republicans were not holding firm on the Kansas statehood issue, but continued to be optimistic despite these signs of compromise. He wrote: "I am a firm believer in that universal law which makes all evil tend to the development of good."

In the mind of Giddings the chief danger to true Republicanism in the late 1850s came from the rise of a neo-Whiggish conservatism rather than from the Know-Nothings,
whom Giddings had excoriated so bitterly in 1855. The verbal sparring between Giddings and Thomas Corwin symbolized the division in the Ohio Republican party. Corwin was an old Whig who had played no part in the formation of the party in 1854 and who had only voted for Fremont over Fillmore in 1856 because Fillmore had no chance of winning Ohio. Re-entering politics as a Republican in 1858, he won the party's nomination for the seventh congressional district, a Whig-turned-Republican stronghold in southwestern Ohio. Corwin appealed primarily to conservatives, those who wanted the Republican party to shed the image of antislavery radicalism and emphasize Whiggish staples such as the protective tariff, banking reform and internal improvements. Corwin rejected Chief Justice Taney's opinion in the Dred Scott case that Congress could not prohibit slavery in the territories, but at the same time he upheld the necessity of obedience to the Fugitive Slave Law and deplored its deliberate violation by antislavery zealots. Thomas Ewing, another old Whig who waited until 1860 before committing himself fully to Republicanism, advocated the restoration of the Missouri Compromise, wrecked by the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scott decision, and then the reorientation of the Republican party away from the slavery controversy toward a revived economic Whiggism, a policy clearly needed in response to the Panic of 1857 and the ensuing business depression.
Corwin even accepted the theoretical possibility that the United States might take possession of Latin American states such as Cuba with slavery maintained in them. In the midst of the debate the Ashtabula Sentinel forcefully restated the radicals' view: "Nor is the Republican an antislavery party, merely as to the extension of slavery. It is pledged against the institution in all its forms, wherever the party can exert an influence." Only the nativists and a "few fossilized politicians hearkening back to Whiggery" thought otherwise.

Despite the entrance of Corwin and Ewing into Ohio Republican party politics in the late 1850s the party's position on the extension of slavery and on the dangers posed by the "slave power" did not change. Although congressmen such as John Sherman and John Bingham avoided harsh anti-slavery rhetoric they firmly opposed the demands of Southerners for the further extension of slavery and did not try to minimize the significance of slavery-related issues in political debate. Foner has described this position as "moderate" to distinguish it from both an antislavery radicalism and the compromising tendencies of former Whigs like Corwin and Ewing. Most of these "moderates" opposed the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton constitution as a perversion of the true meaning of popular sovereignty. Nevertheless, the radicals could not fail to notice the
moderates' acquiescence to the prevailing racism of northern society and their rejection of the concept of social and political equality for blacks. Even within the radical camp the moral idealism of Joshua Giddings was not carried on in quite the same way by his younger successor, John Hutchins. Compared to Giddings, Hutchins' critique of the South focused more narrowly upon the undesirable social and economic consequences of slavery than on the moral evil of slaveholding itself.

The radicals felt somewhat better about the direction of the party after the 1859 state convention, although the influence of the moderates could be seen in the selection of William H. Dennison, the party's gubernatorial candidate that year. German Republicans and Western Reserve radicals led the successful efforts to replace Judge Swan and adopt the antinativist resolution, while Corwin led the conservatives in defense of Swan. The nomination of Gholson in place of Swan was only partly due to antislavery fervor, because Gholson also had the strong backing of Cincinnati delegates who wanted a nominee from their city. Gholson was a native of Mississippi and one-time slaveowner who had moved to Cincinnati to practice law and who had become prominent in Whig and Republican politics. That Gholson was as fervently antislavery as the Western Reserve radicals was doubtful. Since Gholson refused actually to indicate his opinion of the Fugitive Slave Law, all the radicals had
to go on were assurances from some of the Cincinnati delegates that he was "sound" on this issue.\textsuperscript{37}

With Chase not seeking re-election the party chose Cincinnati lawyer and businessman William H. Dennison as its gubernatorial candidate, a man who symbolized moderate Republicanism, acceptable to all but the most radical and conservative elements in the party. Dennison faced a vigorous and capable opponent in Democrat Rufus P. Ranney of Cleveland, a former state supreme court judge and able stump speaker whose running mate for lieutenant-governor was a former Whig. The two men engaged in a spirited campaign throughout the state, enlisting Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas to add to the oratory of their respective campaigns.\textsuperscript{38}

Moderate Republicans who were concerned that the platform took too radical a stance on the Fugitive Slave Law were especially eager to have Lincoln come to Ohio. They looked upon him as an effective spokesman for a more moderate Republicanism.\textsuperscript{39} In reply to an inquiry from former congressman Samuel Galloway of Columbus Lincoln indicated his view of the platform plank calling for repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. He "regretted" both the plank and the rejection of Swan, suggesting that such actions would endanger the Republican cause among conservatives and moderates in 1860.\textsuperscript{40} Earlier he had warned Chase that the action of the Ohio convention hurt the party in Illinois and predicted that the national convention in 1860 would
"explode" if such a resolution were introduced there. Lincoln also asserted his belief that Congress had the authority to enact a Fugitive Slave Law.

Lincoln delivered major addresses in Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati in September 1859. In his Columbus speech he strongly attacked Stephen Douglas's application of popular sovereignty to the slavery question, and asserted that slavery was a moral issue while denying that he favored black suffrage or racial equality. He made essentially the same points in Cincinnati, although he took greater pains to assure his audience that Republicans had no intention of interfering with slavery where it already existed. Undoubtedly he was conscious of the fact that a slave state lay just across the river. Moderate Republicans warmly praised Lincoln's campaign appearances and when the party swept to victory they gave him a good deal of the credit. Candidate Dennison had even borrowed notes from Lincoln's 1858 debates with Douglas to use in preparing his own speeches.

The Republicans won a clean sweep of state offices as well as majorities in both houses of the legislature, and Dennison's margin over Ranney was much larger than that of Chase over Payne in 1857. Compared to Chase in 1857 Dennison ran stronger in Hamilton County and southern Ohio generally, without losing the support of Republicans in the Western Reserve. He also apparently benefited from
the absence of a third-party American candidate. He received
majorities in four of the five nativist wards in Cincinnati
and in six out of the nine counties in the state with
significant nativist elements. As Table 18 shows, Joseph
Medill's anxiety over a mass defection of southern Ohio
voters simply failed to materialize.47 Dennison also improved
upon Chase's 1857 showing in five of the six Cincinnati
ethnic wards, but like Chase could only carry the two
German Protestant wards.

TABLE 18

REPUBLICAN VOTE BY REGION,
1857 AND 1859 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1857-Chase</th>
<th>1859-Dennison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
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<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State

48.7

51.9


In his inaugural address Governor Dennison sounded the
themes of moderate Republicanism: the economic superiority
of free labor, the need for government policies favorable
TABLE 19

REPUBLICAN VOTE IN CINCINNATI ETHNIC WARDS,
1857 AND 1859 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>1857-Chase</th>
<th>1859-Dennison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCES: Cincinnati Gazette, October 15, 1857, October 16, 1859.

to economic development, and an attack upon the encroachments of an insatiable "slave power." He said little about the immorality of slaveholding. As for nativism he was perhaps too generous to his party when he declared that "our legislation has never been marred by proscription for religious opinions, nor any political privilege denied because of the birthplace of the citizen." This statement, however, accurately predicted the policies Dennison and his fellow Republicans would henceforth pursue.

The importance of the moderates as the Republican party's political center of gravity, a trend obvious in Ohio in the late 1850s, became all the more apparent at the
national level in 1860 with the nomination of Abraham Lincoln over a number of more radical or more conservative rivals. One of those rivals, Salmon Chase, could perhaps appreciate the irony of what was happening. The party was moving, albeit slowly and uncertainly, toward the kind of firm stance Chase had always wanted it to take, and yet it was clearly going to do so under the leadership of moderate men, not under a radical like Chase. He firmly contended that he was a strong candidate who among other assets would run better in the Middle West than the New Yorker William Henry Seward.\(^{49}\) To receive the presidential nomination in 1860, Chase would need strong backing from the Ohio delegation. He had support there, mainly among the radicals, but it was far from unanimous. Samuel Galloway, a Lincoln backer, concluded that "we have . . . borne long enough the burden of Chase's obnoxious views, and the crisis is rapidly approaching when we must defeat him, or permanently destroy the Republican party."\(^{50}\)

In March 1860 a state convention officially endorsed Chase, but Galloway estimated that only about eight or ten of the forty-six members of the state delegation really wanted Chase and would stay with him beyond the first or second ballot.\(^{51}\) The Cincinnati Gazette was extremely cool toward a Chase candidacy because as one of its editors put it, they were "duly regarding the classes of readers among whom our journal circulates."\(^{52}\) Chase was the preferred
candidate of the Ashtabula Sentinel, but that newspaper found any of the leading candidates acceptable save for Edward Bates or John McLean. The Sentinel did not hesitate to endorse Lincoln once he was nominated.

At the national convention in Chicago the Ohio delegation was so divided that the delegates were left free to vote for whatever they wished beginning with the first ballot. Chase received thirty-four votes from Ohioans on the first ballot, but as the Lincoln drive gained momentum the Ohio delegation turned toward him, giving him twenty-nine Ohio votes on the decisive third ballot. Chase took his defeat rather gracefully, although he was particularly disappointed with those Ohio delegates whose support he had expected but did not receive. The great majority of Ohio Republicans were pleased with Lincoln's nomination. As the Ohio State Journal put it, indeed Chase and Seward were the "real leaders of the party," and yet there was something eminently acceptable about the gentleman from Illinois, something that spelled victory and hope.

With Lincoln at the head of the ticket Ohio Republicans entered the 1860 campaign confidently. Lincoln seemed to project the moderate image needed to hold the party's elements together. Richard Corwine of Cincinnati shuddered to think of the results had Seward been nominated: "[It] would have broken us up into a hundred fragments." Considering the kaleidoscopic nature of Cincinnati Republicanism,
composed of former Whig business and professional men, Protestant and anticlerical German immigrants, nativists, and even a few abolitionists, such fragmentation could not be dismissed as an impossibility. Joshua Giddings might object to the idea, but Cincinnati Republicans found it useful to emphasize the Whig-Republicans continuity they found symbolized in Lincoln. One of them had passed the word to old Whigs friendly to John Bell's candidacy that Lincoln favored a protective tariff on iron and hoped that he had spoken correctly. The evidence suggests that he had. Although Lincoln did not make any specific pro-tariff public statements in the campaign he emphasized his total adherence to the party platform, which included a protective tariff plank. Privately Lincoln indicated that he indeed favored a protective tariff.

Despite the presence of four candidates in the field Lincoln received a clear majority of the total vote cast in Ohio. He improved upon Fremont's 1856 showing in Hamilton County and southern Ohio generally while not sacrificing strength in the Western Reserve. Lincoln's percentages in the various regions of the state were similar to those Dennison received in 1859. However, Lincoln also achieved victory in Cincinnati's German Catholic twelfth ward, something neither Chase nor Dennison had done, although Douglas carried Cincinnati's Irish wards. The four-way election of 1860 also illustrated other interesting
patterns in Ohio politics. Constitutional Ohio candidate John Bell's strength, like that of Allen Trimble in 1855 and Millard Fillmore in 1856, was overwhelmingly concentrated in Cincinnati and other old nativist strongholds in southern Ohio. Breckinridge was the choice of Democratic tradition- alists scattered across the state in areas where influential party leaders had supported the Buchanan administration against Douglas on the Kansas statehood issue as a question of partisan loyalty. 61 Finally, the Lincoln majority in Ohio, built upon Republican gains in southern Ohio and the preservation of party dominance on the Western Reserve,

**TABLE 20**

**VOTE DISTRIBUTION BY CANDIDATE, 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Douglas</th>
<th>Breckinridge</th>
<th>Bell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Ohio</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ohio</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 21

VOTE DISTRIBUTION IN REGION, BY CANDIDATE,
1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Douglas</th>
<th>Breckinridge</th>
<th>Bell</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Southern Ohio</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Southern Ohio</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Northern Ohio</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Northern Ohio</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


reflected the successful formula of moderate Republicanism: to subdue the party's antislavery image sufficiently to appeal to a greater number of northern white voters. The radicals, having no real alternative, remained safely in the party fold while party managers sought and received a larger share of the great middle of northern opinion.
FIGURE 7
PRESIDENTIAL VOTING IN OHIO, 1860

- County with Lincoln majority
- County with Douglas majority
- County with Douglas plurality
- County with Lincoln plurality

NOTES: CHAPTER SIX

1. Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men, pp. 205-10; Salmon P. Chase to Henry Wilson, December 20, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

2. Ohio State Journal, May 27, 1858.


4. Salmon P. Chase to Professor Cleveland, November 3, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP.

5. Chase to Charles Sumner, July 16, 1858, Chase Papers, LC.

6. Lewis Campbell to Isaac Strohm, August 18, 1857, Strohm Papers, OHS.


10. Ashtabula Sentinel, April 16, 1857.

11. German Protestants appear to have made up a sizable part of Crawford county's immigrant population, but the county remained consistently Democratic throughout the 1850s. Thomas H. Smith has concluded that the county's strong Democratic tradition was based on the native-born population and not significantly affected by immigrant voting. See Smith, "Crawford County 'Ez Trooly Dimecratic': A Study of Midwestern Copperheadism," Ohio History, LXXVI (Winter-Spring 1967), pp. 33-53. Lorain County in the Western Reserve represents the reverse pattern. Any Democratic voting by its German Catholic population would have been more than balanced by the staunch Republicanism of its native-born residents.

12. James M. Ashley to Chase, November 27, 1856, Chase Papers, LC; Charles Reemelin to Chase, June 25, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP.

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17. Salmon P. Chase to Theodore Parker, May 3, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

18. Joshua Giddings to Chase, November 3, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP; Benjamin Wade to Chase, November 3, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP; Edward Wade to Chase, November 21, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP.

19. Chase to Gerrit Smith, May 30, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

20. Chase to ?, October 12, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

21. Chase to Henry Reed, November 11, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

22. Chase to Israel Green, March 15, 1859, Chase Papers, HSP.

23. E.S. Hamlin to Chase, February 18, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

24. Joshua Giddings to Chase, January 2, 1857, Chase Papers, HSP.

25. Ibid.

26. Ashtabula Sentinel, April 22, 1858, quoted in Ohio State Journal, May 1, 1858.


38. *Ibid.*, p. 338; Joshua Giddings to Thomas Corwin, October 13, 1858, in *Ashtabula Sentinel*, October 14, 1858; Corwin to Salmon P. Chase, October 12, 1858, Chase Papers, HSP.

39. Samuel Galloway to Abraham Lincoln, July 23, 1859, Robert Todd Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress,
Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as Lincoln Papers, LC.); W.T. Bascom to Abraham Lincoln, September 9, 1859, Lincoln Papers, LC.


42. Abraham Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, June 20, 1859, in Basler, ed., III:386.


45. W.T. Bascom to Abraham Lincoln, September 30, 1859, Lincoln Papers, LC; Bascom to Lincoln, October 13, 1859, Lincoln Papers, LC; Samuel Galloway to Lincoln, October 13, 1859, Lincoln Papers, LC.

46. William H. Dennison to Lyman Trumbull, July 21, 1859, Lincoln Papers, LC.

47. Joseph Medill to Salmon P. Chase, July 27, 1859, Chase Papers, HSP.

48. William H. Dennison, Inaugural Address of the Honorable William H. Dennison, Governor of Ohio, Delivered Before the Senate and House of Representatives, January 9, 1860 (Columbus, 1860).

49. Chase to Gamaliel Bailey, January 24, 1859, Chase Papers, HSP; Chase to Benjamin R. Cowen, April 2, 1860, Chase Papers, CHS; Chase to Homer G. Plantz, May 30, 1860, Chase Papers, CHS; Chase to Cowen, November 26, 1860, Chase Papers, CHS.

50. Samuel Galloway to Abraham Lincoln, October 13, 1859, Lincoln Papers, LC.

51. Galloway to Lincoln, March 15, 1860, Lincoln Papers, LC.

52. Joseph Barrett to Salmon P. Chase, March 3, 1860, Chase Papers, LC.
53. **Ashtabula Sentinel**, May 9, 1860.

54. **Ibid.**, May 23, 1860.


56. Salmon P. Chase to Abraham Lincoln, May 17, 1860, Lincoln Papers, LC.


58. Richard M. Corwine to Abraham Lincoln, May 28, 1860, Lincoln Papers, LC.

59. W.H. Schoenberger to Abraham Lincoln, October 12, 1860, Lincoln Papers, LC.


SUMMARY

The techniques and sophisticated analysis of the "new political historians" of the 1960s and 1970s have demonstrated the critical role of ethnocultural issues in the ongoing development of American politics. Consequently, students of antebellum politics can no longer ignore the rise of political nativism and the cultural and social tensions between old-stock Protestants and the newly-arrived immigrant Catholics. Nor can the significant contacts which developed between nativists and the emerging Republican party be overlooked. Nevertheless this examination of the rise of Republicanism in one northern state reveals that nativism ultimately played only a secondary role in the development of that party by 1860. That role appeared dramatic at first but was gradually diminished by successful manipulation by the party leadership and the overshadowing influence of other issues and perspectives.

Historians who emphasize the importance of ethnocultural conflict in the politics of the 1850s are correct in noting various reasons why nativism would have appealed to many early Republicans. The connection between growing immigration
and Democratic electoral gains in the North was clear to even the most casual political observer. Nativist ideas had been part of Whig political culture as far back as the 1830s. Moreover, abolitionists received little support from immigrant groups. Imbedded in the thought of many early Republicans were the concepts of a nation divinely ordained and committed to absolute moral principle, and of politics as a legitimate means to achieve such a vision. Therefore the nation had the right to exclude from the community individuals who did not conform to the moral order. Depending upon how a Republican conceived of national morality, he might brand various persons as "heretics" to the national creed: slaveholders, manufacturers of liquor, Mormons, or Catholics.¹ Many Know-Nothings and Republicans shared a number of key values: evangelical Protestant religion, the legitimacy of moral and religious issues in political discourse, and dissatisfaction with the existing party system and with the role played by most immigrants in that system.

In understanding why, despite these shared values and perspectives, the nativists did not succeed in dominating the Ohio Republican party before 1860 one must make a distinction between the political and cultural aspects of nativism. As defined in the Introduction, political nativism involved the effort to translate nativist precepts into legislation and to elect nativists to public office.
Cultural nativism encompassed the social and religious attitudes and prejudices of old-stock Protestants reacting to a changing culture. In neither its political nor its cultural forms did nativism correspond precisely with the goals and programs of the American or Know-Nothing party. The American Party of Ohio, while clearly nativist in its origin, gradually evolved away from a purely nativist forum and became a haven for those with various political motives who found it advantageous to work from outside the emerging party system, such as conservative Whigs and to a lesser extent conservative Democrats. Culturally, on the other hand, nativism was broader than the American party, because it represented a set of attitudes that could be found among Protestants in other parties, especially the Whig and Republican but also the Democratic and Free Soil as well. The chief difference between cultural nativists outside the American party and political nativists within it was that the cultural nativists saw no great danger requiring legislative and electoral mobilization against foreigners and Catholics. Among Ohio Republicans who came out of the Free Soil tradition some were opposed to nativism in both forms: they combined hostility to the slaveholder with tolerance and respect for the immigrant. But others were hostile to both slaveholders and immigrants. These Republicans simply put a higher priority on restricting the slaveholder.
Since cultural nativism was a matter of individual belief that could be divorced from electoral politics, Ohio Republicans could afford to be more tolerant of it than they could of political nativism, which if not carefully limited would interfere with the building of a large anti-Democratic coalition. Thus Salmon P. Chase could accept nativist arguments as perhaps having some legitimate bases while firmly rejecting political compromise with the Know-Nothings on matters of basic policy. Too much can be made of the significance of the Know-Nothing running mates Chase accepted in 1855 or the "nativist" legislation regarding elections and church property passed by the Ohio General Assembly in 1857. In 1855 the Know-Nothing movement in Ohio was at its peak, while the fortunes of the Republican party were still uncertain. By accepting Know-Nothings on the ticket, the Republicans made what appears to be a large concession to nativism, but in fact it involved no real compromise of principle. With Chase at the head of the ticket, antislavery Republicans achieved their major goal for that year. The Know-Nothings who agreed to run with Chase were among those nativists who were already in process of shedding their political nativism and joining the Republican party, a circumstance the committed nativist followers of Allen Trimble correctly perceived. It is hard to see how political nativists could have taken much comfort in the election of Salmon P. Chase. Aside from
making a few friendly gestures to them for the sake of political gain, he was fundamentally disinterested in carrying out a nativist program, or in fact any program which did not advance either antislavery or his own personal ambitions, or preferably both. The "purity of elections" law of 1857 fell far short of the nativist concept of restricting immigrant voting. Furthermore, the motivation for such a law was as much an anti-Democratic one as a nativist one, in that its primary focus was to stop tactics which Whigs and now Republicans accused Democrats of resorting to on election day. Highly partisan Republicans who resented Democratic success at the polls would not necessarily have transferred those feelings to the immigrants, as the nativists did.\(^5\)

As for the church property law, when the Republicans returned to power in the General Assembly in 1860, after one session of Democratic control in 1858-59, they chose not to re-enact this law which the Democrats had repealed in 1858. Even if it had remained in force it probably would not have posed a serious problem to the Roman Catholic Church, which was in any case moving away from allowing bishops to hold direct title to church property toward a system of parish incorporation in which the church hierarchy retained control of the parish trustees. Nothing in the Ohio law prohibited the clergy from serving as corporation trustees, as did similar laws passed in Michigan and Pennsylvania at that time. Nor was there any implicit
statement like the one in the Michigan statute which said that the internal laws and practices of a religious organization such as the Catholic Church would not be recognized in the civil law. Since a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1871 the courts have generally ruled that such internal laws and practices are valid and not to be subject to judicial oversight, in effect ruling that a religious corporation may control its property according to its own principles of operation, whether they be congregational or, as in the case of the Catholic Church, hierarchical. Thus although the Ohio statute was inconvenient to the Church at a time when much of its property was still held directly by the bishops, still the alternative, incorporation, was acceptable to the Church provided that clerical control over the laity was maintained. By the beginning of the twentieth century Catholic church property ownership through parish incorporation was the norm rather than the exception.6

Many other decisions made by Ohio Republicans between 1856 and 1860 reflect the desire for nativist support and cooperation, but not at the expense of losing favor with anti-nativist segments of the party. After 1855 very few party nominations went to individuals with prominent nativist connections, and the party platforms either avoided discussion of nativist-related issues or gave but the slightest ground to nativist demands. For example, in 1859 the platform condemned restrictions on the immigrants'
right to vote but did not mention by name the state of Massachusetts where nativists had approved such a restriction. Thomas Spooner, the head of Ohio Know-Nothings in 1855, sought unsuccessfully the Republican nomination for lieutenant-governor in 1859. He was very disappointed that Chase did not support his cause.

If by 1860 the Republican party in Ohio was not essentially nativist neither was it essentially abolitionist. Its membership included both nativists and abolitionists, but the tone and direction of the party was increasingly set by the moderates. These men in the middle had become aroused by the machinations of the "slave power." Compared to the Whigs of the 1830s and 1840s they were more sectional and more anti-Southern in their thinking. They were also intensely practical politicians who wanted to win elections, and they shaped the party image to bring the greatest success at the polls. They permitted the antislavery zealots to write strong platform resolutions but made sure their candidates were safe and sane men of moderate bearing. To join together the various elements in the party - Free Soilers, old-line Whigs, German radicals, Protestant nativists, tariff-seeking manufacturers - was a strenuous but not impossible task. The safest course was to unite these groups around a mutually acceptable theme: anti-Southernism. Ohio Republicans defined a set of political, economic, and moral goals as the true basis for "progress"
in the North as well as in the nation as a whole. What was in the North's interest consciously or unconsciously became for them the national interest as well.\(^9\)
NOTES: CHAPTER SEVEN


2. A good statement of this position is in Chase's public letter to Dr. John Paul, December 27, 1854, Chase Papers, HSP.


7. Salmon P. Chase to James W. Grimes, June 11, 1869, Chase Papers, HSP; Chase to Charles Sumner, June 20, 1859, Chase Papers, LC. The 1859 antinativist platform plank was repeated in the 1860 state platform at the insistence of Joshua Giddings. (Cincinnati Times, June 21, 1860.)

8. Thomas Spooner to Salmon P. Chase, March 11, 1859, Chase Papers, HSP; Spooner to Chase, April 21, 1859, ibid.; Spooner to Chase, October 22, 1859, ibid.

The Know-Nothing crusade of the 1850s died with the coming of the Civil War but nativism continued to flourish on a reduced scale in the postwar years. It survived in conflicts over religion in the public schools, continuing Republican attacks on Catholic Democratic politicians, and the establishment of new nativist societies.¹ The most important of these was the American Protective Association, founded in Clinton, Iowa in 1887.² Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab, in their survey of American right-wing movements, concluded that this organization grew out of the same set of social and cultural tensions and dislocations that have been suggested as the basis for Know-Nothings.³ But John Higham has noted a shifting geographical pattern to anti-Catholic movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a shift from an urban to a rural base. "What had issued from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia in the 1840s radiated from the smaller cities of the Middle West in the 1880s and finally found its most valiant champions among the hicks and hillbillies," he concluded.⁴ The nativism that flourished among the middle and upper
classes in eastern cities at the beginning of the twentieth century had been secularized. When patrician nativists like Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard condemned immigrants from southern and eastern Europe they did so on racial, not religious grounds.⁵

After a few years of being relegated to backwoods obscurity anti-Catholic nativism returned to national prominence with the dramatic rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the early part of the 1920s.⁶ Historians of the Klan of the 1920s have observed several purposes to Klan activity, which varied from place to place. For some the Klan was primarily an anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic organization, while for others it was more specifically anti-black. In the states of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas Charles Alexander has concluded, the Klan's chief characteristic was "moral authoritarianism." It was "an instrument for restoring law and order and Victorian morality to the communities, towns, and cities of the region."⁷ Kenneth Jackson has demonstrated that the Klan of the 1920s thrived in a number of large northern and western cities, including Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Denver and Portland.⁸ It especially appealed to working-class and lower middle-class men and women struggling to cope in a competitive, impersonal and somewhat threatening environment. In these cities the Klan combined hostility toward blacks, Catholics, and Jews, with the amount of attention paid to each group varied according to local
circumstance. The urban dimension of the Klan in the 1920s suggests at least a temporary departure from the urban-to-rural shift Higham discerned, although at least part of the explanation for the urban Klan in the 1920s would have to include the migration of rural native-born Protestants into these cities. Catholic - Ku Klux Klan confrontation in these cities presented parallels to Catholic-nativist confrontation in the older cities of Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville in the 1840s and 1850s.

Thus down to 1930 anti-Catholic nativism remained an active tradition in right-wing politics, with the main change over time being not in the content of the tradition's ideology but in the geographical locations in which the tradition flourished. Since 1930 anti-Catholic nativism has largely disappeared except among a few minor groups. In its place anti-communism emerged as the dominant theme of right-wing groups active in the mid-twentieth century. Indeed individual Catholics could be found among the supporters of Senator Joseph McCarthy and of Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society. The shift from anti-Catholicism to anti-communism marked one of the most significant transitions in the history of American right-wing politics. As a result of this change the ideological substance of the nineteenth-century nativists and the mid-twentieth century anti-communists was vastly different.
What the two groups had in common were similarities in style and mood, the sensational manner in which they presented their charges, and their common xenophobic fixation on an "alien enemy" force whose methods they described as subtle, devious, and deadly to "Americanism."

In the 1970s American right-wing history entered yet another phase with the emergence of the "New Right," a collective term to describe several groups which have organized themselves into a fairly cohesive coalition. The New Right retains a strong anti-communist theme, but to a greater extent than was true of McCarthyism or the John Birch Society it combines anti-communism with a crusade against "secular humanism," a general phrase denoting the social and cultural trends which the New Right has opposed. The New Right accused liberals in government, education, and the media with fostering these trends. Among the issues in this category were abortion, pornography, the prohibition of prayer in the public schools, and busing for school integration.

In the mid-twentieth century the conservative wing of the Republican party, strong in the Middle West and West and also in the South after about 1960, has taken positions attractive to some groups and individuals on the Far Right. The most fervent and ideologically committed "true believers" of the right have rejected Republicanism for its lack of ideological purity, but conservative Republicans and some
rightist movements have from time to time found accord on various issues. Michael Paul Rogen has shown that Senator Joseph McCarthy's base of support lay primarily with locally powerful elites in the midwestern wing of the Republican party who were angered by the domestic and foreign policies of the eastern liberal internationalist elite after World War II. McCarthy only lost their support when the demagogic excesses of his crusade became too blatant to accept.\textsuperscript{11} Large segments of the anti-communist right enthusiastically endorsed the presidential candidacy of Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964, a nomination that caused sharp friction between the liberal and conservative wings of the party. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 brought to the White House a leader popular with the New Right.

With the election of Reagan the conservatives in the Republican party for the first time in the post-World War II era were actually in a position to lead and to govern rather than merely to criticize and condemn those in power. The responsibilities of political leadership in a free, democratic society require qualities that extremist groups of either right or left seldom possess: flexibility, tolerance for opposing viewpoints, the ability to compromise, the willingness to see politics as the continual process of adjusting conflicts among diverse groups and interests rather than the creation of absolute ideological designs.\textsuperscript{12} The specific issues that concerned the Know-Nothings of the
1850s and the various right-wing movements of the mid-twentieth century were vastly different. But one common thread in both periods was the problem of relating intense ideological movements to a less ideologically-minded mainstream political party. In both cases that mainstream party, the Republican, was not averse to accepting support from the right-wing, or to employing language and symbolism that suggested a degree of support for right-wing goals. However the Republican party, both because it encompassed individuals hostile to the right-wing and because it was more attuned to the requirements imposed on those who actually govern, was not in a position simply to make the programs and passions of the right-wing its own.

In the 1850s Ohio Republicans used several methods to deal with those on the right. Where nativism was potent, as in Cincinnati and several southern counties, they permitted nativists to have some influence on the selection of candidates for local offices. On the state level they chose some nativists, but not the most zealous ones, for lesser state office, but absolutely refused to do so for the symbolically important office of governor. Ohio Republicans secured the passage of two state laws that incorporated nativist thinking, mainly for symbolic reasons, but did not follow this with a more comprehensive program of nativist legislation. They encouraged a division between moderate and extreme nativists, and closed the door to
cooperation with the more extreme faction. They created a party made up of several diverse groups that could only be finally unified on the basis of opposition to the further extension of slavery. When the Civil War broke out the Republicans, in command in both Ohio and in the nation, were called upon, as any governing party would be, to face the actual needs and demands of the moment. Thus the crisis of the war years drew the party even further away from attention to nativism.

In the mid-twentieth century the Republican party seldom controlled Congress, but it has held the presidency on several occasions and has been called upon to exercise the virtues associated with governing a large, complex, and pluralistic nation. On the national level the Republicans finally repudiated McCarthyism, rejected the extremist assertions of the John Birch Society, and disassociated itself from the racism of the Ku Klux Klan. (Perhaps in some local areas this repudiation of the Far Right has been more equivocal.) Under Presidents Eisenhower and Nixon the activist role of the federal government in stabilizing the economy and protecting social welfare was at times criticized, but hardly eliminated. Nevertheless, the conservative wing of the Republican party in the mid-twentieth century was rhetorically anti-communist, hostile towards the economic and social role of the federal government, and tolerant of the neglect of active enforcement of civil
rights. Thus it was not surprising that this wing of the party has continued to be attractive to rightist groups and individuals. The basic problem of how a major political party operating in the context of a pluralistic society enters into relationship with ideologically committed groups on the extremes of the political spectrum has been as compelling in the mid-twentieth century as it was in the decade before the Civil War.
NOTES: CHAPTER EIGHT


5. Ibid., pp. 131-57, 175-76, 182, 272.


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