The Know Nothing Movement in Louisiana.

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THE KNOW NOTHING MOVEMENT IN LOUISIANA

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by

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ABSTRACT

During the 1850s the American or Know Nothing party appeared on the American political scene. Although most of the political strength of the Know Nothing party was centered in the northeastern United States, that party also had a following in the South. The Know Nothing party in Louisiana received its greatest support in the New Orleans area, but throughout the state the American party found enthusiastic followers.

The American party evolved from the death of the Whig party, a growing fear of continued foreign immigration, and a desire of conservative and Union men to preserve the Union. In Louisiana, many former Whigs joined the Know Nothing movement. Rather than join the Democratic party which the Whigs had opposed for years or remain politically isolated, a large number of Whigs flocked to the new party. Because the Whig party had had a history of supporting nativistic causes in the 1830s and 1840s, these former Whigs had no difficulty in accepting the anti-foreign stance of the American party. In addition, the new party embraced the issue of the preservation of the Union which had always been a popular issue with the Whig party and an
issue which helps explain why some former Democrats also supported the party.

The greatest success of the Know Nothing party came early in its existence in Louisiana. In the 1854 New Orleans Municipal Election, the American party achieved its first significant victory in the state. Following the New Orleans election, the Americans in 1855 won several local elections in the rural parishes of Louisiana. These successes in 1854 and 1855 were particularly encouraging to the Know Nothings because the gubernatorial election of 1855 was rapidly approaching. Although the American party lost the gubernatorial election, the Democratic margin of victory had been thin. Democratic charges that the Know Nothings proscribed Roman Catholics and that the American party was anti-republican had not resulted in a one-sided victory for the Democrats. Americans looked forward to the 1860 presidential election.

Despite attempts by the American party to allay the fears of those who believed that the party was proscriptive, the Americans continued to suffer election defeats in 1856 and 1857. While the Democratic majority was not overwhelming in the presidential election of 1856, fewer parishes supported the American party than before. Then, the state election of 1857 was disastrous for the Know Nothings. After the 1857 defeat no American sought an elective state office on the American party ticket.
The strength of the party remained only in New Orleans. However, even in New Orleans the party lacked unity. Americans in that city even appealed to German voters, and former Know Nothings disenchanted with the continuing violence of the American party, launched Independent movements to challenge American dominance. By 1859, the American party failed to oppose the Democrats in the gubernatorial election of that year. In the 1860 presidential election the majority of the former Americans supported either of the two Union and conservative candidates, Stephen A. Douglas or John Bell. Know Nothingism ended as a Union movement as opposed to the nativistic movement which had originally characterized the American party.
INTRODUCTION

During the 1850s a major third party appeared on the American scene—the American or Know Nothing party. This party embraced old political issues, nativism, and tried to address itself to the new political world of the 1850s. However, there is much about the party that needs further elaboration. For example, who were these Know Nothings? Why did the party start? And, what was their program?

Historians have disagreed about the origin of the American party in the South. Some historians believe that southerners welcomed the American party, not so much because of antagonism to foreigners and Roman Catholics, but because of their hesitation to join the Democracy which agitated the sectional question.¹ Or, more specifically, many former Whigs saw the new party as a political vehicle to oppose the Democrats.² The consensus is that the American party did appear to be an attractive alternative to either political stagnancy or alliance with the Democrats.


However, there were some areas of the South which had a significant foreign population that exacerbated the existing problems of pauperism, intemperance, and demagogy.  

Speculation abounds about the question of the role that nativism played in Know Nothing success in the South and Louisiana. Ray Allen Billington, in *The Protestant Crusade: 1800-1860*, notes that nativism was a significant part of the success of the American party in that region, including Louisiana.  

W. Darrell Overdyke is of the same opinion. In his *The Know Nothing Party in the South*, he describes Louisiana as a "veritable hotbed" of nativism. In addition, he recognizes a fanatical anti-Roman Catholic faction of Know Nothingism in Louisiana. But to Overdyke, anti-Catholicism was unimportant, and he develops the idea that despite the nativist sentiment, Louisiana was an exception to the anti-Roman Catholicism of the American party elsewhere. But Robert C. Reinders takes exception with Overdyke's thesis that Louisiana Know Nothingism showed a "tolerance" for Roman Catholics. According to Reinders, a significant anti-Catholic sentiment existed (those Roman Catholics)


Catholics who belonged to the American party were mainly anti-clerical according to Reinders) in Louisiana and the Roman Catholic Church recognized this quite clearly. 7

A more recent view explains Know Nothingism's meteoric rise as a result of a socio-economic upheaval in the 1850s. Michael Holt presents this view in "The Politics of Impatience: The Origins of Know Nothingism." He feels that the destruction of the Whig party and the success of Know Nothingism can be partially attributed to "a general malaise and a sense of dislocation caused by rapid social and economic change. . . . "8 A more recent view similar to Holt's is found in William J. Evitts's A Matter of Allegiances: Maryland from 1850 to 1861. Like Holt, Evitts notes that "Marylanders in the early fifties were generally distraught over the moral and social climate they saw around them."9 In addition, both Holt and Evitts recognize, in their particular regions, a disdain for politicians and party politics. Both see the Know Nothing party attracting "most of its local leaders from new men, men who were younger and poorer than most politicians."10

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Obviously historians differ fundamentally over who and what constituted the Know Nothing movement in the nation, the South, and Louisiana. For Louisiana no significant study of this movement exists. Therefore, my investigation of the American party in Louisiana will attempt to ascertain who became Know Nothings, why they did so, and to determine what issues sustained the party in Louisiana.

In attempting to determine what made a Louisiana Know Nothing I have gone beyond the traditional assumption that the American party was virtually "Whiggery in disguise." I have used quantitative analyses to determine who were the Louisiana Know Nothings and where their strength lay. A simple social recruitment analysis and election analyses allowed me to determine the characteristics of the Americans and to discover those areas of the state in which the party received its greatest support. In so doing I have found that the traditional view that the Know Nothing party was a party of old, wealthy, and large slaveholding planters with their commercial connections, is not totally accurate. My findings also clash with those of Holt and

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Evitts: the Know Nothing leaders in Louisiana did not resemble those Americans found in the northeast and Maryland. Their thesis that social and economic upheaval, along with a disdain for traditional politics, contributed to the rise of the American party has no real basis in Louisiana. While I have found some evidence of a loss of faith in politics by some of those who joined the Louisiana American party, this hostility to traditional politics did not play an important role in the rise of Know Nothingism in the state. In Louisiana the American party leadership did not differ greatly from that of the Democratic party. In addition, my investigation will point out that those who joined the American party appear to have done so because they had no other place to go after the Whig party collapsed.

A genuine nativism also motivated many in Louisiana to participate with the American party. The most important issue for the American party was a hatred for immigrants. All the studies agree that the American party was anti-foreign, and my study confirms this bias, even in areas that had no significant foreign-born population. Using Know Nothing editorials, pamphlets, and letters I intend to demonstrate that this anti-foreign sentiment became inextricably involved with the question of slavery.

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Although the American party tried to avoid the slavery issue on the national scene and promote Unionism, it continually agitated the issue in Louisiana whenever expedient. Know Nothings continually argued that their party could best protect slavery, and as a result they kept the slavery question before the voters of the state as much as the Democrats.

Anti-Roman Catholicism was also part of the attraction for Americanism in Louisiana. Even though the official position of the Louisiana American party opposed the anti-Roman Catholicism of the national party, certain Louisiana Know Nothings attacked the Catholic Church in no uncertain terms. I will show, contrary to Overdyke's thesis, that particularly in North Louisiana and Baton Rouge, there were Americans who made no distinction between the liberal native-born Roman Catholics and the more recently arrived foreign-born Catholics. I also intend to prove that in heavily Roman Catholic south Louisiana the American party was weakened by its anti-Catholic stance. However, my quantitative data and my qualitative sources do not indicate overwhelming rejection of the American party by Roman Catholics, not even in south Louisiana.

Finally, the older historians of the American party in Louisiana do not examine party unity on state issues in the General Assembly. My evidence suggests that the old economic and social issues which had once divided the Democrats and Whigs no longer elicited the same responses
in the American era. In fact, the few state issues that arose in the mid-1850s, and that received American approba-
tion, did not receive anything like unanimity from party members.

Therefore, my interpretation of the Louisiana Know Nothing party presents a new view from earlier versions. Whereas the American party did serve as a vehicle for old Whigs to oppose the Democratic party, my view of the leadership of the American party differs from the traditional view. The Know Nothing leader was not older, wealthier, and he did not own larger numbers of slaves than his Democratic counterpart. Americans found commercial enterprise attractive, but so did Democrats, and in almost equal numbers. Even though Know Nothings condemned the Democratic party for agitating the sectional issues of slavery, Americans appealed to the proslavery views of the southern voter just as did the Democrats. There were also those Americans in the state who regarded Roman Catholicism, whether foreign or native, as a threat to republicanism. Finally, the American party did not present a unified front in the legislature even on those issues it supported. Therefore, the American party lacked cohesion and unity of purpose. The fractured nature of the party weakened the American party, causing it finally to succumb to the sectional crisis of the times.
CHAPTER I

EARLY POLITICAL NATIVISM IN LOUISIANA: 1832-1849

Geography, ethnic differences, and immigration greatly influenced Louisiana's politics between 1830 and 1861. The geographical features determined what kind of agriculture was feasible and profitable. The native population, descendants of the French and Acadians, gave direction to early territorial politics and resented the large number of Americans who immigrated to Louisiana. Another wave of immigration added color and often violence to Louisiana politics as foreign immigrants came in increasing numbers after 1840, with most coming from Ireland and Germany.

Geographically, Louisiana can be divided into two general areas; the hill country and the level country. The hill country consists of piney woods parishes which make up the Florida parishes north of Lake Pontchartrain; the North Louisiana Uplands consisting of Morehouse, Union, Claiborne, Bossier, Bienville, and Jackson Parishes; and the West Louisiana Uplands, west of the Calcasieu and Red Rivers. The level country consists of pine flats, prairies, alluvial lands, wooded swamps, and coastal marshes. In
the southern half of the Florida parishes are the pine flats; the prairie country is located in the south central parishes of St. Landry, parts of St. Martin and Lafayette, St. Mary, Vermilion, and Calcasieu Parishes. The alluvial lands are located in those parishes adjacent to the Mississippi River and the other major rivers of the state, such as the Red. The wooded swamps and coastal marshes are generally found in the extreme southern part of the state along the Gulf coast.  

During the antebellum period the state's wealthy planters lived in the alluvial parishes. The plantation economy dominated, with either cotton or sugar the primary staple. In the parishes of northwest Louisiana and in the northern half of the Florida parishes less successful farmers worked small farms. Remoteness from markets and inadequate soil prevented staple crop agriculture from succeeding in this area. Poor whites barely subsisted in the pine barrens of extreme southeast and southwest Louisiana along the Pearl and Sabine Rivers respectively.  

Most of the inhabitants of the prairie country in southwest Louisiana were descendants of the Acadians or French who


grew a little cotton, sugar cane, and rice and grazed cattle as well. Except for a few fishermen and trappers, descendants of the Acadians, the Gulf coastal marshes were largely uninhabited.

Despite the immigration of Americans into what is present-day Louisiana, before the United States acquired the state and during the territorial period, the Creole population outnumbered the Americans, particularly in south Louisiana where most of the French resided. A continuing influx of Americans gradually eroded this majority, but even as late as 1810 Creoles still outnumbered the

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3 Ibid., pp. 11-13.

4 The exact definition of the word "Creole" continues to perplex historians and sociologists. Some would include all non-Anglo native Louisianians (including blacks) while others limit the use of the word to the descendants of the French and Spanish colonials. Joseph Tregle in his unpublished dissertation makes a distinction between Latin Creoles and foreign French. He defines Latin Creoles as those whose heritage can be traced to colonial days and he includes the Acadians (descendants of the French Canadians) in this group. The foreign French were those Louisiana residents, according to Tregle, who immigrated to Louisiana during and after the French Revolution. Joseph George Tregle, Jr., "Louisiana in the Age of Jackson: A Study in Ego-Politics," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 38-39, 49, 53.

For the purposes of my study I will use the word Creole to refer to those descendants of colonial Louisianians and the French immigrants. Although Tregle correctly noted the differences between the Latin Creoles and the foreign French, the similarities of culture and politics were sufficient to bring them together culturally and politically in opposition to the immigrating Anglo-Americans.
Americans by at least two-to-one.5 American immigrants found New Orleans, the northern parishes, and the Florida parishes more congenial while the Creole population lived mainly in the lower river parishes or New Orleans. In 1840 "the French were preponderant in fifteen parishes to the South and the Americans in twenty-one parishes to the North and East."6

In addition to Americans immigrating to Louisiana a significant influx of foreign immigrants added to the population. Although many remained in the South's largest commercial city, many others continued up the Mississippi River to St. Louis and the great Midwest. New Orleans' attraction for these immigrants is evident in the 1850

5There are no census reports extant for the years between 1788 and 1803. In 1803 the United States consul at New Orleans, working with the best documents available, reported that the total population of Louisiana was 49,473. The population figure included residents of areas that did not become part of the State of Louisiana, and when this number is deducted the population of what is known today as Louisiana was 41,803. By 1810 the population had increased to 76,556 and it is estimated the Creoles still outnumbered the Americans at this time by at least two-to-one. François-Xavier Martin, The History of Louisiana, from the Earliest Period (New Orleans: James A. Gresham Publisher, 1882), pp. 300, 347.

It is difficult to estimate the population of Creoles and Americans after 1810 since census figures regarding nativities are sketchy at best. One historian estimates that even as late as 1830 the Creoles outnumbered the Americans by a two-to-one ratio. L. W. Newton, "Creoles and Anglo-Americans," The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XIV (1933), 34.

6Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle, pp. 18-19.
census. Their numbers grew until by 1850 the foreign-born accounted for forty-two percent of the total population, or 51,227 persons out of 119,460 persons. This substantial and growing minority played an important part in Louisiana's political history with both major parties seeking its votes.

The ethnic differences of Louisiana along with the results of immigration led to religious controversy. The Americans brought their Protestant religion with them to north Louisiana. In fourteen south Louisiana parishes only one Protestant church is listed in the census of 1860. American immigration eventually turned New Orleans into a strong Protestant city, but Protestant strength was in north Louisiana where most Protestants were Baptists or Methodists. There were no Roman Catholic churches in fourteen north Louisiana parishes by 1850. In the southern part of the state the "French" Catholics dominated that denomination, and New Orleans, the Catholic diocesan seat, remained an important Roman Catholic area.

Prior to 1850 the French descendants outnumbered the Americans and this numerical strength permitted the

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8 Ibid., p. 482; Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle, pp. 62-64.
Creoles to remain influential in state politics. Creoles and Americans resented each other and with the admission of Louisiana to the Union politics in the state became inextricably involved with a Creole-American rivalry. However, a tacit agreement to rotate the governorship between a Creole and an American prevented the rivalry from becoming extreme and too violent. The Americans violated the agreement in 1824 when the American candidate Henry Johnson succeeded American Thomas Robertson as governor. Provoked by the cupidity of the Americans, the Creoles succeeded in electing Pierre Derbigny as governor in 1828 and A. B. Roman in 1831. The Creoles, or, a candidate of their choosing, won succeeding gubernatorial elections until 1842.

During this period, particularly in the 1820s and 1830s, Creole political leaders concerned themselves with state and local affairs more than with national politics. Jacksonian and anti-Jacksonian politics moved them little. Andrew Jackson's popularity helped him carry Louisiana in 1828 and 1832, but Creole lethargy in national campaigns played an important role. Despite the success of the

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Jacksonians in Louisiana in national elections, they did not win a state election until 1842.\(^{11}\)

Following Jackson's victory in 1832 the Democrats and the Whigs adjusted to the ethnic rivalry in Louisiana. Both the gubernatorial election of 1835 and the presidential election of 1836 appear to belie this adjustment, for both campaigns were reminiscent of the past with the Creole or Whig faction succeeding in the state election and the American Democrat in the national race.\(^{12}\) However, both parties by this time made appeals to the Creole population and to the increasing number of Irish immigrants in New Orleans. John Slidell, a new Democratic leader in Louisiana, wooed Creole politicians in order to strengthen his party. Then, too, the Democrats shrewdly ran a Creole for governor in the 1838 gubernatorial campaign. The Whig nominee and Creole, A. B. Roman, won the election, but in 1842 another Creole and Democrat, Alexandre Mouton, 

\(^{11}\)Tregle, "Louisiana in the Age of Jackson," p. 466. For a more detailed discussion of Louisiana politics during the 1820s to the mid-1830s Tregle's Ph.D. dissertation should be consulted.

defeated an American who had received the Whig nomina-
tion.13

The Democrats initial victory for a state office
came in the 1842 gubernatorial race and indicated growing
support for that party. American immigration to north
Louisiana, southwestern Louisiana, and the Florida parishes
continued and most of the new residents voted Democratic.
New Orleans became more Americanized and Democratic as
well. Most of these Americans obviously brought their
Jacksonian politics from their native states because they
continuously supported Jacksonian candidates. After
arriving in Louisiana they chafed under the restrictive
and aristocratic Louisiana Constitution which had been
written back in 1812. They called constantly, but fu-
tilely, for a constitutional convention. They wanted
particularly to change property requirements for office
holding and tax-paying requirements for voting.14

Proponents of constitutional revision finally
passed a resolution in Louisiana's General Assembly which
called for a convention to modify the 1812 document and
Governor Roman signed it in 1841. Originally planned to
meet in Jackson, the Convention found that site inadequate
and reconvened in New Orleans on August 24, 1844. The

13McCormick, The Second American Party System,
pp. 317-18.

convention completed the new organic law on May 16, 1845 and the people of the state ratified it on November 5, 1845.\textsuperscript{15}

The old constitution was a reflection of Louisiana in 1812. It required candidates for the lower house to own property valued at 500 dollars, those for the Senate to own property worth 1,000 dollars, and a gubernatorial candidate to own property valued at 5,000 dollars. To vote one had to be a male citizen of the United States, free, white, and twenty-one years old, but a voter also had to be a tax payer or purchaser of land from the United States. The 1812 Constitution required a periodic adjustment of the representation in the lower house according to the population of the qualified electorate, but the Senate had fixed election districts and that body possessed veto power over all legislation. Few elective offices existed, and the governor appointed, with Senatorial advice and consent, most officials, including judges and sheriffs.\textsuperscript{16}

The Constitution of 1845 mirrored the temper of the times and gave Louisiana a much more democratic form of government than its predecessor. The new document curtailed legislative power, abolished property requirements


\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., pp. 499-505.
for seeking office and tax-paying requirements for voting, and increased the number of elective offices. Article 10, Title II of the new organic law increased the residency requirement for electors from one to two years. Wary of the increasing number of foreigners coming to New Orleans both Democrats and Whigs supported this measure. However, the Democrats from north Louisiana fought this provision since it would temporarily disfranchise American farmers immigrating to Louisiana. Whether an immigrant was a foreigner or from another state the Whigs favored this provision since both usually became Democrats.\(^17\)

Representation in the General Assembly came about by a compromise between New Orleans and "black belt" delegates. Representation in the lower house of the General Assembly continued to be based on the total population of the qualified electorate. The "black belt" planter class again received favored treatment in apportioning the Senate, the basis of representation being total population including blacks. The constitution limited New Orleans to one-eighth of the membership in the Senate. Even though New Orleans and the southern parishes lost seats in the General Assembly to north Louisiana parishes, the city held the balance of power in

the lower house while the "black belt" retained a majority in the Senate.\textsuperscript{18}

Nativistic attacks on foreigners, particularly Roman Catholic foreigners from Ireland, were not absent from the South and Louisiana during the 1830s and 1840s. An irrational fear of Papal power in the United States continued to grow with the ever increasing flood of foreign immigrants to the United States. Few of these immigrants landed in the South, but the rhetoric of the nativists and anti-Roman Catholic propagandists found its way below Mason and Dixon's line. In fact, the Roman Catholic Bishop John England established the first Catholic journal in the United States at Charleston, South Carolina in 1822. England founded this journal, the \textit{United States Catholic Miscellany}, as a rebuttal to the anti-Roman Catholic propaganda. Bishop England also felt obliged to participate in a newspaper debate between Catholics and Protestants in the Charleston \textit{Courier} in the late 1830s. Such debates, concerning whether or not Roman Catholicism was a threat to America, were quite commonplace during the decade.\textsuperscript{19}

Kentucky and Baltimore. The Reverend Nathan L. Rice published the *Western Protestant* in Bardstown beginning in 1836 and the Reverend Robert Breckinridge and the Reverend Andrew Cross started the *Literary and Religious Magazine* in 1835 in Baltimore. Typical of the nativistic press of this time, these journals often maligned Roman Catholics, charging them with immorality. When libel suits did reach the courts convictions were not obtained.  

Because of the South's peculiar institution of slavery the anti-Roman Catholic propaganda acquired a peculiar slant. Fear of slave insurrections became part of a possible Catholic-Negro alliance.  

A major commercial city like New Orleans, which attracted foreign immigrants, did not escape the nativist and anti-Roman Catholic propaganda of the 1830s. By the fall of 1835 a nascent nativist spirit culminated in the formation of the Louisiana Native American Association. The principles of the Association echoed those of nativist groups throughout the United States. In an address to the people of Louisiana, it deplored "the outcast and offal of society, the vagrant and the convict--transported in myriads

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to our shores, reeking with the accumulated crimes of the whole civilized world." Strong language to be sure, but the Native Americans in Louisiana feared the growing number of immigrants and the possibility of the Creoles forming a political alliance with them.

Louisiana's problems with nativism did not escape the notice of an editorial writer for the New Orleans Bee. In a lengthy article the writer accused native Americans from states other than Louisiana of trying to exclude foreigners "from the fruits of America." This writer felt that America's under-developed condition depended on immigrants who should be encouraged to immigrate. America's resources were plentiful and educated Europeans brought their knowledge to help develop the country. "May not," asked the author, "a naturalized foreigner be as competent and eligible a citizen of Louisiana as a citizen of another state?" Admirable as this defense appears, the writer left the door open to future discrimination because he believed foreigners should be admitted freely only until the United States came of age.23

22Ibid., pp. 131-32.

23New Orleans Bee, April 6, 1835. The New Orleans Bee was a Jackson paper in the 1830s. In the mid-1830s it came out against the Louisiana Native American Association. Ironically, in the 1840s it exhibited nativist sentiments (it was now a Whig organ) and in the 1850s the Bee sympathized with the nativists of that decade, the Know Nothings.

Hereafter New Orleans will be omitted from all future references to newspapers from that city; place names will be used, however, for all non-New Orleans papers.
Nativists, meanwhile, lost no time attacking their enemies. The race for governor in 1834 resulted in various ethnic slurs. The Whig candidate, Edward Douglass White, had to contend not only with his Democratic challenger but against his Irish ancestry. Correspondents to the New Orleans Bee accused White, the protegé of Judge Alexander Porter, also an Irishman, of using his Irish background by appealing to Irish voters to win the election. Both political parties were guilty of demagoguery in their appeal to both French and Irish voters. However, the frustration of the nativists can be imagined since White won seventy percent of the vote.

The 1834 gubernatorial campaign and White's lopsided triumph did not augur well for the adherents of nativism. Neither did the continued immigration of Irish into the state, particularly New Orleans. The number of Irish qualified to vote after 1835 should have assured that ethnic group control of Louisiana's largest city, but they failed to vote thus obviating any chance to achieve political hegemony in New Orleans. This failure to vote can perhaps be attributable to political naivete, but whatever the reason, the possibility of Irish political hegemony always remained in the minds of the nativists.

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24 Ibid., June 7, July 1, 2, 1834.

The possibility of political control by the foreign-born plus White's victory, contributed to the creation of the Louisiana Native American Association.\textsuperscript{26}

White had hardly begun his term when his detractors accused him of favoring the foreign-born for political office over native Americans. Political appointments should go to American natives thought these patriots. In the spring of 1835 a Native American meeting passed a resolution stating "that it is politic, natural and just that native born Americans should be appointed to office in preference to foreigners."\textsuperscript{27}

In response to such a resolution an editorial in the \textit{Bee} defended foreign immigrants. Obviously becoming well seasoned in such matters the writer pointed out that foreigners fought in the American Revolution and added to the United States by bringing their "arts and skills." Even Governor White's alleged appointments of foreign-born to political office did not withstand close scrutiny. For example, in New Orleans, White made thirty-eight appointments with just seven non-native Americans being appointed to office. Of these seven positions only two could be considered positions which brought financial renumeration.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Earl F. Niehaus, \textit{The Irish in New Orleans: 1800-1860} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), pp. 71, 77.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{Bee}, April 8, 11, 1835.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid., April 11, 17, 1835.
\end{footnotes}
Following this editorial support of foreign immigrants, those opposed to the increased nativistic sentiment held a unity meeting in April 1835 and deprecated this rise in bigotry. Those who attended the meeting had as their goal harmony and fellowship among all Americans. These "friends of union and of peace" listened to the address by the publisher of the Bee, who volunteered his publishing office for the meeting.29

Promoting fellowship in Louisiana and particularly in New Orleans during the 1830s was difficult. Those seeking to exclude foreign immigrants from the American political scene were equally as determined to assert their control over the Creoles. Antipathy toward the foreign-born and Creoles became indistinguishable as the latter sought to retain their political hegemony in Louisiana by wooing foreign immigrants. Jacksonian supporters attacked the Whigs as enemies of naturalized citizens and asserted that the Democrats had always supported naturalized citizens.30 But in the 1830s the Creoles generally belonged to the Whig party; yet the Creoles' desperate political situation forced them to seek aid from foreign immigrants. To confuse the situation even more, one of the founders

29Ibid., April 10, 13, 1835.
30Ibid., August 1, 1835.
of the Louisiana Native American Association, William Christy, was a Democrat. Like most nativist organizations of that time non-members knew little about the workings or membership of the Association. Nullification of the naturalization laws and restoration of the Alien and Sedition laws figured prominently on the list of priorities of the Association. The Association called for a twenty-five year residency requirement before granting citizenship and resolved to vote only for a native American.

The leaders saw to it that their propaganda reached the people. One of the leading organizers of the Association, John Gibson, edited the True American. This newspaper operated throughout the mid- to late 1830s. In 1839 Dr. James McFarlane, a native of South Carolina, founded another pro-nativist organ the Native American.

Agitation of anti-foreignism by the nativist press continued in the late summer of 1835. Incensed because the governor appointed a naturalized citizen to the position

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31 Ibid. The ubiquitous Mr. Christy remained a leading figure in Louisiana nativism and became a leading figure in the Know Nothing party in the 1850s.

32 Bee, August 1, 1835.

33 No copies of the True American are extant. John Smith Kendall, "Early New Orleans Newspapers," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, X (July 1927), 397.

34 Niehaus, The Irish in New Orleans, pp. 77-78.
of Sheriff of Orleans Parish, the editor of the *True American* incited the American section of the city against the Creoles. The *Bee* accused him of making disparaging remarks about the city police and the Roman Catholic clergy, and denounced the paper's attempt to divide the city.  

A division of spirit certainly pervaded New Orleans. Soon after this incident the state legislature partitioned the city into three municipalities. Americans had long clamored for this action. As early as 1832 the cry for an American mayor of New Orleans had been heard. Creole politicians whose districts crossed ethnic boundary lines found it expedient to be aware of American sensibilities. Each municipality was a separate corporation and possessed a council and recorder elected by the people. A mayor presided over a general council composed of the three municipal councils with the general council legislating in matters of common interest. The old town, where most of the Creoles resided, made up the First Municipality. The Faubourg St. Mary and uptown New Orleans composed the Second Municipality where the Americans and some immigrants resided. The Third Municipality, Faubourg Marigny,  

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35 *Bee*, September 7, 1835.
36 Ibid., March 31, 1832.
37 Ibid., April 17, 1832.
which many of the foreign immigrants called home, lay below present day Esplanade Avenue. 38

Nativism became so widespread in Louisiana and New Orleans in particular in the 1830s that opponents felt obliged to organize in opposition to the Louisiana Native American Association. A notice in the Bee on February 10, 1836, called for a meeting to form an association of "Loyal Americans." This group sought legislative incorporation in reaction to a similar move taken by the Louisiana Native American Association. Not all opponents of nativist groups approved of this proposed organization. An editorial comment in the Bee thought an opposition group would only harden prejudices of nativists. Nevertheless, the meeting took place on February 11, 1836. Elected president of the "Louisiana Loyal American Association" was Gilbert Leonard of Plaquemines Parish. Vice-presidents were J. H. Holland, President of the New Orleans Navigation Company and former Governor of Louisiana Jacques Dupre of Opelousas. The Louisiana Loyal Americans denounced the Louisiana Native American Association for keeping the distinctions among Louisianians before the people and set forth as its goal

the bringing together in a feeling of "union and benevo-
lence" all citizens of Louisiana.39

The names of some of those attending the organiza-
tional meeting indicates that the Loyal Americans made an
effort to include all ethnic groups as well as both Democrats
and Whigs. Not only were French names evident, but numerous
American and Irish names stand out. Interestingly enough,
one name in particular deserves mention. Christian Roselius,
a New Orleans attorney, attended this anti-nativist meeting,
his appearance demonstrates that his prejudices developed
slowly, because in the 1850s he became a leading member of
the Know Nothing movement.40

Nativism and anti-Roman Catholicism reappeared in
the 1838 state election campaign. André Roman, a former
governor and the Whig candidate, received a scathing attack
because of his alleged opposition to naturalized citizens.
At the same time, his accusers also pointed to his dis-
approval of Americans. They claimed he would never appoint
an American to office if a Creole could be found. The
supporters of Roman's Democratic opponent, Denis Prieur,
Mayor of New Orleans, indirectly attacked Roman's

39See, February 10, 12-13, 1836.

40Ibid., February 13, 1836. Roselius came to New
Orleans in the early nineteenth century from Germany in
a virtual state of poverty. In 1827 he was admitted to
the bar and appointed attorney-general in 1841. Louis
Voss, History of the German Society of New Orleans (New
Catholicism. Since Roman had attended a Catholic school in Baltimore, over which Catholic priests presided, his detractors felt that the priests had "smothered that love of country and admiration for liberty . . ." necessary in an elected official.  

Violence closed out the 1830s. To combat the nativists and its press an Irishman cranked up an anti-nativist paper in 1839. Appropriately named, the Anti-Native American (a friendly paper called it the "Anti-Humbug") pulled no punches. The Bee reported that the publisher of the Anti-Native American had made discourteous remarks about Colonel Christy of the Louisiana Native American Association. Thereupon the Colonel and his two sons attacked the Irishman's headquarters with axes. The publisher shot Christy and one son, but they achieved their goal; the paper ceased publication.

The advent of the 1840s witnessed no respite in the continuing hostilities between nativists and anti-nativists. The first outbreak occurred during the election for mayor of New Orleans in the spring of 1840. Party lines became more tightly drawn than in the 1830s.

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41 Bee, June 15, 18, 1838.
42 No copies of the Anti-Native American are extant.
Additionally, the Whig party frequently echoed native American rhetoric and at times supported avowed nativists for election to public office. In this New Orleans election the Whigs re-nominated Charles Genois. A Native American party (referred to at times as the Native American Repeal Party) organized for the election and nominated William Freret, owner of one of the largest cotton presses in New Orleans, and a resident of the American section of the city. The _Bee_ referred to a Mr. Kennedy as the regular administration candidate, a Van Buren man. He received the anti-Native American label, and the _Bee_ predicted Irish and German naturalized citizens would vote for Kennedy. Although some considered Freret exclusively Native American, others thought of him as a Whig. The Whigs realized Freret's Native American party nomination and his stand on repealing the naturalization laws would cost him the votes of many naturalized Whigs.\(^44\)

Freret won the election with 1,051 votes to Genois's 942. Kennedy and lesser candidates received no more than 200 votes among them.\(^45\) One newspaper's analysis of the election estimated that Freret lost at least 300 Whig votes in the First Municipality. But despite the presence of a large number of naturalized Whigs in the First and Third

\(^{44}\) _Bee_, March 30, 1840, April 1, 3, 1840.

Municipalities, he managed to win. These naturalized Whigs received assurances of Freret's good intentions and the promise that his position on "an abstract question" (repeal of the naturalization laws) would not prevent him from fulfilling the duties of mayor. Those naturalized Whigs, who could not vote for Freret because of his nativist views, were urged to "rejoin" the party since, according to one political observer, Freret's victory had assured the ascendancy of the Whig party in New Orleans.\(^{46}\)

Following this election, the Native American Repeal party sought to extend its new found strength beyond New Orleans. The nativists "drafted" Judge George Guion, a Whig from Lafourche Parish, as the Native American candidate for Congress from the First Congressional District. Although he felt drawn to the Repeal Party because of sympathy with their stand on repeal of the naturalization laws, he declined the nomination because of the lateness of the offer and because the Whig party had already nominated him. Instead, he urged the people to support the Whigs in their fight against the Democrats.\(^{47}\) Nativists recognized the need to protect the franchise and to repeal the naturalization laws, but most, like Judge Guion, apparently were not ready for a political party based exclusively on nativistic principles. Such was true particularly outside

\(^{46}\) *Bee*, April 8, 1840.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., June 13, 15, 1840.
New Orleans where the foreign immigrant had not yet made an impact.

The Native American Convention held in New Orleans in 1841 attracted delegates from across the state. Judge Guion, who had recently declined the nomination of the Native American Repeal party, figured quite prominently as the president of this convention. Guion's active participation confirmed his attraction to nativist principles. The delegates from all over Louisiana who came to this convention urged the United States Congress to restrain itself from passing laws naturalizing foreigners and to prohibit state legislatures from doing the same. With Judge Guion presiding, the convention turned down a resolution offered by Thomas Green Davidson calling for a third party. Apparently the success of the Repeal party in New Orleans did not impress the delegates from other sections of the state. However, they did recommend a national

48 Ibid., March 2, 1841.

49 A delegate from the Florida parishes, Thomas Green Davidson, would be haunted during the 1850s for his participation in this nativist movement. As a successful candidate for Congress in the Know Nothing period he would be charged by Whigs and Know Nothings with his earlier anti-foreign sentiments. He did withdraw from the Native American Association because he favored a regular party organization that would repeal the naturalization laws and the Native American convention voted down his resolution to that effect.
A year after this convention the Native Americans lost their hold on the mayoralty of New Orleans. The Native American Association had queried the mayoralty candidates on their views of the naturalization laws. The Democratic nominee and former Mayor of New Orleans, Denis Prieur, did not favor repeal nor the exclusion of the foreign-born from office. The incumbent, William Freret, a Whig and nativist, received the nomination of the Native American party. He stood four-square behind the Native American Association's demand for the repeal of the "defective" naturalization laws. Although the Whig party made no official nomination, it supported Freret's candidacy.

Following Prieur's victory over Freret by a count of 1,334 votes to 1,069 votes, the editor of the Whig organ, the Bee, mourned Freret's defeat. In a lengthy election post-mortem the newspaper's political writer explained Freret's defeat. He believed that Freret's failure to receive the regular Whig endorsement and the irreparable

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50 Bee, March 2, 1841. Naturally New Orleans had a large delegation but there were delegates from West Feliciana, Livingston, St. Landry, Jefferson, St. Mary, St. Tammany, and Claiborne parishes.

51 Kendall, History of New Orleans, 1:156; Bee, April 4, 1842.
harm done by the nativist newspaper the *Louisiana American* played important roles in the loss. An election day article in the *Louisiana American* disputed the issue being one between Democrats and Whigs. Instead, the issue was "Native American versus anti-Native American, and the ballot box must decide whether we are to govern ourselves or to be governed by imported patriots. . . ." The article also intimated that Creoles bullied voters at the polls, and to cap off this scathing polemic the *American* printed the article in an Irish dialect. The *Bee* claimed that many naturalized citizens, including naturalized Whigs, resented these insults and deserted Freret on election day. Native Americans also suffered defeat outside New Orleans when their candidate for mayor of Baton Rouge lost his election in 1842.

The 1842 gubernatorial campaign gained momentum immediately after the New Orleans mayoralty election. New Orleans Whigs admonished country Whigs not to be hoodwinked by the Democrats into believing the New Orleans election had been a test of Whig party strength. The Whigs believed that Freret's defeat came, not because of

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52. No copies of the *Louisiana American* are extant.

53. *Bee*, April 6, 1842. William Freret soon returned to City Hall. Prieur resigned to accept a more lucrative post necessitating a special election. Nominated by the Whigs, Freret overwhelmed his Democratic opponent.

Whig weakness, but from mixing in "extraneous questions" in the election. Obviously these "extraneous questions" meant the issue of nativism versus anti-nativism which the Whigs hoped would not become part of this state campaign. One Whig editor feared that if his party would "permit themselves to be led astray by irrelevant or collateral issues (as upon a recent occasion), they will be beaten. . . ."  

However, nativism did surface during the 1842 state campaign. The Democrats accused the Whig candidate, Henry Johnson, of being a nativist, and his identification with the Native American party did not bring denials. One Johnson supporter denied the candidate's association with the Native American party, saying that Johnson stood "uncommitted on the question of Native Americanism." But this same Johnson proponent wondered how the Democratic candidate, Alexandre Mouton, stood on this question since a Louisiana newspaper had reported that Mouton warmly supported the Native American party. Late in the campaign, according to the Bee, the Democratic Louisiana Courier tried to impugn Johnson's character. The Courier reported that Johnson had stated that he "was sure of enough American (Anglo-Saxon) votes to elect him and cared little for

55 bee, April 21, 1842.
56 Ibid., April 18, 1842.
57 Ibid., May 4, 1842.
what the Creoles, or their French allies may do. . . ."
The Courier wondered that the Creole population could trust
him after this statement. The Bee felt sure that the
Creoles in the state would not believe Johnson felt so
assured of American support, and thought that last minute
tactics which attempted to divide American and Creole Whigs
would work against the Democratic party. Regardless,
Mouton won and became the first Democratic governor in the
history of the state.

Nativism continued unabated in Louisiana and ap­
peared next in the race for United States Congress in 1843
in the First Congressional District. Nominated by the
Whigs and Democrats were George K. Rogers and John Slidell
respectively. The Whigs attempted to convince naturalized
citizens that Democrats became solicitous to naturalized
citizens only before an election. According to the Whigs
the Democrats gave naturalized citizens no credit —
intelligence when they promised to assist immigrants in
voting if they voted for Slidell. In contrast, the Whig
party felt it never appealed to immigrant's prejudice.
Whiggery better represented the working class to which
many naturalized citizens belonged. Whigs felt their

58 Louisiana Courier, July 2, 1842.
59 Bee, July 4, 1842.
party protected labor and industry in the United States from "the hostile legislation of European monarchies." Even though the Whigs did make appeals to the foreign-born, they remained alert to the possible attempts of the Democratic party to illegally vote the foreigners. The concern about fraud led them to admonish election judges to check naturalization papers carefully. When Slidell won the election, the Whigs accused him and the Democratic party of the wholesale manufacture of illegal voters. One Whig partisan estimated that between 500 and 600 "naturalized citizens" voted illegally. The same source noted that the illegal naturalization of foreign immigrants occurred in the City of Lafayette (a New Orleans suburb). The Democrats chose Lafayette because the ten dollars a person fee for naturalization papers in New Orleans exhausted the Democratic treasury and the price in Lafayette was lower. Additionally, the Whigs found that the vote in Plaquemines Parish exceeded that of any previous year. In fact, there were more votes cast in Plaquemines Parish than white males over twenty-one.

The Whigs bemoaned their defeat and readily attacked the Democrats for this fraud. Considering that the total vote in Plaquemines exceeded the number eligible to vote

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60 Ibid., June 29, 1843, July 3, 1843.
61 Ibid., July 6-7, 9, 1843. The vote in 1840 was 290; in 1842, 270; but in 1843 it was 340.
and that Slidell received 270 votes out of a total of 340 votes, the Whigs appear justified in their allegation of fraud in Plaquemines Parish. However, the Democratic naturalization of immigrants prior to this election forced the Whigs into the realization of the need to naturalize foreigners as well. Soon after the election the Whigs announced that party members could obtain legal information to assist immigrants in becoming naturalized. Ironically, the Whigs chose Colonel William Christy, the leading nativist, to disseminate the legal advice.  

The question of naturalized citizens fraudulently voting remained a significant problem in Louisiana. From the winter of 1843 to the spring of 1844 this topic concerned both Democrats and Whigs. Following a special election which sent the Whig James Freret to the state legislature, the Democrats cried fraud. Whigs had guarded against voters with fraudulent naturalization and excluded from voting those in particular who possessed naturalization papers issued by Judge Benjamin Elliott of the City Court of Lafayette.  

In another special election to fill an unexpired term in the state Senate, Thomas Slidell, a Democrat, defeated Christian Roselius, a Whig. The Whigs believed that Judge Elliott's "naturalized citizens" contributed

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62 Ibid., August 24, 1843.
63 Ibid., December 20, 22, 1843.
to Roselius's defeat. To prove this charge of fraud the Whigs noted that the number of votes cast nearly doubled from the recent election of James Freret. They accused Elliott of issuing approximately 1,800 naturalization certificates, some to people not even present in court.64

The controversy over Judge Elliott's citizens emerged next in the New Orleans mayoralty election of April 1, 1844. The city had become so imbued with nativism that both parties either nominated or unofficially supported a candidate tainted with that prejudice. The Whigs renominated William Freret and challenged the voters of the city not to tolerate the voters created by Judge Elliott. The Democrats supported Edgar Montégut, who, the Whigs reminded the public, had been the Native American candidate for mayor of New Orleans back in 1840. Montégut won, whereupon the Whig press bitterly attacked the Democrats calling the election a prostitution of the ballot box. The Whigs reported that election judges accepted some seventy-five Elliott votes in the 4th Ward, First Municipality where the total votes cast was over 300. Usually this ward polled only 200 votes. In the more heavily immigrant Third Municipality, 2d Ward, election judges accepted over 100 Elliott votes. It was no wonder the

64Ibid., February 26-28, 1844.
Whigs fumed over these incidents of illegal voting by foreigners.65

Election weary Louisianians received no respite in 1844. Two crucial elections held on July 1, 1844, decided representation in the state legislature and the Constitutional Convention. The importance of both elections, particularly the election for delegates to the convention, prompted both parties to conduct their campaigns vigorously. Having generally disapproved the calling of a constitutional convention, the Whigs threw themselves into the contest in order to control the proceedings. Because of election frauds in recent elections, primarily in the New Orleans area, the Whigs seemed determined to deny illegally naturalized citizens the franchise.

Once the election had been completed, complaints and accusations from both sides flowed freely. The Whigs charged the Democrats with denying well-known citizens the right to vote. The Democrats did so, according to the

65Ibid., March 30, 1844; April 2, 5, 1844. The Bee noted that in the American section of New Orleans, the Second Municipality, Whig commissioners prevented these illegal voters from voting. However, in the First and Third Municipalities, areas of large numbers of immigrants, election judges in certain wards permitted them to vote.

Although an Impeachment Court removed Judge Elliott by a 9 to 5 vote, the Court ruled its verdict had no bearing on the validity of the disputed naturalization papers. Bee, April 8, 1844; Niehaus, The Irish in New Orleans, p. 79.
Whigs, in anticipation that Judge Elliott's "citizens" would be turned away from the polls. The charges continued for a month after the election by which time it became clear that the Whigs had generally succeeded in both elections.66

The Whigs improved their legislative position and did well in the convention election. In the lower house the Whigs gained two seats over 1843, leaving them with a slight majority. Although the Democrats maintained their majority in the Senate, the Whigs gained one seat over 1843 and reduced the Democratic majority to one. In the important convention race the Whigs captured the majority by one. However, one Whig paper noted that allied with conservative Democrats or non-partisan conservative delegates the Whigs would forestall any loco-foco attempts to "radicalize" the organic law of Louisiana.67

The 1845 Constitution was certainly more democratic than the 1812 document. As discussed above, the convention overturned property requirements and tax paying prerequisites for holding office and voting respectively. Besides reflecting Jacksonian tendencies, the convention mirrored the rising alarm over foreign immigration. Whigs particularly distrusted foreign immigrants. The Whigs claimed that foreign immigrants, along with immigrants

66Bee, July 2-4, 6, 8, 10, 1844; August 5, 1844.

67Ibid., July 6, 8, 9, 19, 1844; Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 48.
from other American states, were not capable of comprehending Louisiana's local laws and institutions.

Whigs wanted to include nativist principles in the new constitution to protect what they considered their vested interests. One successful candidate to the convention, Judah P. Benjamin, felt immigration to Louisiana dangerous for the state. Shortly after the election of delegates Benjamin called for the formation of a "nativist" party. He obviously thought the existing parties incapable of dealing with the immigrant problem. Benjamin, a Whig, along with other leading Whigs such as former governor W. C. C. Claiborne and Glendy Burke of New Orleans, favored strict rules governing residency requirements. They hoped to prevent anyone other than a native from becoming the chief executive. When this move failed, they succeeded in having the convention adopt a fifteen year residency requirement for the governor and lieutenant-governor.68

The 1844 presidential election appeared to be a particular challenge to the Whigs. Yet, the Whigs were confident they would carry Louisiana. However, the Democrats were equally as determined as the Whigs were to win the election. Fearful that the Democracy would use

foreigners illegally in the contest, the Whigs formed a committee armed with a list of every foreign male who had entered Louisiana from a foreign port since 1840. Everyone on this list would be ineligible to vote according to Louisiana's Constitution. This committee obviously did not count on John Slidell shipping boat loads of "voters" to Plaquemines Parish to vote for James K. Polk, a maneuver which put Louisiana in Polk's column and elicited bitter denunciation from the Whigs.

Becoming more visceral in its editorials, the New Orleans Bee referred to the immigrants who allowed themselves to be used by Slidell as vagabonds and loafers. The Bee felt that the Plaquemines frauds would bring about the formation of a native American party. The Plaquemines frauds also sparked a renewed agitation for the repeal of the naturalization laws. In December 1844 United States Senator Henry Johnson of Louisiana formally requested that the Senate Judiciary Committee inquire into the expediency of modifying the naturalization of laws of the United States, so as to extend the time allowed to enable foreigners to become citizens; to require greater guard against fraud in

69 Bee, November 4, 1844.
70 Ibid., November 7, 1844. This newspaper noted that the Democrats secured a 1200 vote majority in a parish (Plaquemines) that had never previously cast even 400 votes.
71 Ibid.
the steps to be taken in procuring naturalization papers; and to prevent, as far as practicable, fraud and violence at elections.\textsuperscript{72}

However, one observer commented that changing the naturalization laws would have no effect on suffrage. Nativists should emulate Louisiana's constitutional requirement which prevented anyone from voting who had not been a citizen of the United States for two years.\textsuperscript{73}

Nativists in Louisiana apparently thought this constitutional provision insufficient. They organized a Native American party for the 1846 gubernatorial election and nominated Charles Derbigny of Jefferson Parish for governor and L. Deshields for lieutenant-governor. The Whig press generally supported the need for protecting the franchise, but as before opposed a third party movement based on nativist principles. Believing that the Native Americans could not survive as an independent party, the Whigs argued that their party represented the greatest protection for the franchise.\textsuperscript{74}

Of course the Whigs had to contend with the Democrats as well. The Democratic party had labeled William DeBuys of New Orleans, the Whig candidate for governor, a Creole. Referring to him as a Creole, contended the \textit{Bee}, lessened DeBuys's appeal to the Anglo-Saxons. At the same

\textsuperscript{72}Billington, \textit{The Protestant Crusade}, p. 206.

\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Bee}, May 24, 1845; July 25, 1845.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., October 2, 1845; December 6, 1845.
time Whigs defended DeBuys from charges that he was a nativist. One Democratic paper the *Louisiana Courier* charged that DeBuys, while a representative in the legislature, had opposed Governor White's alleged favoritism of foreigners over natives for public office. The *Bee* denied that DeBuys opposed naturalized citizens and sought to disprove the Democratic charge that DeBuys participated in the Louisiana Native American Association. The *Bee* did not research its files well because on March 2, 1841 General William DeBuys's name appeared in the *Bee* as a vice-president at the Native American Convention in New Orleans.

The Democrat Isaac Johnson won the election, and the Whigs blamed their defeat on the bad weather and the competition of Derbigny's candidacy. However, Derbigny ran poorly throughout the state receiving only 588 votes out of some 23,000 votes cast. Even if all of Derbigny's votes had gone to DeBuys the Whig nominee would not have won. For the second time in the 1840s nativists in the state were unsuccessful in consolidating their position beyond New Orleans. As a political movement Native Americanism succeeded periodically in the city, but was not a durable threat to either the Whigs or the Democrats. Most

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76 *Daily Picayune*, February 11, 1846. The Democrat Johnson received 12,403 votes and the Whig DeBuys 10,335.
politicians who adhered to the nativist ideology felt more secure in one of the major parties and eschewed these early nativist parties.

Anti-foreign sentiment never ceased but it did wane in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Derbigny's miserable showing in 1846 indicated that nativism as an issue was being pushed into the political background. David Wilmot's proviso, the Mexican War, and the Compromise of 1850 absorbed the attention of most Americans and Louisianians during this period. However, continued foreign immigration and fraudulent voting permitted nativism to remain a visible if not a viable issue.

The Whigs continued to deprecate the Democrats' alleged use of what one writer called "the immense floating and alien vote" to defeat Whig candidates. Even naturalized citizens were suspect. During the Congressional campaign in 1847 Whigs reminded election inspectors that recently naturalized citizens had a two year residency requirement before being eligible to vote. But nativism lost out to another issue--the Democratic charge that the Whigs wanted to negotiate a dishonorable peace with Mexico took precedence.

77 Bee, February 13, 1847.
78 Ibid., November 1, 1847.
Hostility to foreigners did not play a significant role in the 1848 presidential election in Louisiana. Most of the electioneering centered around the issues of slavery in the territories and the Wilmot Proviso. But a pro-Taylor organ did notice that Democrats portrayed the Whig nominee as antipathetic to Germans and Irish. Taylor also favored, according to the Democrats, a twenty-one year waiting period before giving the franchise to naturalized citizens. 79

Unfortunately for Louisiana Whigs, Zachary Taylor's success in 1848 did not help the Whig state ticket in 1849. The gubernatorial campaign got cranked up in the summer of 1849 with national issues predominating as in the recent presidential election. 80 However, nativism did appear, with the Whigs as usual accusing the Democratic party of appealing to foreigners only at election time. Hoping not to antagonize foreign-born voters, the Whigs thought that the Germans and Irish were particularly susceptible to this kind of electioneering, not because of dishonesty, but because of a misguided belief of what the Democrats could do for them. The Whig press reminded the foreign-born that their nominee for governor, Alexander Declouet, had voted against a legislative resolution to Louisiana's congressional

80 Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 57.
delegation calling for the repeal or modification of the naturalization laws. Declouet's position took on added significance, according to his supporters, since his antinativism stance occurred when the Native American party and its ideology received its greatest support. 81

Whigs took the charge of anti-foreignism to the Democratic camp. They charged Joseph Walker, the Democratic candidate for governor, with anti-foreign prejudice. Allegedly Walker had called Alexander Porter a "damned Irishman" after Porter defeated Walker for United States Senator in 1834. To prove the charge the Whig press printed letters from those who were privy to Walker's feelings. One correspondent stated that Walker did not approve of appointing naturalized citizens to high positions such as United States Senator. 82 Whigs asked therefore, who could be called the friend of naturalized citizens and foreigners? They answered not Joseph Walker. If their accusation concerning Walker's statement about Porter did not convince the voters the Whigs had additional proof of Walker's antipathy to foreigners. As a state legislator Walker had voted against an appropriation for the Catholic Male Orphan Asylum of New Orleans which aided many immigrant children. 83 The Louisiana Courier denied

81 Bee, August 21, 1849.
82 Ibid., October 13, 15-17, 29, 31, 1849; November 1, 1849.
83 Ibid., October 19, 1849.
that Walker had ever called Judge Porter any such thing as "a damned Irishman," and that paper asked the Irish Democrats if they intended to permit the Whigs to cajole them "out of a single vote." The Democratic paper also reminded the Irish voters that the recent murder of an Irishman had been committed by a participant in a Whig outing, in full view of numerous Whigs, and they took no action against the assailant.

Despite all the charges of Democratic insincerity toward foreigners the Whigs remained convinced of the corruptability of the foreign-born. Alarmed over the number of foreigners making declarations to become citizens, the Whigs reminded them of the two year residency requirement for voting. Whigs felt that this warning would go unheeded and they knew many foreigners planned to commit "fraud and perjury" in this election. This conviction undoubtedly made it difficult for the Whigs to accept the result of the election in which Walker defeated Alexander Declouet by a slim majority. Walker received 17,673 votes while Declouet garnered 16,601 votes. Declouet received a majority in the Second Congressional District, which included the strong Whig sugar

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84 *Louisiana Courier*, October 31, 1849.
85 Ibid., November 2, 1849.
86 *Bee*, October 25, 1849.
parishes, while Walker won majorities in the other three districts. 87

Nativism in Louisiana received a tremendous impetus from continued foreign immigration. In this sense Louisiana differed little from the rest of the country. At times the nativist rhetoric became anti-Roman Catholic. But in the 1830s and 1840s Louisiana did not experience a rabid anti-Papal sentiment. Nativists did include Creoles in their denunciation because Creoles had attempted to form an alliance with the immigrants, but Creoles soon identified with the Whig party which exhibited a clear anti-foreign feeling.

However, formal nativist organizations competed with the Whig party in Louisiana during this period of the state's history, and launched a third party movement in New Orleans and in the state. Obviously with most of the immigrants residing in New Orleans these organizations and party movements had most of their success in the city. But even in New Orleans the Native American Repeal party and the Native American party received mostly ideological support and generally failed to acquire political acceptance.

87 *Louisiana Courier*, November 19, 1849.
CHAPTER II

RESURGENCE OF NATIVISM: 1850-1855

Nativism, ethnic prejudice, and anti-foreignism received little attention in Louisiana during the early 1850s. The Compromise of 1850, Cuba, and a new state constitution occupied the attention of the politicians and the press to a large extent, with the Whig party affirming the Compromise, opposing intervention in Cuba, and supporting the call for a new constitution. The Democrats reluctantly accepted the Compromise of 1850, favored the "emancipation of Cuba," and were generally unenthusiastic about a new constitution. When nativism did appear, it usually occurred within the framework of a broader issue. By 1853 and during 1854, however, nativistic and anti-Roman Catholic sentiment assumed more importance as foreign

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1 New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 10, 1850; November 11, 12, 1850; August 28, 1851; October 29, 1851; December 13, 1852; Carrollton Star, May 17, 1851; New Orleans Commercial Bulletin, May 17, 1851; October 29, 30, 1852; West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, November 24, 1852; Louisiana Courier, August 10, 1850; September 18, 1850; May 3, 1851; August 18, 1851; September 13, 1851; New Orleans Daily Delta, June 11, 1850; August 15, 1850; September 25, 1850; May 6, 1851; August 7, 1852; New Orleans Daily True Delta, August 5, 1852. Hereafter New Orleans will be omitted from all future references to newspapers from that city; place names will be used, however, for all non-New Orleans papers.
immigration increased and the United States Roman Catholic hierarchy became more assertive because of the large-scale immigration of foreign Catholics to the United States. This continuing foreign immigration and assertiveness of the Catholic hierarchy, along with the demise of the Whig party, coincided with the formation of a nationwide political nativist party which made its first appearance in Louisiana during an 1854 New Orleans election.

An early manifestation of nativism in the 1850s in Louisiana occurred during the national debates over the Compromise of 1850. The Whig party heartily supported the Compromise measures and used every opportunity to commit itself to that measure. Although the Democrats accepted the finality of the Compromise, they did so in a more subdued manner. The Democrats objected to what the Louisiana Courier referred to as "the bigoted nativism of the Whig press." The Whig press had roughly handled United States Senator from Louisiana Pierre Soulé for his vote against the Compromise, much of the criticism centering on Soulé's foreign birth. One Whig paper stated that a foreigner like Soulé could not grasp the essence of the United

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2Daily Picayune, September 15, 1850; Daily Crescent, November 11, 1850.


4Louisiana Courier, October 21, 1850.
States government. Another journal pointed out that Senator Soulé's supporters were "not native and to the manor born." Wondering about this Whig logic the New Orleans *Daily Delta* queried if a non-Englishman could not grasp American laws, how could an Englishman understand Louisiana codes?

In addition to national affairs, local and state issues also furnished a forum for nativistic rhetoric. The consolidation of the three municipalities of New Orleans and the writing of a new state constitution were controversial issues in 1851 and 1852. These two issues contributed to ethnic rivalries and appeals to naturalized citizens. Whig newspapers opposed consolidating New Orleans because they believed it would revive pre-1836 ethnic hostilities. Not until 1852 when the predominately American suburb of Lafayette had been included in the consolidation package did consolidation succeed. Whigs were more positive when it came to rewriting the organic law of Louisiana and sought the inclusion of an elective judiciary, state aid to public works, and a system of

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5 *Daily Crescent*, August 10, 1850.

6 *Plaquemine, Southern Sentinel*, November 16, 1850. This newspaper never had kind words for Mr. Soulé. In 1853 it continued its attack on the recently appointed Minister to Spain for his desire to annex Cuba. *Southern Sentinel*, April 16, 1853.

7 *Daily Delta*, August 13, 1850.

8 Ibid., February 7, 1850.
Democrats were not opposed to these features, but felt that either constitutional amendments or legislative acts would be better than a new constitution. However, the Democrats refused to be censured by the Whigs for the illiberal features of the 1845 Constitution which prohibited naturalized citizens from voting for two years after becoming a United States citizen. In fact, the residence requirement had been extended to two years for all new residents. The Louisiana Courier laid the blame for this clause on the Whig party and a few conservative Democrats.

These incidents of nativism were minor, but events throughout the country, as well as in Louisiana, precipitated more virulent forms of bigotry and ultimately led to organized political nativism. The continued influx of immigrants into the United States, many of whom were Roman Catholics, augured ill for toleration. Louisiana received 52,011 immigrants in 1851, or, more than one-eighth of the total number of immigrants that arrived in

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9Carrollton Star, October 11, 1851; Commercial Bulletin, October 6, 15, 1851.

10Daily True Delta, May 28, 1851; June 17, 1851; October 25, 1851.

the country that year. In contrast, only 22,148 immigrants had arrived in Louisiana during 1846, just five years before.

Most of the support for the principles of nativism in Louisiana came from the Whig party and its political organs. One reason for the Whig stand was the success that the Democrats had in courting immigrants. At election time the Democrats reminded the immigrant population of the past Whig association with native Americanism. The Democratic party tied Whiggery to nativism during the election for Orleans Parish sheriff in 1851. The Whig candidate James Freret had been associated with the Louisiana Native American Convention back in the 1840s. That convention had approved the repeal of all laws naturalizing foreigners and favored excluding naturalized citizens from the franchise. The Democrats naturally brought before the foreign-born population Freret's involvement with the Native American Convention. The Whigs opposed this Democratic appeal to a particular class of people, but to no avail as the Democrats won the election, inaugurating a string of Democratic victories in the state.

12 DeBow's Review, XIII (July 1852), 196.
13 Ibid., III (January 1847), 351.
14 Louisiana Courier, October 30, 1851.
15 Daily Crescent, September 26, 1851.
Several elections in 1852 furnished a forum for appeals to the foreign-born population of Louisiana. The presidential campaign, a New Orleans municipal race, the votes on a new state constitution, and the state elections all witnessed partisan appeals to the foreign-born. Of course, the issues of slavery, abolitionism, internal improvements, foreign policy, and filibustering played a role in the presidential campaign, but both parties effectively used bigotry as a weapon. While the Democrats criticized Winfield Scott for his past flirtations with nativism, the Whigs attacked Franklin Pierce as anti-Catholic and made good use of one Democratic elector's earlier native American views. Partisan presses continually inflamed national prejudices with appeals to adopted citizens. The Daily True Delta of New Orleans urged naturalized citizens to vote against the Whig mayor.


17 Staats Zeitung, October 16, 1852. I was assisted in translating some German stories which appeared in scattered German newspapers in New Orleans by George C. Kieser.

18 Bee, August 17, 1852; Commercial Bulletin, August 17, 1852; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, August 28, 1852.

19 Bee, July 8, 1852; Alexandria Red River Republican, July 31, 1852. This elector, T. G. Davidson, had been prominent in the Louisiana Native American Association in the 1840s, but the Democrats now claimed that he recanted his previous philosophy. Baton Rouge Daily Comet, September 24, 1852.
of that city because he had "permitted thugs to menace the lives of adopted citizens." Whigs and Democrats also blamed each other for the distinctions between foreign-born and native citizens in the 1845 state constitution, and both parties reminded the voters when they went to the polls to decide on a new constitution that they opposed such distinctions. Finally, the Whigs characterized the Democratic candidate for governor Paul O. Hebert as a pro-foreigner or an ambitious Creole, depending on the section of New Orleans or the state in which they campaigned.

Whigs claimed that they had always been liberal toward naturalized citizens, but Democrats and the foreign-born scoffed at such a claim. Even when the Whigs ran

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20 *Daily True Delta*, March 22, 1852.

21 The Whig party had succeeded in calling a convention and electing a majority of the delegates to the convention. They supported its passage while the Democrats had several reservations, particularly in regards to representation being based on total population. This clause earned the Constitution of 1852 the epithet of the "nigger-as-good-as white constitution." *Daily Delta*, July 30, 1852; August 7, 1852; *Louisiana Courier*, November 9, 1852.

22 *Daily Crescent*, July 27, 1852; August 20, 1852; *Daily Delta*, August 7, 1852. The 1852 Constitution removed this discriminatory feature.

23 *Louisiana Courier*, December 15, 1852. Both political parties agreed that the single issue in this state campaign was to control the legislature in order to implement the recently approved constitution. Continuing its decline the Whig party completely failed in its objective. West Baton Rouge, *Capitolian Vis-A-Vis*, November 24, 1852.

24 *Louisiana Courier*, October 25, 1853.
a naturalized citizen for public office, the candidate had little affinity for the recent immigrants of Louisiana. For example, the Whig candidate for Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1853, Christian Roselius, was a naturalized citizen. However, Roselius's former association with the Louisiana Native American Association probably cost him the election because his Democratic opponent Thomas Slidell had made Roselius's association with nativism an important issue.25 A large percentage of the immigrants of the state lived primarily in the Third (Municipal) District of New Orleans. That district gave Slidell a 305 vote majority out of 1351 cast.26 The success of the Democrats in attracting immigrants to their party, the Democratic disregard for the naturalization law, and the growing lawlessness on election day alarmed nativists. They feared what they saw as the increased influence of foreigners in both the country and the state.

The state and congressional elections of 1853 furnished the Whigs with a perfect example of how the Democrats abused the naturalization law, perpetrated election day frauds, and used the immigrant and foreign-born citizen as unsuspecting tools to further their ends.

25 Daily Crescent, March 31, 1853; April 5, 7, 1853; Louisiana Courier, April 1-3, 1853.

During the campaign the Whig party asserted that the Democrats of New Orleans "manufactured citizens" by naturalizing foreigners who had not passed the required five years residency and who could not even speak English. To insure friendly surroundings, the Democratic Judge Donatien Augustin, who issued these naturalization papers, chose the Sixth District Court Building of New Orleans. This was not even the bench over which Judge Augustin presided. However, it was in the same building as police headquarters. The Democrats at that time controlled the police of the city. Therefore, the Democratic judge could proceed without fear of interruption. To insure that these "naturalized" citizens voted for the straight Democratic ticket a Democratic officer of the state collected the naturalization papers. Compounding the fraud, the Democrats held them until election day to insure a correct vote. Outraged at these tactics, the Whigs predicted that the only thing left for the Democrats to do was to use these debased "citizens" to commit outrages at the polls. And the Democrats did use these "citizens." One Democratic stronghold, in the First District of New Orleans, part of what became known as the "Irish Channel," returned a vote of

27 Commercial Bulletin, October 19, 1853.
28 Daily Crescent, October 18, 20, 21, 1853.
29 Ibid., November 7, 1853.

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1098 where previously the vote had never exceeded 950. This particular vote, and a similar increase throughout the city, occurred despite the recent yellow fever epidemic which had taken its toll on the population of New Orleans. The Democratic victory in this 1853 election brought charges of fraud from the Whigs and a former Democrat, Charles Gayarré, the unsuccessful independent candidate for Congress in the First Congressional District. Gayarré's charges mainly concerned the internal problems of the Democratic party, but both he and the Whigs agreed on the illegal use Democrats made of "the debased of foreign lands." They also agreed that a complete board of Democratic inspectors at the polls and the Democratic police force resulted in many Whig votes not being counted.

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31 Bee, November 8, 1853. This stronghold in the First District would be the scene of future election day violence.

32 The Democrats won a majority of the seats in both houses of the legislature and three of the four congressional seats. Louisiana Courier, November 20, 1853.

33 Address of Charles Gayarré, to the People of the State on the Late Frauds Perpetrated at the Elections Held on the 7th November, 1853, In the City of New Orleans (New Orleans: Sherman and Wharton), Gayarré Collection, L.S.U. Archives; Plaquemine, Southern Sentinel, December 24, 1853; Daily Crescent, December 26, 1853.

Gayarré charged that one-fourth of the entire vote in New Orleans was spurious. The Democrats regarded Gayarré as a disappointed office-seeker and demanded the charges of fraud be proved. Daily Delta, December 19, 1853; Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, January 4, 1854.

34 Bee, November 8, 1853; Soulé, The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans, p. 46.
Related to the anti-foreign prejudice was anti-Roman Catholicism because many of the newly arrived immigrants belonged to that faith. Similar to anti-foreignism, anti-Roman Catholicism received more attention as immigration increased. With increased immigration, membership in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States increased too. This increased membership made the Roman Church uncompromising. It must have appeared to nativists that the Roman Catholic Church sought to be as dominant in America as it had been in Europe. Nativists seized upon the sometimes arrogant posture of the Roman Catholic hierarchy of the country to prove how aggressive that faith was. Roman Catholic editors exacerbated the situation by heaping abuse on Protestants and encouraging their fellow Roman Catholics to profess openly their religion. One bold Roman Catholic editor wrote the following:

Our object is to show, once more, that Protestantism is effete, powerless, dying out through disturbed only by its proper gangrenes, and conscious that its last moment is come when it is fairly set, face to face, with Catholic truth.\(^35\)

According to the nativists, other examples of the arrogance of Roman Catholicism was the attempt of the church to remedy the problems of sectarian instruction in the schools, to divide the public school fund, and to

settle the ownership of church property, the last referred to as the trustee problem. Nativists in the United States and Louisiana looked unfavorably upon steps taken by the Catholic hierarchy in the eastern United States to gain title to church property and to divide the public school fund. Louisiana had had an experience with the trustee problem in 1842 when the St. Louis Cathedral hierarchy asserted their control over church property. At that time nativists condemned what they considered the anti-republican feature of the hierarchy's ownership of property. Although a trustee problem in Louisiana had occurred earlier, the northeastern states furnished local nativists with sufficient news on this sensitive issue. The Vatican increased the tension when it sent a papal nuncio, Monsignor Gaetano Bedini, to the United States in 1853 to solve the trustee problem. Violence followed

36Simply stated the trustee problem resulted over whom should have control over church property, laymen or the church hierarchy.

Billington, The Protestant Crusade, pp. 289-92. The insistence of the Catholic hierarchy that the clergy should control all church property permitted the nativists to stress the undemocratic features of Catholicism.


39A complete discussion of the trustee problem and division of the public school fund in the United States during the 1850s can be found in Billington's The Protestant Crusade, pp. 295-300.
the travels of Monsignor Bedini, and when Louisiana nativists learned that the papal nuncio would possibly visit New Orleans, inflammatory placards inciting violence against Bedini appeared around the city. These placards stated:

BEDINI, THE TIGER, who is Guilty of the Murder of Hundreds of Patriots, their Wives and Children in Italia, who Ordered that Ugo Bassi, the Patriotic Catholic Priest be Scalped before he was Executed; will this Abominable Servant of Despoty [sic] Receive the same Honors as the Heroes of Freedom, or will we Follow the Action of the Brewers of London against Haynau.40

Most of the newspapers in New Orleans, and some of the country presses, opposed the outbreak of invective against Bedini, and hoped that New Orleans would demonstrate that "all sects are free to come and go as they please in this country."41

However, there were those in Louisiana who obviously did not share this tolerant stance and who hoped mob violence would rule. These radical Louisiana nativists invited the ex-priest Alessandro Gavazzi to lecture in the state.42 The nativists undoubtedly knew that Gavazzi's rhetoric usually led to turbulence. Gavazzi's logic, however, did not appeal to all nativists in the state. The

40 Ibid., p. 302.

41 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 21, 1854; Bee, January 11, 1854.

editor of the Baton Rouge *Weekly Comet*, George A. Pike, could not understand Gavazzi's attraction for so many Protestants in America. Pike denied that America's success was due to its Protestantism and that Roman Catholicism and republicanism were inimical. Pike asserted that Gavazzi really intended to advance Roman Catholicism in the United States and that the ex-priest was a Jesuit in disguise.  

Nativists also opposed Catholics meddling in the education of the children of the state, particularly when that meddling involved the public schools. It mattered little to the nativists that public education in the state affected very few children. In 1852 the enrollment in public schools throughout Louisiana was only 17,000 and the total budget was $250,000. At times this controversy became involved with party politics as in the New Orleans municipal election of 1851. A Democratic paper charged the Second Municipal (public) School Board with requiring sectarian prayers and the reading of a Protestant Bible. The municipal council repealed the requirement, thus removing it as a campaign issue.

Anti-Roman Catholic sentiment became more prevalent whenever a division of the public school fund seemed

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43 *Baton Rouge Weekly Comet*, December 2, 1853.


45 *Daily Delta*, February 16, 19, 21, 1851.
possible. George A. Pike appeared to be the self-appointed protector of public education and the public school fund. His suspicions about Roman Catholicism prompted him to question the real intentions of the "Catholic Free Schools" in Baton Rouge; he hoped they would teach "good and wholesome doctrines." Pike also wrote about the failure of the state legislature to provide adequately for public education, and he made it a campaign issue in the 1853 state elections. The Baton Rouge editor admonished the electorate to show concern for whom they voted, charging that poor public education had resulted in the Jesuits assuming a greater influence in educating the children of Louisiana. Protestants received Pike's assurance that any Catholic agitation of the public school fund question and legislation to implement such a division of the fund would meet defeat.

However, nativists wanted a substantive solution to the immigrant and Catholic problem rather than a barrage of prejudicial newspaper editorials and articles. Nativist

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46 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, July 28, 1853.
47 Baton Rouge Daily Comet, October 27, 1853.
48 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 11, 1853; January 5, 1854. The editor reported that a New Orleans paper, the Southern Journal (no copies extant) would attempt to persuade the residents of Louisiana of the necessity to divide the public school fund.
appeals continued in the newspapers of Louisiana, but by the spring of 1854 these appeals supported the Know Nothing party. The failure of the Whig party, nationally and locally, left numerous Louisiana Whigs without an effective political vehicle to oppose the Democracy, and the past affinity of the Whigs for political nativism permitted many to join the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic Know Nothings.

One historian has written that the Know Nothing movement in Louisiana began in the late fall of 1853 and early 1854, but there is no mention of its existence in Louisiana until late winter and early spring of 1854. The first notice of this secretive political party appeared during the 1854 New Orleans Municipal election, and its notoriety quickly spread throughout the state. The origins of the party in Louisiana are not clear, but some of the local opponents credited a New Yorker E. Z. C. Judson, also known as Ned Buntline, with founding the national party and having a hand in establishing local wigwams.


51 How or why this E. Z. C. Judson came to Louisiana is not known. His name simply appeared in the newspapers of New Orleans.
(lodges) in New Orleans, which were subordinate to Judson's lodge in New York City.  

The Know Nothing party was not like the Democratic or Whig parties. As one observer noted, its objectives were part religious and part political. Its end was the disfranchisement of adopted citizens and their exclusion from political office. Although Louisiana Know Nothings denied that they were anti-Roman Catholic, opponents claimed that the American party intended perpetual war on Catholics.  

Admission to national Know Nothing ranks was restrictive. The applicant for admission had to be a native born citizen, of native born parents, and could not belong to the Roman Catholic religion. In Louisiana Know Nothings waived the latter requirement. The applicant had to renounce his previous political affiliation and had to cooperate exclusively with the new order. The National American principle requiring a member to hold no "political, civil, or religious intercourse with any person who is a Catholic," and "to use all available means to abolish the political and religious privileges he (meaning any Roman Catholic) may at present enjoy" caused the

52Daily True Delta, March 15, 1854; Propagateur Catholique, March 27, 1854.

53Daily True Delta, March 15, 1854.
Louisiana party continuing problems.\textsuperscript{54} Know Nothings had to pledge that they would not vote for anyone for political office who was not a native born citizen of the United States. Nor could Know Nothings vote for someone who might be disposed, if elected, to appoint foreigners or Roman Catholics to any position of "emolument or trust."\textsuperscript{55}

Americans organized their party along the lines of a secret fraternal order. Lodges, passwords, signs of recognition, a grip, and challenges were all part of the party. Members called their lodges "wigwams." Secrecy was so important that members were warned not to divulge the name of the party or any of its proceedings to non-members. When questioned about the party, members were instructed to reply "I know nothing"; therefore, the term Know Nothing became a more commonly accepted name for the party. Also used regularly in campaigns was the symbol "Sam." This was readily applied to the American party and was part of the secrecy surrounding the order.\textsuperscript{56}

When seeking admission to a meeting of a local wig-wam, the applicant knocked at an outer door a specific

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. Louisiana Know Nothingism and Roman Catholicism is discussed more fully in Chapter III.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.; The Origin, Principles and Purposes of the American Party (n.p., n.d.).

number of times. After knocking he whispered, "What meets here, today, (or night)?" The interrogator behind the door then responded, "I don't know," to which the applicant replied "I am one," and was then admitted to a second door. At the second door the applicant rapped four times. While the door was being opened, he whispered to its guard, "Thirteen," and then finally he entered the meeting.

Similar signs had to be given upon retiring from a meeting before adjournment, and the members used other signs, warnings, and the grip in public to identify and assist each other. The Americans never published notices of meetings. In fact, in the early days of the party no records of anything about the party were kept. Members called emergency meetings by scattering small squares of white paper over the public streets or nailing them to posts.

There were three degrees of membership in the American party. Between each degree three weeks had to pass. The First Degree of initiation simply required that the candidate meet the requirements of membership of the party and support its candidates and objectives. The Second Degree permitted those who became eligible to seek public

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57 Daily True Delta, March 15, 1854; Billington, The Protestant Crusade, pp. 384-85.
58 Daily True Delta, March 15, 1854.
office. The Third Degree, or, Union Degree, pledged the member to support "the Union of these States." 59

That this secret organization with all its ritual made its first appearance in New Orleans surprised no one because the city ranked second only to New York City in the number of yearly immigrants. Also, the city had a history of turbulent elections. At first this nativist movement had an innocuous beginning with a call for a mass meeting to organize an independent reform movement. The notice for the meeting, to be held at Lafayette Square in the American section of New Orleans, appeared in the local Whig papers, and announced that the purpose of the meeting was to nominate, irrespective of party, efficient and independent candidates. 60

The Democrats thought very little of this independent reform movement and noted that the organizers of the mass meeting did not specifically mention any reforms they intended to carry out. The Democrats called the movement a "grand burlesque" gotten up by former Whigs, Native Americans, and the refuse of the Democratic party to secure the


re-election of present Whig office-holders. 61 One anti-Reform party paper compared the movement to a "hybrid, guerilla [sic] force, free to act according to the views and interests of each little petty leader who can obtain certain advantages for himself or his friends." 62

To prove that the Reform party intended to reform nothing the *Daily True Delta* and the *Louisiana Courier* brought out some interesting facts about the movement and its candidates. The Independent Reform party candidate for city surveyor had the support of nearly every contractor in the city, and its candidate for mayor, the former Democrat Colonel J. W. Breedlove, had been accused by the Whigs of misappropriating public funds when he last held public office. 63 But the most newsworthy accusation against the Reform party pointed to the involvement of the Board of Directors of the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad Company in the movement. The *Daily True Delta* reported that some of the leading reformers were connected with that railroad corporation, one as director; and that these men had "packed the Know Nothings with [their] own

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61 *Daily True Delta*, March 17, 19, 1854; *Louisiana Courier*, March 18, 1854. A pro-Reform paper noted that the Independent Reform candidate for mayor and two-thirds of the candidates for alderman and assistant alderman were Democrats. *Bee*, March 18, 1854.

62 *Daily True Delta*, March 9, 1854.

63 Ibid., March 23, 1854; *Louisiana Courier*, March 27, 1854.
advantages." Specifically the paper mentioned Charles
Pride and Jesse Gilmore, Reform candidates for alderman,
and Colonel Campbell, Reform candidate for assistant alder-
man.64

Throughout the campaign and after the election the
Daily True Delta continued exposing the connection between
the railroad directors and the Know Nothings. The paper
believed it had uncovered a vast conspiracy65 that involved
the president and former president of the railroad, Colonel
Campbell and James Robb respectively. Campbell had been a
member of the state legislature which approved state aid
for that road and Robb, who had purchased the bonds for the
New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad at a
sizable profit for himself, was an originator of the Reform
or Know Nothing movement. The True Delta also reported
that the bond sale had increased the bonded indebtedness
of New Orleans by five million dollars.66 To carry on the
Reform campaign, the True Delta alleged that Robb and the
other Reform "conspirators" had assessed railroad companies,

64 Daily True Delta, March 25, 1854.

65 Ibid., June 30, 1854. The editor of the True
Delta reported that the railroad directors' "nefarious
schemes" had been planned as early as the re-writing of
the Louisiana Constitution in 1852. This document permitted
the state to subscribe to works of internal improvement.

66 Ibid., April 19, 1854; May 17, 1854. These bonds,
secured by a pledge of the property of New Orleans, were
to bear interest at eight percent, ten percent discounted.
candidates, and contractors. The unsuspecting citizens of the city, who had contributed to Robb's success at the election, thought they had done so in the name of reform. After the election the True Delta offered further proof that reform had had no place among the goals of the leaders of the movement. The paper published a letter from Reform candidate Colonel Campbell in which he admitted that the movement had been "a mere affair of bribery and corruption, in which a handful of speculators, unseen, arranged the plot and directed its execution." 67

As often happens in a political campaign, the Democratic Daily True Delta was guilty of oversimplification and the failure to completely inform the public. Although the True Delta alleged that all the Reformers wanted was "to obtain possession of power," 68 that paper failed to note that before any party can implement a program political power must first be obtained. Then, the connection between the Reformers and the railroads, and the financial contributions made to that party by railroad companies and contractors were not denied by the Reform party. It was a

67Ibid., May 17, 1854. The True Delta did mention that a "falling out" among the railroad directors had occurred which may have prompted Campbell to release this letter.


68Daily True Delta, March 23, 1854.
matter of public record that Colonel Campbell was president and that James Robb had been president of the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad and were leading members in the Reform party. In addition, the conspiracy claimed by the True Delta lost its credibility when the paper reported that "these plunderers first began to lay the foundation of their nefarious schemes when they were successful in re-writing the constitution." The True Delta was alluding to the 1852 constitutional convention at which James Robb and the Whig party were primarily responsible for the constitutional article permitting the public subscription to railroad companies. However, the True Delta omitted any reference to its own 1852 newspaper account that many Democrats had followed the leadership of the Whigs and James Robb in securing this constitutional revision.

The Reform meeting at Lafayette Square may not have addressed itself to specific reforms, but the Reform press did agitate certain problems which it considered needed correcting. These Reform newspapers pointed out that faction and spoilsmen, who served federal politicians and not New Orleans, ruled the city. In addition, fraudulent voting had gotten out of hand, rowdyism controlled a prostituted ballot box, and Irish and German immigrants, ignorant

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69 Ibid., June 30, 1854.

70 Ibid., August 17, 27, 1852; September 2, 1852.
of United States laws, caused the political corruption in the nation and the state. Obviously the Reformers believed their success at the polls would help eliminate corruption, but they also called on the legislature to pass a registry law for the city in order to control the high incidence of fraudulent voting. The Whigs of the state had called for this reform ever since the 1852 Constitution mandated the legislature to pass such a law, but Whigs and now Reformers alleged that Democrats in the assembly and a Democratic governor opposed what they considered a tyrannical measure because New Orleans held the balance of power in state elections.

To a large extent the Reform party remained on the defensive, trying to refute Democratic charges that the Reform ticket was a Whig trick and a prejudiced Know Nothing movement. However, the reformers claimed that most of their candidates belonged to the Democratic party, and their party would renominate any Democrat who performed well in office. The Democrats denied that most of the Reform candidates were Democrats and that those who belonged to that party were "hackneyed politicians who have

71 Bee, March 15, 1854; Daily Crescent, March 21, 23, 25, 1854.

72 Commercial Bulletin, February 26, 1852; Daily True Delta, June 25, 1852; Daily Crescent, October 31, 1853; November 7, 1853; March 25, 1854; Baton Rouge Daily Comet, April 21, 1854.
been thrown aside before." But the Know Nothings through­
out their existence in Louisiana continued to promote
their non-partisanship even though they inherited many of
its members and principles from the Whig party.

The alleged bigotry of the Reform party and its
association with Know Nothingism proved to be a more
serious allegation than the charge of its being a Whig
trick. Democrats searched in vain for a naturalized citi­
zen on the Independent Reform ticket, and predicted
proscription of the foreign-born citizen if this secret
organization succeeded on election day. The Daily True
Delta reiterated its assertion that the Know Nothings in­
tended not to reform, "but to stigmatize as unworthy to
share in the government of New Orleans everyone not born
on the soil. . . ." This same newspaper published some
interesting statistics in refutation of the Reformers' char­
ges that "foreigners ruled us." In 1854 Louisiana
had one hundred and sixty-eight important federal, state,
congressional, Orleans Parish, and city offices, and only

73 Daily True Delta, March 17, 1854; Louisiana
Courier, March 18, 27, 1854.

74 Louisiana Courier, March 21, 1854.

75 Daily True Delta, March 26, 1854. This paper
mentioned that the Reform party had overlooked one-fourth
of the population which owned one-third of the assessed
property in making up its ticket.
thirty-two individuals of foreign origin or naturalized citizens filled those positions.  

When Know Nothingism made its first appearance in the city, Democrats put Roman Catholics on their guard.  

Opponents of the Know Nothing Independent Reform ticket stressed that the organization had religious as well as political objectives. These religious objectives included perpetual war on Catholics. The Daily True Delta printed what it termed the "cardinal principles" of the Know Nothings which restricted membership in the organization to "native-born citizens, of native born parents, and not of the Catholic religion," and no "political, civil, nor religious intercourse" could be held with a Catholic. Most important, a Know Nothing could not vote for a Catholic.

The sizable Catholic population in New Orleans had to be considered by both parties in this New Orleans election. Many of these Catholics had been members of the Whig party, the party which the Democrats now alleged had thrown its support behind the bigoted Reform ticket. The Reformers

76Ibid., March 23, 1854. Considering each category there were no naturalized citizens holding a federal office, six of forty-nine state or congressional positions were held by naturalized citizens, only two of twenty parish officials had been born outside of the country, and twenty of sixty-eight naturalized citizens held public office in city government.

77Louisiana Courier, March 19, 1854.
denied the anti-Catholic charges, as they had denied any anti-foreign animus, and their ticket, Reformers noted, did include Catholic candidates. The Reform ticket listed twelve Catholic candidates out of forty-two. However, one explanation for Catholics joining a party hostile to their religion was that with the Whig party virtually defunct many Catholic Whigs, most of whom were Creoles, simply did not feel comfortable in the Democratic party.

The campaign created tremendous excitement and as expected election day brought violence to the polls. The charges of anti-foreignism, anti-Roman Catholicism, and personal attacks exacerbated the situation, and culminated in riots and murder. The Seventh Precinct witnessed two murders, the attempted murder of the police chief, and the destruction of the ballot box. The Reformers accused the Irish of voting illegally and condemned the police for being in the forefront of the disturbances. Once again the Reformers demanded that the legislature follow the mandate of the new constitution and pass a registry law

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78 *Daily Crescent*, March 17, 22, 1854; *Commercial Bulletin*, March 24, 25, 1854.


80 *Daily True Delta*, March 29, 30, 1854. The two murdered men and the police chief were all Irishmen.

81 *Daily Crescent*, March 28, 31, 1854; *Bee*, March 29, 1854.
for the city. Despite all their protests of fraud the Reform party won control of the municipal government. Even though their candidate for mayor lost, they captured the other key city-wide positions and a majority of the alderman and assistant alderman seats.

While the Democrats despaired over their defeat in the city, events following the success of the Reformers in New Orleans must have given the Democracy additional cause for alarm. It soon became apparent that the Democratic party could expect significant statewide Know Nothing opposition. Former Whig papers throughout the state applauded the Reformers' success in New Orleans and approved "the end of vote buying, voting the dead, and that rightful sovereigns of the country will be able to vote without intimidation." These papers reported that members of the Know Nothing party could be found in every section

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82 _Bee_, April 1, 1854.

83 _Daily True Delta_, March 30, 1854; _Bee_, March 29, 1854. The Democratic Board of Aldermen declared three alderman Reform candidates illegally elected as a result of the destruction of the ballot box. After a new election all three were again successful.

84 Democrats believed the Reformers had a peculiar way to reform New Orleans, and if that kind of reform continued no one would risk voting. The Democrats estimated they lost the office of Controller, two alderman, and six assistant alderman positions because of the destruction of the ballot box in the First District. _Baton Rouge Daily Advocate_, March 31, 1854; _Daily True Delta_, March 29-30, 1854.

85 _Thibodaux Minerva_, May 13, 1854; West Baton Rouge _Capitolian Vis-A-Vis_, April 5, 1854.
of Louisiana. New Orleans purportedly had several wigwams and an estimated one to five thousand members. A Know Nothing meeting in East Baton Rouge Parish condoned the violence in the New Orleans election if reform required that action. Located in Iberville and St. Mary parishes and the Red River region were lodges whose members were "good and respectable" gentlemen who conducted their meetings "with order and decorum." From Catahoula Parish the Harrisonburg Independent, although it disdained the title of Know Nothing organ, was "disposed to give it [Know Nothingism] . . . aid and assistance."

In addition to their election triumph in New Orleans, the Know Nothings also gained victories in other areas of the state. Despite Democratic attacks on the Know Nothings in Clinton the party succeeded in electing E. T. Merrick as district judge for East and West Feliciana parishes, a notable achievement since the Felicianas had previously supported the Democracy. In two separate special

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86 Daily True Delta, March 15, 1854. However, this paper placed the figure at a more conservative level of five or six hundred members.

87 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, April 21, 1854.

88 Ibid., July 30, 1854; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 27, 1854; June 3, 1854.

89 Shreveport South-Western, October 25, 1854.

90 Louisiana Courier, October 15, 1854.

91 Shreveport South-Western, October 25, 1854.
legislative elections, one in New Orleans and another in East Baton Rouge Parish, Know Nothing candidates won seats in the state assembly. These two victories were particularly noteworthy because in New Orleans the Know Nothing party swept the election, including a Catholic candidate, and they now showed strength in formerly solid Democratic East Baton Rouge.\footnote{Bee, November 27, 30, 1854; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, December 23, 1854; Soulé, The Know-Nothing Party in New Orleans, pp 58-59.} Finally, from Thibodaux the senior editor of the Thibodaux Minerva felt no regrets over the rise of Know Nothingism and looked "upon the results of the late state elections as harbingers of the purity of the elective franchise."\footnote{Thibodaux Minerva, December 23, 1854.}

This rapidly growing Know Nothing order used every opportunity during the remainder of 1854 to express itself on various topics, but the rhetoric did not change drastically from that used in New Orleans. Anti-foreign, anti-Roman Catholic, and the spirit of '76 sentiment filled the speeches, editorials, and lecture halls whenever nativists wrote or spoke.\footnote{Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, July 1, 1854.} The adverse effects of a large-scale immigration policy received much attention from the Know Nothings. According to them, the "dregs of European life" arrived yearly in the United States in such large numbers that they subsequently contributed to the rising
crime rate, the lawlessness at elections, and even prospered at the expense of natives. The Americans asserted that the tendency of the immigrants to band together upon arriving in the United States made them easy prey for demagogic politicians who contributed to foreigners' undue political influence. Know Nothing newspapers carried excerpts from George Washington's "Farewell Address" warning natives of the evils of foreign influence, and printed patriotic poetry and sayings. Patriotic literature would not remedy the problems of immigration. The panacea for nativists remained the extension of the naturalization period, and as soon as possible the repeal of all naturalization laws.

Not only did the nativists want an extension of the naturalization law, or its total repeal, they were ever alert to any legislation that would encourage further immigration. The possibility of Congress passing a homestead bill received no support from the Louisiana Know Nothing party. According to Know Nothings, a homestead bill would result in more decadent foreigners coming to the United States, and because of their large numbers

95 Daily Crescent, June 28, 1854; August 18, 1854; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 20, 1854; September 2, 1854.
96 Daily Crescent, June 28, 1854.
97 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, July 4, 1854.
98 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, September 16, 1854.
they would soon control the government. The only purpose of such a bill, alleged the Know Nothing press, was "to swindle honest men for the benefit of rogues." Know Nothings noted that with increased immigration pauperism had risen and American labor had been driven from employment as well.99 The Democratic Daily True Delta refuted these nativists' arguments against a homestead bill, and argued that such a bill would advance the United States by peopling unproductive territory. The same paper did not believe that immigration had or would hurt American labor, stressing that the country needed more immigrant labor. Louisiana already had a labor shortage which had resulted in wages on the levees of New Orleans as high as four and five dollars a day. If the labor scarcity continued, wages would continue to climb, hence the True Delta hoped the Know Nothings could find a substitute for the immigrant labor that they feared.100

During these discussions over a homestead bill the New Orleans Bee raised a crucial point for the South and Louisiana: if Europeans, who knew little about or were against slavery, primarily peopled the territories the institution of slavery would be endangered.101 The issue

99 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, March 31, 1854; Bee, May 1, 1854.
100 Daily True Delta, March 26, 1854; July 7, 13, 28, 1854.
101 Bee, May 1, 1854.
of slavery had destroyed the Whig party and the Know
Nothings understood its divisive qualities. So aware
were the Know Nothings that at the 1854 National Council
meeting at Cincinnati they adopted a third degree of member­
ship, the Union degree. The Union or third degree re­
quired from those who took it a pledge of fidelity to the
Union and "to seek an amicable adjustment of all political
differences that threatened its continuance."102 Louisiana
Know Nothings demonstrated a determination to uphold the
"third degree" in their opposition to Senator Douglas's
Nebraska Bill. The Know Nothing papers of the state called
the bill "injudicious and unnecessary," and believed the
repeal of the Missouri Compromise Line would do nothing
more than renew the agitation of the slavery question.
Kansas-Nebraska would "give new life to the fanaticism of
the North" while accomplishing nothing for the South.
According to the Know Nothing press, slavery could not
exist there,103 indeed they wondered that Missouri and
Kentucky had remained slave states for so long.104 It

102 Billington, The Protestant Crusade, p. 423. The
state was represented at this National Council meeting by
F. A. Lumsden of New Orleans, one of the proprietors of
the Daily Picayune.

103 Sometimes even a Democratic paper in the state
admitted that slavery could not permanently exist in the
Nebraska territory due to the climate and the type agri­
culture suited to that area. Louisiana Courier, March 2,
1854.

104 Daily Crescent, June 3, 1854; November 14-15,
1854; Semi-Weekly Creole, November 8, 15, 1854.
is interesting, however, that prior to the formal intro-
duction of Know Nothingism into Louisiana the opinions on
the Nebraska bill differed. On March 13, 1854, Duncan
Kenner a Whig from Ascension Parish, submitted a joint
resolution which stated

that the Nebraska territorial bill, now pending in
Congress, so far as designed to carry into effect and
perpetuate this principle of non-intervention as to
the institution of slavery, meets our approval and we
request our Senators and Representative to support
the same.

Two days later the resolution received unanimous approval.105
Kenner and several other senators, who would become members
of the Know Nothing party, had, at this time, at least no
objections to the Nebraska bill.

Whereas the Know Nothings thought the Nebraska
bill was "injudicious," the Democrats believed Douglas's
bill attempted to "carry out in good faith the Compromise
of 1850."106 The Democrats took issue with the Know
Nothing party that the Missouri Compromise was "irrepeal-
able," and argued that the doctrine of non-intervention
should apply to Kansas and Nebraska.107 The Democrats
discovered that slavery was a serious threat to the unity
of the national Know Nothing party, and Louisiana Democrats

105 Louisiana Senate Journal, March 13, 15, 1854, pp. 107, 127.

106 Daily True Delta, February 10, 1854; Baton Rouge
Daily Advocate, February 11, 1854.

107 Daily Delta, June 17, 1854.
quickly took advantage of the weakness. Now, not only would the Know Nothings have to defend themselves from the charges of anti-foreignism and anti-Catholicism, but the local nativists had to deny the Democratic accusations that free-soil proclivities tinged the northern Know Nothings.  

The anti-foreign stance of the Know Nothings provoked numerous attacks from unsympathetic Louisianians because of the anti-republican posture of the party. But the recently concluded New Orleans election demonstrated that the Know Nothing position on Catholicism would prove a greater liability. Nevertheless, the party continued to deny any anti-Catholic sentiment or any intention to interfere with any religion or sect. One sympathetic paper reported that "it [Know Nothingism] is no more hostile to Catholicism than any other religion if it keeps within its sphere." Of course the sphere Know Nothings wanted Roman Catholics to eschew was the temporal or secular. Then, too, nativists continued their opposition to the accumulation of power and wealth of the Catholic Church as

108 *Louisiana Courier*, May 30, 1854; November 10, 1854. Of course northern free-soilers and abolitionists levelled the charge of a southern conspiracy against the Know Nothing party since Know Nothings worked to avoid the slavery issue altogether. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, p. 424.

typified by Archbishop Hughes' attempts to vest control of church property in New York in the hierarchy of the church. Although Louisiana had no religious leader comparable to Archbishop Hughes to excite the nativists, the Irish Catholic attempt to divide the public school fund created considerable agitation in the state. Finally, there was nothing more frightening to the secretive Know Nothings than the secretive Jesuits, described by the Know Nothing party as "a designing scheming, and dangerous secret political order." 110

The prejudice of the Know Nothing party against Roman Catholics was obvious from the bigoted sentiments expressed in its political organs. Therefore, how could some Louisiana Roman Catholics belong to a political party with the avowed objective of carrying on perpetual war on Catholics? 111 In addition to denying that the party proscribed Catholics, many members of the Know Nothing society pointed out that Louisiana was an exception to the anti-Catholicism that characterized Know Nothingism elsewhere. 112 But critics of the party, citing the 1854 elections in New Orleans as an example, alleged that the only reason the Reform ticket had included Roman Catholics

110 Baton Rouge Daily Comet, July 14, 1854; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, May 28, 1854; July 16, 1854; November 12, 1854; Daily Orleanian, August 11, 1854; West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vig, September 6, 23, 30, 1854.

111 Daily True Delta, March 15, 1854.

112 W. Darrell Overdyke in his "History of the American Party in Louisiana," adheres to this interpretation.
was a ruse to attract additional members from the Roman Catholic and Creole areas of the city.\textsuperscript{113} However, the most believable reason for Roman Catholic participation appeared in the Creole Catholic newspaper, the New Orleans \textit{Semi-Weekly Creole}. This Know Nothing paper discussed the liberal views of the Creole Catholics of Louisiana who had brought from France "the opinions of the Gallican Catholic Church, which is diametrically opposed to any assumption of political or secular authority by the Pope or by any of his priesthood." The \textit{Semi-Weekly Creole} noted that a vast difference existed between the Gallican and other Catholics.\textsuperscript{114} Commenting on the speeches of the converted Catholic Orestes Brownson during his visit to New Orleans, the \textit{Semi-Weekly Creole} demonstrated its liberal Gallican position. It warned its readers that according to Brownson "God makes known his authority only through the instrumentality of the Pope--an Italian prince--to the utter exclusion of such plain republicans as Franklin Pierce or Roger B. Taney." This belief of papal authority was

\textsuperscript{113}This is the view of Leon Soulé in \textit{The Know-Nothing Party in New Orleans}. Soulé believes that the old Creole-American animus never ceased, and during the 1850s the Creoles consciously used the immigrants to ward off American growth in New Orleans. Soulé disagrees with Overdyke's thesis that the Know Nothing party in Louisiana did not intend to proscribe Roman Catholics.

\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Semi-Weekly Creole}, October 18, 1854. A fuller discussion of this seeming contradiction of Roman Catholics joining an anti-Roman Catholic political party is discussed in Chapter III.
not the Americanism of Louisiana Catholic Creoles who would not permit the Pope or his bishops to "interpret their rights as native born Americans." 115

Of course the official organ of the Catholic diocese, the *Propagateur Catholique*, had no reservations about the anti-Catholic posture of the Know Nothing party. And Know Nothing denials of bigotry were difficult to believe while Know Nothing papers criticized Roman Catholic priests, attacked Catholic ideology, and referred to Catholicism as anti-republicanism. 116 The *Propagateur Catholique* warned Catholics that they were not allowed

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Reinders disagrees with Overdyke that Louisiana was an exception to the anti-Catholicism of Know Nothingism. To Reinders the immigrant waves to Louisiana created a threat to native born Creoles' control of the Catholic Church since Irish and German Catholics were more likely to obey blindly the Catholic hierarchy. The Creole Catholics had never been good Catholics and many belonged to local Masonic lodges long before Know Nothingism appeared. Then, too, Reinders does not believe, as does Soulé, that the Creole-American conflict existed in the 1850s. "Through inter-marriage, business and political conservatism, a unified Creole-American upper class existed in New Orleans." "Orestes A. Brownson's Visit to New Orleans," 6. For those reasons, argues Reinders, Creole Catholics could and did belong to the Know Nothing party.

116 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, August 17, 27, 1854; September 2, 1854; Thibodaux *Minerva*, October 21, 1854.
membership in the organization, and above all the hatred of Catholicism was paramount among Know Nothing objectives.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{117} Propagateur Catholique, March 17, 25, 1854.
CHAPTER III

KNOW NOTHINGISM AT ITS PEAK: 1854-1855

By the close of 1854 virtually every part of Louisiana had come into contact with the Know Nothing party. The party had experienced some local success at the polls, particularly in New Orleans, and numerous Whig newspapers threw their support behind the new movement.¹ The members of the party had every reason to be optimistic for the future. The state elections of 1855 and the 1856 presidential campaign offered the Know Nothings an opportunity to test their strength statewide. The 1854 victory in New Orleans and the widespread newspaper support made the Americans confident that they could win a state election. So confident were they that soon after their success in New Orleans the American press quickly began speculating on prospective gubernatorial and even presidential candidates.

Before the state campaign began, the Americans continued to win at the polls in 1855. In North Louisiana

¹There were some Whig newspapers that eschewed the Know Nothing party in favor of the Democrats, for example, the Carrollton (a suburb of New Orleans) Star.
Americans elected the entire municipal ticket in Farmerville (Union Parish), and the voters of Morehouse Parish elected a Know Nothing to the state legislature. From Iberville Parish the Southern Sentinel reported that "Sam had a glorious triumph" in the Plaquemine municipal election, winning a majority of the positions of selectman. The Sentinel also noted that three-fourths of the voters against the American party had been foreigners. Moreover, the nativists succeeded in the Clinton municipal election, controlled the police juries of East Feliciana and St. Landry parishes, as well as the town government of Washington, and they evenly divided the town government with the Democrats in Opelousas. In addition, the Americans succeeded in electing their candidate, E. T. Merrick, as Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court. Know Nothings also won judicial elections on the district level.

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In the Morehouse Parish election the Know Nothing candidate had won in November 1854, but the Louisiana House ordered a new election since fraud had been alleged. The American increased his majority in the new election.

3. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 12, 1855.

4. Overdyke, "History of the American Party in Louisiana," 272; Opelousas Patriot, May 12, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, June 8, 1855.

5. New Orleans Semi-Weekly Creole, July 4, 1855; New Orleans Daily Crescent, August 14, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, October 7, 1855; The Creole asserted that Merrick's
Finally, the nativist press gleefully reported that Governor Hebert had become disenchanted with his Democratic party and contemplated a Know Nothing alliance.⁶

These early victories by the American party can perhaps best be explained by noting that the Know Nothings capitalized on a general feeling of distrust of the "old politics" in Louisiana. Many people believed that the political structure of the state needed reform. The Know Nothings believed that politicians abused the naturalization laws and the franchise. They objected to the way both Whigs and Democrats truckled to foreigners. However, Americans singled out the Democrats in particular for their demagogic appeals to, and the manipulation of, the foreign-born.⁷ Know Nothings struck a nerve with their nativist rhetoric and offered native Americans a return to the election proved the American strength in the rural parishes of the state.

Hereafter New Orleans will be omitted from all future references to newspapers from that city; place names will be used, however, for all non-New Orleans papers.

⁶Shreveport South-Western, March 14, 1855; April 4, 1855. Governor Hebert had removed some Democrats from appointive positions and replaced them with what the South-Western referred to as "thorough Know Nothings." One biographer of Hebert writes that Whig papers accused Hebert of being a Know Nothing in order to "cover their own identification and partly destroy the Democratic party." Albert Leonce Dupont, "The Career of Paul Octave Hebert, Governor of Louisiana: 1853-1856," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXXI (April 1948), 523.

⁷Bee, July 25, 1854; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, July 30, 1854; West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, August 30, 1854.
purity of former days. One American explained the rise of the Know Nothings in the following manner:

The Know Nothing party was at first a Reform party. The evils to reform were frauds upon our naturalization laws and elective franchise. The party was to elect people to secure a registry law as directed by the state constitution and the eventual repeal of the naturalization laws by Congress. To this end native born Americans are to be voted for. All political wire-working, trickery, and demagoguery was regarded as foreign influence.9

From its inception in New Orleans and throughout its existence, the American party continually stressed the necessity to reform the political process and to maintain native control over politics.

Of all these early victories the American’s greatest success before the state election was in the New Orleans municipal election. In 1854 the Independent Reform movement

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8 West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis, September 23, 1854.

9 Louisiana Courier, July 24, 1855. Michael F. Holt in Forging a Majority: The Formation of the Republican Party in Pittsburgh, 1848-1860 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969) and "The Politics of Impatience: The Origins of Know Nothingism," Journal of American History, XIX (September 1973), 309-31, and William J. Evitts in A Matter of Allegiances: Maryland from 1850 to 1861 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), discuss the concern of native born Americans during the 1850s with corruption in politics. Holt calls it a "pervasive loss of faith in and animosity toward politicians, . . ." while Evitts says "politics continued to be an object of scorn." In addition, both authors write of a sense of dislocation caused by rapid social and economic change in those years. However, Louisiana did not have the same social or economic dislocation during these years, and as a result, the Know Nothing party in Louisiana was not like that in other parts of the United States which was "overwhelmingly a movement of the laboring and middle classes." Holt, "The Politics of Impatience," 313, 329.
had made great strides but had not captured control either of the Board of Aldermen or the executive branch of government. Both parties kept issues at a minimum with the Americans noting the Democratic "fraternization" with the foreign vote while the Democracy accused the so-called reformers in the city council of raising taxes and permitting the bonds of the city to be "dishonored." The Know Nothing party won the violence-plagued election. Each party accused the other of precipitating the violence. The Democrats also charged the nativists with refusing to accept the votes of numerous naturalized citizens. But the Americans ignored this allegation and with control of the city council the Know Nothings solidified their position in the city. The Know Nothing-controlled city council then impeached the two remaining Democratic recorders, giving the Americans control of the police as well as the legislative branch of government.  

10 Bee, March 24, 1855; Daily True Delta, March 23, 1855; Louisiana Courier, March 26, 1855.  


A police board consisting of the mayor and four recorders (judges) of the city controlled the police of New Orleans. The board had been created in 1853 by the Louisiana legislature which, New Orleans Whigs claimed, intended to remove all power over the police from the recently elected Whig mayor of that city. Daily Crescent, November 1, 1853.
Actually, these Know Nothing victories temporarily overshadowed several weaknesses inherent in the party. In forthcoming campaigns these weaknesses would be widely publicized by the opponents of the American party. Certain aspects of the society had been denounced as anti-republican, proscriptive, and deceptive. Opponents called Know Nothingism a Whig trick and a movement closely allied with abolitionism in the North. Its secrecy and sophomoric rituals brought ridicule and abuse from the anti-American press. But anti-foreign and anti-Roman Catholic policy, especially the latter, resulted in the most vehement opposition in Louisiana. The nativists attempted to quiet the criticism by compromising some of the major principles upon which the National Order had been founded, but in the process the state party lost its credibility with the National Council, its own members, and the voters of Louisiana.

One continuing problem of the American party which helped contribute to its loss of credibility was the Democratic accusation that Know Nothingism was a Whig trick.¹²

¹² *Louisiana Courier*, March 18, 1854. One anti-Know Nothing paper did deny that Know Nothingism was a Whig trick. Prior to the state elections of 1855, the New Orleans *True Delta* doubted that the Whigs of New Orleans "would support such a party." However, rather than a sincere belief, this disclaimer was probably an attempt on the part of the *True Delta* to embarrass the Whigs from joining, what many Democrats thought to be, an anti-Republican party. *True Delta*, October 21, 1855.
Across the state Know Nothing newspapers denied the charge and quickly pointed out that their party was composed of both Whigs and Democrats. In fact, Americans noted that the Democratic party nominated former Whigs. And Democratic newspapers such as the *Louisiana Courier* reported that the anti-Know Nothing movement consisted of both Whigs and Democrats.

Both parties were correct. Whigs and Democrats did join the American movement. The most notable Democrat who joined the Americans was Charles Gayarré. But there were less famous Democrats such as J. H. Kilpatrick and John Young, both of Caddo Parish. Kilpatrick had been a former Democratic nominee for the state legislature in 1852 and a Franklin Pierce appointee as U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana. During the 1855 gubernatorial campaign, the Know Nothings proudly pointed to the four former Democrats on the American State ticket.

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13 West Baton Rouge *Capitolian Vis-A-Vis*, August 23, 1854; Shreveport *South-Western*, August 8, 1855; Thibodaux *Minerva*, August 11, 1855; *Bee*, August 13, 1855; Clinton *American Patriot*, August 18, 1855; Opelousas *Patriot*, September 29, 1855.

14 *Bee*, October 10, 1855; *Louisiana Courier*, July 17, 1855.

15 Shreveport *South-Western*, August 8, 1855; Clinton *American Patriot*, August 18, 1855.

16 Opelousas *Patriot*, September 29, 1855. However, the Americans placed these four former Democrats in the lieutenant-governor's slot and three less important
Also, Democratic allegations that Know Nothingism was a Whig trick became easier to deny when a prominent Whig like Judah P. Benjamin spoke out against the American party. Benjamin assisted Americans even further in refuting the Whig trick assertion when he drifted into Democratic ranks.¹⁷

Other prominent Whigs repudiated Know Nothingism. On June 18, 1855, former Whig Associate Judge of the Louisiana Supreme Court, P. A. Rost, addressed the Democratic State Convention in Baton Rouge. He had harsh words for the Americans and soon became involved with the Democratic party.¹⁸ Know Nothing editors, among them the editor of the Thibodaux Minerva, found it difficult to understand why some Whigs opposed the American party. Calling the Democratic party the foreign party, this editor asserted that Henry Clay, a good Whig, would "stick by the American party"¹⁹ if he were alive. Another Know Nothing editor, this one from Baton Rouge, took the offices. The four former Democrats were: lieutenant-governor candidate Louis Texada, secretary-of-state candidate R. G. Beale, auditor candidate Walter Rossman, and superintendent of education candidate O. D. Stillman. Bee, July 6, 1855.

¹⁷Daily Delta, August 3, 1855; September 24, 1856.
¹⁸Southern Standard, July 1, 1855. The Southern Standard was a Roman Catholic newspaper printed in New Orleans.
¹⁹Thibodaux Minerva, October 13, 1855.
offensive and called the Democratic party a Whig trick. In the late 1850s more former Whigs, and for that matter Americans joined the Democratic party. However, the desertion to the Democratic party occurred more as a result of the failure of the Know Nothings to become the majority party. The American party had never failed before to attract large numbers of former Whigs.

The southern American party did attract a large majority of former Whigs to its ranks. The traditional historical interpretation overwhelmingly adheres to this opinion, and my quantitative data support this view.

20Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, October 19, 1856. According to the editor of the Comet, the president, vice-president, secretary, and two speakers at a Democratic political meeting on October 17, 1856 were all Old Line Whigs, who now proclaimed Buchanan as "the only man who can save the Union."

21Shreveport South-Western, November 17, 1858.

When the Whig party collapsed after 1853, most southern Whigs felt politically stranded. After having contested the Democratic party for two decades, the majority of the Whigs refused to join that party, particularly since the Whigs "believed that the foreign-born Irish and other foreigners were being voted against them." Therefore, to remain politically active former Whigs found the American party a suitable vehicle to oppose the Democracy.

Previous historians of the American party in Louisiana have characterized the Know Nothing leadership as representative of the old wealthy slaveowning aristocracy of the state. To these historians the Americans were the conservative property holders who were first Whigs, then Know Nothings. They were businessmen and lawyers who represented the urban mercantile interests. Conversely,


The coefficient of correlation between the Whig presidential vote in 1852 and the Know Nothing gubernatorial vote in 1855 is +.568. My methodology is discussed in Appendix D.

they portray the Democrats as small yeoman farmers or
city workingmen.24

The career of former Whig Charles Derbigny, who
became a Know Nothing, seems to support the suggestion that
Americans like the Whigs, represented the planter and urban
and commercial groups with their ties to the legal pro-
fession. Derbigny, the son of former Governor Pierre
Derbigny, was from an old Louisiana Creole family. Charles
studied medicine in Paris, but returned to Louisiana when
his father died in an accident. He then studied law and
became a member of the state legislature, serving at one
time as president of the state senate. In 1845 the Native
American party nominated Derbigny as its gubernatorial
candidate. He finished third in a three-way race that
year, and lost again in 1855 as the gubernatorial nominee
of the American party. In addition to his legal and
legislative career, Derbigny was a sugar planter with
holdings in both Lafourche and Jefferson parishes.25

However, the careers of many Democrats of this
time did not vary much from that of Derbigny's. Thomas J.

24Soulé, The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans,
pp. 62, 93, 118; Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in
Louisiana, p. 148; Overdyke, "History of the American
Party in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XVI
(April 1933), 268.

25Stanley Clisby Arthur, Old Families of Louisiana,
colla. George Campbell Huchet de Kernion (New Orleans:
Semnes and G. W. Munday were both distinguished members of the state legislature. Semnes, who moved to New Orleans in 1850, studied at both Georgetown College and Harvard Law School. President James Buchanan appointed him United States District Attorney for Louisiana in 1858. Munday was a prominent and well-to-do planter of East Feliciana Parish. Starting his business career as owner of a Clinton newspaper, Munday subsequently became deputy sheriff, parish policy juror, and assessor of his parish, in addition to his legislative career.26

To be sure, social, economic, and ideological differences did exist between the Know Nothings and Democrats in the 1850s. One American wrote of his candidate as "a conservative and sincere politician" while the Democrats were "always stirring up storms."27 If Americans were truly heirs of the Whig party, this assessment seems to reinforce the opinion of Charles Grier Sellers, Jr. In his study of southern Whigs Sellers writes that the Democratic "measures for extending political democracy, inclined propertied and conservative men to rally to the Whig party as a bulwark against mobocracy."28 However, were the Americans in


27William W. Wall to Thomas C. W. Ellis, March 31, 1856, Ellis Papers, L.S.U. Archives.

Louisiana only facsimiles of the Whigs? Were the members
the old, conservative, propertied, and staple crop planters
tied to the urban commercial elements of the state pic­
tured by the traditional view, and were the Democrats the
small yeoman farmers and men on the make?29

One profession which offered several advantages for
an aspiring young man was the legal profession. William
Barney in his study of the political leadership in Miss­
issippi and Alabama in 1860 discusses these advantages in
some detail. Generally, as Barney notes, lawyers had
access to political and economic information which enabled
them to acquire wealth and status in their local areas.
As soon as possible these "lawyer-politicians" invested
their money in plantations and slaves, which was the ulti­
mate achievement of most southern men of that day.30

29 W. Darrell Overdyke, Leon Soulé, and Roger Shugg
obviously accept the thesis of Arthur C. Cole and U. B.
Phillips that the Whigs were owners of large plantations
and therefore owned large numbers of slaves. In addition,
it is apparent that they also accept the interpretation of
Arthur M. Schlesinger and Bray Hammond that the Democrats
were incipient entrepreneurs and men on the make. Arthur
Charles Cole, The Whig Party in the South (reprinted;
Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1962); Ulrich B. Phillips,
in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner
M. Schlesinger, The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown,
and Co., 1945); and Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in
America from the Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton:

30 William L. Barney, The Secessionist Impulse:
Alabama and Mississippi in 1860 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton
University Press, 1974), pp. 50-54.
However, lawyers clearly favored the Democratic party to a greater degree than the Know Nothing party. As one historian has noted, the Democratic party "promised the most rapid advancement." However, in Louisiana the

31 For this study of political leadership I used the names of Americans and Democrats who were members of their state, parish, or local central committees. Also, I used the names of state representatives, senators, local parish and city officials, and political candidates. The total number of Americans and Democrats used was 137 and 98 respectively. I acquired the information regarding these leaders' age, occupation, real and personal property, place of birth, and number of slaves owned from the United States Census, 1860, Population and Slave Schedules. Some additional information came from Joseph Karl Menn, The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana--1860 (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Co., 1964).


It should be noted that the microfilm copy of the 1860 census for several parishes is of poor quality which accounts for some parishes not being represented. In addition, the size of New Orleans in 1860 made that city most difficult to research.

The efficiency of the census enumerators in several parishes was less than adequate. Several wealthy individuals, whose wealth would suggest the ownership of at least a few slaves, did not have any slaves listed in their possession. The same is true for an individual who had several slaves but no personal or real wealth recorded. However, these omissions should not detract from the conclusions I reached. My universe is sufficiently large enough and it adequately represents the various areas of Louisiana.

Democrats not only attracted the younger lawyers, who would have been interested in rapid advancement, but it also won more adherents among the lawyers over forty years old than did the Know Nothings. Of the four major occupational classes which I used in this study, the legal profession provided the second largest number of Democrats. Conversely, the members of the American party found law to be less attractive than the other occupations.

If the traditional view is correct at all, Americans should have had strong support from the town business interests with their connection to northern capital. However, the businessmen and artisans of the towns did not support one party to a greater extent than the other. More of the town middle class supported the Know Nothing party than the Democratic party; twenty-six percent as opposed to twenty-three percent, but the difference is obviously not significant. The only noticeable difference among the

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33 Planter, farmer, lawyer, and Town Middle Class are the four occupational types used. I decided that an individual who owned twenty or more slaves would be classified as a planter; one with fewer than twenty as a farmer.

34 Table 1. It is impossible to be certain how many Know Nothings may have been lawyers as well as planters. Since the attainment of planter status was great in the antebellum South probably both Democrats and Know Nothings preferred the title planter rather than lawyer.

35 These individuals will be referred to as Town Middle Class.

36 Table 1.
town middle class was their place of nativity. Although both parties drew equal support among those born in the deep South, those party members born in the upper South and North generally gave greater support to the American party than to the Democratic party. 37

Party leadership in urban New Orleans, with its business interests, cosmopolitan attitude, and large immigrant population does not completely conform to the traditional view either. Democrats had greater strength among those politicians who were fifty years old and over, and with greater wealth than the Americans. In addition, the Know Nothings, while not attracting older, or even wealthier members, did receive support from those of all age groups, but worth under 25,000 dollars. Even though these findings contradict the traditional view, the Democratic party in New Orleans did have a greater percentage of its political leaders from those younger and less wealthy individuals. 38 Among those politicians for whom data could be found, the Americans engaged more in commerce and industry, with ties to northern capital, than did the Democrats. Both parties in the city had a few foreign-born leaders. However, the Democrats of foreign birth were from Ireland and Germany, while the Americans were from

37Appendix A.
38Table 2.
France or former French possessions. Because the American party had continually disparaged the Irish and German immigrant, it is not surprising that the Irish and Germans avoided the Know Nothings.

Throughout Louisiana slaveholding planters and farmers dominated both parties. Of the four major occupation types, planters and farmers who owned slaves constituted fifty-seven percent of the American party leadership and forty-nine percent of the Democratic leadership. Know Nothing planters, those who held twenty or more slaves, had a slight edge over the Democrats, thirty-eight percent to thirty-six percent. These figures hardly reflect the traditional view of Overdyke, Soulé, and Shugg. But more interesting Know Nothings also led the Democrats in the group of farmers who owned fewer than twenty slaves. According to Shugg, it was this latter group who supposedly favored the Democratic party because that party favored an expanding slave economy and the reopening of the African slave trade, all of which better suited ambitious small slaveowners since it would reduce the cost of slaves.

In addition, the Democrats did well among the older planters (eighteen percent to eleven percent for the American party) and the American party received more support from younger

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39 Appendix A.

40 Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle, pp. 153-54.
slaveholding planters, those under forty years old; again a group considered partial to the slave expansion rhetoric of the Democrats. 41

Large slaveholdings and great wealth were not always synonymous with Know Nothingism in Louisiana as has been traditionally thought. In those Democratic parishes of 1855 with a large concentration of slaveownership, wealthier politicians supported the Democratic party more than the American party. Whether young or old, forty-five percent of the Democratic leaders in these parishes can be classified as wealthy. On the other hand, Know Nothing success among wealthier politicians was limited to twenty-six percent of their total leadership in these parishes. This lack of strength among the older wealthy is particularly evident because the largest percentage (43%) of the American leadership in these parishes came from those under forty and with personal fortunes valued under 25,000 dollars. 43 In these parishes the assignment of older wealth to Know Nothings does not stand up.

Americans did do better among older and wealthier politicians in those parishes won by the Democrats in 1855

41 Table 1.

42 The American party achieved its greatest success in the 1855 gubernatorial election. However, the total number of parishes carried by that party was only sixteen. Therefore, it was necessary to draw my conclusions from the parishes which the Democrats won.

43 Table 3.
in which slave ownership was of moderate proportions. Conversely, the Democrats did better among the yeomanry. Older wealth increased significantly for the Americans, twenty-seven percent to nine percent for the Democrats. The Democratic party attracted over one-fourth of its leadership in these parishes from those under forty and worth less than 25,000 dollars. 44

Once I disregarded slaveownership, in those parishes carried by the Democratic party in 1855, the preference for the American party increased with greater wealth. Only in the forty to forty-nine year old age group did the Democratic leadership outnumber the Americans. The effect of older wealth in this circumstance partially sustains the traditional historical opinion since that group gave solid support to the American party. 45 However, it is interesting to discover that in those Know Nothing parishes in 1855 older wealth supported the Democracy. It was from the wealthy, younger, and middle-aged political leaders that the Americans received their greatest strength. One possible explanation for this fact is that my findings for Terrebonne Parish indicate that many very young American leaders obviously inherited or acquired great wealth and large numbers of slaves from deceased or older family

44 Table 4. It should be noted that there was not sufficient information to make any generalizations regarding those parishes which had little slaveownership.

45 Table 5.
members. Still, increased wealth among the political leaders in general increased their preference for the American party.

To further confuse the situation, if the politics of an area is disregarded, younger wealth, surprisingly, tended to support the Know Nothing party. Know Nothings under forty, and worth over 50,000 dollars, constituted thirteen percent of the political leaders of their party while the Democrats in that group accounted for only two percent of the total leadership of their party. Nor does older wealth fit the traditional view. First, older wealth was virtually even in its support of Know Nothings and Democrats. Secondly, Democrats actually led in this fifty and over age group with property valued over 50,000 dollars by one percentage point, eleven percent to ten percent.

Once all variables are excluded, there is little difference in age between the American and Democratic party leadership. Know Nothing political leaders were not older than their Democratic counterparts. In fact, what difference in age that did exist statewide runs counter to the traditional view. Know Nothings held a two percent edge in the under forty age group (43% versus 41%), while

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46 Appendix A.
47 Table 6.
48 Table 7.
49 Ibid.
the Democrats in the fifty and over group held a one percent margin (27% versus 26%). In the forty to forty-nine age group, the percentage was thirty-one and thirty-two for the Know Nothings and Democrats respectively. Furthermore, the median age for both parties was forty-one. The mean age for both parties also contradicts the traditional view. The average age for the American party was forty-two while Democratic leaders on the average were forty-three years old.

From these statistics it is readily apparent that political leadership in the state during the existence of the American party can be characterized quite differently than the commonly held view. The American party was not the party of old, wealthy, and large slaveholding planters with their commercial connections. Many Americans did fit this description, but there was not any real difference in age between Democrats and Americans, and significant wealth was not confined to the American leadership. Where older wealth did support the Americans it was in those areas of Louisiana that did not have large concentrations of slave-ownership. Older wealth was virtually even in its support of both parties, and younger wealth (excluding the politics

50 Ibid.

of an area) tended to support the Know Nothing party. It is true that the Americans had a slight edge in the planter category, but they also led in the group of farmers who owned fewer than twenty slaves. Also, there was no overwhelming preference among the commercial interests in the state for the American party, nor did the lawyers of Louisiana clearly favor the Americans.

Therefore, the broad traditional generalizations used to describe the political leadership in Louisiana during the mid-1850s simply do not apply. The American party was as successful as the Democrats in recruiting individuals from various social and economic segments of the state.

Even though the strength of the American party came from no one particular segment of society, all members, whether former Whigs, old or young, wealthy or not, could and did agree on their dislike of foreigners. Know Nothings did not compromise this particular principle of their party. Perhaps it is ironic that a political party that owed its existence to a hatred of foreigners should achieve its widest acceptance at a time when foreign immigration declined in the United States and Louisiana.\footnote{From a high point of 460,474 total arrivals into the country in 1854, the number of arrivals slipped to 224,496 in 1856. Both of these figures include United States citizens returning from abroad; the number in 1856 totaled 24,000 American citizens. Louisiana received}
the anti-foreignism of the Know Nothings was unremitting, and very likely was a crucial reason for the existence of the party in the state. On this question of anti-foreignism Charles Gayarré believed that: "The Know Nothing party had no other ostensible object than that of excluding foreigners from participating in the administration of the affairs of the country, of securing the purity of elections. . . ."  

Gayarré believed, as did the American party, that the "disorders in the administration of our public affairs" could be attributed to the constantly growing foreign influence upon men in public office. The growing political influence of the foreign-born in turn resulted in fraud, corruption, and intimidation during campaigns, and the subsequent election of dishonest men. Gayarré lectured the voters of Louisiana when he noted that the United States would not have become so corrupt "if you had not permitted 43,028 "passengers from abroad" in 1853, but by 1857 that figure was down to 21,299. As in the United States figures, the Louisiana total also included a small number of American citizens returning from abroad. DeBow's Review, XVI (May 1854), p. 452; XXIV (June 1858), p. 571.

your cradle to become the drain into which has rushed with an appalling velocity the hugh flood of the dregs and impurities of the rest of the world." 54

The portrait of the immigrant that appeared in the nativist press of the state was that of an ignorant, illiterate pauper. One nativist newspaper used the 1850 census to illustrate that one in every thirty-seven foreigners was a pauper while only one in every 317 Americans was poverty stricken. 55 Nativists also characterized the immigrant as a criminal who filled the prisons, workhouses, and penitentiaries. Nativists thought it was hopeless to Americanize what they called "the serfs of Europe"; and the immigrant's inability to appreciate the laws, liberties, and privileges of the nation led to their corruption by venal politicians. 56

Much of what the Know Nothing press printed about foreign immigrants and their impoverished condition was true. The assertion that they made up a disproportionate percentage of the inmates of public hospitals and prisons

54 Charles Gayarré, Address to the People of Louisiana on the State of Parties (New Orleans: Sherman, Wharton and Co., 1855), pp. 9-11. A copy is in the Charles E. A. Gayarré Papers, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University Library.

55 Opelousas Patriot, April 28, 1855; Bee, August 31, 1855.

56 Opelousas Patriot, August 18, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 9, 1855.
was also true. But according to the anti-nativist press these statistics which the Know Nothings paraded in front of the voters misled the public. What the Know Nothings failed to publicize was that part of the funding for Charity Hospital came from a tax upon immigrants arriving in the United States. Then too, most of those foreigners admitted to public hospitals, claimed the friends of the immigrants, needed treatment only as a result of injuries or diseases sustained from honest labors.

Not only did the American party despise the immigrant because of his debased social and economic condition

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During the years 1850 through 1854 the number of foreign-born admitted to Charity Hospital was significant. The following table illustrates this problem of admissions from the foreign-born population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Irish Admitted</th>
<th>No. of Foreign-Born</th>
<th>Total Admitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>11,130</td>
<td>16,598</td>
<td>18,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>11,655</td>
<td>16,503</td>
<td>18,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>10,195</td>
<td>16,141</td>
<td>18,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>7,217</td>
<td>12,333</td>
<td>13,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>5,491</td>
<td>11,606</td>
<td>13,192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Reports, Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital.

Even a naturalized citizen agreed with the nativist's estimation of the debased condition of the immigrant. In a pamphlet advising the impoverished European to remain in Europe this author sounded similar to the American nativist when he wrote that the typical immigrant was poor, dirty, and sometimes diseased. Emigration, Emigrants, and Know-Nothings, by a Foreigner (Philadelphia: 1854), pp. 5-6, 31.

Daily True Delta, October 7, 1855.
which drained the public coffers, but the party bitterly criticized the political manipulation of the foreign-born. This political manipulation of the foreign-born had been a common complaint of nativists in the past, and the Know Nothing party believed catering to the foreign-born resulted in the government falling into the hands of foreigners and demagogues. As Gayarré alleged, foreigners received the blame for election-day frauds and riots whenever and wherever they occurred.59

In every election, particularly those which the Know Nothing party lost, the significance of the foreign vote received constant publicity. New Orleans nativists responded most energetically to what they termed the Democratic fraternization with the large foreign vote. The Bee denied that foreign influence was insignificant as claimed by the anti-nativist press, and it asserted that the foreign vote held the balance of power.60 Ever alert to the illegal use of foreigners, the American press attacked the Democrats for again "manufacturing voters" in that city.61 However, Know Nothings in the rural parishes

59 Opelousas Patriot, March 24, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 9, 1855.
60 Bee, September 5, 1855.
61 Commercial Bulletin, October 12, 1855; Daily Crescent, October 15, 30, 1855. Know Nothings denied that the First District Court, a criminal court, had jurisdiction in a civil matter such as naturalization. The Daily Crescent went so far as to deny any legal standing for any naturalization issued by that court since its inception on April 28, 1853.
were not unaware of the foreigners' effect on the outcome of elections. Nativist newspapers in Plaquemine and Opelousas reported that local elections in their parishes in 1855 had gone against the Know Nothing party because of foreigners. In Grand Coteau the Americans lost to "the anti-American party," and one nativist asserted that it was "a sorry state when native citizens are thrust aside and foreigners preferred." The editor of the Plaquemine Southern Sentinel estimated that the foreign vote constituted over fifty percent of the anti-Know Nothing majority in the nativist defeat in Iberville Parish.62

The Louisiana Know Nothing party not only deprecated the debased condition of the foreign-born and the chaos they caused on election day, but the nativists reminded the electorate that the foreign population had an antipathy for the South's peculiar institution. The remarks of the Daily True Delta had no foundation, according to the Americans, when that paper stated that "if they [Know Nothings] were deprived of their foreign pauper argument the party would be bankrupt in electioneering capital."63 The Know Nothings in the state capitalized on the alleged foreign opposition to slavery, and the Americans had ample proof for their claims. One naturalized citizen, who had

62 Opelousas Patriot, May 19, 1855; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 19, 1855.

63 Daily True Delta, October 7, 1855.
agreed with the nativists on the wretched conditions of the immigrants, also helped to prove what the local party had reported since it first appeared in the state. This individual advised those contemplating emigrating to the United States to avoid the South since they would have to compete with slave labor which he thoroughly despised. It was no secret in Louisiana that foreigners, particularly the Germans, avoided the South because of the competition with slave labor. These recently arrived immigrants often became the greatest exponents of free-soil ideas. Even the German immigrants who remained in New Orleans found it difficult to "find a middle path between their natural German abolitionism and their Southern environment." So strong did the Germans feel about slavery that no "German newspaper in South or North accepted advertising dealing with slavery."

Foreigners, free-soilism, and Kansas-Nebraska became inextricably related during the state and congressional

64Know Nothing warnings in Louisiana about the free-soil proclivity of immigrants began with the debate over the Nebraska Bill.


66Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, May 12, 1855.

67Robert T. Clark, Jr., "The German Liberals in New Orleans (1840-1860)," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XX (January 1937), 140.
campaigns of 1855. Trying to convict the immigrants of the charge of anti-slavery, leading Know Nothing spokesmen like B. G. Thibodaux from Terrebonne and Randall Hunt asserted that all foreigners were abolitionists. However, the Democrats, not permitting an opportune issue to escape them, pressed their Know Nothing adversaries hard to explain their opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The Baton Rouge Daily Advocate reported that Know Nothing Congressman T. G. Hunt had voted with the abolitionists against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and that the Know Nothing candidate for Congress from the Fourth District, W. B. Lewis, admitted he would have voted against it had he been in Congress. However, it was T. G. Hunt who received most of the Democratic abuse since, as a United States congressman, he had actually voted against the bill. The Democratic press reminded Congressman Hunt that the South opposed the restrictive Missouri Compromise line of 1820 which the Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed. One anti-nativist paper asked Hunt how he could forget his constituents and insult the South by rejecting a bill offered by free-state congressmen that "would put an end to Congressional interference with concerns of the people

68 Thibodaux Minerva, July 28, 1855; Daily Delta, August 16, 1855.

69 Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, August 16, 1855; September 26, 1855; Opelousas Patriot, September 1, 1855.
of the territories over slavery." Because of the way Hunt had voted, claimed the Daily True Delta, every abolition journal in the North "heralds his name with praise."70

Hunt and the Know Nothing party denied that his vote had been hostile to the South, arguing that what harmed the South was "the flood of emigrants, opposed to slavery, peopling the territories, which the Democratic party encourages by favoring naturalization of foreigners." Hunt believed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line, which had silenced outcries of faction and had brought tranquility to the country, could not restore the political equilibrium between North and South. The real purpose behind the Kansas-Nebraska Act was to confer "a political franchise upon foreigners without any condition of residence." Hunt earnestly believed that enfranchising foreigners in turn helped to suppress slavery.71 Hunt's fellow Know Nothing, and congressional candidate from the Third District, Preston Pond, Jr., agreed with Hunt, and predicted that Kansas and Nebraska would be lost to the South as a result of increased immigration which added to the strength of abolitionism. In addition, nativists

70Louisiana Courier, September 6, 1855; Daily True Delta, September 2, 14, 1855.

71Bee, September 3, 1855; Semi-Weekly Creole, September 26, 1855; November 21, 1855. The Daily True Delta noticed that at the time of his vote against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill Hunt said nothing about how it would give foreigners the immediate right to vote in the territories. Daily True Delta, October 4, 1855.
believed that the land in the territories given away to unnaturalized foreigners should go to natives. 72

The German immigrants received the brunt of the Know Nothing attack. According to one nativist, the Germans actually believed that all men should be free. 73 The German newspapers in turn warned their readers to have nothing to do with the Know Nothing party. Prior to the state election of 1855 the Louisiana Staats-Zeitung said, "Our Know-Nothings, or, as they call themselves, reformers, are in truth allies of the devil." 74 However, the Opelousas Patriot singled out no particular ethnic group when it warned the voters of the state that if they gave foreigners political influence and power "they will not only prevent slavery in the territories, but will call upon Congress to abolish it in the states." To make its case even stronger the Patriot quoted articles from the Chicago Democrat which favored immigration as a means to abolish slavery. 75

72 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, November 3, 1855.
73 Daily Delta, August 16, 1855.
75 Opelousas Patriot, August 25, 1855. Just how accurate the editor of the Patriot was is doubtful, but he wrote that 99 percent of all foreigners opposed slavery, and that seven-eighths settled in the free states.
Despite the concern of Louisiana Know Nothings over immigration and its effect on abolition, the American party had a difficult time denying the Democratic allegation of being allied with abolitionism. At the Democratic State Convention in Baton Rouge in June 1855 former Whig P. A. Rost informed the delegates that the Know Nothing party in New England was infected with abolitionism. On the same topic the Daily True Delta pondered how Know Nothings in Louisiana could join with "traitors from Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, who are delegated expressly to represent northern fanatacism against southern institutions."76

American party spokesmen called the Democratic charges "untenable and ridiculous." These supporters denied that their party was tainted with abolitionism and asserted that the American party stood upon the principle of protecting the Constitutional rights of the states in regard to slavery. This absurd charge, Americans reported, originated with the Pierce administration which tried to burden the Know Nothing party with the stigma of abolitionism.77

However, the Americans did admit there was "a small and fanatical anti-slavery" element in the

76 Southern Standard, July 1, 1855; Daily True Delta, May 12, 1855.

77 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 20, 1855; Opelousas Patriot, March 10, 1855; May 5, 1855.
party. Actually, despite the Union, or Third Degree, northern members increasingly cooperated with the abolitionists. Thus, at the 1855 National Know Nothing Convention several northern delegates refused to accept a pro-slavery platform and bolted the party. One Know Nothing paper absurdly claimed that where free-soilers embraced the American party they

harmonize with the men of the South in a determination to support the constitution and the union—in the proposed change of the naturalization—in placing the control of public affairs in the hands of natives, and in other matters necessary to carry out true American principles.

This same paper did not want to debate an abstraction, and believed the South had more to fear from the foreign immigrant's opposition to slavery. Finally, the Semi-Weekly Creole pointed out that "Democratic liberality to foreigners permits them to vote in the territories before they are naturalized, that party is responsible for the growing balance of power against the South."

According to the Americans, the Democratic attempt to stigmatize the American party as pro-slavery was untenable. Know Nothings claimed that the attempts of the Democracy to link Know Nothings with abolitionism was "nothing but an 'Old Fogy' trick to scare southerners

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78 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 16, 1855.
80 Semi-Weekly Creole, July 28, 1855.
81 Ibid.
away from the American Party." Americans believed that this campaign of the Democratic party to stigmatize the American party as pro-slavery would not work since the abolitionist press actually opposed the Know Nothings. Americans noted that their platform could hardly be anti-slavery when numerous northern delegates at the national convention had refused to sign a document that upheld the rights of the South. The Know Nothing press of the state agreed with the Semi-Weekly Creole that the Democrats could not awaken any sectional jealousies within the party, and these papers stressed the real issue before the country was the alteration or repeal of the naturalization laws.

Alteration or repeal of the naturalization laws of the country had long been a panacea of the nativists. The belief that foreigners had increased their political influence at the expense of natives helped to bring about this movement for altering the naturalization laws. Charles Gayarré in his Address to the People of Louisiana on the State of Parties agreed with other Louisiana nativists that times had changed and that the immigrants were "now greedy and half famished, . . . the greater portion

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82 Clinton American Patriot, May 19, 1855.
83 Bee, January 25, 1855; Opelousas Patriot, March 10, 1855.
84 Opelousas Patriot, July 7, 1855.
85 Bee, March 8, 1855.
have been reared in brutish ignorance . . . and cannot be expected to understand the complicated machinery of our political system." Of course, the Know Nothing press belabored the point that these foreigners were unduly influenced by native demagogues. Nativists also believed foreign interlopers, such as Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot who unsuccessfully fought for Hungarian independence from Austria in 1848 and 1849, swayed the foreign-born too greatly. In addition, with the South always sensitive to any threat to slavery the American party argued that a modification of the naturalization laws would prevent foreigners from strengthening the abolitionist cause.

Understandably, Know Nothing speeches and literature stressed the need to extend the period preceding naturalization from five to twenty-one years. In a speech at Houma congressional candidate T. G. Hunt declared that the extraordinary increase in immigration made the naturalization laws of 1790 obsolete. Hunt did not believe that these recent immigrants, who he called the "worst classes of the common laborers of the monarchical governments of Europe," could be politically incorporated into the

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86 Gayarré, Address to the People of Louisiana, p. 18.
87 Opelousas Patriot, March 24, 1855; Daily Delta, August 16, 1855.
88 Daily Delta, August 16, 1855. This goal gave credence to the Democratic charge that the Know Nothing party wanted to put an end to immigration completely.

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country. If the naturalization laws were not remodeled, the foreigners would soon hold the balance of power in elections, argued Hunt, and "that could be fatal to the liberties of the country."^89

Nativists recognized congressional control over naturalization and demanded that that body modify the laws in order to "insure a unity of feeling and sympathy between the foreign and native citizens ere the rights of citizenship be conferred."^90 The American party state platform in 1855 called for "an amendment of the naturalization laws, with proper safeguards to preserve the purity of the elective franchise."^91 The membership of the American party heartily endorsed this plank at numerous mass meetings and regional conventions throughout the state. One speaker at a New Orleans meeting reminded his audience that the party intended to take away none of the rights or privileges of the foreign-born, but only to change the naturalization laws. According to this nativist, the object of the party was to permit a foreigner to vote only after "he has been, like the rest of us, twenty-one years in the country."^92 Know Nothings believed the

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89Daily Crescent, September 26, 1855.
91Daily Picayune, July 6, 1855.
92Daily Delta, July 12, 1855.
intelligent portion of naturalized citizens recognized the need for this change. However, some nativists, ultraists as one Know Nothing paper called them, favored total repeal of the naturalization laws. This drastic step received the disapprobation of the great majority of the Americans in the state.

The American party did not convince the anti-nativist press that all they sought was modification of the naturalization laws. The *Daily True Delta* accused the Know Nothing party of seeking total cessation of foreign immigration to the United States. This paper asserted that if the nativists had a real concern for protecting the franchise they would not have removed the 1845 constitutional provision which required a two year state residence before being eligible to vote. This conservative feature would have protected the franchise more effectively than the 1852 Constitution which the nativists had been instrumental in drafting. Additionally, anti-American spokesmen criticized the Know Nothing attempts to change the naturalization laws because that would have no effect on voting. These critics noted correctly that naturalization did not give a foreigner the right to vote; that right depended

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93 *Bee*, September 18, 1855.

94 *Baton Rouge Weekly Comet*, April 26, 1855; *Clinton American Patriot*, July 14, 1855.

95 *Daily True Delta*, September 4, 10, 1855.
of course, there were those in the Know Nothing organization who recognized this fact, and as a result they increasingly, if reluctantly, accepted the goal of conferring upon the national government the right to grant aliens the franchise. Obviously these Know Nothings believed they would have more success in denying the franchise to the foreign-born through congressional action than at the state level.

The Know Nothing policy of secrecy received almost as much criticism as did the American position on immigration. Initially the Know Nothings defended their policy of secrecy. Know Nothing spokesmen denied that the secretiveness of the party was wrong, and they pointed out the secret features were no different from other parties. The Clinton American Patriot stated pragmatically that the party in its initial stages had depended on secrecy; otherwise "it would have been crushed." Charles Gayarré also

96 Carrollton Star, October 30, 1855; November 1, 1855. Democrats also argued that since this was a Congressional matter it should be kept out of local affairs. Daily Delta, February 1, 1855.

97 Thomas R. Whitney, A Defence of the American Policy, as Opposed to the Encroachments of Foreign Indulgence, and Especially to the Interference of the Papacy in the Political Interests and Affairs of the United States (New York: DeWitt and Davenport, 1856), pp. 155-56.

98 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 3, 1854; Daily Picayune, February 16, 1855.

99 Clinton American Patriot, December 27, 1854.
recognized the necessity for secrecy, but his defense was certainly more eloquent. In response to his question as to whom was responsible for the American party meeting in secret, Gayarré answered:

Grasping with his right hand the truncheon of demagogism, seated on the throne of party fanaticism, his feet resting on the footstool of immigration, his head crowned with the plunder and spoils of taxation, his temples anointed with the oil of corruption, he bids us hold out liberties at the mercy of his capricious will. The name of that king is Mobocracy.100

Others complained that the Democratic press had no right to criticize the Know Nothing secretiveness when the Pierce administration organized foreigners into secret societies, societies which affiliated with abolitionists and caused election frauds.101

However, the criticism of the secret rites, and a growing antipathy to the policy on the part of the membership led to a general call for abolition of the secret features of the party. Agreeing that it once had been necessary, the party press noted it had become "galling and oppressive."102 In the state campaign of 1855 the American party held numerous mass meetings while the party organs boasted they did not look like "Hindoos, [sic] Dark Lanterns, Assassins, murderers, Cowards, or ruthless

100 Gayarré, Address to the People of Louisiana, pp. 13-15.
101 Shreveport South-Western, July 11, 1855.
102 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 30, 1855; Clinton American Patriot, June 30, 1855.
proscriptionists." The American party state convention of 1855 in an official address proclaimed there was no longer a need for secrecy since the party had "attained the vigor of manhood." The convention also released for publication its state platform and policy. Local wigwams gradually followed this lead and abolished all signs, grips, and passwords of the order. The Americans in Louisiana wanted an open order with the only requirement for membership being the approval of the state and national platforms.

Alleged anti-foreignism, abolitionism, and secrecy were all overshadowed in the state by the anti-Roman Catholic principle of the American party. The Know Nothings had made a good case for their opposition to the alien population. In addition, many Louisiana Democrats had once flirted with Native Americanism, and the Know Nothings made good use of that fact. It was highly improbable

103 Daily Crescent, July 12, 1855.
104 Daily Picayune, July 6, 1855. See Appendix C for the American party state platform. The party adopted only one statewide platform, but they adopted state resolutions for other elections.
105 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, November 25, 1855.
106 American newspapers reported that Thomas G. Davidson and Miles Taylor, Democratic congressional candidates in the Third and Second Congressional Districts respectively, had been prominent in the Native American movement of the 1840s. Shreveport South-Western, September
that any member of the American party in the state ever uttered abolitionist principles, although northern members of the party did embarrass their southern brethren. Finally secrecy, as the Americans agreed, did give their party an initial advantage against the Democrats. Therefore, the anti-Roman Catholic position of the National American party became perhaps the most serious problem for Louisiana Know Nothings. Even though the Louisiana party opposed proscription of Roman Catholics and numerous members of the Roman Catholic faith belonged to the American party, anti-Roman Catholicism furnished the Democrats of Louisiana an effective weapon to use against the Know Nothing movement.

The anti-Roman Catholic bias of the National American party, and local attacks against the Papacy and the hierarchy of the Church in the state weakened the American party in Louisiana. At first Know Nothings throughout the state denied anti-Roman Catholicism was a tenet of Know Nothingism. American party editors believed these accusations amounted to nothing more than the opposition trying to make political capital. The nativist press alleged that by spreading these false accusations Democrats attempted to influence the Roman Catholics of the state not to become members of the American party. One Know Nothing

5, 1855; October 10, 1855; Daily Crescent, September 11, 1855; Thibodaux Minerva, September 15, 1855; Bee, October 4, 1855; Clinton American Patriot, October 13, 1855.
editor added that the American people would never make a religious test for office holding.  

The American party tried diligently to convince the nation and the state that they opposed not Roman Catholicism itself, but only the interference of the Pope and his priests in the temporal affairs of this country. Nativists charged that the Roman Catholic religion required a belief in the Pope's infallibility, and since he interpreted all temporal law he could abrogate it when necessary. Numerous books, pamphlets, and newspaper articles supporting Know Nothingism advanced this thesis, which was designed to allay the fears of Roman Catholics. One pamphlet stated it this way: "... the exclusion of sectarian religion from political influence—the protection of the absolute freedom of thought by vindicating the integrity of the public schools from all sectarian influence, whether Protestant or Papist. ..." Louisiana Americans likewise asserted their opposition to any Roman Catholic encroachment upon political rights or public education.  

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107 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 27, 1855; Opelousas Patriot, March 17, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, April 26, 1855; Semi-Weekly Creole, June 23, 1855.  
110 Shreveport South-Western, September 5, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 9, 1855.
Louisiana Know Nothings had to be particularly sensitive to the anti-Roman Catholic issue. A sizable segment of the population of the state belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. And many members of the American party were Roman Catholics. Therefore, the American party press made every effort to prevent the Catholic issue from dividing the party in the state.

But there were supporters of the Know Nothing party, despite party denials of a proscriptive policy against Roman Catholics, who did attack the Church and its policies in no uncertain terms. George A. Pike of Baton Rouge, publisher of the Comet newspapers was one of these men. Unlike his colleagues in areas of the state with large Roman Catholic populations who may have felt restrained by the Catholic presence in their section, Pike's editorials did little to convince Roman Catholics that his party did not intend to proscribe them. Bishop Hughes of New York, the Society of Jesus, and the Southern Catholic Standard newspaper were the favorite targets of Pike. Pike opposed Bishop Hughes, or any other Roman Catholic bishop, from holding all church property in their name.\footnote{Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, June 21, 1855; May 3, 1856.} To Pike and the Know Nothings ownership of property by a Catholic bishop resulted in the centralization of the Roman Catholic Church with the prospects of the "government . . . soon begging the church for funds
to carry on its affairs." Pike's fear of the Jesuits was not an isolated one. Nativists characterized that society as "a secret oath bound clan hourly striking death blows at the very foundation of our republic." Finally, the attacks by the Roman Catholic newspaper the Southern Standard on the American party provoked Pike into a rage against it. Calling it a "vile and slanderous sheet" Pike permitted himself to go beyond the bounds of propriety.

If Pike was an embarrassment for the state organization, the National Council proved to be a far greater liability for Louisiana Know Nothings. A Know Nothing delegation from the state travelled to Philadelphia in June 1855 to attend the national convention. Immediately the Louisiana delegates and the convention became involved in an imbroglio over the seating of the delegation which included the Roman Catholic Charles Gayarré. The convention finally voted to seat only the Protestant members of the delegation, but the Protestant delegates chose not to accept admission under such terms. The convention

112 Ibid., August 5, 1855; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, May 3, 1856.
113 Baton Rouge Daily Comet, January 23, 1856; Clinton American Patriot, June 30, 1855.
114 Baton Rouge Daily Comet, June 21, 1855; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, August 14, 1856; November 2, 1856.
then proceeded to write its national platform which included an anti-Roman Catholic plank.115

Gayarré's exclusion and the anti-Roman Catholic article (Article 8) of the national platform pleased few Know Nothings in Louisiana. Most Know Nothings organs thought the eighth article ill-advised and regretted the action of the Philadelphia Convention.116 Rejecting what they termed the anti-republican eighth article several Know Nothings advised the Louisiana party to "go it alone" and "repudiate their (the Philadelphia Convention) sentiments and proceedings."117 Gayarré had intended to address the Philadelphia Convention on the Roman Catholic question had he been seated. He expressed his feelings on the proscriptionist views of the American party in the following manner:

Is it not worse for you to say to an American—you shall never fill any office of trust or profit in your own country because you are a Catholic, than


116Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 23, 1855; Baton Rouge Daily Comet, August 4, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, August 5, 1855.

117Commercial Bulletin, June 23, 1855; July 2, 1855; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 23, 30, 1855; July 14, 1855.
for the Pope to say to a foreigner: you shall not build a Protestant temple in my dominions?

If your administration should proclaim that all the American Catholics, citizens by birth, are to be excluded from office as dangerous, had not every other government on the face of the earth as strong a right to exclude foreign Protestants from its territory?\(^{118}\)

At their state convention in July, Louisiana Know Nothings adopted a more conciliatory platform. The state platform, while essentially the same as the one adopted by the national council in Philadelphia, had one important exception. The state convention rejected the anti-Roman Catholic plank since it would not tolerate even an ambiguity which might be construed to deny to any American citizen perfect liberty of conscience, and absolute immunity from legal or political persecution and punishment on account of his religious belief.\(^{119}\)

Shortly after the state convention over 10,000 persons turned out in Lafayette Square in New Orleans to endorse the state platform.\(^{120}\)

Thus, the American party entered the campaign for state and congressional offices with a platform that stood in variance with the national platform upon the Roman Catholic question and with Roman Catholic candidates on its ticket. Throughout the campaign Know Nothings continually asserted that they opposed religious proscription.

\(^{118}\)Charles Gayarré, "Religious Toleration," DeBow's Review, XIX (September 1855), 326-27.

\(^{119}\)Daily Picayune, July 6, 1855. See Appendix C for the American party state platform.

\(^{120}\)Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, July 11, 1855.
They boasted of the three Catholic candidates for high state offices on the American ticket and noted that the Democrats had only two Catholic candidates for inferior offices. Therefore, the nativists asked, which ticket was most dangerous to Catholicism? Charles Derbigny, the American gubernatorial candidate, asserted that three-fourths of the Creoles of the state were Americans, and that he expected every Catholic parish in Louisiana to give a majority to the Know Nothing party.

Derbigny was optimistic because the Louisiana platform had rejected the anti-Roman Catholic plank of the national platform as it applied to American Roman Catholics. In Louisiana this would permit the native Creole Roman Catholics to sustain the American party. In addition, the Creoles of Louisiana had denied that the Pope had any control over their temporal affairs, and they had asserted that there was a difference between the

121 *Daily Crescent*, August 4, 1855; Baton Rouge *Weekly Comet*, August 12, 1855; *Opelousas Patriot*, September 29, 1855. The three Roman Catholic Know Nothings were Charles Derbigny of Jefferson Parish, Louis Texada of Rapides Parish, and J. V. Duralde of West Baton Rouge Parish; candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, and state treasurer respectively.

Even on the parish level Know Nothings noted that they had more Roman Catholic candidates than the Democrats. In St. Landry Parish, two-thirds Roman Catholic, the party reported that the Democrats had only one Roman Catholic candidate out of three while the American party ticket contained all Roman Catholics. *Opelousas Patriot*, September 29, 1855.

122 *Opelousas Patriot*, October 20, 1855.
Gallican and other Catholics. Americans throughout the nation also made this distinction. One political pamphlet which contained Know Nothing principles supported this difference between Gallican and other Catholics. Many Americans asserted that the Gallican Catholics were liberal and opposed to clerical interference while the ultra-montane Papists blindly supported the dictates of the clergy.  

The Democracy of the state criticized the anti-Roman Catholic plank in the American national platform while the Catholic press denied there was any such thing as a Gallican Catholic. Democrats noted that even the nativist press opposed the eighth plank of the National American platform, and they ridiculed those Know Nothings who alleged the Roman Catholic test had "crept into the platform" and would be removed.  

Along with the secular press, the Roman Catholic Southern Standard and Propagateur Catholique warned the Creoles to be alert to the real aim of the Know Nothings, the proscription of Roman Catholics. These two Catholic newspapers denied that the Roman Catholic

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123 The Origin, Principles and Purposes of the American Party, pp. 34-35; Anna Ella Carroll, The Great American Battle or, The Contest Between Christianity and Political Romanism (New York: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1856), pp. 178, 202. Miss Carroll noted that Louisiana Roman Catholics had stood firm against the Papacy's temporal power and applauded them for their resistance.

124 Daily Delta, June 24, 1855; July 10, 1855.
population in Louisiana contained "infidels and apostates." Although these newspapers admitted that there were some Creole names among the Know Nothings, they claimed these Creoles were simply dupes. The Southern Standard denied that Louisiana Americans rejected the Philadelphia Platform; they approved it, the Southern Standard claimed, but rejected its application to American Roman Catholics. This newspaper refused to be "humbugged and bamboozled." "We (native Roman Catholics) will stand or fall with our fellow naturalized Catholics." Even Charles Gayarré denounced the attempt to differentiate between French Catholics and other Catholics. Although Gayarré admitted that most Roman Catholics in Louisiana did not go to confession or acknowledge Papal authority over them, he denied that the Louisiana delegation to Philadelphia supported the proscription of any Roman Catholics. The Louisiana delegation to the 1855 Philadelphia Convention would have accepted no religious test. Gayarré enlightened those who believed that distinctions existed between Catholics in Louisiana. But let me tell you, if there is anything which will make us flock to the confessional, it is the intelligence that you dare to interfere with our free action in this matter. I have no hesitation in saying, in the name of my constituents, that latitudinarians as they are in Catholicism, they would shed, if necessary, the last drop of their blood in defence of the creed of their forefathers. . . .

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125 Southern Standard, July 1, 8, 15, 1855; Propagateur Catholique, July 7, 14, 21, 1855.
126 Daily True Delta, September 18, 1855. Charles Gayarré left the American party in September 1855. He
Gayarré referred to some Roman Catholics as latitudinarians. If these were the Roman Catholics who belonged to the Know Nothing party in Louisiana, the Roman Catholic hierarchy disagreed. If a Catholic belonged to the Know Nothing party, the Roman Catholic Church asserted that he was one "who has made himself liable to excommunication for not making his Easter duties. Those who are trying to get Catholic support by calling themselves Catholic are not properly calling themselves correctly."\(^{127}\) In addition, the \textit{Propagateur Catholique} claimed that the Creole faction of the American party did not control the party, and that the Know Nothings bribed them with the offer of places. The \textit{Catholique} concluded that if the Creoles sustained this party "the Creole population would commit suicide."\(^{128}\) This Roman Catholic newspaper did not accept the concession the Know Nothings of Louisiana pretended to make for Roman Catholics, and concluded that despite the ninth article, which rejected any religious bigotry, the Louisiana party still regarded the Roman Catholic Church as corrupt.\(^{129}\)


\(^{128}\) \textit{Propagateur Catholique}, July 21, 1855.

\(^{129}\) \textit{Ibid.}, July 25, 1855.
To add to the nativists' problems, the anti-American press charged that North Louisiana Know Nothings accepted the Philadelphia Platform without reservations. The Democracy exploited this issue during the 1855 campaign.\(^{130}\) On July 23, 1855, the Bienville Parish Know Nothing party resolved that the state wigwam had exceeded its authority when it repudiated the eighth article of the Philadelphia Platform. This meeting, held at Sparta, Louisiana, repudiated the state action and affirmed the national platform.\(^{131}\) The Know Nothing New Orleans *Daily Crescent* denied that the Sparta wigwam typified the Louisiana American party. These "hot-heads," the *Daily Crescent* charged, numbered only twenty-five or thirty members out of a total of 25,000 persons who accepted the state platform.\(^{132}\) The *Louisiana Courier* gladly noted the abuse of Roman Catholics in Jackson Parish. The Farmerville *Enquirer* of Union Parish also had an anti-Roman Catholic reputation. This paper believed that Roman Catholic institutions would be better regulated with convents opened to grand juries and habeas corpus extended to them.\(^{133}\) The correspondent

\(^{130}\) *The Daily True Delta* asserted that even in New Orleans three American councils had repudiated the denunciation of the religious plank of the National Order by the State Council.

\(^{131}\) *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, August 1, 1855; *Louisiana Courier*, August 3, 1855.

\(^{132}\) *Daily Crescent*, July 4, 6, 1855.

\(^{133}\) *Louisiana Courier*, August 3, 10, 1855.
"Justice" in the Baton Rouge *Daily Advocate* reported that a Protestant minister, the Reverend Dr. R. M. Stell, who campaigned for the American party in North Louisiana accepted the Roman Catholic test clause of the Philadelphia Platform. Reverend Stell did not stop there; he claimed that the Charity Hospital of New Orleans refused admittance to Protestants. Reverend Stell also referred to the Sisters of Charity who administered the hospital as "women of easy virtue." In addition, Reverend Stell opposed state appropriations to various charitable causes affiliated with Roman Catholics "as pandering to Catholic influence and Romanish prejudices." 134 Another clergyman joined Dr. Stell in fulminating against Roman Catholics in North Louisiana. A minister, simply referred to in the press as Reverend Dr. Harmon, campaigned in the northwestern parishes advancing the claim that Charles Derbigny, candidate for governor, "would rather see his children in their graves than Roman Catholics." This prompted the *Daily True Delta* to ask the Americans if they were representing their gubernatorial candidate as two different people in two areas of the state. 135

134 *Baton Rouge Daily Advocate*, August 1, 1855, September 29, 1855; *Daily True Delta*, October 5, 1855. The specific charities, and the appropriations allocated which Stell assailed, in addition to the Charity Hospital, were the Benevolent Association of the Catholic Ladies of Baton Rouge, $1000; Les Dames de la Providence (indigent widows), $2000; and St. Mary's Catholic Boys' Asylum, $3000.

135 *Daily True Delta*, October 5, 1855.
To further complicate matters in the 1855 campaign, two American tickets appeared. Charles Derbigny headed the ticket nominated in New Orleans in July, but a National American ticket appeared in the fall headed by John Ray of Ouachita Parish. The Democrats reported that the North Louisiana Americans could not accept the Popish candidates and had presented this Protestant ticket. The Democrats denounced the goals of the National American ticket, but respected their total acceptance of the principles of the American party's National Council. The National American ticket quickly acquired the sobriquet Blue Book or Simon Pures. The American press took note of this Simon Pure faction, but only to deny its authenticity. The New Orleans Daily Crescent reported that this group, headed by a Charles W. Hardy, had had its "dispensation" to establish a state council and subordinate councils revoked in June 1855 by the National Council. Every candidate nominated by the Simon Pures disassociated himself from the "Bogus ticket," and denounced religious proscription and endorsed the "regular" ticket headed by Charles Derbigny. The Know Nothings called the "Bogus ticket," or, Blue Book ticket

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136 Ibid., September 30, 1855.
137 Daily Crescent, October 2, 3, 1855.
a Democratic trick to confuse the American party at a late date in the political campaign.  

The American party entered the elections of 1855 asserting it was the "only national party to take the high and conservative ground on the slavery question," and decried any persecution of foreigners or Roman Catholics. Although other issues did appear during the campaign, the Democracy's continuous attempts to discredit the American position on slavery, foreigners, and Roman Catholics permitted little debate on anything but those issues.

138 Thibodaux Minerva, October 6, 20, 27, 1855; November 3, 1855; Bee, October 8, 1855; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, October 13, 1855; Daily Crescent, October 13, 24, 1855.

139 Bee, June 30, 1855; Opelousas Patriot, August 18, 1855.

140 In the state platform the American party listed four planks under the heading "State Policy." One, the second, could easily have been interpreted as anti-Catholic and anti-foreign.

1. Reform of abuses, and retrenchment in our State expenditures.

2. Education of the youth of the country in schools established by the State.

3. A constitutional organization of the Swamp Land Commissioners.

4. A more efficient administration of the Internal Improvement Department, with a view of improving our inland navigation.

Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, July 8, 1855.

141 Opelousas Patriot, September 15, 1855. This Know Nothing paper reported that at a Democratic rally the only issues discussed were the American's opposition to Catholics, unconstitutionality, inconsistency, bigotry, fanaticism, and tyranny.
When the election returns became known, the Democratic party had elected all of its state candidates, retained its legislative majority, and won three of the four congressional seats. In the gubernatorial race the Democrats had increased their 1852 majority by over 9,000 votes. However, the results were much closer in the congressional races, except in the Fourth Congressional District where the Democratic candidate won handily. In the state legislature, although the Democrats maintained their majority, the American party had not been vanquished. And, in New Orleans, the legislative candidates of the American party were quite successful. All of their candidates for the state senate won, and they won most of the representative seats.

The election results did bear out various Democratic charges against the Know Nothing party. The nativists had denied the accusation that the American party was a Whig trick, but the Relationship between the Whig gubernatorial

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143 Ibid., 277.
144 Opelousas Patriot, March 31, 1855.
vote in 1852 and the Know Nothing vote in 1855 is significant. Of the seventeen parishes which the Whig Presidential candidate Winfield Scott had carried in 1852, eleven gave majorities to the American Charles Derbigny. In addition, eleven of the seventeen parishes which went Whig in the 1852 gubernatorial election also voted for the Know Nothing candidate for governor in 1855. Some of these parishes which Derbigny carried in 1855 had been thorough-going Whig parishes since 1840. These parishes were located in the sugar and cotton areas of the state. Just as the Whig party had garnered support from these Mississippi and Red River parishes, so did the American party.

Roman Catholics generally did not vote for the American candidates. Both parties attributed the defeat of the Americans to the apprehension that many of the old Whig Roman Catholics had toward the proscriptive policy of the party. However, the Thibodaux Minerva was only

146 See Table 8. The coefficient of correlation between the Whig vote in 1852 and the Know Nothing vote in 1855 is +.568. In the congressional election the coefficient of correlation is not as significant. The coefficient of correlation between the 1853 Whig Congressional vote and the 1855 Know Nothing vote is +.288, and between 1851 Whig vote and the 1855 Know Nothing vote the correlation is +.364.

147 ICPR.

148 Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 84.

149 Thibodaux Minerva, November 10, 1855; Daily True Delta, November 14, 1855; Opelousas Patriot, December 1, 1855.

See Table 8. The coefficient of correlation between the percentage of Roman Catholic church aggregate
partially correct when it stated that the Creoles were against the American party "owing to the implied religious test in the national platform."\(^{150}\) Of those sixteen parishes which returned majorities for Derbigny and the American party nine, or, more than half of them had a significant Roman Catholic population. Although there is a negative coefficient of correlation between the 1855 American party vote and the percentage of Roman Catholics in Louisiana, many Creole Roman Catholics did not permit the national platform to influence them. In fact, St. Charles, St. James, and St. John parishes, all Know Nothing parishes in 1855, had a church seating capacity that was exclusively Roman Catholic according to the 1850 United States Census. West Baton Rouge, St. Martin, and St. Mary parishes, which Derbigny carried, had a Roman Catholic church seating capacity of seventy-six, sixty-five, and forty-four percent respectively. Finally, the two "urban" accommodations in 1850 and the American gubernatorial vote is \(-.061\). Although this is not a high inverse relationship what is important is that there is a negative correlation. The coefficient of correlation between the 1855 congressional Know Nothing vote and the percentage of Roman Catholic church aggregate accommodations in 1850 is \(-.18\). However, after running a partial correlation there is little change.

The coefficient of correlations became more significant when I focused on the parishes with the heaviest Catholic populations. In the gubernatorial race the coefficient of correlation is \(-.424\) and in the congressional race it is \(-.497\).

\(^{150}\) Thibodaux Minerva, November 10, 1855.
parishes, Jefferson and Orleans, had a Roman Catholic church seating capacity of forty-six and forty-five percent respectively, and both returned American majorities.\textsuperscript{151} Even though an argument could be made that in Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Mary parishes the Protestant majority solidly supported the anti-Roman Catholic American party, it is improbable that the other six parishes with a Roman Catholic majority ranging from sixty-five to one hundred percent would have supported a blatantly anti-Roman Catholic party. Only Lafourche, St. Charles, and St. Landry parishes with a large Roman Catholic and Creole population experienced a dramatic decline in support from the Whigs in 1852 to the Americans in 1855. However, only Lafourche fell from the Whig-American column in 1855.\textsuperscript{152} Since the Thibodaux \textit{Minerva}, published in the parish seat of Lafourche, had reported that the Creoles were against the proscriptive religious test of the American party, it appears evident that Creole Roman Catholics in Lafourche sincerely believed the Know Nothing party did not represent their best interests. However, the 1855 election returns indicate that most Creole Roman Catholics who had supported the Whig party moved over to the Americans or chose not to vote at all.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{151} ICPR; \textit{United States Census, 1850}.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid. Heavily Catholic St. James and St. Martin parishes increased the majority for the American party in
Foreigners came in for abuse for their alleged role in the Know Nothing defeat. One American editor noted that "five-sixths of the foreigners voted against the Know Nothings." Although there is no significant negative coefficient of correlation between a large foreign-born population and the Know Nothing vote in 1855, it is unlikely that the non-native-born population supported the anti-foreign Know Nothing party. In Jefferson and Orleans parishes, a significant foreign-born population probably had some effect on the vote. Jefferson Parish, a parish which had generally voted Whig in earlier gubernatorial campaigns, increased its majority for the Americans in 1855 by almost ten percentage points over the Whig majority of 1852. Orleans Parish, with a larger number of foreign-born residents than Jefferson, returned an American majority in 1855. This was the first time that that parish had not supported the Democratic candidate for governor since 1842.155

1855 over that of the 1852 Whig majority. St. John, St. Mary, and Terrebonne parishes, all with significant Catholic majorities, experienced a slight to moderate decrease in their majorities in 1855 as compared to 1852.

154Opelousas Patriot, December 1, 1855.

155Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, pp. 441-42; United States Census, 1850.

See Table 8. The coefficient of correlation between the Know Nothing congressional vote and the percentage of foreign-born is +.227. The coefficient of correlation between the Know Nothing gubernatorial vote and the percentage of foreign-born is +.237. In both
In order to have won in New Orleans the Americans had to overcome the foreign support for the Democrats. The largest concentration of immigrants in that city was in the Third District, known prior to the 1852 consolidation of New Orleans as the Third Municipality. The Irish, the largest immigrant group in New Orleans, the Germans, and the French immigrants generally moved into the Third District upon arriving in the city. In previous elections the Third District had proved itself a Democratic stronghold. For example, in the 1854 municipal election the Democratic candidate for mayor won the Third District with seventy-five percent of the vote. If the American instances, despite the positive relationship, it was highly unlikely that the non-native population would support an anti-foreign party.

After running a partial correlation the coefficient of correlation for the gubernatorial and congressional are +.445 and +.448 respectively. Therefore, the presence of foreigners in large numbers suggest that a native American backlash occurred in 1855.


gubernatorial candidate was to even have a chance to win the 1855 election, the immigrant vote in the Third District would have to be curtailed. Consequently, the Americans either intimidated Democratic voters at the polls or refused to accept questionable naturalization papers offered by foreign-born voters. As a result, the Third District failed to return a majority for the Democratic nominee, Robert C. Wickliffe. In fact, Wickliffe received only forty-three percent of the vote in the Third District in 1855. One particular precinct, the Fifteenth, which had given Democratic candidate for mayor John L. Lewis 557 votes out of a total of 724 cast in 1854, gave Wickliffe only 185. Meanwhile, the Know Nothing Derbigny won that precinct with 295 votes in 1855.

Although the presence of foreigners seems to have affected how nativists voted in 1855, particularly in Jefferson and Orleans parishes, the Democratic charge that Know Nothingism was synonomous with abolitionism in the North had little effect on the way slaveholders voted. The slaveholding class was not deterred from voting for the American party. Actually, my quantitative data indicate a tendency of the slaveholding areas of the state...
to favor the Know Nothing party in this election. Also, every parish, except three, which voted for the Know Nothing Derbigny had a slave population of fifty-two percent or more. Concordia Parish, a wealthy cotton parish situated along the Mississippi River, had a slave population of ninety percent. Twenty percent of the free population of Concordia owned at least one slave and over ten percent owned more than twenty slaves. However, Concordia Parish was not the exception. Nine of the sixteen parishes in Derbigny's column had ten percent of the population or more who owned at least one slave.

In spite of Democratic accusations of "Whiggery in disguise," proscriptiveness, anti-republican, and abolitionism, the American party had done fairly well. However, knowledgeable members of the Know Nothing order recognized that certain changes had to be made, particularly in the national party. These leaders believed that "when everything religious and the secrecy is abolished

160 See Table 8. The coefficient of correlation between the percentage of slaves in 1850 and the Know Nothing gubernatorial and congressional vote in 1855 are +.374 and +.364 respectively. After I ran a partial correlation the coefficient of correlation between the percentage of slaves in 1850 and the 1855 Know Nothing gubernatorial vote is +.520. The partial correlation between the percentage of slaves in 1850 and the Know Nothing congressional vote in 1855 is +.512.

161 The three parishes which had a slave population of less than 52% were the two "urban" parishes Jefferson and Orleans, and St. Tammany Parish. United States Census, 1850; ICPR.
from the National Organization" the party would meet with little opposition. For the Americans the next major test in the state would be in the 1856 presidential campaign.

162Thibodaux Minerva, November 10, 1855.
CHAPTER IV

THE DECLINE OF KNOW NOTHINGISM: 1856-1857

The Democratic victory in 1855 initially left some Know Nothings confused about the continued existence of the party in the state. Although the Democrats had not overwhelmed the Know Nothings, there were those who despaired over the future of the American party in Louisiana. The editor of the Plaquemine Southern Sentinel emphatically announced that only one party existed in the state: the Democratic party. He believed that the American party would never rally in the state. However, most Americans remained more optimistic predicting that only the Know Nothing party could avert a sectional conflict. Even the Southern Sentinel soon threw off its negative position and announced that a Know Nothing would succeed Franklin Pierce as president. The faithful claimed that once the national organization removed its objectionable

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1The Democratic majority was less than eight percent of the total vote cast. The election return data were obtained from the Institute for Social Research in coded form. However, the official returns are reported in both the House and Senate Journals of Louisiana for 1855.

2Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, December 1, 1855.

3Ibid., December 15, 1855.
features all Louisianians would march in Know Nothing ranks.4

During the 1856 legislative session, opposition to the Know Nothings resulted from charges of election frauds. Numerous alleged frauds in the state election culminated in a legislative confrontation. Most of the fraudulent voting charges originated in New Orleans, the scene of numerous irregularities. The rioting on election day was so bad that both parties called upon the legislature to pass a registry law for the city.5 However, destroyed ballot boxes, intimidation of naturalized citizens, and the rejection of "voters" prompted some Democratic candidates to contest their defeat.6 The Democratic majority in the state legislature quickly declared vacant the seats of several Americans. Three Know Nothing senators, three representatives, and the sheriff of Orleans Parish were among those who had their elections declared

4Thibodaux Minerva, November 10, 1855; Baton Rouge Daily Comet, November 20, 1855.

5Baton Rouge Daily Comet, November 27, 1855; New Orleans Daily True Delta, December 2, 1855; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 2, 1855; January 14, 1856; New Orleans Daily Crescent, January 22, 1856; Louisiana Courier, February 19, 1856. Hereafter New Orleans will be omitted from all future references to newspapers from that city; place names will be used, however, for all non-New Orleans papers.

null and void. The American press expected the removals, but expressed disbelief at the haste of the Democrats. One Know Nothing paper bitterly reported that the legislature had "accomplished something for the Democratic candidates that the voters would not do."  

Despite these defeats in the state election and in the legislature, Know Nothingism remained a threat to the Democracy. Know Nothings won victories in Thibodaux, Washington, St. Landry Parish, Donaldsonville, Bayou Sara, and Minden. Although the Americans did not succeed in the election for selectmen in Baton Rouge, the American

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7Daily True Delta, November 17, 1855; Bee, January 31, 1856; February 14, 25, 1856; March 28, 1856; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, March 23, 1856. The three American senators excluded from their seats were Glendy Burke, Leonce Burthe, and J. J. Michel. The American representatives were A. T. C. Morgan, Davall, and F. A. Lumsden. The Know Nothing sheriff was Joseph Hufty. All the American candidates were from New Orleans.

In addition, lesser city elected officials were subsequently removed by the Democratic controlled legislature. The Semi-Weekly Creole believed that the testimony given in all the contested hearings was "illegal." Semi-Weekly Creole, February 2, 1856; Daily Crescent, March 27, 1856; W. Darrell Overdyke, "History of the American Party in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XVI (July 1933), 410-12.

The Americans in the legislature filed a minority report which declared all evidence given in behalf of the challengers was unauthorized by law. Senate Journal, 1856, p. 15.

8Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, April 16, 1856; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, April 16, 1856; July 10, 1856; Thibodaux Minerva, May 10, 1856; Opelousas Patriot, May 10, 24, 1856.
candidate for mayor won his election. Nevertheless, the most important test for the American party prior to the presidential campaign was in New Orleans.

The Know Nothings in the city had the opportunity to capture complete control of the city government. Although they controlled the legislative branch of the city, the Democrats held the mayoralty. In this election the "reformers" continued to eschew the name Know Nothing or American. Recognizing the hindrance that the anti-Roman Catholic position of the National American party caused them in heavily Roman Catholic New Orleans, the "reformers" preferred to run on a ticket labelled "Citizens Ticket Irrespective of Party." In addition, Americans hoped the no party label would attract sympathetic Democrats to their cause.

While the Americans stressed the achievements under the reform council the Democratic press emphasized the importance the election had for the upcoming presidential campaign. Anti-foreign and anti-Catholic issues received limited attention. The Louisiana Courier still bemoaned that "blind" Catholics supported this Citizens Ticket.

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9 Batson Rouge Weekly Comet, April 13, 16, 1856. After the election the editor noted that the Democratic candidates for the various Baton Rouge municipal positions were Democrats in name only since they had only recently withdrawn from the American party.

10 Daily Crescent, March 18, 1856.
ticket, or the Know Nothings. Instead of nativism, the Citizens ticket accentuated the "reformers" accomplishments in extinguishing debts, curtailing expenses, reducing the rate of taxation, and making the wharves of the city profitable. The Democrats, on the other hand, shrugged off these accomplishments, and pointed out the poor condition of the streets and public buildings of the city.

The Democratic leadership also underscored the importance this election had for the upcoming presidential campaign. The Louisiana Courier did not think that enough Democrats were taking the election seriously. It reminded the party that a victory in New Orleans would "give Democrats in other states the good promise of Louisiana going Democratic in the national election."

Riots and disorder characterized the election. For the Know Nothings intimidation worked well as they won every race. The Americans and Democrats accused each other of being responsible for the violence and murders. Over 4,000 voters stayed away from the polls, and the Democrats

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11 *Louisiana Courier*, May 31, 1856.

12 *Daily True Delta*, March 20, 1856; *Bee*, June 2, 1856; *Daily Crescent*, May 10, 22, 1856. In addition, each party accused the other of tyrannical measures. The Know Nothings attacked the removal of American legislators while the Democrats brought up the "Reform" Council's removal of two Democratic recorders. *Louisiana Courier*, May 29, 1856.

13 *Louisiana Courier*, May 31, 1856.
alleged it was due to the citizens' fear of "hired organized bands of ruffians."\(^{14}\) Control of the police force of the city and good discipline at the ward level "insured large turnouts" for the Americans and "control of the polls." Therefore, the Americans controlled, for the first time, both branches of city government.\(^{15}\) This victory, combined with the earlier rural success, gave the Know Nothing party renewed hope that it could carry the national election in 1856.

The alleged proscriptive features and abolitionist tendencies of the American party always remained a favorite target of the anti-American press. After the 1855 state election the opposition newspapers continued their attacks on the nativism of the American party as well as its abolitionist leanings. The Baton Rouge *Daily Advocate* reported that an American convention in Cincinnati had adopted a platform which declared that "Congress should refuse to admit into the Union any State tolerating slavery, which shall be formed out of any portion of the territory from which that institution was excluded by the Missouri Compromise."\(^{16}\) Another anti-American paper felt that the

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\(^{14}\) Ibid., June 3, 5, 19, 1856; *Daily Delta*, June 3, 1856.


\(^{16}\) Baton Rouge *Daily Advocate*, December 7, 1855.
southern Know Nothings had to abandon the "pro-slavery" plank of the Philadelphia Platform in order to succeed in the presidential election. A movement in that direction had already been taken, according to this paper, when Representative Eustis voted for Representative Fuller of Pennsylvania, "a rank anti-Nebraska man," for Speaker of the House. In addition, the anti-nativist press alleged that the anti-Catholic "Simon Pure" faction of the American party officially represented the party in the state. The Catholic Standard denied that Roman Catholics harbored anti-republican sentiments or that foreigners could never lose their attachment to their homeland. This paper asserted that no foreign-born Roman Catholic endorsed abolitionism. Instead, those southerners who supported the Know Nothing party had been "warring on the true friends of southern institutions."

Sensitive to the Democratic charges the American party made every effort to allay the fears of those who believed the Know Nothings were proscriptive. Some

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17 Daily True Delta, December 30, 1855. The eventual election of the slavery opponent, Nathaniel Banks as Speaker, gave the anti-Know Nothing press the opportunity to lay the blame squarely on the southern Americans. Daily Delta, February 5, 1856. The Americans, however, blamed the Democrats for the election of the anti-Catholic and abolitionist Banks. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, February 9, 1856.

18 Daily Delta, January 8, 1856; Catholic Standard, January 20, 1856.
Americans vowed they would leave the party if the northern wing insisted on the religious question. Representative George Eustis delivered a speech in the House in which he condemned the religious plank of the American party. He also noted that Louisiana Americans repudiated that plank. At almost the same time Eustis made his speech Know Nothings in the Louisiana General Assembly supported a resolution which called for the election of a Roman Catholic chaplain for the legislature.¹⁹ The omnipresent Charles Gayarré published another Address. In this publication, which dealt with the religious question, the author denied that Roman Catholics sustained any temporal rights of the Pope. If the American party insisted on proscribing Roman Catholics, Gayarré promised "Louisiana must secede in a body. Louisiana will in 1856 vote for either a Democrat sound on naturalization laws or a candidate of her own."²⁰

Gayarré's threat was not necessary. The American party presidential nominating convention at Philadelphia

¹⁹Thibodaux Minerva, December 22, 1855; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, February 2, 1856. Strong anti-Catholic sentiment did exist in Louisiana, however. The Louisiana Baptist of Mount Lebanon, Louisiana attacked the Know Nothings for attempting to elect a Catholic chaplain. During the legislative session this paper printed several anti-Catholic articles. Mount Lebanon Louisiana Baptist, February 21, 28; April 3, 1856. Only a few issues of this paper are extant.

²⁰Charles Gayarré, Address on the Religious Question (n.p.: 1856), pp. 10, 26. A copy is in the Charles E. A. Gayarré Collection, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University Library. Hereafter cited as L.S.U.
in February voted to seat those Louisiana delegates who accepted Catholics in the state order.\textsuperscript{21} In addition, the convention moderated its anti-Roman Catholic plank. Article V of the platform stated that "no person should be elected for political station (whether of native or foreign birth) who recognizes any allegiance or obligation, OF ANY DESCRIPTION, to ANY FOREIGN PRINCE, POTENTATE, OR POWER." However, the anti-nativists still claimed this discriminated against Catholics.\textsuperscript{22}

The Americans wanted to forget the recently discarded anti-Catholic plank. However, the anti-Know Nothing press reminded the voters that proscription of Roman Catholics remained an American goal. The \textit{Louisiana Courier} wondered how an anti-Catholic party could exist in Louisiana. Americans had in the past differentiated between Gallican and other Catholics. But the \textit{Catholic Standard} held fast in its denial of any distinction. Asserting that "all American Catholics agree that beyond his own

\textsuperscript{21}Semi-Weekly Creole, March 1, 1856. Representative Eustis addressed the convention and defended the Louisiana Order for admitting Catholics. Eustis assured the convention that his delegation upheld the other principles of Know Nothingism. Another Louisiana delegate from New Orleans likewise defended the policy of admitting Catholics, but he strongly assured the gathering that the order in Louisiana denied the temporal authority of the Church.

\textsuperscript{22}Baton Rouge \textit{Weekly Morning Comet}, October 19, 1856. This paper compared this plank with the oath of allegiance on becoming a citizen, and found no difference. Baton Rouge \textit{Daily Advocate}, March 2, 1856.
dominions the venerable head of the Catholic Church has no
temporal power, . . ." the Catholic Standard flatly re­
jected the American thesis that the Pope held any temporal
power over Catholics. However, the Catholic Standard did
inject itself into the political campaign by endorsing the
Democratic party. Most Americans ignored the Catholic
Standard. They simply publicized the refusal of the
Louisiana delegation at Philadelphia to participate in any
proceedings if the national party proscribed Roman Catho­
lics. Of course the Americans were quick to point out
proscription was not a feature of the National American
party.

However, blatant anti-Roman Catholicism did surface
in the 1855 campaign. As in 1855 it was isolated, and
limited mainly to the Baton Rouge Comet newspapers. The
editor continued his attack on the wealth of the Church
and its foreign hierarchy. According to the Morning Comet,
the attempts to incorporate Catholic congregations fore­
shadowed the time when, with government sanction, the
Church would "strangle the government." This editor did
not neglect the Catholic Standard, which, according to
Comet editorials, abused "everything American."24

23Louisiana Courier, July 26, 1856; Catholic Standard,
March 30, 1856; April 27, 1856. The Catholic Standard
equated the Know Nothings with black Republicanism in that
both strove for the political supremacy of the North.

24Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, October 18, 1856;
Baton Rouge Morning Comet, May 3, 1856; August 14, 1856;
The American party of Louisiana also felt inclined to reevaluate its immigrant policy. Local wigwams, and the state society exhibited a "new look" in 1856. Meeting at Baton Rouge in June 1856, the state convention adopted a resolution which read:

in political affiliation we reject none, whether native or foreign, whose judgment and sympathies are with us upon the principles we seek to enforce, believing that all interests will be promoted in the end by our success.25

This did not please every nativist, however. One editor called it a prostitution of American principles. He did not believe it was good policy, or, that it reflected the sentiments of the party in Louisiana. He asked, "Does the American party, now grovel in the dust, and flounder in the political cess-pool as other parties have done for power and place?"26

Obviously this editor had expressed the sentiments of many Know Nothings. A fellow American from northwest Louisiana simplified, in one sentence, what the election was all about. He thought the main issue was:

whether this country shall be governed by the present race of Pierce office-holders, and their N. York soft-shell freesoiler dependents, aided by 'foreign influence,' or be restored to its pristine purity and

Baton Rouge Weekly Morning Comet, October 5, 1856; November 2, 1856.

25Baton Rouge Weekly Morning Comet, March 23, 1856; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, June 17, 18, 1856.

26Baton Rouge Weekly Morning Comet, June 22, 1856.
vigor, and ruled by the natives of the land, in accordance with the policy of the immortal 'Father of his Country' and the founders of the republic.\textsuperscript{27} Other Americans dragged out the stereotyped foreigner for this campaign. They pictured him living in the poor houses, asylums, taking up the public domain, and abusing the franchise. Foreign immigration and foreign rule, as the nativists reminded the electorate, had caused the downfall of ancient republics. The \textit{Daily Creole} criticized the Democratic platform which ostracized Americans and cuddled foreigners. The only plank needed in this campaign, asserted the nativists, should call for the entire repeal of the naturalization laws.\textsuperscript{28}

Americans in the state also favored the action of the national convention on the slavery question. In an attempt to unite the northern and southern wings of the party the convention dropped the pro-slavery plank, and adopted a clause which it hoped would bring the party together. But northern delegates wanted stronger language on the slavery issue, and when it was not forthcoming forty delegates withdrew.\textsuperscript{29} However, the Democrats informed

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\textsuperscript{27}Shreveport \textit{South-Western}, May 28, 1856.
\textsuperscript{28}Fillmore and Donelson Campaign Pamphlet (n.p., 1856), L.S.U. Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, July 5, 1856; Baton Rouge \textit{Weekly Comet}, October 5, 1856; November 9, 1856; \textit{Daily Creole}, October 17, 1856.
\end{flushleft}
the voters of the state that in place of the pro-slavery plank the Americans had adopted a dangerous principle for the South. The new plank called for "the maintenance and enforcement of all laws until said laws shall be repealed, or shall be declared null and void by a competent judicial authority." Such a principle meant that a law, such as the Fugitive Slave Act, would be obeyed only until abolitionists secured a Congressional majority to repeal it, or, elected a president who would appoint judges who would declare it unconstitutional.\(^{30}\)

The Know Nothing party had to appear strong on slavery in order to help refute Democratic charges that Louisiana Americans were soft on the peculiar institution. A great deal of Know Nothing literature on slavery still centered around the immigrants' alleged hostility to slavery. The recent battle for Speaker of the House in Washington demonstrated that the sectional controversy still raged. Therefore, by making the foreigner the scapegoat the Americans hoped to keep their party above the sectional controversy. One determined American editor blamed immigration for all the problems of the country. Civil strife in Kansas, disruption of the election process, North versus South, and abolitionism were all directly attributable to the foreign-born. Ultimately an end to slavery would

\(^{30}\) Ibid., pp. 427-28; Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, March 15, 1856; Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, March 2, 1856.
result as the European immigrant continued to increase the political strength of the North. The Kansas-Nebraska Act received its share of abuse. As in the 1855 campaign, Know Nothings opposed giving the vote to unnaturalized foreigners since this would hasten the end of slavery. Alien suffrage and squatter sovereignty only perpetrated "an additional wrong on the South." The American press alleged that the German immigrants exhibited a particularly strong free-soil trait. Not only in the free states, but Germans in New Orleans, according to some nativists, supported John C. Fremont, the candidate of the anti-slavery Republican party. The Bee alleged that the only reason the Deutsche Zeitung did not place Fremont's name at the top of its sheet was that the Republican candidate could have no electoral ticket in Louisiana.

Generally Louisiana Know Nothings approved of the national American platform. The nominations of Millard Fillmore and Andrew Jackson Donelson for president and vice-president respectively pleased most members as well. Some nativists withheld their support until they learned what the platform said on the religious question, and if

31 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, July 5, 1856; Opelousas Patriot, August 30, 1856; Daily Creole, September 18, 1856; October 17, 1856; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, October 28, 1856.

32 Bee, July 21, 28, 1856; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, August 12, 1856.
a southern man would be on the ticket. One Know Nothing newspaper expressed dissatisfaction with the platforms of both parties, but concluded, as did many Americans, that Fillmore stood on safer ground for the South.\(^{33}\)

The National American party conducted a conservative and union campaign in 1856. Southern delegates ultimately controlled the American convention following the withdrawal of several northern delegates. But instead of giving in to sectional jealousies, Know Nothing campaign literature stressed the Union sentiment of the party. Because of this emphasis on the Union, the Americans also acquired the support of old line Union Whigs in the campaign. In Louisiana, Whigs endorsed the nomination of Fillmore by the national Whig convention in Louisville. Whig meetings held throughout the state passed resolutions which supported Fillmore and Donelson and opposed the sectional strife in the country caused by the Democratic party.\(^{34}\) Fillmore pleased old line Whigs because as one wrote, he knew the former president to be "a pure patriot, firm to his duty, a conservative and sincere politician,"

\(^{33}\)Thibodaux Minerva, March 15, 1856; Commercial Bulletin, July 4, 1856.

\(^{34}\)A miscellaneous campaign pamphlet dated August 17, 1856 in the Ellis Papers, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University Library. Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, July 20, 1856; September 3, 7, 1856; Daily Creole, August 11, 1856. J. J. Slocum to Thomas C. W. Ellis, September 16, 1856, Ellis Papers, L.S.U.
and what goes a long way with me a good Whig.\textsuperscript{35} Unionism encompassed everything, while economic issues received short shrift.\textsuperscript{36} Americans practically ignored foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{37} Know Nothings hardly neglected nativism, but that subject generally found its way into the conservative and Union rhetoric of the American party.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35}William W. Wall to Thomas C. W. Ellis, March 31, 1856, Ellis Papers, L.S.U.

\textsuperscript{36}The Americans criticized President Pierce for his veto of an appropriations bill which included improvement of the Mississippi River. After Buchanan's nomination the Know Nothings noted the inconsistency of a protectionist Buchanan defending a platform which included a free-trade plank and opposed internal improvements. The state Democratic administration also came in for its share of this kind of abuse. Americans opposed the increased extravagance of the administration for what it called the enrichment of partisans, and demanded a Board of Public Works be created in accordance with the 1852 Constitution. The Democrats simply responded that internal improvements by the states has always been Democratic policy.

\textsuperscript{37}Americans noted the Democratic failure to settle the differences between Spain and the United States over Cuba. Additionally, the conservatives feared "another 54\textdegree 40' or Fight and the taking of Cuba" if Buchanan was elected. Fillmore and Donelson Campaign Pamphlet (n.p., 1856), L.S.U. Shreveport South-Western, October 17, 1855.

The Democrats generally abided by Pierce's attempts to uphold the United States' neutrality laws while not tolerating any "Old World interference," particularly in Nicaragua. Catholic Standard, January 6, 1856; May 11, 1856; Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, March 31, 1856.

\textsuperscript{38}Allan Nevins, \textit{Ordeal of the Union}, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 2:494-95. Upon his arrival in New York, Fillmore set the tone for the campaign when he stated that "We have received from our fathers a
It was not inconsistent for Louisiana Know Nothings to relegate nativism to a secondary position considering the emphasis given to foreigners in the state elections of 1855. Americans in the state were following the lead of Fillmore, and the party elsewhere, and "confined their campaign literature to pleas for the preservation of the union. ..." In Louisiana nativism still commanded some attention, particularly as to how foreigners and slavery were inimical to each other. But "in the heat of the slavery controversy, the American party had forgotten the issues that gave it birth."  

The American campaign centered around Fillmore's Unionism. While the conservatives of the South rallied behind Fillmore, and the preservation of the Union, the Know Nothings alleged the "southern Locofocos ... are planning the programme of a dissolution of the union in the event of Fremont's election. ..." The Bee noted

Union and a Constitution above all price and value, and that man who cannot sacrifice anything for the support of both is unworthy of his country." Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, 2:494.

Billington, The Protestant Crusade, p. 428. Billington writes that Fillmore conducted his campaign on the issue of "preserving the union," and other Know Nothings did not stress nativistic issues.


40 Ibid.

Commercial Bulletin, October 2, 1856.
that Fremont appealed exclusively to the North, and Buchanan, although less exclusively, appealed mostly to the South. The election of either Fremont or Buchanan, according to the Americans, meant "the victory of free-soilism and its ascendancy forever, and consequently the division of the Union into anti-slavery and pro-slavery sections." Both candidates were too sectional. Americans assured the South that northern conservatives rejected Buchanan's chances of winning in their region, and, therefore, urged southerners to unite behind Fillmore.  

Know Nothings denied that Buchanan's election would safeguard slavery. Americans argued that the only reason the South supported Buchanan was his alleged position favoring the extension of slavery into Kansas. However, the South ignored squatter sovereignty, "the touchstone of the Democracy," and the Americans called squatter sovereignty inimicable to the South. Americans considered squatter sovereignty worse than the Wilmot Proviso. Since Congress did not possess any right either to establish or prohibit slavery in the territories, the Know Nothings rejected giving the people of a territory any such power. This doctrine would in fact stop the extension of slavery. Additionally, the Americans

42Ibid., August 9, 1856; Bee, August 14, 26, 29, 1856.
attempted to prove Buchanan's opposition to the extension of slavery.\textsuperscript{43}

In fact, according to the Americans, the Democratic party as a whole opposed the extension of slavery.\textsuperscript{44} The attempts of the Democrats to maintain some semblance of nationality gave the Know Nothings evidence for the allegation. Americans publicized a speech by Buchanan on the Texas admission question in which he stated that his vote for admission actually was a vote against slavery. He had reasoned that with Texas in the Union, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri would become free. Vice-presidential nominee John C. Breckinridge's Tippecanoe Speech also received Know Nothing attention. In that speech Breckinridge asserted he opposed the extension of slavery. Know Nothings alleged that Louisiana Governor Robert C. Wickliffe endorsed Breckinridge's speech. Americans charged Seward himself went no further. In summation of the Democratic position on slavery, the \textit{Bee} reported that they

\begin{quote}
are opposed to slavery in Kansas, to a division of Texas into four more slave states, to the acquisition of Cuba with slavery, and to the maintenance of that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Bee}, July 1, 1856; October 2, 1856; \textit{Daily Creole}, September 18, 1856; \textit{Daily Crescent}, September 26, 1856.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Daily Crescent}, September 26, 1856; \textit{Daily Creole}, September 30, 1856; October 22, 1856.
equilibrium in the Senate that Calhoun said was necessary to the harmony of the Union.\textsuperscript{45}

The Americans charged that southern Democrats supported candidates who opposed the extension of slavery yet these same Democrats were ready to dissolve the Union and fight a civil war if slavery was not extended.\textsuperscript{46}

The Democrats of Louisiana responded to their critics. Did not American Congressman T. G. Hunt agree with William Seward on the slavery extension issue? Democrats attempted to prove that Hunt believed Congress had the authority to legislate on the question of slavery in the territories. According to the Democracy this was what Seward had in mind when in his Albany speech of October 1855 he asserted slavery extension could be stopped in the territories.\textsuperscript{47} In regards to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, party spokesmen denied the act contained the principle of squatter sovereignty. That doctrine had no advocates in the South, and the American attack on it was "buncombe." In fact, according to the Democrats, everyone in the South had supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act until Fillmore

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Bee}, October 6, 1856. Governor Wickliffe in his inaugural address, long before the heat of the campaign, stated emphatically that if the North ever became numerically superior over the South in the Senate as it had in the House "the aggressive spirit of the North will direct the legislation of Congress so that the South will be obliged to abandon the Union." Senate Journal, 1856, pp. 17-18.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Bee}, October 9, 1856.

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Daily Delta}, November 1, 1855.
returned from Europe to the United States. Now Know Nothing politicians believed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line was unjust. Despite Know Nothing denials, the Democrats charged that Fillmore’s election meant the restoration of the line.  

Democrats offered additional proof of Fillmore’s indifference if not outright hostility to slavery. In his campaign speeches Fillmore stated Congress had the power to legislate to almost any extent on the subject of slavery. Fillmore’s past record on slavery proved his hostility to that institution. Democrats charged that he had voted to receive abolition petitions, voted against the admission of Texas, voted to repeal all laws by which the Federal government was bound to protect slavery; moreover, he had doubted the constitutionality of the fugitive slave law.

The Democratic party, on the other hand, defended slavery. With Americans opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which many persons believed included principles on slavery such as the South had a right to demand, the Democracy supported the bill. Judah P. Benjamin, defending his conversion to the Democratic party, summed up the sectional

48 Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, July 15, 31, 1856; August 9, 1856; September 6, 1856; Daily Creole, October 3, 1856; Bee, October 1, 1856.

49 Daily Delta, September 12, 1856; Louisiana Courier, August 3, 1856; October 5, 1856.
problem in the following manner: "Democrats in Congress, on every question affecting slavery, voted in solid phalanx in favor of the rights of the South, while Whigs and Know Nothings . . . generally voted with the abolitionists." 50

Therefore, despite the emphasis placed on the preservation of the Union by the American party, the election came down to which party would best serve the interests of the South and Louisiana. Democrats charged that the Know Nothings favored proscription in the state and that in the North the nativists allied themselves with "freesoilers, abolitionists and negro worshippers." 51 American defenders, while stressing union and country, alleged that the Democrats had nominated Buchanan because that party needed northern votes and in that section could picture Buchanan as anti-slavery. In the past Buchanan, according to the Know Nothings, had "worn a northern or southern face," depending on the circumstances. 52 With the sectional crisis so intense both parties in the state had a difficult time defending the inconsistencies of their party and candidates. The voters of Louisiana would have the difficult task of determining which candidate served the best interests of their region and the country.

50 Daily True Delta, September 24, 1856.
51 Louisiana Courier, July 26, 1856; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, October 25, 1856.
52 Daily Creole, August 22, 1856; Bee, September 3, 1856.
However, intimidation and fraud, in addition to slavery and immigration, was an issue in this campaign. Neither political party was above using fraud or intimidation to win an election. New Orleans, with its large floating population, both native and foreign-born, was the scene of most of the election day abuses. The New Orleans municipal election of 1854 had been particularly violent and had set a precedent for the rest of the decade. The Americans controlled the executive and legislative branch of the city government, and the Democrats the judicial branch. Therefore, the Know Nothings appointed the police and the election commissioners. Through the courts in New Orleans the Democrats issued naturalization papers. Prior to the 1855 state election the Americans had accused the Democrats of manufacturing voters. On election day the Know Nothing commissioners refused to accept the votes of these naturalized citizens and demanded naturalization papers from many suspect voters. In addition, armed Know Nothings surrounded the polls throughout the city and tried to intimidate citizens to vote for the American


54 Commercial Bulletin, October 12, 1855; Daily Crescent, October 30, 1855; November 1, 1855.

55 Louisiana Courier, November 6, 1855.
candidates. Election day brought violence at various polling places in the city. Several precincts had their ballot boxes destroyed, votes discounted, or errors made in the tabulation. The Democratic press claimed that several Democratic candidates lost because of these "illegal" acts.

As a result of these past election day experiences the Democratic party in 1856 was vigilant to the possibilities of fraud and violence. Governor Wickliffe, in an address to the state legislature, recognized that

New Orleans exercises a large control in the legislation of the State, and a very large influence in general elections; hence, every restriction should be placed upon her to prevent her corporate power from being abused to promote party purposes.

The country parishes expected to return a large Democratic majority, and they had no intention of permitting ballot box breaking in New Orleans to decide the election against the Democratic party. The Calcasieu Press reported that the New Orleans vote would not be counted if any fraud occurred in that city.

Both Americans and Democrats in New Orleans anticipated violence. The Democratic State Central Committee

56 Daily True Delta, November 17, 1855.
57 Louisiana Courier, November 6, 9, 1855; Daily True Delta, November 17, 1855.
58 Senate Journal, 1856, p. 18.
59 Louisiana Courier, October 21, 1856.
and the Parish Committee issued a call to the city Democrats "to register themselves in order to aid in the maintenance of law and order" on election day. The Louisiana Courier could not understand the Americans' chagrin over this call since the Know Nothings' "Union Hussars will doubtless prove themselves in November an effective bodyguard of the Union." However, the Americans took no chances and the Know Nothing mayor, Charles M. Waterman, ordered a search for arms at the Charity Hospital and the offices of the Democratic Louisiana Courier. Although election violence did occur, it was comparatively mild. The Daily True Delta reported that "brass knuckles were more frequently, the knife less commonly, employed upon citizens who desired to vote the Democratic ticket. . . . Of course nobody expected protection from the police, and nobody was disappointed." If the violence was mild, intimidation must have been effective. A Democratic majority in the 1852 presidential election, and a small Know Nothing majority in the 1855 gubernatorial election

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60 Ibid., October 26, 1856; November 12, 1856; Daily Crescent, October 31, 1856; November 10, 1856.

61 Daily Crescent, November 10, 13, 1856; Louisiana Courier, November 12, 1856.

62 Daily True Delta, November 6, 1856; James Kimmins Greer, "Louisiana Politics 1845-1861," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIII (January 1930), 113; Soulé, The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans, p. 82.
became a 3,400 vote American majority in 1856. Nevertheless, as far as the Democrats were concerned, the violence which did occur, did not affect the outcome of the election.

In the state vote the Know Nothings lost by approximately 1,400 votes. The Americans carried fourteen parishes in 1856 as compared to sixteen parishes in the 1855 gubernatorial election, and seventeen carried by the Whigs in the 1852 presidential election. Even though the Americans experienced a decline in the total number of parishes carried in 1855, and the number the Whigs won in 1852, the Democratic majority hardly changed. The Democratic majority in 1856 increased by only sixty-three votes from that in the 1852 presidential election and actually dropped from 1855 by over 1,400 votes. This latter phenomenon is explained to a great extent by the large majorities the Americans received in Orleans and Jefferson parishes. In 1855 New Orleans voters gave the American candidate for governor only a 400 vote majority, whereas in 1856 Fillmore carried that city by over 3,300 votes. The situation was comparable in Jefferson Parish.

Election return data were obtained from the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, The Institute for Social Research, Center for Political Studies, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Hereafter cited as ICPR.
Know Nothing majority was almost 200 votes in 1855 while in 1856 it had increased to over 800 votes.64

Despite the nomination of Fillmore by the National Whig party, old line Whigs in Louisiana showed less enthusiasm for Know Nothingism than in 1855. The coefficient of correlation between the Whig presidential vote of 1852 and the Know Nothing vote of 1856 is not as significant as it had been in 1855.65 A parish by parish analysis demonstrates that the American party suffered some of its worst defeats in former Whig parishes.66 Two former Whig parishes, St. John and St. Charles, deserted the Know Nothings in 1856. The Whigs in 1852 had carried St. John Parish with a majority of more than fifty-five percent of the vote in the presidential election and more than fifty-three percent in the gubernatorial election of the same year. In the 1855 gubernatorial election the American party carried St. John parish with fifty-three percent of the vote. However, in 1856 the parish went Democratic

64Soulé, The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans, pp. 81-82; ICPR.

65See Table 9. The coefficient of correlation between the 1852 Whig presidential vote and the 1856 American vote is +.47. Perry H. Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, rev. and enl. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 84. The large percentage of Know Nothing votes in New Orleans helped offset the rural Democratic vote.

66Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 34.
by over fifty-two percent of the vote. More dramatic was the vote in St. Charles Parish. The Whigs carried that parish in the 1852 presidential election with seventy-two percent of the vote and seventy-nine percent in the 1852 gubernatorial race. The American party barely carried St. Charles Parish in the 1855 gubernatorial election, and then received only thirty-nine percent of the vote in the presidential election in 1856. The most noticeable reversal occurred in Lafourche Parish. Returning a Whig majority of eighty-three and eighty-two percent in the 1852 presidential and gubernatorial elections respectively, Lafourche Parish voters went Democratic in the 1855 gubernatorial race by sixty-six percent. Lafourche Parish supported Buchanan in 1856 with a seventy-two percent majority.

However, Whig apathy in 1856 for Fillmore did not result in a mass desertion of Whigs to the Democratic party. There is no significant, nor even a positive, coefficient of correlation between the 1852 Whig presidential

67 CPR. Two other Whig parishes in 1852 which voted Democratic in 1856 were St. Landry and Tensas. The majority in St. Landry Parish in 1852 was sixty-one percent while in 1856 the Democrats won that parish with a fifty-eight percent majority. In Tensas the Democrats won in 1856 with a fifty-seven percent majority as opposed to their forty-eight percent effort in 1852.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.
vote and the 1856 Democratic vote. In addition, the Know Nothing majorities in the old Whig parishes of Madison, St. Martin, St. Mary, and West Baton Rouge remained significant. Although these parishes had decreased majorities in 1856 as compared to 1855, all four returned a majority for Fillmore in excess of fifty-three percent of the total vote. Also, the Americans were victorious in the old Whig parish of Morehouse in 1856. That parish had voted Democratic in the 1855 gubernatorial campaign. 

Apparently, as in the 1855 gubernatorial election, neither party convinced slaveholders that one party would better protect slavery. Though slavery had played an important role in this campaign, slave owners did not disproportionately support one, or, the other party. Even owners of twenty or more slaves, those with a greater vested interest in the institution, failed to support either the Democrats or Americans exclusively. Despite a loss of some parishes with a large percentage of slaves, Lafourche, St. Charles, and St. John parishes, the Know

70 The coefficient of correlation between the Democratic vote in 1856 and the Whig presidential vote in 1852 is -.47.
71 ICPR.
72 See Table 9. The coefficient of correlation between the Know Nothing vote in 1856 and the percentage of slaves in 1860 is +.08. The correlation between "planters" (those who owned twenty or more slaves) and the 1856 Know Nothing vote is +.10.
Nothing party still won majorities in others with equally as large slave populations. In West Baton Rouge, St. James, and St. Martin parishes, the American majority was over fifty-six percent of the total vote and those parishes had slave populations of seventy-three, seventy, and fifty-eight percent respectively. Of the fourteen parishes carried by the Know Nothing party, eleven had a slave population of at least fifty-two percent, while half had a slave population of over sixty percent.\footnote{ICPR.}

In addition to slavery, the preservation of the Union ranked high among the issues of the campaign. The Union, and its maintenance, influenced a large number of those who voted for Fillmore. By using the election figures of 1860, there is a very significant and positive coefficient of correlation between the 1856 American vote and the Constitutional Union party vote in 1860. The American party still attracted the conservative, Union-loving voter.\footnote{See Table 9. The coefficient of correlation between the 1856 Know Nothing vote and the 1860 Southern Democratic vote is -.59. While the coefficient of correlation between the 1856 Know Nothing vote and the Union party vote in 1860 is +.73.} Evidently while some Whigs either voted Democratic, or, did not vote, the American party garnered some support from Union Democrats.\footnote{Of the three "new" parishes to the American ranks in 1856, St. Helena Parish before 1855 had consistently...}
Conservatism and Unionism received favorable responses from the voters of the state because Louisiana had strong economic and social ties to the rest of the nation. "The Mississippi Valley fed its commerce, a tariff protected its sugar industry, and the North furnished many of its leading citizens."⁷⁶ Even as late as the fall of 1860 Union men were being advised to "look to your business interest," and to avoid the secessionist impulse.⁷⁷

To a large degree this conservatism and Unionism of the American party was also a legacy of Whiggery. During the campaign the Americans had stressed that Fillmore would be satisfactory to the South, particularly since he had signed the 1850 Compromise measure which "left things in a state of peace for Pierce." Know Nothing campaign material pointed out that Whig compromises "have repeatedly saved the Union--A Whig administration quelled sectional strife..."⁷⁸ In addition, the Old Line Whig movement voted Democratic and St. Bernard Parish had often voted Democratic. Howard, *Political Tendencies in Louisiana*, pp. 442, 444.


⁷⁷ *Commercial Bulletin*, October 26, 1860.

⁷⁸ Ibid., July 4, 1856; Fillmore and Donelson *Campaign Pamphlet*. 

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organized in July endorsed the American candidates and their conservative and Union rhetoric. 79

In addition, the reality of politics surely influenced the conservative and Union stand taken by the Know Nothing party. Because the Democratic party talked about the danger of union, the Know Nothings had to be for union. Americans stressed that the "conservative men of the South are rallying to elect Fillmore to preserve the Union, while Southern Locofocos . . . are planning the programme of a dissolution of the Union in the event of Fremont's election. . . ." 80 These conservative and Union men did not believe the Union would be dissolved upon Fremont's election. 81

Therefore, for all of these reasons economic self-interest, the Whig legacy, and plain politics the massive swing over to the Democracy in the slave counties in the South was not as great in Louisiana. 82 However, detection

79 Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, July 20, 1856; September 7, 1856; Daily Creole, August 11, 1856; J. J. Slocum to Thomas C. W. Ellis, September 16, 1856, Ellis Papers, L.S.U.

80 Commercial Bulletin, October 2, 1856.

81 Daily Crescent, October 7, 1856.

82 Perry H. Howard in his study argues that there is no evidence that slave parishes in Louisiana massively swung over to the Democracy. Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 86.

James Broussard, using county election returns in his study on Know Nothing electoral strength in 1856 in the South, concludes that for the South in general there
of the movement to the Democracy does help explain why American majorities eroded in certain areas of the state.

Sugar cane and cotton planters in Louisiana both had an important interest in the future of the Union and the institution of slavery. But no planter group, whether sugar cane or cotton, expressed any unusual affinity for a particular party. The American party captured five cotton producing parishes and seven sugar growing parishes. Still noticeable, although to a lesser extent, was the support given the American party in wealthy sugar and cotton parishes along the Red and Mississippi Rivers. While the farmers in the hill country (the stronghold of the Democratic party in the state) continued to support the Democracy, sugar and cotton parishes lined up behind Buchanan. The cotton parishes that voted for Fillmore were Caddo in northwest Louisiana, Morehouse, Madison, and Concordia in northeast Louisiana, and St. Helena in 

was a massive swing over to the Democracy in those slave counties. However, in Louisiana the movement was not as great. Broussard, "Some Determinants of Know-Nothing Electoral Strength in the South, 1856," Louisiana History, VII (Winter 1966), 14.

See Table 9. The coefficient of correlation between sugar production and cotton production and the 1856 Know Nothing vote is .12 and -.03 respectively.

U.S. Census, 1860. No census data were available for St. Bernard Parish on sugar and cotton production, therefore, 1850 census data were used.
the Florida parishes. The sugar parishes were Jefferson, St. Bernard, St. James, St. Mary, St. Martin, Terrebonne, and West Baton Rouge in the southeastern part of the state. 85

Nativism did have an impact on Louisiana voters, however. Regardless of the American state policy to proscribe no citizen, the proximity of a large foreign-born population influenced native Americans to support Fillmore. 86 The greatest concentration of foreign-born individuals was in Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard parishes. All three supported Fillmore, but the percentage in Jefferson and Orleans was extremely high, eighty-eight and sixty-nine percent respectively. 87 James Broussard argues that despite the few immigrants in the South, the insistence of the American party that northern immigrants were endangering slavery influenced southern voters. 88 Although this reasoning may have influenced some Louisiana voters, a more probable reason for the

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid. See Table 9. The coefficient of correlation between the Know Nothing vote in 1856 and the percentage of foreign-born in 1860 is +.55. I also ran a partial correlation, and the relationship increased to +.84. As in 1855, despite the positive relationship, it is highly improbable that naturalized citizens voted for the nativist American party.

87 U.S. Census, 1860; ICPR.

88 Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 85; Broussard, "Some Determinants of Know-Nothing Electoral Strength in the South," 16-17.
significant correlation between the American vote and a large percentage of foreign-born residents appeared often in Know Nothing newspapers. Charles Gayarré summed it up in his 1855 Address, noting that the immigrants are "now greedy and half famished--the greater portion have been reared in brutish ignorance . . . and cannot be expected to understand the complicated machinery of our political system." Like many other nativists, Gayarré had no objection to denying foreigners the right to office and he believed that "in this time of national crises only Americans should decide the country's fate." Apparently nativists, particularly in the New Orleans area, felt threatened by the large number of immigrants and on election day agreed with Gayarré's assessment.

The anti-foreign-born attitude of the American party affected the vote in 1856, while the anti-Roman Catholic stance of the national American party had little impact. The Democrats and the Roman Catholic newspapers of the state still could not convince Louisiana Roman Catholics of the dangers of Know Nothingism. Although the Americans failed to retain four heavily Roman Catholic parishes which the Whigs had won in 1852, Roman Catholics across the state showed no clear hostility to Fillmore's

89 Charles Gayarré, Address to the People of Louisiana on the State of Parties (New Orleans: Sherman, Wharton and Co., 1855), pp. 18, 28, Gayarré Collection, L.S.U.
candidacy. Even in South Louisiana, which had a greater number of Catholics, Buchanan failed to receive any overwhelming mandate from the Catholics.\textsuperscript{90} Know Nothing parishes such as Terrebonne, St. Martin, West Baton Rouge, and St. James had Catholic populations ranging from sixty-one percent of the population to one hundred percent.\textsuperscript{91}

Therefore, in Louisiana the American party continued to draw support from Whig areas of the state, areas with strong Union sentiment, a large foreign-born population, and even large numbers of Roman Catholics.\textsuperscript{92} The

\textsuperscript{90}See Table 9. The coefficient of correlation between the percentage of Catholics in 1860 and the American vote in 1856 is +.00. For twenty South Louisiana parishes it is -.16. After running a partial correlation the statewide coefficient of correlation is -.19.

There is very little difference in these coefficients of correlation and those between the Whig presidential vote in 1852 and the percentage of Catholics in 1850. For the state and South Louisiana the coefficients of correlation are +.28 and -.11 respectively.

ICPR. The four Catholic parishes the Know Nothings failed to win in 1856 that the Whigs had won in 1852 were Lafourche, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. Landry parishes.

\textsuperscript{91}ICPR.

\textsuperscript{92}See Table 10. Using eight socio-economic variables from the 1860 United States Census I ran a multiple correlation. The eight variables explained fifty-four percent of the proportion of the variance of the total variance. In other words, a significant part of the vote for each candidate is explained, from parish to parish, by the eight socio-economic factors. The multiple coefficient of correlation is .74. However, the single most important variable is the percentage of foreign-born which has a multiple coefficient correlation of .55.
threat to slavery did not result in a solid Democracy in 1856, although movement in that direction was noticeable. The American party had done fairly well in Louisiana. Many Americans remained buoyant after the defeat and considered the Know Nothing party as a viable alternative to the Democrats in Louisiana and the nation. One American newspaper even predicted that the American party would have a national candidate in the field in 1860 for president.93

Regardless of the scattered post-1856 election optimism, the American defeat finished the party in the nation and Louisiana, except for New Orleans. National party members had hoped to throw the election into the House. But the Americans had captured only the electoral votes of Maryland. In Louisiana, Know Nothings had fewer explanations for defeat in 1856 than in the past. A feeling of resignation set in. One editor lamented that he felt outnumbered. Or, in the words of another, the Know Nothings failed because of the lack of patriotism in their age.94

Buchanan's election, and Fremont's strong showing, sobered many Know Nothings. This turn of events left one American "no longer sanguine about the fate of the Union."

93 Baton Rouge *Weekly Comet*, November 12, 1856; Shreveport *South-Western*, May 13, 1857.

94 Baton Rouge *Weekly Morning Comet*, November 9, 1856.
Surely the rejection of Fillmore, who the Americans called the only national candidate, and the strength of the Republicans meant the continued agitation of the slavery question. These unionists asked, what could the country expect in 1860 from the black Republicans? Despite Fremont's strength, Union-loving men in Louisiana could still be found. The Bee even found hope in Buchanan's election. Although dejected over Fillmore's defeat, it saw the election of Buchanan less a party victory than a triumph of Union-loving men of all parties who had united in an effort to defeat Fremont.

Generally, the Americans hoped Buchanan would rid the country of sectionalism. Some still thought the repeal of the naturalization laws, with Democratic assistance, would help. Many refused to fight sectionalism with sectionalism, and called upon Union men everywhere to unite. But a growing sense of helplessness led some Americans to advocate southern unity.

Know Nothing solidarity for Union had begun to crumble. A Plaquemine American believed all past political

95Daily Crescent, November 11, 1856; Bee, November 8, 1856.
96Bee, November 17, 1856.
97Ibid.
98Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, November 12, 1856.
99Plaquemine, Southern Sentinel, November 15, 1856.
ties had to be forgotten. "A solid southern phalanx to combat the rising tide to preserve the union" had to be found. According to this disappointed unionist, a "Union of the South for the sake of the Union would protect in-violate the constitution and Union, stop northern fanaticism and sectionalism, and develop southern manufactures." This attitude became contagious in the state. In the opinion of one American newspaper editor the number of Union men in the South, though still a majority, daily declined.

Southern unity continued to attract Know Nothings in 1857. In early 1857 two Know Nothing editors, opposed to sectionalism in principle, advocated a southern party for "the protection of constitutional and legal rights." To some former Americans, continued support of the American party would only aid the Republicans. The Democratic party, according to these recent converts to

100 Ibid., December 6, 13, 20, 27, 1856. The writer for the Southern Sentinel denied his program was sectional. To him "The union of the Southern people, then, for the purpose of effecting a great national end, is not of necessity a 'Southern Party.'"

101 Bee, November 21, 1856.

102 Although American newspapers appeared to desert the Know Nothing party, they remained loyal to basic American party principles and, at times, various Know Nothing candidates.

103 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 24, 1857; Daily Crescent, January 28, 1857.
southern rights, deserved the approbation of all southern
men. They declared that the members of the American party
would vote only when capable Democrats were presented. 104

Democrats had to appreciate such declarations.
Members of the Democracy agreed that all southern Know
Nothings should abandon their party for the Democratic
party. Democrats warned that Buchanan's election had only
postponed the dissolution of the Union. If the Democracy
failed to defeat Republicanism the South would seek to
dissolve the Union. The Democratic Daily Advocate agreed
with the Know Nothing Southern Sentinel of Plaquemine that
"an unbroken southern phalanx" would protect the interests
of the South. 105

However, numerous Americans vehemently opposed any
talk of disunion. 106 Some expected to "sweep Louisiana
in the upcoming fall elections." A Know Nothing from the
Florida Parishes wrote, "Let our party be quiet, purge
itself of all its bad doctrine and machinery, and remain

104 Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, April 11, 1857; May 16, 1857; June 20, 1857.
106 Bee, March 10, 1857; June 12, 1857. Whigs and
Know Nothings had always suspected the numerous southern
commercial conventions of disunionist sentiments. The com­
mercial convention held in Savannah in 1856 was no different
according to the Baton Rouge Morning Comet. The editor of
the Morning Comet warned his readers that he "smells treason
in it." Baton Rouge Morning Comet, November 27, 1856.
at the same time true to the Union and the South. . . ."\(^{107}\)

Even that recent convert to sectionalism, the Southern Sentinel, vacillated between unionism and sectionalism.\(^{108}\)

Neither unionism, sectionalism, nor nativism garnered much support among Louisianians in the judicial and local and parochial elections of 1857. Except in New Orleans the Democracy had its way in these elections.\(^{109}\)

The Democrats had hoped to control the New Orleans elections through the artifice of a partisan election law passed by the Democratic controlled legislature in March 1857.\(^{110}\) However, the law did not become operative

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\(^{107}\) Thomas C. W. Ellis to E. J. Ellis, February 10, 1857, Ellis Papers, L.S.U.

\(^{108}\) Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, December 27, 1856.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., May 9, 1857; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, April 21, 1857. The Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet attempted to make something of the successful candidate for mayor, and one selectman, as well as lesser officials-elect of Baton Rouge, had been Know Nothings the year before.

\(^{110}\) When the Democrats introduced the bill the Americans in the legislature called it revolutionary and tyrannical. It created an Election Board presided over by a Superintendent of Elections, appointed by the governor. Know Nothings objected to the summary arrest power the bill gave the superintendent. After the passage of the election law the Americans questioned the constitutionality of the law. They believed it violated Article 124 of the state constitution which gave the citizens of New Orleans, not the governor, the right to appoint the police officers of the city.

immediately. As a result, the Democrats called for a non-
partisan judicial race, and offered no organized opposition
in either election. Taking advantage of their dominant
position in New Orleans, the Americans won all judicial
races. The Native American goal to control the judicial
branch of government in New Orleans succeeded in this
election. Former Democratic justices had illegally granted
naturalization papers in the city, Americans alleged, and
now the American party could put an end to such demagogic
practices. Immigrants would no longer be made "citizens"
on the eve of elections to swell Democratic majorities.

The Democrats in the legislature intended to con-
trol New Orleans any way they could. In addition to the
election bill, the legislature provided for the appointment,
by the governor, of all notaries public, constables, jus-
tices of the peace, tax collectors, and assessors in the
city, while these offices remained elective elsewhere in
the state. Bee, February 28, 1857; March 14, 17, 1857;
Daily Creole, March 7, 1857.

However, in the rural parishes where the Democrats
had more political strength the Americans opposed partisan
judicial elections. Daily Crescent, March 28, 1857; Baton

The reasons for not offering any organized opposi-
tion in these elections, according to the Democrats, were
the lack of any political issues in the judicial election,
and the unlikelihood of a fair election in the municipal
contest. Louisiana Courier, April 5, 1857; June 2, 1857.

The Americans offered another explanation. The
tyrrannical election law hurt the Democrats, as did a split
between Soulé and Slidell Democrats in the city during the

In the aldermanic contest the Democrats could only criticize the extravagance of the American administration, as well as its anti-foreign attitude. In the absence of their election law the Democrats watched the Know Nothings sweep the election.

The state elections of 1857 would be the last major campaign for the American state party. However, in some areas of Louisiana the membership hardly acted like defeated men. Optimism abounded in some parish conventions. Ouachita Parish Know Nothings resolved that though defeated the Americans of Ouachita were not conquered. Delegates nominated at these parish meetings went on to the state convention at Baton Rouge in June. There the party nominated their congressional and state candidates. The state convention approved an address protesting immigration, and criticized the Democratic party for its failure to protect the rights of the South in Kansas. The delegates also adopted resolutions critical of state Democrats for wasting public lands, neglecting the public schools, assailing the rights of popular suffrage, and bankrupting

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113 Louisiana Courier, May 10, 1857; Soulé, The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans, p. 89.

114 Shreveport South-Western, May 13, 1857.

115 Since this was not a gubernatorial election the only offices contested were those of state auditor, treasurer, and superintendent of education.
the state treasury. But in this state campaign of 1857 both Know Nothings and Democrats, out of necessity, worked hard to demonstrate that their party best protected the South.

The continuing sectional crisis had forced the Know Nothings to adopt a more southern posture. Officially the party still affirmed its conservative and union goals, but during a time of heightened sectional tensions Know Nothings chose a distinct southern image. Even though state offices were at stake, as well as the congressional positions, the American party concentrated on national affairs. It was on national issues that Americans obviously hoped to expose the anti-southern attitude of the national Democracy.

Nativism, although always an important issue among Americans, received less attention in this campaign. Know Nothings attacked the anti-republican and anti-slavery attitude of immigrants. Americans alleged that both black Republicans and northern Democrats struggled to acquire the alien vote which their section of the country hoped


117 The Democratic Louisiana Courier recognized the lack of interest in the nativist issue by the Americans, and asked "where is their platform?" Louisiana Courier, July 10, 1857.
would help overcome southern power. In particular, the Know Nothings remained adamantly opposed to alien suffrage and squatter sovereignty. The Daily Creole thought it strange that the state rights men did not see the danger of alien suffrage and squatter sovereignty. According to the Daily Creole, the American party would

arrest . . . the assaults which have been made upon the constitution by the fanaticism of the times. First, by arresting the growing power of foreign influence upon our government; and second, by uniting all American hearts to resist . . . aggression upon state rights. . . .

Of course the panacea of repealing the naturalization laws still received the approbation of Louisiana Know Nothings. One American newspaper demonstrated the importance of the foreign issue to all nativists when it declared that only when "the principle that Americans Shall Rule America is acknowledged throughout the country will the reason for the Know Nothing party cease." Americans injected President Buchanan's domestic and foreign program into the campaign. Know Nothings agreed with the southern rights New Orleans Daily Delta that in both areas Buchanan had shortchanged the South.

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119 Opelousas Patriot, February 21, 1857.

120 Daily Delta, June 16, 1857. In the past this newspaper had usually supported the Democracy, but with increased tensions it became more independent and favored southern rights protected by a southern party.
Americans wondered if Buchanan intended to continue former President Pierce's anti-filibustering policy in regards to Central America. The American party believed it was "the natural destiny of Anglo-Americans to overrun Central America. . . ." Know Nothing newspapers had approved of General William Walker's Nicaraguan expedition, and they believed that "the course of Americanism in Nicaragua is now bright." But Kansas attracted more attention than Nicaragua. William Walker had been overthrown before the campaign really intensified. Kansas, however, became more important during the months preceding the election. Know Nothings found the idea of submitting the constitution of Kansas to a popular ballot obnoxious. President Buchanan's governor in Kansas, Robert Walker, had taken sides with the free state party, according to the nativists, and approved of submitting the constitution to the actual residents.

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121 Shreveport South-Western, February 11, 1857.

122 Daily Creole, April 4, 1857. Despite their previous support of former President Fillmore's anti-filibustering position in regards to Cuba, Louisiana Know Nothings believed a difference existed between the two situations. In Nicaragua "no international law was outraged, no usage of civilized government was violated." Therefore, with this logic Americans felt secure in their support of Walker's mission. Semi-Weekly Creole, May 3, 1856.

123 Daily Creole, June 24, 1857; Bee, June 30, 1857. Governor Walker advocated this policy in his Topeka Speech of June 1857.
Such a plan would be detrimental to the South. The American party asked how the Democratic press could propose that all parties unite behind Buchanan when his administration followed policies so adverse to the South. Americans alleged that Buchanan's failure to remove Walker proved the president unfaithful to the South. In addition, the Democratic senators Benjamin and Slidell, and the Democratic congressional candidates, had not denounced Buchanan and Walker.¹²⁴

The Democrats of the state denied that Buchanan supported Governor Walker. The southern Democracy condemned Walker, and in fact, President Buchanan rebuked the Kansas governor. The Democrats reported that Walker had abandoned his earlier position of submitting the constitution to a popular vote. The Baton Rouge Daily Advocate believed the American antipathy to the Kansas-Nebraska Act was more dangerous than recent Democratic policy regarding Kansas. This Democratic newspaper charged that the Know Nothings still favored the Missouri Compromise, "or some other measure restricting the institution of slavery."¹²⁵

¹²⁴Shreveport South-Western, July 1, 1857; August 5, 1857; Daily Crescent, July 14, 17-18, 22, 1857. In addition, the Americans reported that the Address of the Democratic State Central Committee failed to censure either the president or Governor Walker. Daily Crescent, September 10, 1857.

¹²⁵Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, August 15, 18, 20, 1857; October 5, 1857. For good measure the Daily Advocate attacked the anti-Catholic bias of the American party.
Meanwhile, the American party was unable to main-
tain unanimity on the issue of Unionism as opposed to
sectionalism. The issue of southern unity which began soon
after the 1856 defeat continued in 1857. Despite their
state convention resolution upholding the constitution and
the Union, a noticeable spirit of sectionalism crept
into the editorials of some Know Nothing newspapers. Even
pro-Democratic rhetoric could be found in former American
papers. The Plaquemine Southern Sentinel and the New
Orleans Daily Crescent advocated a united South "to pre-
serve the Union." The Southern Sentinel, soon after the
American convention, decided that to support the American
party was hopeless. Other Know Nothings criticized this
defeatist attitude, and denied the people wanted a southern
party. But late in the campaign even the staid and con-
servative New Orleans Bee admitted the death of the American
party in Louisiana. This newspaper urged the South to
choose the lesser of two evils, the Democrats over the
black Republicans.

Because of these defections the American candidates
suffered another defeat. The Democrats won all three state

\[126\] Bee, June 11, 1857.

\[127\] Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, January 24, 1857; Daily Crescent, January 28, 1857; March 12, 1857.

\[128\] Plaquemine Southern Sentinel, June 20, 1857; Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, October 4, 1857.

\[129\] Bee, October 27, 1857.
offices. However, the American party continued its predominance in New Orleans, despite the operation of the election law. But success in the city, and a few other local victories, did not halt the continued Know Nothing decline. The Democratic party not only held its legislative majority, it increased that majority from seven to eleven in the House and from twelve to thirteen in the Senate.  

The Know Nothings did no better in the congressional elections. Know Nothing support in these elections centered mainly in the First and Second Congressional Districts.  

The American mayor of New Orleans had the courts enjoin the election law. However, the courts lifted the injunction in order to permit the election to proceed without any hindrance. The mayor had suggested this action. Daily Delta, October 9, 1857; Daily Crescent, October 20, 1857.

Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and Algiers and Districts Two and Three of New Orleans comprised the First Congressional District. The sugar parishes, Jefferson Parish, and Districts One and Four (the American area) made up the Second Congressional District.

Eustis had to depend on American supremacy in New Orleans for his victory. Unlike the Second District, the "country" parishes of Plaquemines and St. Bernard could not overcome Know Nothing strength in that part of the city included in the First District. The Democratic majority in Plaquemines and St. Bernard increased from forty-six in 1855 to 160 in 1857. Election return data obtained from the Institute for Social Research in coded form.
District returned Know Nothing George Eustis to Congress, but the party lost the other three congressional races. Despite the American majorities in Jefferson and Orleans parishes in the Second District, several of the country parishes returned large Democratic majorities to defeat the American candidate. They even failed to take advantage of a division within the Democracy in the Third District, and lost that district by over 700 votes.132 Outside of the New Orleans area, and the parishes of Concordia, Madison, St. James, and St. Martin, the Democratic majorities increased significantly over the 1855 congressional elections.133

A strong, positive correlation between the American congressional vote in 1857 and the Constitutional Union party vote in 1860 points to a relationship between conservative and Union men and the Know Nothing party. Increased emphasis on southern rights by the Americans apparently did not deter these "Union loving" men from

132 The Democrats split between the Slidell faction, which supported the incumbent Thomas G. Davidson, and the Soulé faction. The Know Nothings hoped their candidate George W. Watterson would win as a result of the Democratic discord. Daily Crescent, July 17, 1857.

133 In the Third Congressional District (the Florida Parishes and central Louisiana) the Democratic majority increased by over six hundred votes. In the Fourth District (western and northwestern Louisiana) the majority increased by over thirteen hundred votes. Election return data obtained from the Institute for Social Research in coded form.
voting for the American candidates. Union men still believed the American party offered the better choice. Investors in manufacturing, with their ties to northern and European capital, likewise supported the American party. But wherever strident state rights attitudes prevailed (based on a correlation between the 1857 Know Nothing congressional and the 1860 Southern Democratic presidential vote) the Know Nothings received less support than the Democrats. Old Whig cotton and sugar parishes along the Red and Mississippi Rivers, as well as the sugar parishes of St. Martin and Terrebonne, returned Know Nothing majorities. Even though the American party held its own in the old Whig area of the State, former members of that party showed no preference for the Know Nothings as they had in previous elections in the state. But Whigs did not overwhelmingly defect to the Democrats.

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134 See Table 11. The coefficient of correlation between the 1860 Union presidential vote and the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote is +.76. The coefficient of correlation between the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote and per capita wealth invested in manufacturing in 1860 is +.54. The partial coefficient of correlation is +.59.

The coefficient of correlation between the 1860 Southern Democratic vote and the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote is -.56.

135 See Table 11. The coefficients of correlation between the Know Nothing congressional vote in 1857 and the Whig congressional vote in 1851 and 1853 is +.35 and +.27 respectively. The coefficients of correlation between the 1857 know Nothing congressional vote and the 1852 Whig presidential vote and the 1852 Whig gubernatorial vote is +.50 and +.43 respectively.
Nativism and slave ownership influenced few voters. Again, the alleged anti-Roman Catholicism of the American party had no major effect on the vote in 1857. As in previous elections, parishes with large Catholic majorities voted for the Know Nothing congressional candidates. Nor did slaveowners believe that the Americans would better protect the institution of slavery than the Democrats. However, Americans did do well in large slaveholding parishes like Caddo, Concordia, Madison, St. James, and West Baton Rouge. All of these parishes had a slave population comprising at least sixty percent of the total population. Therefore, slaveowners probably thought little of the continual Democratic allegation that Know Nothingism was synonymous with abolitionism. Nor did the planters of the state vote for either party in a discernible bloc.

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136 See Table 11. The coefficient of correlation between the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote and the percentage of Catholics in 1860 is -.04. According to the 1860 U.S. Census, there were no Protestant accommodations in St. James Parish which the Americans carried by a 168 vote majority out of a total of 488 votes cast. St. Martin, Terrebonne, and West Baton Rouge parishes all had Catholic majorities of well over sixty percent. U.S. Census, 1860.

137 See Table 11. The coefficient of correlation between the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote and the percentage of slaves in 1860 is +.34.

138 U.S. Census, 1860.

139 See Table 11. The coefficient of correlation between the percentage of planters and the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote is +.36. The coefficient of correlation between sugar production and cotton production and the 1857 Know Nothing congressional vote is +.07 and +.13 respectively.
Finally, the presence of a large foreign-born population had no significant effect on the voters of the state. 140

The nativism of the American party meant less to the voters of the state than before. Protection of southern rights and the preservation of the Union became the leading issues of the day. The American party sought to preserve the Union and fought the sectionalist impulse. Yet, the Americans' desire for victory in Louisiana led them into seeming contradictions. Although in favor of the Union, Know Nothings took an increasingly strong southern position. To the Americans there was nothing inconsistent with standing up for the South and preserving the Union. These two goals were not incompatible. Americans believed that the nation, the South, and the state needed office holders who would not exacerbate the sectional controversy. In 1856 they had stressed that Fillmore was such a man. He was the only national candidate and was, therefore, the best qualified to protect the interests of the South. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise line and doctrines like "Popular Sovereignty" had been the machinations of the Democratic party. Both had led to the civil strife in Kansas and agitation in Congress, neither of which helped the South or the Union. However, after 1857 in Louisiana,

140 See Table 11. The coefficient of correlation between the 1857 American party congressional vote and the percentage of foreign-born in Louisiana in 1860 is +.30.
all of the American program and goals became moot, since that party, as such, would not offer another candidate for state or congressional office.

Party unity and voter appeal for the Americans had centered around either nativism or the preservation of the Union. State issues provided little help in either party cohesiveness or voter appeal. State campaigns dealt mainly with national political issues. Americans denounced the foreign-born and Roman Catholics, and devoted their energy to changing the Naturalization Laws of the United States. Know Nothings always found it propitious to demonstrate that the naturalization laws affected other national policies and institutions. Kansas-Nebraska, slavery, free-soilism, and homestead legislation always found their way into the debates over immigration and the naturalization laws. Since a large number of the immigrants were Roman Catholics, the anti-Catholic bias of the American party received considerable attention during the 1850s. This emphasis on national issues and the problem of naturalization pushed further into the background the issues over which Whigs and Democrats had traditionally opposed each other. Issues like railroads, internal improvements, and banking no longer remained as divisive in Louisiana. Indicative of the problem was the plea of the New Orleans Daily Delta in 1855 to keep federal
politics out of local affairs. However, few heeded this advice to any great extent.

As a result of the emphasis on nativism and national politics, state issues and the meagre American state program received little attention or support. One plank in the American party platform of 1855, "Reform of abuses, and retrenchment in our State expenditures," was so vague that the party hardly addressed itself to that issue. Another plank, "Education of the youth of the country in schools established by the State," had no meaning in Louisiana. The state spent only $300,000 annually on public education. This limited financial support prompted the Superintendent of Public Education to report that "There really is not a single feature of the system anything approaching what it ought to be." In Louisiana Democratic and American legislators primarily opposed each other over questions of fraudulent voting, contested elections, and a registry law and election law for the American stronghold of New Orleans.

\[141\] New Orleans Daily Delta, February 1, 1855.

\[142\] See Appendix C for the state platform for the American party.

The Democratic legislators from 1856 to 1858 used their majorities in both houses of the General Assembly to weaken the American party in the legislature and in New Orleans. The first order of business for the 1856 legislature was the removal of Know Nothing sheriff John Hufty of New Orleans, and of three American senators and several representatives from that city. The Louisiana Courier reported that the votes on these removals were strictly partisan, and referred to the unseating of the Americans as "another great work on the part of the majority."\(^{144}\) The final senate vote on an "Address" to remove Sheriff Hufty from office clearly demonstrated the partisanship involved. The vote was nineteen to twelve with every American present voting no.\(^{145}\)

The struggle for political dominance continued in the legislature with the introduction in 1856 of a bill to

\(^{144}\) *Louisiana Courier*, February 17, 1856; March 5, 29, 1856.

\(^{145}\) *Senate Reports*, February 19, 1856, p. 36. Know Nothings cast nine of the twelve negative votes. Democrat Adam Beatty expressed the sentiments of the three Democrats who also voted no when he explained that he "would vote nay because it is a dangerous precedent for the Legislature to remove a man from office under such circumstances." *Senate Reports*, February 19, 1856, p. 31.

The house vote on the removals were numerically recorded. No roll call vote was printed.
register voters in New Orleans and an election bill in 1857. The former bill actually received the support of both parties, but the Democrats claimed they had always feared they might be "interfering with free suffrage" if such a law passed.\textsuperscript{146} Know Nothings, however, attributed the Democratic reluctance to pass such a law to partisan politics. A. G. Brice, a Know Nothing representative, believed a registry law would mean a loss of money to the Democratic State Central Committee. A registry law would end the election frauds in New Orleans and the Democrats, according to Brice, could no longer buy and sell the several "offices of emolument. . . ."\textsuperscript{147} Americans and Democrats divided over whether naturalized should "show more proof of citizenship" in order to register. The Americans favored a strict proof of citizenship while the Democrats were opposed. A vote on one section of the bill which required a strict proof of citizenship resulted in eight Know Nothings, along with two Democrats, voting yes while only one American and thirteen Democrats voted nay.\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{146}\textit{Louisiana Courier}, February 19, 1856.
\textsuperscript{147}\textit{House Reports}, January 24, 1856, pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{148}\textit{Senate Reports}, March 11, 1856, p. 57; \textit{Senate Journal}, March 11, 1856, p. 65. The Democratic Registry bill, which finally passed, contained features opposed by the Know Nothings. The proof of citizenship was not as strict as Americans wanted, and the governor appointed the "register" rather than providing for his election.
The election law passed in 1857 was also a partisan piece of legislation aimed specifically at weakening the Americans in New Orleans. According to the New Orleans Bee, this law removed from New Orleans officials all control over the arrangements for elections, the appointment of Commissioners, and the establishment of places for voting, and vests those powers in an irresponsible Board and an Executive officer who is clothed with absolute authority.\textsuperscript{149}

The bill passed the senate by an eighteen to ten vote; all Democrats in favor and all Americans opposed.\textsuperscript{150} In the house, the vote was thirty-six to nineteen in favor. Again, as in the senate not a single American party member voted for the bill.\textsuperscript{151}

Beyond these questions of power politics,\textsuperscript{152} there was little partisanship on substantive issues. State aid to railroads, internal improvements, and more liberal banking laws no longer excited the party struggles as in the Whig-Democratic era. Leasing of the state penitentiary and the importation of free black laborers, which received

\textsuperscript{149}Bee, March 14, 1857.
\textsuperscript{150}Senate Journal, March 12, 1857, p. 72; Senate Reports, March 12, 1857, pp. 112-20.
\textsuperscript{151}House Journal, February 27, 1857, p. 61; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, March 3, 1857. The Daily Gazette and Comet reported that three Democrats joined sixteen Know Nothings in opposition to the bill.
\textsuperscript{152}This subject is more fully discussed above.
limited attention in the 1850s, likewise failed to divide state legislators along partisan lines. Both political parties to a greater or lesser extent supported these programs. Two issues on which the Americans gave the appearance of presenting a clear alternative to the Democrats were a constitutional organization of the Swamp Land Commission and an efficient Internal Improvement Department. However, even on these two issues party unity disappeared in the General Assembly.

Long before the appearance of the Know Nothing party, Whigs and Democrats had recognized the advantage of state aid to railroads. The Whig controlled Constitutional Convention of 1852 restored to the legislature the authority to grant aid of the state to railroad ventures. Then, the Democratic General Assembly in 1853 voted state aid to three major railroads: the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas Railroad Company, the New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad Company, and the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad Company. Democrats had been instrumental in prohibiting such aid in the old 1845 State Constitution. However, in the 1850s Democratic newspapers found great virtue in the state subscribing to private railroad companies stock. The Democratic Courier believed the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas railroad would increase the population of North Louisiana and would help "counteract the diversion of trade from New Orleans
which railroads of the North and West had done."\textsuperscript{153} The Baton Rouge \textit{Daily Advocate} hoped that the legislature could provide "amply" for another railroad venture: the Baton Rouge, Grosse Tete, and Opelousas railroad.\textsuperscript{154} This latter railroad company and the New Orleans and Baton Rouge Railroad Company received support from both Know Nothings and Democrats. Both won state aid in the legislature and the New Orleans and Baton Rouge line secured the endorsement of the Democratic governor.\textsuperscript{155} The final senate vote on the bill granting aid of the state to the New Orleans and Baton Rouge Railroad Company was twenty-two in favor and five opposed. Of the five opposed, four were Democrats and one, William M. Kidd, was a Know Nothing.\textsuperscript{156}

The only real political feud that developed during the debates over state aid to railroads was state sectionalism, or, North Louisiana legislators versus South

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{153} \textit{Louisiana Courier}, January 6, 1856.
\item \textsuperscript{154} \textit{Baton Rouge Daily Advocate}, April 4, 1854.
\item \textsuperscript{155} \textit{House Journal}, March 11, 1856, pp. 86, 98-99; March 13, 1856, p. 69; January 19, 1857, p. 7; February 27, 1857; Baton Rouge \textit{Weekly Gazette and Comet}, March 1, 1857.
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{Senate Reports}, March 4, 1857, pp. 83-84. The bill had earlier passed the house by a 49 to 26 vote. \textit{House Journal}, February 27, 1857. Since the roll call votes never listed the party affiliation of the members of the House of Representatives, it is at best guess work as to which party individuals belonged. I knew how many members of the American party were in the house during various sessions, so I had to base my findings on what party supported various bills and determine party unity as an approximation.
\end{itemize}
Louisiana legislators. During the discussion of the New Orleans and Baton Rouge railroad bill, Francis Oliver, a Democrat who represented the North Louisiana parishes of Catahoula, Caldwell, and Franklin, opposed this bill because his home parish of Catahoula had no railroad tracks in it, yet that parish would be taxed to pay for the interest on state railroad bonds. This issue of sectionalism in the state would not come to fruition for years. However, it did point out that the opposition to this bill, including William Kidd's, appears to have been based not on an ideological or party position but a sectional bias.

The question of internal improvements also elicited support from most legislators and the press of the day. When opposition did arise to internal improvements, it concerned the creation of a new Board of Public Works, speculation and waste in the management of the state swamp lands, or, which section of Louisiana received its fair share of tax dollars for internal improvements.

157 Senate Reports, March 4, 1856, p. 46.

158 The parishes represented by the five opponents were: Caddo, Natchitoches, DeSoto, Sabine, Bienville, Claiborne, Winn, Bossier, Morehouse, Union, Ouachita, Jackson, Catahoula, Caldwell, and Franklin, all north Louisiana parishes. Senate Reports, March 4, 1857, pp. 83-84.

159 Although both senators and representatives from both North and South Louisiana argued over which section of the state received more financial support for internal improvements, there were also indications that opposition to internal improvement projects came from "those whose
party introduced a controversy by supporting what they called "a constitutional organization of the Swamp Land Commissioners" during the 1855 state campaign. The controversy continued in Louisiana until 1859. The 1852 state constitution had provided for an elective Board of Public Works to supercede the old Swamp Land Commission. The governor appointed the members of the Swamp Land Commission. The Know Nothing party continually attempted to capitalize on the refusal of the Democrats to create the elective Board of Public Works, but nativism and naturalization always dominated the American party platform and editorials. In addition, not every Know Nothing agreed with the necessity of an elective board. Duncan Kenner, an American from Ascension Parish, did not believe the Louisiana Constitution mandated the legislature to create an elective Board of Public Works. He thought it was just "directory." In fact, Kenner voted with the Democratic majority to repeal those sections of the constitution which created so much controversy over whether an elective Board

property lay on the Mississippi River." In addition, one representative from New Orleans protested the resistance of the house to provide aid for New Orleans. A roll call vote is not available to determine the extent of this sectionalism. House Reports, February 21, 1856, pp. 34-39; Senate Reports, March 18, 1856, pp. 69-70.

160 Baton Rouge Morning Comet, February 29, 1856; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 21, 1856; Bee, March 1, 1858.
of Public Works should be established. Actually, the Americans received more cooperation from certain Democrats on this issue than from Kenner. Whereas Kenner voted against his party, Democrat Adam Beatty from Terrebonne Parish favored following up the constitutional requirement. In addition, four other Democrats during this same 1856 legislative session voted against a move to recommit a bill which did provide for the creation of an elective Board of Public Works.

Know Nothings again demonstrated their inconsistency and lack of unity when legislation concerning internal improvement projects came up for consideration in the General Assembly. Even though the American party approved of internal improvements, several Know Nothings opposed any project which would be funded from the Swamp Land Fund of the state. These party die-hards refused to vote affirmatively on any such funded project until "there was a constitutional organization of a Board of Public Works." This issue was an integral plank in the 1855 American party platform. However, soon after one Know Nothing senator outlined this party policy for the legislature, six Americans voted along with eight Democrats on a senate bill

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{161} Senate Reports, March 6, 1856, pp. 52-54; Senate Journal, March 6, 1856.
\footnote{162} Senate Reports, March 6, 1856, p. 54; Senate Journal, March 15, 1856, p. 77.
\footnote{163} House Reports, March 18, 1856, pp. 68-70.
\end{footnotes}
which authorized an appropriation for 130,000 dollars to construct a levee in Madison Parish with money from the Swamp Land Fund. Know Nothing policy fared no better in the legislative sessions of 1857 and 1858. A bill to construct levees in Catahoula Parish with appropriations from the Swamp Land Fund passed the senate with the help of six Americans. In 1858, Know Nothing Senator Joseph M. Ducros, a member of the Committee on Swamp Lands, introduced a bill (subsequently passed by the senate) which appropriated 25,000 dollars from the Swamp Land Fund "to finish work in progress in the Second Swamp Land District." 

Know Nothings had even less success in achieving unity over the management of public lands in Louisiana. During the 1855 state campaign, the American party included in its state policy the pledge of "a more efficient administration of the Internal Improvement Department, with a view of improving our inland navigation." Throughout the 1855 campaign, the state campaign of 1857, and as late as 1858, American party newspapers accused the Democrats of squandering state land, speculating with state

164 Senate Journal, March 5, 6, 1856, pp. 57-59.
165 Ibid., February 23, 1857, p. 40; February 10, 1858, p. 28. No vote was given in the 1858 Senate Journal.
166 Bee, September 3, 1855.
land, and mismanaging swamp land funds. Nevertheless, when an American senator from New Orleans attempted to amend a levee construction bill (the amendment provided against speculation) several Know Nothings deserted him. The amendment would have required anyone purchasing land affected by the proposed levee to take an oath that "he does not apply to purchase any portion of said lands for the purpose of speculation." Additionally, the amendment limited the number of acres that could be purchased. The chair ruled his amendment out of order, and five American senators helped sustain the ruling.

The absence of American unanimity on public lands continued throughout the 1858 legislature. The Know Nothing New Orleans Daily Crescent had complained about the high cost of reclaiming swamp land and the low price for which it sold. Yet, only three Know Nothing senators in 1858 voted against the sale of one million acres of swamp land at one dollar and twenty-five cents

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167 Ibid., October 6, 1855; March 1, 1858; Shreveport South-Western, October 24, 1855; Baton Rouge Morning Comet, February 29, 1856; Baton Rouge Weekly Comet, December 21, 1856; Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, November 1, 1857; Daily Creole, June 10, 1857.

168 Senate Journal, March 6, 1856, p. 59. Five other American senators voted against the chair.

169 Daily Crescent, September 14, 1857.
per acre. At least five Americans in the senate voted for the land sale. 170

Know Nothing senators continued to split their votes on the subject of state lands, while Americans in the House of Representatives demonstrated little enthusiasm for the Know Nothing position on alleged Democratic mismanagement of state lands. Even though American newspapers in Baton Rouge and New Orleans detailed the abuses in the First Swamp Land District of the state, a majority of the American representatives failed to vote on crucial bills concerning that district. 171 In 1856, at least twenty-one American representatives were absent when the house passed a bill appropriating 32,000 dollars for work in the First District. Shortly after that vote only nineteen representatives voted against an appropriation of 250,000 dollars "to be placed at the disposal of the commissioners of the Swamp Land Districts for drainage and reclamation." 172

170 Senate Journal, March 12, 1858, pp. 108-9. The three Americans were the only opponents to this swamp land bill. Due to a failure of both the Senate and House Journals, and even partisan newspapers to identify consistently the party to which a legislator belonged, labeling politicians by party in Louisiana during the 1850s was difficult and at times impossible. Therefore, roll call votes by party had to be estimates.

171 Baton Rouge Morning Comet, February 29, 1856; Daily Crescent, September 28, 1857.

172 House Journal, March 4, 1856, pp. 70-72; House Reports, March 5, 1856, pp. 45-47.

The final vote was thirty-one in favor of the $32,000 appropriation and seventeen opposed. The Louisiana
Considering the low opinion the American party had for the Swamp Land Commission, a larger number of American representatives in attendance should have been expected for this vote on such a large appropriation.

On the financial front the American party was silent in 1855 and 1856 on the issue of banks and banking. However, during the financial panic of 1857, and the state campaign of that year, the Know Nothings broke their silence. In an "Address to the People of Louisiana," the Know Nothings charged that "the action of the Legislature with respect to the banks, has been illiberal and injudicious." The "Address" continued with the assertion that "... restriction should not be imposed upon the banks which operate as obstruction to trade and commerce." Specifically the American newspapers noted that the Democratic legislature had been illiberal in refusing to charter new banking institutions. The Louisiana Courier felt it was absurd for the Americans "to come out at this time when the business of the whole country is shaken to its very centre in consequence of privileges unjustly and injudiciously extended to moneyed corporations. . . ."

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173 Louisiana Courier, October 3, 1857.
174 Daily Creole, July 18, 1857; Daily Crescent, September 28, 1857.
According to the Courier, "the banks of Louisiana are sound because the Legislature of Louisiana resisted interested appeals for their indefinite multiplication, and carefully restrained their operations within the bounds of safety." 175

The banking issue once again received the attention of the legislature in 1858. Americans and Democrats found themselves at odds when the Joint Committee on Banks and Banking of the two Houses of the General Assembly, in a lengthy report, recommended in part that "no more banks shall be created under the Free, or General Banking Law." 176 Know Nothing Senator Edward Delony from East Feliciana Parish opposed that part since he believed it conflicted "with the intent and spirit of the article of the Constitution authorizing Free Banking." 177 Although several Americans advocated more banks, Know Nothing solidarity also fell apart on this question. During the 1858 legislative session the senate debated a bill which would prohibit the future establishment of any banks or banking corporations under the provisions of the Free Banking Act of 1855. A motion to lay the bill indefinitely on the table (which would have in effect killed the bill) came

175 Louisiana Courier, October 3, 1857.
177 Senate Journal, February 19, 1858, pp. 50-51; House Journal, February 18, 1858, p. 48.
up for a vote late in the session. Not all the Americans voted yes on the motion, as should have been expected. Of the six Americans voting, three voted to kill the bill and three against. The senate killed the bill, but it required the efforts of several Democrats who voted to lay the bill indefinitely on the table. 178

The 1857 and 1858 legislative sessions dealt not only with the banking question, the leasing of the state penitentiary and the importation of free black laborers also created a slight stir. Since the election bill of 1857 and the question of creating more banks in the midst of a financial crisis occupied much of the legislators' time, the penitentiary and black laborer problems received less attention from the General Assembly. Members of both parties spoke for and against legislation concerning these two issues. Neither political party appeared to take a definitive stand, and individual legislators voted without party discipline. The American party certainly had no opinion on either question. Know Nothing Joseph Chew, Senator for Concordia and Tensas parishes, spoke out against leasing the penitentiary. He believed that "in leasing it you may aid in enriching one or two favorite individual citizens." However, two of his fellow American senators disagreed and voted for leasing while four others

178 Senate Journal, March 10, 1858, p. 102.
were absent for the vote. The division of the party con-
tinued as four other Americans joined Chew in opposing the
leasing agreement which passed by a fifteen to eight
vote.\textsuperscript{179}

The 1858 bill to import free black laborers, or, as it was more popularly known, the "African Apprentice
Bill," also received divided support from both political
parties. Actually, the bill was nothing more than a dis-
guise that would provide for the reopening of the African
slave trade.\textsuperscript{180} On a test vote to adopt section one of
the bill five Americans voted in favor while three opposed.
The test vote was tied when the Democratic President of
the Senate, C. H. Mouton broke the tie by voting yes.

\textsuperscript{179}Senate Reports, February 23, 1857, p. 53. In
the House of Representatives no roll call vote was recorded
in the House Journal. However, George A. Pike, Know Nothing
of Baton Rouge, favored the bill which passed that chamber
by a 37 to 16 vote. If the American party opposed leasing
the penitentiary, the approximately forty Know Nothings in
the House in 1857 took little active interest. House
Journal, March 8, 1857, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{180}Although the Democratic Baton Rouge Daily Advo-
cate and Louisiana Courier opposed the bill, the majority
of senators who voted yes were Democrats and the Democrats
had a majority in the House of Representatives which did
pass the bill. Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, March 30, 1858;
Louisiana Courier, March 4, 5, 14, 17, 1858.

For a more complete discussion of the African
apprentice movement in Louisiana see James Paisley Hendrix's
"The Efforts to Reopen the African Slave Trade in Louisiana,"
Louisiana History, X (Spring 1969), 97-123.
However, the bill became so controversial that the legislature later postponed it indefinitely.  

A final insult to what little party unity existed among the Americans came in the 1859 legislature when party members failed to vote unanimously for Randall Hunt in his bid for United States Senator. Hunt, former Know Nothing candidate for attorney-general in 1855, secured only five votes from Americans. The *Louisiana Courier* reported that Know Nothings voted in greater numbers for the two Democratic candidates. Judah P. Benjamin received six or seven American votes, Henry Gray received twenty or thirty, and Hunt five. Of course, this was simply consistent with what Know Nothings had been doing with their votes throughout the 1850s. Initially, the Americans had presented what appeared to be a united party. However, the fallacy was the inability of Know Nothing state legislators to achieve party unity within the General Assembly.  

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182 *Louisiana Courier*, January 26, 1859.
CHAPTER V

NATIVISM STRUGGLES: 1858-1860

The defeat of the American party in 1857 surprised few Know Nothing supporters. According to one Know Nothing newspaper, the inaction of American candidates and the lethargy of the leaders of the party throughout the state caused the defeat.¹ One American wrote that since all their "friends" were defeated "we must submit."²

But pockets of Know Nothing resistance continued in the state, most notably in New Orleans; and American candidates elsewhere did continue to offer themselves for local public offices. In addition, some of the principles of the American party persisted. Nativism remained part of the American rhetoric, particularly in the Baton Rouge area, but its importance declined. Toward the end of the 1850s those newspapers that had supported American principles

¹New Orleans Daily Crescent, November 7, 1857. Hereinafter New Orleans will be omitted from all future references to newspapers from that city; place names will be used, however, for all non-New Orleans papers.

²E. J. Ellis to John Ellis, November 3, 1857, Ellis Papers, Department of Archives, Louisiana State University Library. Hereafter cited as L.S.U.
centered their attention more upon the problem of the preservation of the Union. These adherents of Americanism continued to oppose what they perceived to be a growing demand for "anarchical extreme southern rights; a Great Southern Party and a dissolution of the Union." Therefore, they grasped at any chance to oppose disunionist sentiment. With the national American party gone, and its anti-Roman Catholic rhetoric less an issue, many old line Whigs were less hesitant to join with Americans in their attempt to preserve the Union. Of course, it was in vain, but these Know Nothings and former Whigs continued to hope Unionism would prevail.

However, these Americans and former Whigs had to decide to what party they could turn to accomplish their goal. The American party press recognized both its own impotence, and the Democratic lack of opposition in the South. Desertions from the Know Nothings occurred frequently. Know Nothing voters and newspapers either joined the Democracy or urged cooperation with the Democrats. The Know Nothing Plaquemine Southern Sentinel became the Democratic Gazette and Sentinel in early 1858. According to the editor, the paper changed its affiliation because the Democratic party could check northern fanaticism. Even the New Orleans Bee, at one point, advocated cooperation with

3Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, October 4, 1857.

4Bee, August 18, 1858.
the Democrats rather than remaining neutral. One Know Nothing withdrew from the party citing the contamination of his party with abolitionism and black Republicanism. However, many of the defections could be attributed to the failure of the American party to become a national party, and its failure to achieve its main goal of reforming the naturalization laws of the country.\(^5\) American legislative strength by 1859 was virtually non-existent, and those in the legislature who called themselves Americans sometimes supported sectional legislation which hardly aided the American goal of Unionism.\(^6\)

The American party existed only on the local level, and even there its existence remained precarious. One American paper claimed the Know Nothings possessed a majority of the Iberville Parish Police Jury, but opponents claimed these alleged Know Nothings were in fact independents.\(^7\) Further proof of the weakness of the American party, outside of New Orleans, was evident in the Baton Rouge municipal elections of 1858 and 1859. In 1858 the Americans managed to win only three of the nine positions in the municipal election. So hopeless did the situation

\(^{5}\)Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, February 27, 1858; Bee, August 18, 1858; Louisiana Courier, September 22, 1859.

\(^{6}\)Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, February 27, 1858; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, August 7, 1858, January 18, 26, 1859; February 3, 1859.

\(^{7}\)Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, June 26, 1858.
appear that the Know Nothing candidate for mayor withdrew in favor of an independent candidate. The Democrats charged that the ticket had been presented for appearances only. And by 1859 Know Nothings in Baton Rouge failed to present a ticket.\(^8\)

Even in the citadel of Americanism, New Orleans, the party no longer presented a unified front. In the 1858 municipal election an independent movement appeared. The \textit{Daily Crescent} called the Independent ticket a John Slidell trick and an aristocratic movement.\(^9\) The Democrats presented no formal ticket, and generally supported the Independent candidates. However, they denied the American charge that the Independents constituted a Slidell trick. Indeed, some Know Nothings, opposed to the continuing violence involved in the elections of the city, also supported the Independents. According to one supporter of the Independent ticket, bullies and cutthroats had taken over the American party.\(^10\) For mayor the Independents nominated

\(^8\)Baton Rouge \textit{Daily Gazette and Comet}, March 16, 1858; April 6, 8, 14, 1858; Baton Rouge \textit{Daily Advocate}, March 22, 1858; April 5, 13, 1858; April 5, 1859.

\(^9\)\textit{Daily Crescent}, March 31, 1858; June 2, 1858.

\(^10\)\textit{Daily Delta}, May 26, 1858; \textit{Louisiana Courier}, June 6, 1858; \textit{Commercial Bulletin}, June 1, 4, 1858. The \textit{Bee}, which declared itself neutral in this election, admitted party politics had reached a low point in the city. \textit{Bee}, May 15, 1858.

Leon Soulé, in his study of Know Nothings in New Orleans, notes that the moneyed merchants of the city
a political novice and military man, P. G. T. Beauregard, who campaigned for reform of the city government. But Beauregard also introduced a national issue into the campaign, announcing that although he supported the Union he did not intend to sacrifice the rights of the South.  

The Know Nothings carried the election, but the *Louisiana Courier* boldly declared Know Nothingism in New Orleans dead.  

This was premature because in the 1859 and 1860 elections factionalism again surfaced. An Independent Citizens ticket made its appearance in the city in 1859, and dissident Americans organized a Citizens ticket in 1860. By 1859, according to one Democratic paper, the Know Nothing party in New Orleans had become so disorganized supported Beauregard. Leon Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans: A Reappraisal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), pp. 92-94.  

11 *Louisiana Courier*, June 6, 1858; *Bee*, June 7, 1858.  

12 As usual for a New Orleans election violence preceded the election day. In order to insure a peaceful election some citizens formed a Vigilance Committee, seized the state arsenal, and manned barricades around Jackson Square. The Know Nothings armed themselves and held Lafayette Square in the "uptown" area of the city.  

Soulé, *The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans*, pp. 95-102; W. Darrell Overdyke, "History of the American Party in Louisiana," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XVI (October 1933), 615-18; *Louisiana Courier*, June 9, 17, 1858; *Daily Delta*, June 4, 5, 1858; *Commercial Bulletin*, June 4, 1858; *Daily Crescent*, June 4, 8, 1858; *Bee*, June 4, 7, 1858.
that it now had to woo the very people it had formerly criticized, the German voters of the city. The Americans succeeded in the New Orleans elections of 1859 and 1860, but the party had not presented a unified front. In these municipal elections in New Orleans the issue of nativism no longer played a major role. Nativism had apparently become obscured by a struggle between the financial "haves and have-nots." From accounts in the New Orleans press, the moneyed faction in 1858, 1859, and 1860 had become disillusioned with the violent aspects of the Know Nothing party in the city. As one critic of the Know Nothings put it, the "proper members, not being able to correct things dropped away."

Despite its continuation in New Orleans, the American party had little success in the more rural parishes of the state. Its failure to win on election day led Americans to admit that the party had disbanded in every parish

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13 Daily Delta, May 3, 17, 31, 1859; Daily Crescent, May 30, 31, 1859; June 8, 1859; May 15, 18, 26, 29, 1860; Bee, June 6, 1859; May 1, 26, 1860; Commercial Bulletin, June 4, 5, 1860.

As in 1858 some Democrats supported the Independent Citizens ticket. However, the Louisiana Courier advised Democrats "to give it wide berth." Louisiana Courier, May 22, 1859. On April 26, 1860 the Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet reported that the American party in New Orleans had succumbed and "gone into line with the only national party," the Democrats.

14 Commercial Bulletin, June 4, 1858.
except Orleans. As one American put it, the party was "without any head and front." 15

Although the American party had disbanded in the state, many former Whigs and Know Nothings refused to permit the Democrats to go unchallenged. In March 1859 old Whig and Know Nothing members of the Louisiana General Assembly announced their intention to reorganize the Whig party. According to the Whig "Address to the People of Louisiana," northern Democrats were adverse to slavery and opposed its extension. The "Address" noted that the national Democratic party failed to present a unified program on the tariff, internal improvements, the acquisition of Cuba, a Pacific railroad, state rights, and the African slave trade. The New Orleans Bee did not find this Whig resurgence surprising. In Louisiana, dissension existed among the Democrats, and on the national level, the Bee alleged, the Buchanan administration had failed. 16

The Whig intention to reorganize did not receive unanimous support. Many Whigs and Know Nothings expressed the conviction that both the state and nation needed an

15 Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, May 23, 1858; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, August 7, 1858. The Bee reported that it would support the Know Nothing party in New Orleans only for "local objects." Bee, May 2, 1859.

alternative to the Democratic party. But the confused state of the American party, and the politics of the day prompted a mixed reaction to the news of a Whig reorganization. The Know Nothing Daily Crescent pronounced the Whig party dead. Any resurrection would be impossible, thought that newspaper, since the Democratic party had appropriated many of the Whig principles.17 Another American party paper, the Shreveport South-Western exhibited more enthusiasm. The editor of that paper reported that Caddo Parish would be well represented at the Whig convention in New Orleans in June.18 As expected, the Democrats referred to the Whig effort as hopeless while the Louisiana Courier specifically labelled it as an attempt to "disguise the Know Nothing cat with Whig meal."19

As the 1859 gubernatorial election approached, opponents of the Democracy urged some kind of organized political opposition to the Democrats in Louisiana. The remnants of the American party showed no inclination to field a state ticket. The Know Nothing party did offer candidates for local offices and legislative positions. One Know Nothing, Dr. Thomas J. Buffington, ran for state

17 Daily Crescent, March 21, 1859. This paper reported that the Democrats had "appropriated many of the Whig principles," and saw no good coming from this attempt to reform the Whig party.

18 Shreveport South-Western, April 6, 1859.

19 Louisiana Courier, March 22, 1859.
senator in East Baton Rouge Parish with no party backing, and in Avoyelles Parish Colonel Fenelon Cannon ran for the General Assembly as an American Democrat. Most American candidates for local offices were seen in Caddo, Rapides, Terrebonne, and Orleans parishes. Caddo and Terrebonne parishes had been consistent Whig and Know Nothing parishes, while Orleans had the only well organized American party wigwam. The continued existence of the American party newspaper, the Alexandria American, certainly aided the Know Nothings of Rapides Parish. However, the fragmentation of the American party weakened the efforts of the Know Nothings in the local campaigns. The Caddo Parish Americans eventually dropped the name American in favor of the label Opposition party, and in Rapides Parish the Know Nothings included two Democrats on their ticket.

State-wide opposition to the Democratic party received little support. The recent Whig call had gone unheeded, and most Whig and Know Nothings believed further attempts to revive it would fail. The Shreveport South-Western urged opponents of the Democratic party to form

20Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, October 18, 19, 1859.

21Ibid., July 1, 1859; October 18, 1859; Shreveport South-Western, July 13, 1859; Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, August 31, 1859.

an opposition party. However, the Bee believed that the only opposition would probably come from the discontented portion of the Democracy.

Discontented Democrats soon emerged in the state. The "Regular" Democrats charged that these dissidents, or "Purifiers" as they were called, intended to defeat the Democrats and would accept "all aid, even from the followers of 'Rip Sam.'" Some Know Nothings did endorse this dissident Democratic movement. The Baton Rouge Advocate reported that a meeting in Plaquemines Parish resulted in a coalition between the Know Nothings and "Purificators." East Feliciana Know Nothings also endorsed the "New Line" Democrats. Additionally, the Advocate charged that Know Nothings had aided the "Purifiers" in appointing their

23 Shreveport South-Western, May 4, 1859.
24 Bee, May 31, 1859.
25 Louisiana Courier, April 6, 1859; Daily Delta, April 6, 1859. The conflict resulted from a clash between the Democratic Central State Committee and the Parish Committee of Orleans Parish over patronage, and who should be the Democratic nominee in 1860. The Central State Committee supported the administration while the Orleans Parish Committee favored Senator Stephen A. Douglas. Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, April 26, 1859; Louisiana Courier, May 14, 15, 1859; James Kimmins Greer, "Louisiana Politics, 1845-1861," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIII (July 1930), 448-49. None of the accounts of Know Nothingism explains how the name "Rip Sam" originated.
26 Daily Delta, April 26, 1859.
delegates who would nominate state candidates. However, John Slidell, the administration leader in Louisiana, showed little concern over this movement which had been organized by Pierre Soulé. Slidell informed President Buchanan that despite Soulé's determination to bring disaffected Democrats and Know Nothings together, the old line Democrats had a decided majority, and would control the nomination of the state ticket.

Soulé's inability to control the Democratic party in the state, and the weakness of the American party led to increased speculation of a Know Nothing-Soulé fusion. Although the Bee believed Soulé's Independent Democrats and the Know Nothings could cause trouble for the regular Democrats, it was distressed that the Democrats would probably go unopposed in the elections. The New Orleans Commercial Bulletin reported that the country press also called for opposition to the Democrats. The Know Nothing

27 Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, May 16, 1859. Both Democratic factions held separate primaries to elect delegates to the Democratic state convention.


29 After the old line Democrats' success over the Soulé faction in naming a state ticket, the Soulé dissidents still intended to fuse with the Know Nothings to carry the state. John Claiborne to Alexander Dimitry, June 15, 1859. Dimitry Papers, Tulane University Library Archives.

30 Bee, July 7, 1859.
American of Rapides Parish hoisted the name of Thomas J. Welles of Rapides as its choice for governor in opposition to the regular Democratic nominee. Yet the Commercial Bulletin thought it useless to contest the Democratic nominees. Although disaffected Democrats continued to correspond "with those belonging to other parties," the Commercial Bulletin noted that little progress had been made. 31

Opponents to the regular Democratic ticket did meet in New Orleans in September to nominate candidates for state office. 32 The convention consisted of several former Know Nothings and Soulé Democrats, and according to the New Orleans Bee, amounted to nothing. The opponents had

31 Commercial Bulletin, September 9, 1859. This newspaper believed Democratic opposition would have a chance only in the Second Congressional District. The Commercial Bulletin based its reasoning on that the Democratic incumbent, Miles Taylor, had supported the purchase of Cuba. This would hurt the sugar interests of the state located in the Second Congressional District.

32 In New Orleans a complicated situation arose. The voters had to contend with four tickets. The Regular Democratic ticket of John Slidell and the Opposition ticket of Soulé and the Know Nothings vied for state offices. While an Independent American and American party ticket contested local and legislative offices. New Orleans Know Nothings linked the Independent American ticket with John Slidell. Allegedly Slidell had agreed to support the Independent Americans in return for their support in his bid for reelection to the United States Senate.

Bee, October 14, 1859; November 2, 1859; Daily Crescent, September 26, 1859; October 10, 17, 1859; Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, October 15, 1859; Soulé, The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans, pp. 108-9.
waited too long to present a ticket, and success for an Opposition party appeared dim since only five parishes had sent representatives to the convention. The Know Nothing press of Baton Rouge objected to the name "Opposition party." The Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet suggested the party be called the Democratic Know Nothing party or the American Democratic Know Nothing party. In addition, this newspaper bemoaned what it called the incorporation by the Democrats of all the best Know Nothing principles and leaders. But with little hope of the now disbanded Know Nothing party presenting its own ticket, the Weekly Gazette and Comet pleaded with Americans and independent Democrats to vote the Opposition ticket and defeat "King Caucus." In addition, some old Know Nothings objected to the influence of disgruntled Democrats in the party, especially Soulé.

Not every American or disgruntled Democrat despaired of the chances of the Opposition party. The New Orleans Daily Crescent claimed it had met with an

33 Bee, September 13, 1859; Daily Delta, September 14, 1859.
34 Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, September 18, 1859; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, September 15, 1859.
35 Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, October 16, 1859.
encouraging reception. Alexandria Know Nothings predicted that Democrats and Americans alike would vote for the nominees of the Opposition party. According to the Alexandria American, the people of Louisiana "have become tired of seeing fools and knaves foisted into office." And the editor of the West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter refused to vote for the Democrats just because they represented, at the time, the only obstacle to black Republicanism. This writer believed that the Opposition party was greatly underrated, and that that party offered a viable alternative on election day.  

Democrats, however, thought little of the Opposition party. The Louisiana Democrat of Alexandria characterized the convention which nominated the Opposition ticket as "a body consisting of a New Orleans Know Nothing delegation and such straggling Samuelites or sore-headed Democrats as may have been in town at the time." According to the Louisiana Democrat, the Opposition had adopted no platform, only resolutions written by one member of the New Orleans Know Nothing wigwam. That newspaper also charged that the delegation from Rapides Parish represented only a single precinct. The New Orleans American party, the Louisiana Democrat, September 17, 23, 1859.

Ibid., October 3, 10, 1859.

Alexandria Louisiana Democrat, September 14, 1859.
Democrat asserted, organized the Opposition movement to appear as a state-wide party, and not a spoils party.  

Despite Democratic allegations to the contrary, the Opposition party did adopt a platform. In fact, there were some former Americans who objected to the last clause of the platform which invited "all citizens" to cooperate with the Opposition party. Indeed, these old nativists had to be chagrined since the issue of nativism was conspicuously absent from this campaign. More prominent in this platform was a denunciation of the Buchanan administration. According to the Opposition party, the national administration had not fulfilled its pledges to the people. Primarily the Opposition charged Buchanan with wasting public money, conducting a cowardly foreign policy, and exacerbating sectionalism. State issues received a secondary position in the platform. According to the Opposition press Democrats of the state had overspent public funds, mismanaged public lands, and burdened the citizens with high taxes. The Opposition party alleged that the Democrats "stood not on their merit, but on their merit as supporters of the Buchanan Administration."

Opposition candidates criticized the Democratic unwillingness

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40 Ibid., September 21, 1859.


42 Daily Crescent, September 21, 1859.
to discuss state policy, but both parties stressed national issues, and neglected state affairs.  

Actually, the 1859 state campaign launched the 1860 presidential election campaign for both the Democrats and their opponents. During this state campaign, editorials appeared in the Opposition party press warmly receiving the possible candidacy of Stephen A. Douglas, while the administration Democrats attacked the senator from Illinois at every opportunity. The New Orleans Bee, with the national American party disbanded, referred approvingly to Douglas's principles as moderate, which avoided "the extremes of either side." Although the Bee criticized "hot-headed politicians of the South, who are the chief culprits in fostering dissension," the former American but now Democratic newspaper, the Gazette and Sentinel of Plaquemine, urged the old Americans to throw their support to the Democrats in 1860.

In the final analysis the 1859 campaign created less excitement than any campaign during the 1850s. Since the American party had gone the same way as the Whigs, opponents of the Democracy drifted aimlessly. The Bee

43 Ibid., October 13, 1859.

44 Bee, June 25, 1859; Louisiana Courier, October 15, 1859.

45 Bee, July 14, 1859.

46 Ibid., June 18, 1859; Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, April 30, 1859.
had been correct when it reported earlier in the campaign that the opponents to the Democratic party had waited too long to present a ticket.\textsuperscript{47} The Democratic \textit{Daily Delta} of New Orleans reported what everyone expected. Except in New Orleans, the Democrats anticipated little opposition.\textsuperscript{48}

The results of the election confirmed the prediction of the \textit{Daily Delta}. The Democratic candidate for governor, Thomas O. Moore, defeated his Opposition party rival by almost 10,000 votes. The Democrats succeeded in three of the four congressional races, losing only in the First Congressional District.\textsuperscript{49} The Opposition ticket won majorities in only two parishes, Terrebonne and Orleans. Voter interest was so low in this election that the total vote failed to exceed that of the 1855 gubernatorial election. Democrats had been confident of success throughout the campaign and many obviously failed to vote. Neither did last-minute enthusiasm for the Opposition party convince enough dissident Democrats, old Whigs, and

\begin{footnotesize}
47 \textit{Bee}, September 13, 1859.

48 \textit{Daily Delta}, September 6, 1859.

49 Moore received 25,434 votes to 15,587 votes for Thomas J. Wells, the Opposition party candidate for governor. The successful candidate in the First Congressional District was John E. Bouligny. Bouligny and L. D. Nichols, unsuccessful congressional candidate in the Second District, both ran under the Know Nothing label. Soulé, \textit{The Know Nothing Party in New Orleans}, pp. 109-10; Alexandria \textit{Louisiana Democrat}, August 31, 1859; \textit{Bee}, October 14, 1859.
\end{footnotesize}
Know Nothings that the regular Democratic ticket could be defeated.

The bulk of the support for the Opposition party candidates did come from former Whigs and Know Nothings. The bulk of the support for the Opposition party candidates did come from former Whigs and Know Nothings.50 Old Whig parishes such as Caddo and Concordia in North Louisiana, and the sugar parishes of St. Charles, St. James, St. Martin, Terrebonne, and West Baton Rouge managed to give forty percent or more of their vote to the Opposition gubernatorial candidate.51 The same was true of those parishes which had supported Know Nothing candidates in the mid-1850s—Caddo, Catahoula, Concordia, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Madison, Orleans, Rapides, and the sugar parishes. All Know Nothing parishes showed remarkable support for the Opposition party.52 Some Whigs and Know Nothings probably voted for Democratic candidates, but most either supported the Opposition ticket, or stayed home on election day.

The continuing theme of nativism, which had heightened many an argument in the 1850s, played little

50See Table 12. The coefficient of correlation between the 1852 Whig presidential vote, the 1852 Whig gubernatorial vote, and the 1859 Opposition vote is +.53 and +.57 respectively.

The coefficient of correlation between the 1855 Know Nothing gubernatorial vote, the 1856 Know Nothing presidential vote, and the 1859 Opposition vote is +.68 and +.73 respectively.

51ICPR.

52Ibid.
or no role in the 1859 election. Nine of the twenty-four strongest Opposition party parishes had a Roman Catholic population of fifty percent or more. Five others had a Roman Catholic population of at least twenty-five percent. Although the parishes with the largest foreign-born population also supported the Opposition party, the great majority had few non native-born Americans. In addition, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes, which had a noticeable community of foreign-born inhabitants, went overwhelmingly Democratic.  

Slave ownership also failed to sway voters in this election. Nineteen Opposition parishes had slave populations which accounted for more than half of the total population. West Baton Rouge, St. James, St. Charles, Madison, East Feliciana, and Concordia parishes had a slave population of better than seventy percent. Concordia and Madison parishes had slave populations of ninety and eighty-eight percent respectively. These Opposition parishes also had several planters who could be classified as large slave holders. Therefore, many slave holders did not believe the Democratic party better protected the interests of the slaveholding South.  

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53 See Table 12. The coefficient of correlation between the 1859 Opposition vote and the percentage of foreign-born and Roman Catholics are +.36 and -.03 respectively.

54 See Table 12. The coefficient of correlation between the 1859 Opposition vote and the percentage of slaves and planters in 1860 are +.08 and +.03 respectively.
Neither the wealth of a parish nor the type of agriculture which predominated in a parish affected the outcome of the election. The wealthy parishes of Ascension and Concordia, and the poorer parishes of St. Helena and St. Tammany all leaned toward the Opposition party. The Democrats also received support from both wealthy and poorer parishes, but that party did have more poorer parishes in its column. Finally, both sugar and cotton parishes went for the Democratic and Opposition parties.  

Whereas nativism, the need to protect slavery, wealth of a parish, and the type of agriculture of a parish did not influence those who voted for the Opposition party, a genuine fear for the Union did. As previously noted, the quantitative data illustrate that most old Whigs and Know Nothings still found it difficult to vote for a Democrat. Therefore, most supported Opposition candidates.  

55 See Table 12. The coefficient of correlation between the 1859 Opposition vote and the farm wealth per acre, the per capita wealth invested in manufacturing, sugar production, and cotton production; all from the 1860 census, was +.15, +.31, +.01, and -.08 respectively.

Finally, a multiple correlation indicates that voting patterns, to a large extent resulted from socio-economic differences from parish to parish. I used eight socio-economic factors, percent slave, percent foreign-born, percent planters, percent Roman Catholic accommodations, farm wealth per acre, per capita wealth invested in manufacturing, sugar production, and cotton production in 1860, to arrive at a multiple correlation of .58. These factors, or variables explain thirty-four percent of the proportion of the variance of the total variance. Simply stated, these eight variables help to explain why voters preferred the Opposition party over the Democratic party from parish to parish.
Whereas the Democrats had made more significant gains in "strong" Whig parishes in 1855, they had less success in 1859. However, the fear of any continued agitation of the slavery question united these supporters of the Opposition ticket more than a general antipathy toward the Democrats. The Opposition party platform during the campaign had stressed national issues, and the first plank deprecated further agitation of the slavery question. The second plank accused the Buchanan administration of fostering "mischievous sectional action." Throughout the campaign Opposition spokesmen had called for the preservation of the Union. And despite the seemingly hopeless situation of the Opposition party, and the lethargy of former Whigs and Know Nothings, over thirty-seven percent of the voters responded to the conservative appeal of the Opposition party. The presidential election of 1860 would prove that most Louisianians would reject a sectional candidate and remain conservative on the question of the Union as this 1859 election forecast.

56 See Table 12.
57 Daily Crescent, September 21, 1859.
58 See Table 12. The coefficient of correlation between the 1859 Opposition vote and the Constitutional Union vote of 1860 is +.79. The coefficient of correlation between the Opposition vote of 1859 and the Southern Democratic vote of 1860 is -.60.
Ever since the 1856 presidential election the Democratic and opposition newspapers, whether formerly Whig or Know Nothing printed little political news not relevant to the 1860 election. The presidential election of 1860 had intruded upon the recently concluded state campaign. And both parties had conducted their campaigns with an eye on 1860. The Buchanan administration received more attention during Louisiana elections than did state and local issues. Free-soilism, Lecompton, Cuba, and Nicaragua were some of the issues seriously discussed by local candidates. Of particular concern was how these problems would affect the status of the Union.

Know Nothing newspapers in the late 1850s reflected this growing concern with the preservation of the Union. From all areas of the state the theme of union pervaded the editorials of these papers. The Shreveport *South-Western* blamed the Democrats for the current crisis atmosphere. According to this northwest Louisiana paper, the Democrats were responsible for "the chicanery and intrigues of its free-soil northern managers, and the demagogueism of its pliant southern leaders, who have brought the union to the brink of ruin."\(^59\) Louisiana Americans opposed the rash of retaliatory resolutions offered in the 1858 legislative session against the

\(^{59}\) *Shreveport South-Western*, December 8, 1858.
personal liberty law of Massachusetts. Such sectional measures as these resolutions, which would tax the commodities of that northern state, and the movement for southern Bibles, hymn books, school books, tracts, and literature, met with opposition in the American press. In fact, the Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet advocated permitting the reading of all incendiary tracts against slavery, arguing that the institution was just and "the truth can't be corrupted by error."^60 Although the New Orleans Bee believed northern meddling in the slave question prompted southern sectionalism, that newspaper quickly pointed out that disunion would not solve the problems of the South.^61 Furthermore, Know Nothing sentiment generally rejected the gloomy picture of the future of the Union painted by such southern radicals as Robert Barnwell Rhett. One Louisiana American newspaper asserted that "long after his [Rhett's] bones have returned to their native dust, the Union he so desperately assails will endure to gladden the heart of the patriot..."^62 So attached to the Union was the proprietor of the Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet that he hoped there would be someone in the presidency as

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^60 Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, February 27, 1858; March 5, 1858.

^61 Bee, October 30, 1858; August 6, 1859.

^62 Ibid., July 18, 1859.
strong as Andrew Jackson if any state attempted disorganization. 63

Although the Know Nothing press blamed the Democrats for the sectional tension which existed during the 1850s, some state Democrats also recognized the disadvantages of sectionalism. There were those Louisiana Democrats who felt that a southern sectional party would drive northern conservatives away from the state rights Democracy. The Democratic *Louisiana Courier* charged the advocates of a southern party with disunion. To this newspaper William L. Yancey and his Southern League represented "a movement . . . to distract the Democratic party, and come in direct conflict with the strict adherents to the doctrine of State Rights." 64

Unanimity on the question of southern rights did not exist among members of the American party. The disintegration of the Know Nothing party, and its lack of leadership and direction prompted contradictory statements from the press and members of the party. Despite the general disapprobation of sectional agitation by Americans, many individual Know Nothings did not feel bound to that position. In March 1858 Know Nothing Senator W. R. Adams of New Orleans advocated a sectional party. Opposition


64 *Louisiana Courier*, March 17, 1858; September 8, 1858.
to Senator Adams's view, interestingly enough, came from a former Know Nothing newspaper the Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, which had recently joined the Democratic party. At the same time the American party newspaper the New Orleans Daily Crescent attempted to prove that a southern confederacy could succeed. This same newspaper also refused to support what it called the "Union-at-any-and every price." Despite denials that it supported disunion, the Daily Crescent saw little to be optimistic about in regards to northern fanaticism on the slavery issue. This newspaper advocated the preservation of the Union only if it "remains worth preserving." Even the Bee in 1858 expressed a similar view. It favored the Union so long as it remains one of even possible justice—so long as the South may continue within it, and not be at once despoiled and dishonored—so long as the rights guaranteed to us by the federal Constitution are respected.

The Know Nothing Opelousas Patriot went so far as to support the Southern League of William L. Yancey. This newspaper opposed those "who cry peace when there is none." In addition, it believed any attempt to reorganize the Whig party in Louisiana and the South would distract southerners

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65 Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, March 13, 1858.
66 Daily Crescent, February 4, 1858; March 30, 1858; July 10, 1858.
67 Ibid., March 19, 1858.
68 Bee, April 24, 1858.
"during this crisis." The *Patriot* urged the South to "march in one solid phalanx upon the Black Republican forces of the North and West."69

Fragmented and with no direction, some Know Nothings in Louisiana found it expedient to exacerbate sectional tension by attacking the Buchanan administration for its less than enthusiastic support of southern rights. According to these Americans, the president's message in 1857 demonstrated the failure of the national Democracy to treat the South equally. Americans opposed Buchanan's anti-filibustering sentiment since they believed it conflicted with the "manly American principles enunciated in the celebrated Ostend circular." Many southern newspapers favored United States expansion into Mexico, Central America, and Cuba, and even the Democratic *Louisiana Courier* regretted Buchanan's position on Nicaragua in particular. 70

Neither did Buchanan, alleged his Know Nothing opponents, protect southern interests in Kansas. Although the *Bee* believed the president was more pro-southern in regards to Kansas, other Know Nothings noted Buchanan had retained

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69 *Opelousas Patriot*, July 31, 1858; April 16, 1859.

70 *Bee*, December 12, 1857; *Daily Crescent*, December 16, 1857; *Louisiana Courier*, December 16, 1857; January 3, 1858. Yet the *Louisiana Courier* regretted to see the southern press condemn Buchanan. And Buchanan's failure to denounce British interference in the Paulding intervention in Nicaragua provoked the Democratic *Daily Delta* to demand that the Louisiana Legislature speak out against Buchanan. *Daily Delta*, January 9, 15, 1858.
Walker in Kansas long enough to do "all the mischief that he could." 71

Now that the national American party no longer existed, the Louisiana Americans had the additional problem of whom to support in the presidential election of 1860. American newspapers, as well as old line Whig papers, periodically advanced suggestions as to a possible candidate. These newspapers generally sought what they called a "conservative" man, one who opposed further sectional tension. The name which appeared more frequently was that of United States Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois. The New Orleans Bee believed Douglas would be the foremost candidate of "conservatives and nationals throughout the Union." 72 Newspapers like the Bee questioned the logic behind the attacks on Douglas by the Buchanan administration for the senator's stand on the Lecompton Constitution and the English Compromise. 73

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72 Bee, November 8, 1858.

73 Daily Crescent, May 5, 1858; August 13, 31, 1858; September 11, 1858; October 14, 1858; Bee, October 1, 19, 1858.

The Buchanan administration supported the pro-slavery Lecompton constitution approved by the voters of Kansas. However, the free-state party in Kansas held their own referendum and voted overwhelmingly against Lecompton. In order to admit Kansas under Lecompton, the administration
and Whig newspapers as well, applauded Douglas's defeat of Lincoln for the U.S. Senate in 1858. The Bee called it "a victory of National Democracy over the blind and besotted fanaticism of anti-slavery." The Bee had become so nationalistic that in 1859 it reported that it would not be alarmed by the prospect of William H. Seward's election to the presidency. Seward, according to the Bee, would become more conservative upon taking office.

With the 1859 election out of the way many Know Nothings and former Whigs advanced Douglas's candidacy. The New Orleans Daily Crescent reported that Democratic congressman Miles Taylor supported Douglas. The Daily Crescent agreed with Taylor that Douglas "has at this time full possession of the popular mind of the North which is truly, and on principles, favorable to the maintenance of all of the rights of the South under the Constitution and offered the voters of Kansas a compromise, the English Compromise. This compromise offered admission to the Union for Kansas if she voted for a normal grant of land. In effect, Lecompton would be resubmitted. For a fuller discussion of Lecompton, the English Compromise, and Douglas's opposition see Roy Nichols's The Disruption of American Democracy (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), pp. 160-81.

The Democrats in Louisiana reported that Douglas's action in Kansas ran counter to the best interests of the South. One supporter of the Democrats went so far as to state he saw "no marked difference between Douglas and Lincoln." Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, September 14, 1858; Opelousas Patriot, October 23, 1858.

74 Bee, November 8, 1858.

75 Ibid., April 13, 1859.
in the Union." Whigs and Americans looked upon Douglas with favor, claimed one former Know Nothing paper, and another suggested making him the people's candidate if the Buchanan Democrats kept him out of the Charleston convention. In a more practical vein the Daily Crescent queried what other northern man could bring thirty-four votes to the electoral college along with the one hundred and twenty of the South? Of course that man was Stephen A. Douglas.

But many former Whigs and Americans had difficulty supporting a Democrat, and many still hoped for a union movement. As speculation regarding a national Union party increased, the Bee equivocated. It now advocated such a national Union party. Although Douglas had received the approbation of the Bee, it preferred the old Whigs John Bell, John Crittenden, or Edward Everett. The problem of accepting these latter individuals, objected the Bee, was that they "are men without a party." The dissident Soulé faction of the Democratic party hoped the disorganization of Americans and Whigs would work to their advantage. Having lost their bid in 1859 to control the state Democratic machinery, Soulé's "Purifiers" once again made

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76 Daily Crescent, February 7, 1860.
77 Bee, January 31, 1860; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, February 21, 1860.
78 Daily Crescent, March 1, 1860.
79 Bee, November 8, 1858.
overtures to the conservative Whigs and Know Nothings to join them in appointing delegates to the Democratic state convention. But by 1860 a Union movement appeared likely, and the conservative Bee now cautioned against accepting any overtures from the Soulé faction. Additionally, the Bee believed it would be too difficult for Whigs and Americans to "metamorphasize themselves."

Even with the nomination of John Bell and Edward Everett as presidential and vice-presidential nominees of the Constitutional Union party, Americans and old Whigs equivocated. At first these conservatives counseled a wait-and-see attitude. If the Democrats, after their Charleston debacle, remained divided, the Union movement would have a better chance of success. Then too, Union men thought the prospects of the Constitutional Union candidates depended on who the Republicans would nominate. Before the nomination of Bell, the Daily Crescent charged that a three-party race would harm the South, and it looked unfavorably upon a Constitutional Union presidential candidate. Even though that newspaper later changes its stance and reported it knew of no better way

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80 Ibid., February 3, 1860. The Bee, however, soon despaired of any likelihood of a union movement. Less than a month after this article appeared, an article in the Bee reported a union movement could not succeed. Bee, February 28, 1860.

81 Ibid., May 15, 25, 1860.

82 Ibid., May 15, 1860.
to defeat the black Republicans, it still refused to commit itself unconditionally to Bell and Everett. In the final analysis however, most of the former Whig and Know Nothing newspapers supported the Bell-Everett ticket. The Daily Crescent became such an advocate of Bell that it lectured former Whigs and Know Nothings not to forego their principles just because their candidate had no chance of success. But according to the Daily Crescent, Bell had a good chance for success.

The Slidell Democrats in the state regarded both Douglas and Bell as anathema to the South. The Louisiana Courier attacked those Soulé Democrats who supported Douglas's candidacy, and noted that present advocates of the senator had once attacked his principle of squatter sovereignty. In addition, the administration Democrats

83Daily Crescent, March 21, 1860; May 12, 1860.
84In New Orleans the Bee, Daily Crescent, Commercial Bulletin, and Daily Picayune supported the Constitutional Union party. In the country the Shreveport South-Western and the West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter cast their lot with Bell. Mary Lilla McLure, "The Elections of 1860 in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, IX (October 1926), 661.


85Daily Crescent, July 16, 21, 1860. This newspaper refused to back Douglas as Pierre Soulé had urged, and asked why the South should unite behind John C. Breckinridge instead of Bell.
critically linked Soulé with former Know Nothings in the state. Nor did the Courier have kind words for John Bell. Bell's past record on slavery matters received detailed scrutiny. The Breckinridge Democrats reviewed Bell's career beginning in 1837, and listed several instances in which Bell had opposed the institution of slavery. In addition, these Democrats did not take seriously the talk of fusion between the supporters of Douglas and Bell. The Daily Delta charged they loved "their political chief more than they do their country and this glorious union."

This presidential campaign temporarily resurrected the old nativistic issue as well. After the demise of the national American party anti-Roman Catholicism and anti-foreignism received little attention in Louisiana. Defeated and disorganized, Louisiana Know Nothings, with few exceptions, no longer found it expedient to harangue the public on the problems of foreign immigration. Only the Baton Rouge Gazette and Comet continued to agitate for a change in the naturalization laws. The failure of President Buchanan to mention anything on that topic in his 1857 message to Congress disturbed the editor of the Weekly Gazette and Comet. The editor believed native

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86 Louisiana Courier, February 15, 17, 21, 1860; May 23, 1860; June 5, 9, 1860; July 26, 1860.
87 Ibid., August 7, 1860.
88 Daily Delta, July 21, 1860.
demagogism would continue "as long as there is a growing foreign element in our midst whose first and only lesson in republicanism is that 'Liberty is License.'"\textsuperscript{89} Prior to the 1860 presidential election the Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet attacked the Democratic party for "cow-towing" to foreigners, and blamed the dissolution-of-the-Union talk on foreigners.\textsuperscript{90} Some nativists also opposed any federal homestead legislation because it would favor foreigners. However, nativist and southern Democrats joined together in opposition to homestead legislation because it would also favor speculators and black Republicanism.\textsuperscript{91}

The nativism of John Bell, the Constitutional Union candidate, was an issue in Louisiana during the campaign of 1860.\textsuperscript{92} Democrats attacked Bell for his alleged opposition to Roman Catholics and naturalized citizens. The New Orleans Catholic Standard reported that, although Bell

\textsuperscript{89}Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, December 27, 1857; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, January 29, 1858; May 21, 1858; June 10, 24, 1858.

\textsuperscript{90}Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, April 4, 1860; June 20, 1860.

\textsuperscript{91}Daily Crescent, April 10, 1860; Louisiana Courier, February 10, 1859; April 3, 1860.

\textsuperscript{92}Although not blatantly anti-foreign, the Democratic Louisiana Courier during this campaign accused the German newspaper the Louisiana Staats Zeitung of abolitionism leanings. Louisiana Courier, July 21, 22, 1860.
never joined the American party, he reportedly endorsed its proscriptive principles. To substantiate this charge, the Baton Rouge Daily Advocate printed excerpts from a speech delivered by Bell in 1860 at Knoxville, Tennessee, in which he stated that he favored "a little blood letting in order to avoid future blood letting between native Americans and foreigners when aliens, if not checked, flood the land."

Three occurrences, no doubt, contributed to a decline in nativist sentiment. First, the disintegration of the Know Nothing party had a significant impact on all Americans. Newspapers which had been leading exponents of immigration restriction practically eliminated all articles relative to anti-foreignism. The defeats in 1856 and 1857 confused many Americans and they simply lost their direction. Secondly, immigration to the United States continued to decline in the late 1850s. In both Louisiana and the United States the number of immigrants who arrived between 1853 and 1856 had declined by fifty

93 Ibid., August 29, 1860; Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, September 14, 1860; Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel, October 6, 1860. The Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel of September 29, 1860 reported that the Catholic Standard of New Orleans supported the Southern Democratic nominee Breckinridge.

94 Baton Rouge Daily Advocate, November 1, 1860. This speech followed the pre-election riots in Louisville and other American cities between natives and foreigners.
percent. And the numbers continued to decline for the rest of the decade. Therefore, with the source of friction drying up nativists became more restrained. Finally, the sectional controversy overshadowed and encompassed nativism. Louisiana nativists, as well as other Louisianians, were engrossed in the more critical issues of preserving the Union and maintaining southern rights.

Therefore, the major issue for the conservatives and Union men in 1860 was the preservation of the Union. Whether they supported Douglas or Bell, the conservative and union newspapers displayed virtual unanimity on the question of preserving the Union. Further discussion of the slavery question received no support from Union men. Conservatives, whether old Whigs, Americans, or Democrats, regretted the southern Democratic attempt to insert a congressional slave code into their party platform. According to one former Whig and Know Nothing, "slavery is decided by soil and climate not legislation or judicial decisions." One loyal Unionist charged that issues arising


The Shreveport South-Western reported that Germany and Ireland had sent their surplus population and the U.S. could now expect a continued decrease in immigration.

96. The Democrats did confront Bell and his supporters with that candidate's alleged nativism. As discussed earlier, that issue received little attention in 1860.

from this slavery agitation endangered the Union and the South by "washing away and undermining those fraternal bonds which are the ligaments that bind together the Union." The Bee, more optimistic in 1860, did not even consider the election of a Republican cause for dissolving the Union. But the supporters of John Bell warned the voters that the Breckinridge Democrats threatened secession if Lincoln were elected. These conservative proponents of Bell charged the Democrats with attempting to nullify federal laws and to violate the United States Constitution. According to one Unionist paper, the Democracy plainly threatened the Union.

Union meetings and conventions throughout the state urged the people to rally behind the Union. Unlike the state Opposition party convention in 1859, the state convention of the Constitutional Union party packed the Hall of Representatives in Baton Rouge. Almost every parish sent delegates to this convention which resolved to uphold the federal constitution and Union. After the convention the leadership of the state Constitutional Union party strengthened their organization. Every parish but one,

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99 Bee, December 10, 1859; January 20, 1860.

Carroll, had a parish committee. The organization included a state central committee, a finance committee, and a committee of arrangements. The party also began publication of a special party newspaper in New Orleans, the Louisiana Signal. So intense did some of these conservative Bell men feel about the Union that they came out for the Union-at-any-price. One former American party paper which supported Douglas in this campaign, the Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, was "willing to go as far as Old Hickory went into South Carolina, to teach the sisters of the confederacy, what they owe to the Constitution."

Breckinridge Democrats scoffed at the Union-at-any-price men in the South. However, the supporters of Breckinridge denied they were for a dissolution of the Union. They did believe "that the continued repetition of intentional and unwarranted violations of the Constitution may, and ultimately will effect the dissolution of the Confederacy." What these Democrats desired was the

\[\text{101} \text{Greer, "Louisiana Politics," 475; McLure, "The Elections of 1860 in Louisiana," 663. There are no extant copies of the Louisiana Signal. Daily Crescent, October 9, 1860; Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet, August 28, 1860.}

\[\text{\text{102} Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, June 24, 1860.}

\[\text{\text{103} Louisiana Courier, August 22, September 13, 1860.}\]
right to take their slave property into the territories without "their rights, either of person or property, being destroyed or impaired by Congressional or Territorial legislation." As for Bell the Democrats criticized his "opposition to the natural and constitutional extension of slavery under any form. . . ." To these Southern Democrats Bell's conservatism was "a strange conservatism," and they made it known that they would "prefer Yancey's conservatism." 105

Although the sectional candidate Breckinridge carried the state, he did not gain the majority in Louisiana. Bell and Douglas, supported by those conservative Whigs, Know Nothings, and Democrats who had campaigned on a Union platform received a majority of the votes of Louisiana. 106 Even though the Southern Democrats had agitated the slavery question during the campaign, 107 slaveholders, large and small, showed no preference for Breckinridge over Bell and Douglas. Both the conservative candidates and Breckinridge received about the same

104 Ibid., July 25, August 4, 1860; Daily Delta, October 26, 1860.
105 Louisiana Courier, September 11, 1860.
106 Breckinridge's vote was 22,681, followed by Bell with 20,204, and then Douglas with 7,625.
107 Louisiana Courier, May 17, 23, 1860; Daily Delta, August 22, 1860.
support from the large planter class of the state. Breckinridge managed to do well in some of the richest black belt parishes, but so did Bell and Douglas. Even though there is no significant coefficient of correlation between the wealth of a parish and the election results, Breckinridge did win in more of the poorer parishes, and the conservative candidates, particularly Douglas, did better in the more wealthy parishes.

William Barney in his study of the 1860 election in Alabama and Mississippi found that particular areas of those states supported one of the candidates who spoke most directly to "[their] needs and aspirations." In Louisiana there was a similar relationship between a particular candidate and areas of the state. Breckinridge's

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108 See Table 14. The coefficient of correlation between the 1860 Breckinridge vote and the percentage of slaves in 1860 and the percentage of large planters in 1860 is -.03 and +.03 respectively.

Roger Shugg in his book, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, p. 161, states that the large slaveholders were "fervent sectional patriots." He could have easily continued and said they were also among the most fervent Unionists.

109 See Tables 15 and 16. ICPR; United States Census, 1860. The coefficient of correlation between the farm wealth per acre in 1860 and the vote of Breckinridge, Bell, and Douglas is -.41, +.39, and +.18 respectively. Bell and Douglas did carry fewer "poor" parishes than did Breckinridge, but "wealthy" parishes could be found in both the Breckinridge and his opponents columns.

strength in Louisiana centered in those areas where planter agriculture was expanding or in areas of predominately small white farmers. Generally the strong Breckinridge parishes in the state experienced more growth in the slave population, the white population, and showed an increased number of acres of improved farm land. Of the twenty-nine parishes which returned a majority for Breckinridge, twenty had an increase in the slave population during the 1850s. The only Breckinridge parish that had a decrease in the white population was West Feliciana Parish. All the others registered increases during the decade with Bienville, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Franklin, Rapides, Tensas, Carroll, and Claiborne parishes experiencing a white growth rate of over sixty percent. Finally, with the exception of Plaquemines and West Feliciana parishes, every Breckinridge parish had an increase in the number of acres of improved farm land. Several had outstanding increases. DeSoto Parish had an increase in the number of acres of improved farm land from 37,520 acres in 1850 to 96,591 in 1860. Tensas went from 59,391 acres of improved farm land to 117,355 acres in the same period. On the other hand, the Bell and Douglas parishes were generally more static. Of the eighteen Bell and Douglas parishes nine had an increase in the slave population. The remaining nine either declined in the total number of slaves or remained about the same. Whites were not moving into these conservative and Union parishes either. The white population of Ouachita
and St. Tammany parishes declined by twenty-one and fifteen percent respectively. East Feliciana showed no change in the white population from 1850 to 1860. St. James and St. Mary parishes had only a one percent increase and St. Martin and West Baton Rouge parishes registered an increase in their white populations of only five and two percent respectively. Only Morehouse and Terrebonne parishes had an increase in the total white population of more than fifty percent. Then, while the number of acres of improved farm land did increase in the Bell and Douglas parishes, the increases were smaller than in many of the Breckinridge parishes.111

The anti-Breckinridge forces in Louisiana were in the old Whig heartland, whether sugar or cotton areas, and in the towns.112 Results from south Louisiana Whig and sugar parishes, like Iberville, St. Mary, and Terrebonne, indicate that Breckinridge had made inroads there. But


112 See Table 14. The coefficient of correlation between the 1860 Bell vote and the 1852 Whig presidential vote and the 1852 Whig gubernatorial vote are both +.62.

Perry H. Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), pp. 91, 93. Howard points out that forty-five percent of Douglas's vote and thirty-one percent of Bell's vote came from urban Orleans and Jefferson parishes. Breckinridge received only twelve percent of his vote in this area.
his strength centered mainly among the cotton planters of north Louisiana \(^\text{113}\) and the Red River region and southwest Louisiana. \(^\text{114}\) In many of the old Whig parishes that went for Bell and Douglas, the plantation economy had matured. \(^\text{115}\) Most notable was the static condition of agriculture in the sugar parishes which opposed Breckinridge. \(^\text{116}\) In Ascension, Assumption, and Lafourche, parishes where the production of sugar had barely increased during the 1850s, Douglas won with a plurality. In addition, town Democrats went for Douglas. \(^\text{117}\) In the urban parishes of Orleans and Jefferson Douglas outpolled Breckinridge, and in Plaquemine Parish the Illinois Senator won almost thirty percent of the vote. \(^\text{118}\) Finally, most of those late members of

\(^{113}\) See Table 15. ICPR; United States Census, 1860. Howard in his study does not find the unifying support cotton planters were supposed to give Breckinridge. Yet this group did give the Southern Democratic candidate significant support in Louisiana. Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 94.

\(^{114}\) See Table 15. ICPR; United States Census, 1860. Shugg, Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana, p. 161; Howard, Political Tendencies in Louisiana, p. 94.

Although there is no significant coefficient of correlation between cotton or sugar production and the vote for any of the candidates, in the parishes which gave majorities to Breckinridge (twenty-nine), only six produced a significant number of hogsheads of sugar. Only three produced an insignificant number of bales of cotton.

\(^{115}\) See Table 16. ICPR; United States Census, 1850, 1860.

\(^{116}\) Ibid.

\(^{117}\) Ibid.

\(^{118}\) Ibid.
the American party in the state, many of whom were old Whigs, also opposed Breckinridge's candidacy.\(^{119}\)

The election in Louisiana had therefore revolved around two issues. The maintenance of the Union, supported by the conservative Bell and Douglas men, and the determination of Breckinridge's followers to protect what they believed to be in the best interests of the South—an expanding slave system. Similar to the situation in Mississippi and Alabama, it appears the conservatives wanted to preserve what they possessed. Thus, the Southern Democrats in Louisiana and the South spoke to the aspirations of, not the planter class as a whole, but to the rising planter class.\(^{120}\) But the results of the election

\(^{119}\)See Table 14. The coefficients of correlation between the 1860 Bell vote and the 1855 Know Nothing gubernatorial vote and the 1856 Know Nothing presidential vote are +.73 and +.78 respectively.

\(^{120}\)Barney, The Secessionist Impulse, pp. 151-52. The coefficient of correlation of eight socio-economic factors extracted from the United States Census, 1860 show no significant relationship between the votes of any of the parties. After I ran a partials correlation the coefficient of correlation did not become more significant.

A multiple correlation for the vote of each party only showed that thirty-eight percent of variance of the total variance is explained by these eight variables. In other words, not too much significance can be attached to these variables to explain the vote for each candidate, from parish to parish.

While variables extracted from the census show no significant relationship, parishes with a more vigorous growth in agriculture, slaves, and whites tended to support Breckinridge more than Bell and Douglas.
in Louisiana demonstrated that "the majority of the people were still conservative and union-loving."¹²¹

After the defeat in 1857 no American ran for a state office in Louisiana on the ticket of that party. The party had been reduced to its original nucleus in New Orleans. However, even in that city the party lacked unification, and Independent movements challenged American dominance. So different had the Know Nothing movement become by 1859 that Americans appealed to the German voters of New Orleans for support. It was no wonder, then, that in 1859 no American ticket opposed the Democrats and the remnants of the party, along with dissident Democrats formed an Opposition ticket. Finally, in 1860 the majority of old Americans supported either Stephen A. Douglas or John Bell in the presidential election. These former Americans virtually abandoned their own nativist rhetoric in these later years, but they never did lose sight of their conservative and Union goals.

The Know Nothing party in Louisiana had temporarily demonstrated that it could effectively contest the Democrats. However, the American party could not overcome several party weaknesses. Even though the Know Nothings had abandoned the secrecy surrounding it, the initial stigma left the impression among some Louisiana voters that the party was anti-republican. Except in New Orleans, there simply were not enough immigrants in the rest of the state to excite the voters. Then, the anti-Roman Catholic position continually plagued the Louisiana Americans. Although many Roman Catholics did join the Know Nothings, they never did support that movement as they did the Whig party. The inability of the Americans to achieve party unity on issues which they supported also hurt their cause.

Ultimately, however, it was the sectional crisis which ended the political life of the Know Nothing party. The nativist rhetoric appears to have been an attempt to avoid the sensitive sectional problem of the 1850s. Sectionalism had become so serious that the national American party, which emphasized the Union, was divided between northern and southern branches. Northern delegates to the national convention in 1856 refused to support any candidate.
for president who did not support congressional action which would bar slavery from the territories. When this move failed the northern delegates bolted the convention. As a result southerners were left virtually in control of the party. Even though southerners predominated, the American party offered itself as the compromise party. This was at a time when only sectional issues assured mass political allegiance. Therefore, like the Whig party before, and the Democratic party in 1860, the American party succumbed to the sectional crisis.

It is possible that anti-foreignism and anti-Roman Catholicism was not nearly as important to the American party as the campaign literature suggests. Know Nothings were struggling to save the Union. In this struggle to save the Union, the Americans can perhaps be viewed as pathetic persons grasping at an issue, nativism, which they believed would distract the nation from sectionalism and a possible dissolution of the Union.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Manuscripts

Few manuscript collections exist for my specific topic; as a result they provided little information for me. Of all the manuscript collections that do exist, the collections held by the Department of Archives, Louisiana State University proved most helpful. The Charles E. A. Gayarré collection and the Charles E. A. Gayarré Papers, which are part of the Grace King collection, touched on various aspects of the 1850s, particularly how Gayarré and other political figures viewed the question of Roman Catholicism and the American party. The politics of the Florida Parishes were highlighted in the letters of the Ellis family in the Ellis Papers. Included in these papers is campaign material from the John Bell campaign in 1860.

On national issues, the John Slidell Letters, which are photocopies of the originals in the James Buchanan Papers, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, demonstrate the importance of national politics during the 1850s. They also provide a glimpse of Slidell's attitude toward foreigners. The letters cover the period from 1844 to 1861.

The Alexander Dimitry Papers in the Tulane University Library give brief coverage to Louisiana affairs.
in the 1850s. Dimitry was not what may be called "a politician's politician." He was an educator and the first state superintendent of public education in the state.

Most helpful in the identification of the leaders of the Democratic and American parties was the federal manuscript census population and slave schedules for 1850 and 1860. I used the microfilm copies at Louisiana State University, Tulane University, and the New Orleans Public Library.

Printed Letters, Pamphlets, and Speeches

A detailed indictment of the Democratic party for the perpetration of election frauds in Louisiana in 1853 is in Charles Gayarré's Address of Charles Gayarré, to the People of the State on the Late Frauds Perpetrated at the Elections Held on the 7th November, 1853, In the City of New Orleans (New Orleans: Sherman and Wharton, 1853). This pamphlet presents an excellent picture of what prompted Gayarré (and others) to join the American party. Gayarré's Letter To the Editor of the Washington Union (October 23, 1854), discusses his reasons for refusing to submit to a clique in the Democratic party.

On the religious issue and the American party, Gayarré contributed three pamphlets attempting to differentiate between the national American policy and the policy of the Louisiana American party. These pamphlets are: Judge Gayarré to the General Assembly of the Know Nothing
Party (n.p., 1854); Mr. Gavarré's Address on the Religious Test Against Catholics (n.p., n.d.); and Address on the Religious Question (n.p., 1856).

Publications of the Louisiana State Government

Legislative bills, resolutions, some roll call votes can be found in the following state publications: Journal of the House of Representatives and Journal of the Senate. House and Senate debates on bills and resolutions are found in Louisiana House Reports and Louisiana Senate Reports. Louisiana acts are found in Acts Passed by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana.

How nativism affected Louisiana constitutional history see the Official Report of Debates in the Louisiana Convention, 1844 (New Orleans, 1845). The statistical impact of immigrants on the Charity Hospital is in the Board of Administrators of the Charity Hospital, Annual Reports, 1850-54.

Information on public education in Louisiana can be located in the Report of the Superintendent of Public Education to the Legislature of the State of Louisiana, 1857-1858.

Publications of the United States Government

Publications of the United States Bureau of the Census provided important statistical data. I used the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Compendium of

Newspapers

The dates for which I used the paper I have placed within parentheses. For Newspapers with no long continuous run I used scattered.

Newspapers constituted my most important source. Unfortunately many of the country papers which are referred to in the city press are no longer extant. However, the country newspapers which were available did adequately balance the city press during my period.

The single most important newspaper for the period of the 1830s through 1861 was the bilingual New Orleans Bee (L'Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orleans) (1831-1861). In the 1830s the Bee was a Jackson paper and during the mid-1830s came out against the Louisiana Native American Association. In January 1839 the Bee changed its political persuasion to Whig and the paper hoisted the name of Henry Clay for president. During the 1840s it supported nativism and in the 1850s the Bee was a leading proponent of the American or Know Nothing party.

The Democratic counterpart of the Bee was the bilingual New Orleans Louisiana Courier (Courier de la Louisiane) (1830-1861). The Louisiana Courier was
thoroughly Democratic and during its history was the official gazette of the State of Louisiana, Council of the First Municipality of New Orleans.

The leading American party newspapers in New Orleans, other than the Bee, were the Daily Crescent (1850-1862), the Daily Creole (1856-1860), the Semi-Weekly Creole (1854-1856), and the Commercial Bulletin (1851-1861). Both the Daily Crescent and the Commercial Bulletin had been Whig journals prior to the rise of the Know Nothing movement. Although it did support American candidates and principles, the Commercial Bulletin was not as politically motivated as other American papers. The Daily and Semi-Weekly Creole newspapers, published by the same company, became the "Official Journal of New Orleans" in 1856. Both were extremely outspoken against Roman Catholics and foreigners.

A conservative and decidedly Whiggish paper in New Orleans which did not officially endorse American candidates, but which sympathized with many native American beliefs, was the Daily Picayune (1846-1860).

In addition to the Democratic Louisiana Courier, other Democratic party newspapers in New Orleans were the Daily Delta (1850-1861), the Daily True Delta (1850-1861), and the German language Louisiana Staats Zeitung (1852, scattered). The Daily Delta has been referred to as the Creole-Democratic paper, but the editor referred to his paper as an independent journal. Yet, the Daily Delta regularly supported the Democratic party.
Other newspapers published in New Orleans, but with no official political standing were the Catholic papers. *Le Propagateur Catholique* (1852-1856), the *Southern Standard* (1855-1856), and the *Catholic Standard* (1855-1856), all attacked the anti-Roman Catholic feature of the American party. The *Catholic Standard* actually was a continuation of the *Southern Standard* but with a new name. While these newspapers were not published by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, they were "published with the approbation of the most Rev. Archbishop Blanc, and Suffragen Bishops." Therefore, their views could certainly be considered as reflecting those of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The *Carrollton Star* (1851-1856) was a suburban New Orleans newspaper. It was one of the few Whig newspapers that became a Democratic paper during the 1850s.

The country newspapers, both the weekly and daily editions, at times offered a different perspective on the politics of Know Nothingism. The *Baton Rouge Daily Comet* (1852-1856), the *Baton Rouge Morning Comet* (February 5, 1856-December 27, 1856), the *Baton Rouge Weekly Comet* (1853-1856), and the *Baton Rouge Weekly Morning Comet* (1853-1856) were all Whig newspapers which readily made the transition to the Know Nothing party. The *Baton Rouge Daily Gazette and Comet* (1856-1860), and the *Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet* (1856-1862) were American newspapers formed in 1856 by the merger of the *Baton Rouge*...
Daily Comet and the Baton Rouge Daily Gazette, and the Baton Rouge Weekly Comet and the Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette. George A. Pike, the editor of these Comet newspapers, was one of the leading Americans in Louisiana.

Across the river from Baton Rouge were the West Baton Rouge Capitolian Vis-A-Vis (1852-1854), the Plaquemine Southern Sentinel (1848-1858), and the West Baton Rouge Sugar Planter (scattered). These newspapers began as Whig journals then became Know Nothing papers. However, the Southern Sentinel merged with the Democratic Plaquemine Gazette (scattered) in 1858 to form the Democratic Plaquemine Gazette and Sentinel (1858-1861).

Other country newspapers I read included the Shreveport South-Western (1850-August 12, 1857; September 9, 1858-September 18, 1860), the Alexandria Red River Republican (1847-1848; 1850-1853), the Thibodaux Minerva (1853-1856), the bilingual Opelousas Patriot (1855-1861), the Clinton American Patriot (1854-1856), and the Mount Lebanon Louisiana Baptist (1856, scattered). The South-Western, the Minerva, and the Opelousas Patriot were first Whig, then Know Nothing papers. The last became a Democratic paper in 1860. The Red River Republican was a Whig paper while the American Patriot and Louisiana Baptist were both American party journals.

Additional Democratic country newspapers were the Baton Rouge Daily Advocate (1854-1859), the Baton Rouge
Weekly Advocate (1845-1855; 1856-1859), and the Alexandria Louisiana Democrat (1859-1860). The Democratic Advocate succeeded the New Orleans Louisiana Courier as the Official State Journal during the Know Nothing era.

Statistical Information

Much of my source material was acquired in coded form from the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, Institute for Social Research, Center for Political Studies, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The following material I received in coded form: United States Census, 1850 and 1860, Louisiana; Farm Real Estate Values, 1850-1959, Louisiana; Louisiana Election Returns, 1850-1862; Louisiana Candidate Name List, 1850-1862; and Louisiana Partisan Divisions, 1834-1878.

Secondary Sources

General Histories

A good introduction to the literature of the ante-bellum South can be found in Chapters IV through IX of Writing Southern History: Essays in Historiography in Honor of Fletcher M. Green, ed. Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965). The best general survey of the history of the South during the ante-bellum period is Charles S. Sydnor's The Development of Southern Sectionalism: 1819-1848, Vol V


There is no adequate discussion of southern Democrats in the ante-bellum period, but Roy Franklin Nichols in his The Disruption of American Democracy (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), examines the national Democratic party and the weaknesses which led to its defeat in 1860.


William Harrison Adams's *The Louisiana Whig Party*, Vol. VI in the USL History Series, ed. Glenn R. Conrad, Allen Begnaud, and Mathé Allain (Lafayette, La.: USL History, 1973) provides a chronicle of the Whig party in Louisiana that does not stereotype Louisiana Whigs as wealthy, older, and commercially oriented as some older historians have done. Adams emphasizes the personalities and the local interests of the party. Not as detailed as Adams's study are two unpublished works on Louisiana Whiggery. These are Leslie M. Norton's "A History of the Whig Party in Louisiana," (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1940), and Letitia Kinabrew's "The Whig Party in Louisiana" (M.A. thesis, Tulane University, 1922). All three, particularly the latter two, suffer from insufficient analysis of the Louisiana Whig party.

Louisiana

There are several general histories of Louisiana which include comprehensive discussions of the political history of Louisiana in the 1850s. All of the following lack any in depth analysis of the basic issues of the history of the state and chronologically discuss political events from election to election: Garnie William McGinty, *A History of Louisiana*, 4th ed. (New York: The Exposition
Press, 1949); Alcée Fortier, A History of Louisiana, Vol. III (New York: Manzi, Joyant and Co., 1904); François-Xavier Martin, The History of Louisiana, from the Earliest Period (New Orleans: James A. Gresham, 1882); and Charles Gayarré, History of Louisiana: The American Domination, Vol. IV (New Orleans: F. F. Hansell and Brother, Ltd., 1903). The latter three studies are dated, but are by individuals who were close to the actual events of the 1850s and Gayarré was personally involved in the Know Nothing party.

Good political and social histories of the state include Perry H. Howard's Political Tendencies in Louisiana (revised and expanded ed.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971). This is an updated and expanded version of his 1957 work Political Tendencies in Louisiana, 1812-1952. The updated edition is basically a political sociological work which makes use of quantitative methods. A narrative approach to Louisiana politics in James Kimmins Greer's "Louisiana Politics, 1845-1860," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XII and XIII (July and October 1929), 381-425; 555-610; (January, April, July, October 1930), 67-116, 257-303, 444-83, 617-54. The standard work on social, political, and labor problems of the ante-bellum period in Louisiana (in addition to the post Civil War period) is Roger W. Shugg's Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers.

Other studies that examine more specific ante-bellum Louisiana topics are Roger Shugg's "Suffrage and Representation in Ante-Bellum Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIX (January 1954), 390-406; James Paisley Hendrix, Jr.'s "The Efforts to Reopen the African Slave Trade in Louisiana," Louisiana History, X (Spring 1969), 97-123; L. W. Newton's "Creoles and Anglo-Americans," The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, XIV (1933), 132-46; and T. H. Harris's, The Story of Public Education in Louisiana (New Orleans: Delgado Trades School, 1924).

The Slidell-Soulé friction within the Democratic party, and how it related to the Louisiana political scene, is discussed by Mary Lilla McLure, "The Election of 1860 in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, IX (October 1926), 235-59, and Gary E. Sanders, "The Election to the Secession Convention in Louisiana" (M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1968).

A listing of the large slaveholders of the state in 1860, as well as the number of slaves, slave houses, type of agriculture in which these slave owners engaged can be found in Joseph Karl Menn's The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana--1860 (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Co., 1964).
New Orleans


Brother Alfonso Comeau, C.S.C. in his "A Study of the Trustee Problem in the St. Louis Cathedral Church of
New Orleans, Louisiana, 1842-1844," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXXI (October 1948), 897-972, discusses the problem of whether church property would be placed in control of laymen or church officials that led native Americans to the belief that the Roman Catholic Church was anti-republican. Robert C. Reinders's "Orestes A. Brownson's Visit to New Orleans, 1855," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXXVIII (July 1955), 1-19, explores how Roman Catholicism had become so aggressive in the 1850s and how that affected Protestant Americans in New Orleans. Roger Baudier offers a narrative history of the Roman Catholic Church in Louisiana during the ante-bellum period in his The Catholic Church in Louisiana (New Orleans: n.p., 1939).


Nativism and Know Nothings

By far the best and most comprehensive study of American nativism is Ray Allen Billington's The Protestant Crusade: 1800-1860, A Study of the Origins of American
Nativism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938). Billington demonstrates that nativism in the United States prior to the Civil War was a continuing phenomenon which sometimes found political expression, particularly in the 1850s. For a regional study of nativism see Arthur C. Cole's "Nativism in the Lower Mississippi Valley," Mississippi Valley Historical Association Proceedings, VI (1912-1913), 258-75 and G. M. Stephenson, "Nativism in the Forties and Fifties with Special Reference to the Mississippi Valley," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IX (December 1922), 185-202. Michael F. Holt in "The Politics of Impatience: The Origins of Know Nothingism," Journal of American History, LX (September 1973), 309-31, suggests that the origins of Know Nothingism can be found in the social and economic upheaval and political discontent of the early 1850s.

and Biography, LV (January, April 1947), 61-75; 159-67; and Ralph Wooster, "An Analysis of the Texas Know Nothings," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXX (January 1967), 414-23. One additional general view of Know Nothingism in the United States is Harry J. Carman and Reinhard Luthin's "Some Aspects of the Know Nothing Movement Re-considered," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXXIX (April 1940), 213-34.

Favorable contemporary accounts of the American party include Anna Ella Carroll's The Great American Battle or, the Contest Between Christianity and Political Romanism (New York: Miller, Orton, and Mulligan, 1856) and Thomas R. Whitney's A Defence of the American Policy, as Opposed to the Encroachments of the Foreign Indulgence, and Especially to the Interference of the Papacy in the Political Interests and Affairs of the United States (New York: Dewitt and Davenport, 1856). Another contemporary account that deals with the problems of immigrants, and their affect on nativism is Emigration, Emigrants, and Know-Nothings (Philadelphia: n.p., 1854).

Know Nothingism in Louisiana

There are two state-wide studies of the Know Nothing party in Louisiana. The standard work is W. Darrell Overdyke's "History of the American Party in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XV (October 1932), 581-88; XVI (January, April, July, October 1933), 84-91, 256-77, 409-26, 608-27. This history is primarily a chronological study of the American party in Louisiana and the nativism which surrounded that party. Overdyke expanded this history and included Louisiana in his The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950). Another study of Know Nothingism, though less comprehensive than Overdyke's is Edith Chalin Follett's "The History of the Know Nothing Party in Louisiana" (M.A. thesis, Tulane University, 1910).

One of the most interesting municipal elections in New Orleans was in 1858. John Smith Kendall discusses that election in "The Municipal Election of 1858," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, V (October 1922), 375-89.


**Louisiana Biographies**

Biographical studies of prominent Louisiana politicians assisted me throughout my study. Two biographies of John Slidell, which focus on his national career, are Louis Martin Sears's *John Slidell* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1925) and A. L. Diket's "John Slidell and the Community He Represented in the Senate, 1853-1861," (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1958). The former does not bring out fully enough the politics of Louisiana and is essentially a narrative history. There is no adequate treatment of Slidell's rival

"Research on Charles E. A. Gayarré" (M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University, 1934).

Biographical Directories

To supplement information obtained from the manuscript census I relied on several biographical directories for essential personal information. These included:

- Cohen's New Orleans Directory for 1855 (New Orleans: Picayune Printers, 1855);
- Mygatt and Co.'s Directory, 1857 (New Orleans: L. Pessou and B. Simon, 1857);
- Gardner's New Orleans Directory for 1859, 1860 (New Orleans: Bulletin Book and Job Printing Establishment, 1858, 1859);
- A. Meynier, Jr., ed., Meynier's Louisiana Biographies (n.p., 1882);
- William Henry Perrin, ed., Southwest Louisiana: Biographical and Historical (New Orleans: Gulf Publishing Co., 1891);
- Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana, 2 vols. (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1892); and

Only one parish history for the ante bellum period supplied any pertinent information for this study. It is Captain C. T. Dunn's Historical and Geographical Description of Morehouse Parish, its Natural Resources, etc. (New Orleans: J. S. Rivers, 1863).

The following volumes illustrate the new approaches which historians are now taking and have offered numerous

**Miscellaneous**

*DeBow's Review,* during the 1850s provided several articles on immigration, immigrants, political issues, and religious questions of the period. Political platforms and campaign information can be found in *A Political Test-Book for 1860* (reprinted; New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969). Louisiana's ante bellum constitutions can be found in Benjamin Wall Dart, ed., *Constitutions of the State of Louisiana and Selected Federal Laws* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1932).
### TABLE 1

**PARTY MEMBERSHIP OF SLAVEHOLDERS BY AGE AND OCCUPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Under 40</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50 &amp; Over</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planters</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Middle Class</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2

PARTY MEMBERSHIP IN NEW ORLEANS BY AGE AND WEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Under $25,000</th>
<th>$25,000-$49,000</th>
<th>$50,000 &amp; over</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6 37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3

POLITICIANS IN DEMOCRATIC PARISHES WHERE SLAVE OWNERSHIP WAS SIGNIFICANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Membership by Age and Wealth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TABLE 4
POLITICIANS IN DEMOCRATIC PARISHES WHERE SLAVE OWNERSHIP WAS MODERATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Under $25,000</th>
<th>$25,000-$49,000</th>
<th>$50,000 &amp; over</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5
PARISHES CARRIED BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN 1855

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Under $25,000</th>
<th>$25,000-$49,000</th>
<th>$50,000 &amp; over</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6

**Parishes Lost by the Democratic Party in 1855**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Under $25,000</th>
<th>$25,000-$49,000</th>
<th>$50,000 &amp; over</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7

**Louisiana Political Leaders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Under $25,000</th>
<th>$25,000-$49,000</th>
<th>$50,000 &amp; over</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 40</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; over</td>
<td>Know Nothing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Gubernatorial 1855</td>
<td>Congressional 1855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Party Votes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig vote for governor-- 1852</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig congressional vote-- 1853</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig congressional vote-- 1851</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Church Accommodations--state-wide</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Church Accommodations--20 South Louisiana parishes</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>-.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total immigrant</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total immigrant partial correlation</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of slaves</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of slaves partial correlation</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Know Nothing returns were correlated with indices based on the 1850 census.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Presidential 1856</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former Party Votes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig vote for president—1852</td>
<td>+.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slavery</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of slaves</td>
<td>+.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Planters&quot;</td>
<td>+.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservative and Union Issue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 Union party vote</td>
<td>+.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 Southern Democratic vote</td>
<td>-.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar production</td>
<td>+.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton production</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total immigrants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of foreign-born</td>
<td>+.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of foreign-born partial correlation</td>
<td>+.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Church Accommodations—state-wide</td>
<td>+.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Church Accommodations—20 South Louisiana parishes</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Partial Correlation state-wide</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Know Nothing returns were correlated with indices based on the 1860 census.*
TABLE 10
STEPWISE REGRESSION, MULTIPLE COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN THE 1856 KNOW NOTHING PRESIDENTIAL VOTE AND VARIABLES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Presidential 1856</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Percentage of Foreign-born</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Percentage of Slaves</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Per capita wealth invested in Manufacturing</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Farm wealth per acre</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Percentage of Roman Catholic Church Accommodations</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sugar Production</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Cotton Production</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Percentage of planters</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Know Nothing returns were correlated with indices based on the 1860 census.


### TABLE 11

PRODUCT-MOMENT COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN KNOW NOTHING VOTES, 1857 AND VARIABLES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Congressional Election 1857</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former Party votes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig congressional vote—1851</td>
<td>+.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig congressional vote—1853</td>
<td>+.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig presidential vote—1852</td>
<td>+.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig gubernatorial vote—1852</td>
<td>+.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slavery</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of slaves</td>
<td>+.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planters</td>
<td>+.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar production</td>
<td>+.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton production</td>
<td>+.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total immigrants</td>
<td>+.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservative and Union Issue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 Union party vote</td>
<td>+.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860 Southern Democratic vote</td>
<td>-.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita wealth invested in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manufacturing</td>
<td>+.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita wealth invested in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manufacturing</td>
<td>+.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Know Nothing returns were correlated with indices based on the 1860 census.*
### TABLE 12

PRODUCT-MOMENT COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN OPPOSITION PARTY VOTES, 1859 AND VARIABLES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Gubernatorial Election 1859</th>
<th>Congressional Election 1859</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former Party votes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig presidential vote--1852</td>
<td>+.53</td>
<td>+.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig gubernatorial vote--1852</td>
<td>+.57</td>
<td>+.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Nothing gubernatorial vote--1855</td>
<td>+.68</td>
<td>+.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Nothing presidential vote--1856</td>
<td>+.73</td>
<td>+.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total immigrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of foreign-born</td>
<td>+.36</td>
<td>+.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Roman Catholic Church Accommodations</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>+.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slavery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of slaves</td>
<td>+.08</td>
<td>-.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of planters</td>
<td>+.03</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm wealth per acre</td>
<td>+.15</td>
<td>+.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita wealth invested in manufacturing</td>
<td>+.31</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar production</td>
<td>+.01</td>
<td>+.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton production</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservative and Union Issue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union party vote--1860</td>
<td>+.79</td>
<td>+.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Democratic vote--1860</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>-.50</td>
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*The Opposition Party returns were correlated with indices based on the 1860 census.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gubernatorial Vote 1859</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Percentage of Foreign-born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Percentage of Slaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Per capita wealth invested in manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Farm wealth per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Percentage of Planters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Percentage of Roman Catholic Church Accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Cotton Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sugar Production</td>
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</table>

*The Opposition Party returns were correlated with indices based on the 1860 census.
TABLE 14

PRODUCT-MOMENT COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTHERN DEMOCRATIC, CONSTITUTIONAL UNION, AND NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES VOTES, 1860 AND VARIABLES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Southern Democratic Party</th>
<th>Constitutional Party</th>
<th>National Democratic Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former Party Votes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig presidential—1852</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>+.62</td>
<td>+.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig gubernatorial—1852</td>
<td>-.52</td>
<td>+.62</td>
<td>+.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Nothing gubernatorial—1855</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td>+.73</td>
<td>+.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know Nothing presidential—1856</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>+.78</td>
<td>+.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of slaves</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>+.15</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planters</td>
<td>+.03</td>
<td>+.14</td>
<td>-.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wealth of a parish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm wealth per acre</td>
<td>-.41</td>
<td>+.18</td>
<td>+.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar production</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>+.01</td>
<td>+.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton production</td>
<td>+.22</td>
<td>+.01</td>
<td>-.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The party returns were correlated with indices based on the 1860 census.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>No. of Acres of Improved Farm Land</th>
<th>Percent Slaves</th>
<th>Cane sugar, hogsheads of 1,000 lbs.</th>
<th>Ginned cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoyelles</td>
<td>4,059</td>
<td>33,898</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>4,481</td>
<td>3,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bienville</td>
<td>3,623</td>
<td>18,015</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bossier</td>
<td>2,504</td>
<td>40,284</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caddo</td>
<td>3,634</td>
<td>44,174</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu</td>
<td>2,718</td>
<td>8,542</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>1,584</td>
<td>12,081</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>2,336</td>
<td>47,701</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catahoula</td>
<td>3,585</td>
<td>26,077</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claiborne</td>
<td>4,949</td>
<td>31,971</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordia</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>50,059</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>3,549</td>
<td>37,520</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>1,664</td>
<td>14,443</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberville</td>
<td>3,568</td>
<td>46,050</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>23,208</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>3,406</td>
<td>18,621</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>3,390</td>
<td>24,448</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>2,629</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston</td>
<td>2,524</td>
<td>9,163</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natchitoches</td>
<td>5,465</td>
<td>70,784</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaquemine</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>39,774</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>16,835</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pointe Coupee</td>
<td>2,968</td>
<td>43,010</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>8,560</td>
<td>1,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapides</td>
<td>5,037</td>
<td>69,653</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>4,613</td>
<td>4,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabine</td>
<td>3,347</td>
<td>18,254</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Bernard</td>
<td>1,406</td>
<td>11,435</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>4,367</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 15 (Continued)**

**BRECKINRIDGE PARISHES--1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>No. of Acres of Improved Farm Land</th>
<th>Percent Slaves</th>
<th>Cane sugar, hogsheads of 1,000 lbs.</th>
<th>Ginned cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Helena</td>
<td>2,354</td>
<td>21,913</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>10,140</td>
<td>87,584</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>5,951</td>
<td>3,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensas</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>59,391</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4,778</td>
<td>45,135</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermilion</td>
<td>2,328</td>
<td>5,913</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2,367</td>
<td>13,071</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Feliciana</td>
<td>2,473</td>
<td>76,311</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>4,767</td>
<td>18,291</td>
</tr>
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</table>
TABLE 15 (Continued)

BRECKINRIDGE PARISHES—1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>No. of Acres of Improved Farm Land</th>
<th>Percent Slaves</th>
<th>Cane sugar, hogsheads of 1,000 lbs.</th>
<th>Ginned cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoyelles</td>
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<td>58,078</td>
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<td>No Data</td>
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<td>91,583</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>40,028</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4,733</td>
<td>98,928</td>
<td>72.0</td>
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<td>9,385</td>
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<td>19.8</td>
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<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2,888</td>
<td>21,468</td>
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<tr>
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<td>54,413</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>23,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claiborne</td>
<td>8,996</td>
<td>114,699</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>18,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concordia</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>87,406</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>63,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>4,777</td>
<td>96,591</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>16,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9,307</td>
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<td>3,793</td>
<td>62,523</td>
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<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>10,687</td>
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<td>111,375</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>11,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston</td>
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<td>10,537</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>80,616</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plaquemine</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>28,975</td>
<td>63.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pointe Coupee</td>
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<td>82,932</td>
<td>72.8</td>
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<td>60.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26,350</td>
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<td>55.0</td>
<td>No Data</td>
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</table>
### TABLE 15 (Continued)

**BRECKINRIDGE PARISHES—1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>No. of Acres of Improved Farm Land</th>
<th>Percent Slaves</th>
<th>Cane sugar, hogsheads of 1,000 lbs.</th>
<th>Ginned cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Helena</td>
<td>3,413</td>
<td>37,458</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>10,703</td>
<td>93,292</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>3,437</td>
<td>21,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensas</td>
<td>1,479</td>
<td>117,355</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>141,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>6,641</td>
<td>82,791</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermillion</td>
<td>3,001</td>
<td>85,753</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>14,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2,996</td>
<td>22,177</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Feliciana</td>
<td>2,036</td>
<td>71,539</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>5,705</td>
<td>21,331</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## TABLE 16

UNION PARISHES—BELLS AND DOUGLASS—1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>No. of Acres of Improved Farm Land</th>
<th>Percent Slaves</th>
<th>Cane sugar, hogsheads of 1,000 lbs.</th>
<th>Ginned cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascension</td>
<td>3,340</td>
<td>28,346</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>13,438</td>
<td>406</td>
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<td>31,361</td>
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<td>17,160</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5,347</td>
<td>37,535</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>7,074</td>
<td>1,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4,060</td>
<td>82,936</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>9,967</td>
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<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>18,046</td>
<td>22,430</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>8,897</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5,142</td>
<td>40,268</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>10,055</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>56,619</td>
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<td>12,771</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,877</td>
<td>15,895</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3,303</td>
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<td>(Was not a parish in 1850)</td>
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TABLE 16 (Continued)

UNION PARishes--BELL AND DOUGLAS--1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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<th>Parish</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>No. of Acres of Improved Farm Land</th>
<th>Percent Slaves</th>
<th>Cane sugar, hogsheads of 1,000 lbs.</th>
<th>Ginned cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each</th>
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PLEASE NOTE:

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UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS.
The American National Council met in Philadelphia February 13, 1836. All the States except five or six were represented. A H. Barbey, of Ky., President of the National Council, presided, and, after a rather stormy session of three days, devoted mainly to the discussion of a Petition from the former, the following, on the 21st, was adopted:

**AMERICAN PLATFORM.**

1. An humble acknowledgment to the Supreme Being, for His blessings upon our fathers in their successful Revolutionary struggle, and for granting to their descendants, in the preservation of the liberties, the independence, and the union of these States.

2. The perpetuation of the Federal Union and Constitution, on the public good, and the free and equal liberty of the inhabitants of all the States, and the only sure means of American Independence.

3. Federal must rule America; and to this end a Federal Constitution should be selected for all States, and a Federal government created, in preference to all others. Nevertheless,

4. Persons born of American parents residing temporarily abroad, should be entitled to all the rights of American citizens.

5. No person should be selected for public stations (whether of native or foreign birth, who possesses any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate, or power, or who refuses to recognize the Federal and State Constitutions (each within its sphere) as paramount to all other laws, in rule of public action.

6. The unconditional recognition and maintenance of the reserved rights of the several States, and the cultivation of harmony and friendly relations all between the citizens of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions originating solely in the individual States and not interference by each State with the affairs of any other State.

7. The recognition of the right of navigation and commerce of the United States, permanently residing in any territory for the purposes of their Constitution and laws, and that for the preservation of their domestic and social rights, subject only to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, with the privileges of residence, and the reciprocal rights of other States, and the laws of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions originating solely in the individual States, and not interference each State with the affairs of any other State.

8. An enforcement of the principles that no State or territory has a right to infringe upon other States in the right of navigation, or of holding political officers of the United States.

9. A defense in the laws of nature, making a complaint of the want of this right, and the right of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions originating solely in the individual States, and not interference each State with the affairs of any other State.

10. An opposition to any union between Churches, and States; an interference with religious faith or worship, and the religious test for offices.

11. Free and thorough investigation into every act and all alleged act of public functionaries, and a strict economy in public expense.

12. An enforcement of all laws constitutionally enacted, until as it shall be deemed, or shall be declared null and void by competent judicial authorities.

13. Opposition to the reckless and unwise policy of the present Administration in the general management of our national affairs, and to any and all acts tending to curtail the independent and Constitution Government in principle, from other, and threatening, foreign powers and influence in their places; as shown in a treacherous adherence to stronger, and an insidious and cowardly encroachment in the manner, of opposing national agitators, by the repeal of the M'Crory Commission, as shown in prizing in unutterable horror, the state of affairs in Korea and the Netherlands, as shown in its fatal influence on the Mexican and Nicaragua questions; as shown in the recent and wanton pledges of the Departments of the Government, in shown in disgraceful conduct with others, and in the preposterous arrangement of our foreign relations.

14. Therefore, to remedy evil tendency, and prevent the Eastern Hemisphere otherwise meeting this from, we would hold on the "American Party" upon the principles herein before stated.

15. That each State shall have authority to amend their several constitutions, as to limit the several degrees and qualifications of delegates, instead of other subjects, for a secondary and subordinate party.

16. A free and open discussion of all political principles embraced in our Platform.

On the following day (Feb. 22), the American National Convention, composed, mostly of the same gentlemen who had deliberated at the National Council, organized at Philadelphia, with 227 delegates in attendance, Maine, Vermont, Georgia, and South Carolina, being the only States not represented. Ephraim McDowell, of Newburyport, was elected to preside, and the Convention remained in session till the 25th, and, after doing several cases of contested seats, discovered by the ablest lawyers, and with great warmth, the question of the power of the National Council to establish a Platform for the Convention, which should be composed of the members upon that body. Finally, Mr. Killinger, of Pennsylvania, proposed the following:

**Resolution,** That the National Council has no authority to prescribe a Platform of Principles for the American Convention, and we will nominate for President and Vice President, on a majority in favor of introducing the introduction of Slavery into Territory north of 36° 30' by congressional action.

A motion to lay this resolution on the table was adopted, 141 to 90. A motion was then made to proceed to the nomination of a candidate for President, which was carried, 121 to 31, the Anti-Slavery delegates, and certain North Americans, as they were called, voting in the negative, and desiring to postpone the nomination. But being similar at all points, the Convention, and the number of about 50, either withdraw or refused to take any part in the proceedings of the Convention, and many of the former, on the 20th, signed a petition to the Congress, in support of their views, and their recommendations to Congress, and to Parliament, and to the President of the United States, for the establishment of a Platform for the Convention, which should be composed of the members upon that body. Finally, Mr. Kilgour, of Pennsylvania, proposed the following:

**Resolution,** That the National Council has no authority to prescribe a Platform of Principles for the American Convention, and we will nominate for President and Vice President, on a majority in favor of introducing the introduction of Slavery into Territory north of 36° 30' by congressional action.
1. We advocate an amendment of the Naturalization Laws, with proper safeguards to preserve the purity of the elective franchise.

2. We advocate the passage of such laws will prevent the immigration of paupers and criminals to this country.

3. We oppose any interference in the vested rights of all persons whether they be of native or foreign birth.

4. We are in favor of non-intervention with slavery by the Federal Government, except for the protection of our constitutional rights.

5. We advocate a high National Policy, such as will afford a stern and unwavering protection to the American name abroad and will follow and guard the American citizen wherever he moves.

6. We believe that America should be governed by Americans, effecting the same through the ballot-box alone, the only legitimate instrument of reform in this country.

7. We believe that the office should seek the man, and not the man the office, and shall oppose the distribution of office among office-seekers or as a reward for partisan services.

8. We will maintain and defend the Constitution of the U.S., the Union as it now exists, and the rights of the States without diminution, insisting upon a faithful performance on the part of the General Government of all the duties enjoined upon it by the Constitution.

9. While we approve of the platform adopted by the late National Council of the American Party at Philadelphia, we reject the application of the principles of the eighth article to American Catholics, as unjust, unbounded, and entirely unworthy of our country. We shall forever continue to protest against any abridgment of religious liberty, holding it as a cardinal

*The American party adopted the 1855 platform on July 4 at Baton Rouge. It was the only state platform adopted by that party. In future campaigns the American party would adopt party resolutions. New Orleans Bee, September 3, 1855.
maximum that religious faith is a question between each individual and his God. We utterly condemn any attempt to make religious belief a test for political office, and can never affiliate with any party which holds sentiments not in accordance with these.

10. We war with no party as such, but shall oppose all who oppose us in the advocacy of these great American principles.

STATE POLICY

Reform of abuses, and retrenchment in our State expenditures.

Education of the youth of the country in schools established by the State.

A constitutional organization of the Swamp Land Commissioners.

A more efficient administration of the Internal Improvement Department, with a view of improving our inland navigation.
NOTE ON METHODOLOGY*

In this study I have employed a statistical device called the coefficient of correlation, which I want to explain. When two different phenomena—such as the Know Nothing vote and the percentage of Roman Catholic Church Accommodations in 1860, for example—can be precisely measured in many different cases, it is possible to compare these phenomena statistically. One statistical measure is called the "coefficient of correlation." This coefficient is an abstract number which measures the tendency of the two phenomena (or variables) to fluctuate together from case to case. The two variables may have a "positive correlation"; that is, if one goes up or down, the other tends to go up or down in like manner. If the Know Nothing vote increases from parish to parish as the percentage of Roman Catholic Church accommodations increases in those parishes, then a positive correlation is said to exist between those two variables. If one variable tends to fall as the other rises, and vice versa, then the correlation between the two is said to be negative. The strength and direction (positive or negative) of the correlation

*The explanation for the coefficient of correlation by William J. Evitts in his Matter of Allegiances: Maryland from 1850 to 1861, p. 18, n. 44 was the best and clearest I have encountered; therefore, I have borrowed from it.
is expressed by the coefficient of correlation. This coefficient is a number ranging from plus 1.000 through 0 to minus 1.000. A plus coefficient indicates a positive correlation and a minus coefficient indicates a negative correlation. This coefficient can be calculated by a number of formulae; coefficients of correlation in this study were calculated on a computer using the Pearson "product-moment" formula. Generally, if two variables are compared the coefficient of correlation must be greater than +0.5000 or -0.5000 in order to register as a significant tendency toward correlation—that is, a notable tendency for the two variables to change together in a predictable way.

It should be noted that any coefficient of correlation indicates only that two variables move together in a predictable way from case to case. The coefficient says nothing about cause and effect, and does not in itself prove any relationship between the two phenomena.

I also ran two more sophisticated correlation programs. A stepwise regression analysis and a partials correlation program. A stepwise regression analysis produced a multiple coefficient of correlation by correlating several variables simultaneously. The multiple coefficient of correlation demonstrated the increment of influence each variable produced. The partials correlated each variable separately with a dependent variable while
controlling for the other variables in the resulting multiple coefficient of correlation.

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**PLAQUEMINES PARISH:**

**Know Nothings**

1. Dr. David R. Fox 36  Physician $ 5,000 $ 2,500 6 Mississippi
2. Martial Lafranee 59  Rice Planter 10,000 9,000 Louisiana
3. Edmond Martin 52  Rice Planter 10,000 6,000 Louisiana
4. Ferdinand Martin 57  Planter 5,000 3,500 Louisiana
5. Simeon Martin 30  Sheriff 1,000 800 Louisiana
6. Hypolite Ragas 35  Planter 1,000 1,200 Louisiana
7. John C. Rapp 32  Justice of Peace 0 0 Louisiana
8. Victor Reaud 35  Parish Recorder 2,500 2,000 3 Louisiana
9. Dr. J.B. Wilkinson 43  Planter 13,000 0 Mississippi

**Democrats**

1. Oscar Arroyo 38  Clerk $ 3,000 $ 4,000 6 Louisiana
2. Charles J. Villere 30  Attorney 60,000 45,000 89 Louisiana

**POINTE COUPEE PARISH:**

**Democrats**

1. Alcide Bondy 40  Planter $ 23,000 $ 8,000 Virginia
2. A.D.M. Haralson 43  Lawyer 11,500 500 Louisiana
3. Ovide LeJeune 40  Planter 100,000 45,000 Louisiana
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| West Feliciana Parish:                                                                                             |
| Democrats                                                           |
| 1. James R. Marks                                                  | 34  | Editor-Mayor Bayou Sara | $1,500| $2,500   |        | Georgia        |
| 2. R.C. Wickliffe                                                  | 35  | Lawyer                 | 1,000 | 1,500    |        | Kentucky       |
VITA

Marius Michael Carriere, Jr. was born September 24, 1942, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He received his elementary and secondary education in the public schools of New Orleans and graduated from John McDonogh Senior High School in 1960. He enrolled in the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1960 and graduated with a B.A. in History in 1965 with honors. He then enrolled in the Graduate School of Stephen F. Austin State University and was awarded an M.A. in History in 1967. At Stephen F. Austin State University, he was a Graduate Teaching Assistant. He then taught high school in New Orleans and in 1968 he was an Instructor at Xavier University of Louisiana. In 1969 he enrolled in the Graduate School of Louisiana State University. While in Graduate School he was the recipient of a Warrick Fellowship and a Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship. He is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy in History at the Spring 1977 commencement.