

# Rise of the (Catholic) American Nation: United States History and Parochial Schools, 1878-1925

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In her landmark study *America Revised*, Frances FitzGerald portrayed textbook writers of the 1960s and 1970s as pioneers on the frontier of historical uncertainty. Feuds between legislators, educational administrators, publishers, and special-interest groups, had unravelled the once coherent schoolbook narrative of American progress:

The central questions of American history—Is there such a thing as an American identity? What kind of society does the United States have? What are American values? What position does the United States occupy in the world?—are disputed territory for them, as they were not for the predecessors. Of course, the question of national identity is not the easiest of subjects to deal with, but, since the American Revolution, text writers, unlike most historians and novelists, have always succeeded in painting a fairly simple picture of America. Even while the country was changing radically in shape, in population, and even in looks, they had definite answers to the questions about who and what we were. These answers changed over time, but at any given moment they were remarkably uniform and remarkably simple. *The shattering of this single image in current texts thus constitutes an important break with tradition.*<sup>1</sup>

A narrow consensus, what FitzGerald describes as a seamless ideology, did characterize American history textbooks of the 1940s and 1950s. But that consensus arose in part from the gradual incorporation of *competing* stories into a general narrative. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, two as yet unamalgamated versions of American history existed alongside FitzGerald's dominant account. One presented the nation to White children in the segregated public schools of the South; the other to Catholic students in the mostly urban parochial schools of the North. This essay concerns the latter.

Beginning in earnest in the 1870s, Catholic writers and publishers produced textbooks that attacked some of the prevailing interpretations of American history. In highlighting the role of Catholics and their institutions, they sought to overturn the implicit equating of American history with the triumph of Anglo-Saxon Protestants in the New World. A measure of their success can be gleaned from the complaints of prominent Boston minister Daniel Dorchester. In an 1888 book entitled *Romanism vs the Public School System*, Dorchester condemned the "Roman Catholic manipulation" he found in reading books, geographies, and particularly histories used in parochial schools. The minds of pupils "are thus turned backward rather than forward, belittled rather than enlarged, and facts of history long and well established are presented in a distorted light and often wholly omitted." He concluded that the child who "learns history from such books learns no history."<sup>2</sup>

Dorchester overstated his case. Catholics revised the national narrative created by Protestants, but they hardly abandoned it. They could not. Catholic educators wanted their history curriculum to serve the two larger goals of parochial schooling. First, the faith had to be preserved in a new generation. Second, children had to be prepared to assume the roles of "good citizens" and righteous heirs to the United States' republican traditions and (among its European settlers) largely Protestant past. The ideal retelling of America's stories united these objectives, making citizenship and membership in the community of the saved complementary.

Catholic writers strove to create such a usable past. They resisted previous interpretations of American history that either disparaged Catholics or, in the case of most public school textbooks at the turn-of-the-century, mostly ignored them. At the same time, these writers refuted contemporary attacks on the parochial school system and Catholics in general. Where nativists—from the remnants of the Know-Nothings in the 1870s to the resurgent Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s—charged that Catholicism was a recent and unwelcome visitor, these authors traced Church presence in the Americas back to 1492. Where nativists portrayed Catholics as backward and superstitious, they countered with stories of a scientifically and economically progressive Church. Most importantly, where opponents of Catholics cast them as a nationally divisive group, these textbooks showed a laity and clergy that had participated actively in formulating democratic ideals and could now offer uniquely Catholic solutions to the racial, ethnic, and other disputes threatening the nation. In essence, these writers tried to rework the

nativists' binary construction of Catholicism and "Americanism" into something closer to a dialectic, whose components had grown increasingly harmonious over the course of American history. The effort is perhaps best illustrated by the embossed cover of Sister Mary Celeste's 1926 *American History*, which shows a triumphant Columbus raising a cross on San Salvador. Behind him waits the *Santa Maria*. Further in the distance, factories send plumes of smoke into the air beside the towering skyline of a modern city. Above the panorama hangs the Great Seal of the United States and the legend "For God—For Country."<sup>3</sup>

The balance between God and country, between what was appropriately Catholic and American, proved difficult to maintain. Catholic writers endeavored to show "how Catholic America was" by stressing the role of Church members and ideas in the nation's past. They combined this optimistic Catholic boosterism with a more anxious effort to prove "how American Catholicism was"—how it fit neatly into the dominant culture, posed no threat to established institutions, and, in fact, reached its highest development as it intertwined with American nationalism.<sup>4</sup> Ethnic diversity among Catholic immigrants complicated their effort to reconcile these two impulses. By the 1920s history textbooks for parochial schools increasingly merged the faith with sometimes xenophobic elements of American nationalism. The authors often downplayed the international character of Catholicism, slighted ethnic diversity in the American Church, and reproduced many patterns of historical exclusion and subordination in the public school texts they criticized. The movement toward the consensus narrative that FitzGerald found in her work was underway.

Yet this eventual narrative "assimilation" should not obscure the accomplishments of the writers and the once unique nature of their textbooks. They can provide an important context for current debates in educational circles about using history as "minority affirmation," and how (or even if) the history curriculum should be used to foster feelings of national identity in a pluralistic society.

I will sketch an outline of this Catholic version of American history by looking briefly at four broad historical epochs and themes: initial European exploration and settlement; the competing influences of Puritan Massachusetts and Catholic Maryland on the future republic; the roles of Catholics in America's wars, particularly the Revolution; and the contemporary mission of the Church to advance social peace in the nation. I have examined eleven Catholic textbooks, all of which cover American history at least through the Civil War. The first appeared in 1878 and the last in 1926.<sup>5</sup> The 1870s are a natural starting point for the study. The first widely-distributed Catholic textbooks appeared during these years. The trauma of the Civil War left both "professional" and schoolbook historians struggling to define American national identity. Finally, American history's role in the curriculum of both public and private schools expanded rapidly in the last decades of the century.<sup>6</sup> I close with the 1920s because they marked a watershed in the Americanization of Catholics.

Despite their concessions to the prevailing nationalist spirit after 1900, the narratives in these books remained distinct from those prepared for public schools, and generally consistent in outlook over this fifty-year span. Thus, I will consider them collectively.<sup>7</sup>

### ORIGIN OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The common schools of the nineteenth century inherited many principles from thinkers in the early republican period of the 1780s and 1790s, and the Founders' educational priorities helped shape the content of the future history curriculum. Schools, wrote Noah Webster, should "implant in the minds of the American youth the principles of virtue and liberty" and inspire in them an "inviolable attachment to their own country." As soon as the student "opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen who have wrought a revolution in her favor."<sup>8</sup>

A signer of the Declaration of Independence and an ardent republican, Benjamin Rush saw students as creatures of the state, who belonged not to themselves, nor their parents, nor their church, but were public property. Schools, he declared, should "render the mass of people more homogeneous and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government." The history taught in these "republican seminaries" should trace the centuries-long progress from tyranny to democracy that culminated in the creation of the United States. Yet Rush also believed that religion made the ideal moral base for education, and he supported Bible reading in class. Both Webster and Rush, like Benjamin Franklin before them, wanted to place less emphasis on Latin, or eliminate it from the curriculum altogether. Both were suspicious of European influences and vices creeping into American schools, and Webster went so far as to declare that foreign education for American children "ought to be discountenanced, if not prohibited."<sup>9</sup>

Statesmen of the early republic bequeathed many of these sentiments to proponents of the common schools, who appeared in large numbers forty to fifty years later. One should not, however, draw too straight a line between the two groups. Many of the latter were members of the Protestant clergy and would have been uncomfortable with Rush's complete subordination of the church and parental role in education to the state, which in successive years would grow more secular. Nor would they have embraced the utilitarian view of Franklin, who saw Christianity less as source of spiritual wisdom and more as a bulwark of public morality and civil order.<sup>10</sup> But in the 1830s and 1840s, they saw little conflict between the interests of the state and the country's dominant Protestant churches. They promoted state-supported common schools as a way to bring all students together for the "nonsectarian" portion of their education. Denominational institutions that had previously dominated education could continue in the form of Sunday schools.

Most churches acquiesced in the Protestant Compromise, but conflict with Catholics was inevitable. Many Catholics argued, with considerable justification, that nonsectarian simply meant Protestantism of the lowest common denominator, a compromise religiosity that ignored their concerns. Public schools, for instance, used the King James, not Douay version of the Bible. When Catholics turned to common school textbooks, they found problems with offensive terms such as papist and popery, and depictions of the Church of Rome as intolerant or idolatrous.<sup>11</sup> Where Catholics were not demonized in these readers, geographies, and histories, asserted critics, they were simply absent. As early as 1833, the Second Provincial Council meeting in Baltimore called for the creation of more appropriate textbooks for Catholic students. A full response from publishers, however, would take decades.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, these critics often desired Catholic teachers for their students. Owing to the large influx of immigrants and the shortage of qualified native-born Catholics, that request would have required the importation of European instructors, many of them priests or sisters. Later in the nineteenth century, many immigrant parents also wanted these teachers to offer bilingual instruction.

Clearly, the common schools envisioned by Horace Mann and his peers could not meet all these requests.<sup>13</sup> The official Catholic solution was simple: allow the Catholic Church (and whatever other denominations that wished to do so) to maintain separate schools. Then take that portion of revenues raised from Catholics for the common schools and transfer it to their parochial ones. After all, that had been the generally accepted pattern of school funding until the common school movement began. It satisfied the needs of the state in providing an educated citizenry, and it allowed parents and churches more choice in schooling content. In some school districts, compromise worked. In most, the non-Catholics balked. Conflict over the 'School Question' first flared in New York City in the early 1840s and then spread through the East and Midwest. In response to repeated denial of state funds, Catholic parishes expanded their own schools to serve Irish and German immigrants, alongside native-born Catholics. For many proponents of the common schools, Catholics had thrown down the gauntlet. Parochial schools, with their allegiance to Rome and their crucial role in assimilating successive waves of immigrants, now imperiled the common values and security of the country.

"They demand of Republicans," declared one newspaper in 1841, "to give them funds to train up their children to worship a ghostly monarchy of vicars, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and Popes! They demand of us to take away our children's funds and bestow them on the subjects of Rome, the creatures of a foreign hierarchy."<sup>14</sup> Almost fifty years later Daniel Dorchester, who considered himself a moderate on the issue, took an equally dim view of Catholic schools, however they were funded: "[W]e do not consider it wise or equitable, or consistent with true loyalty to the republic, for any denomination to maintain schools in which supreme allegiance to a foreign pontiff is daily inculcated, or

hierarchical dogmas taught.”<sup>15</sup> Anxiety over Catholic schools was widespread enough in 1875 to prompt a Republican presidential hopeful, James G. Blaine, to propose a Constitutional amendment specifically forbidding the transfer of public funds to parochial schools. The measure failed, but Republicans adopted it into their party platform the following year. Part of the fear lay in numbers. More than 700,000 Catholics immigrated to the United States in the 1840s, tripling the Catholic population.<sup>16</sup> Over one million entered the country in each decade from 1870 to 1920, and more than two million in the first decade of the twentieth century. As early as 1884 there were approximately 2,500 Catholic schools serving half a million children.<sup>17</sup>

Many Protestants claimed that Catholics were consolidating their position for an all-out assault on public schools. Indiscreet pronouncements from a few of the less liberal members of the Catholic hierarchy seemed to support these suspicions. Peter LeFevere, a bishop in Detroit during the 1850s, called public schools “infidel” institutions. Thirty years later Bishop Michael O’Farrell of Trenton, New Jersey, declared that the right of the state to educate was not a Christian idea, but a “pagan” one.<sup>18</sup> Borrowing the rhetoric of more extreme nativists, the Reverend Michael Mueller claimed that the public schools of Boston bred prostitutes.<sup>19</sup>

Conflict over Catholic schools had a remarkable longevity, but it reached a climax in the 1920s. Capitalizing on the anti-immigrant backlash of the postwar Red Scare, a coalition of organizations that included the Ku Klux Klan sponsored a voter referendum in Oregon mandating that all children attend public schools. Voters passed the measure, which, had it gone into effect on schedule in 1926, would have destroyed the (relatively small) network of Catholic schools in the state and threatened private schools throughout the country. In 1925, the United States Supreme Court struck down the law as unconstitutional. The Court effectively said that while disputes over funding could continue, Catholic schools were here to stay.<sup>20</sup>

For several decades before the decision, however, attacks on Catholic schools as un-American institutions could command considerable and often sympathetic attention with the public. Church leaders and prominent lay people took quite seriously charges that Catholicism and America’s political and religious liberties made a poor fit.<sup>21</sup> The textbooks below must be read in context of this threat, and that is why this study closes with three histories published only months after the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Sisters of the Holy Names vs. Pierce*. Protestants could control the terms of this debate, and the larger one over Catholics’ appropriate role in the nation, in much of the public press. But, at least in the history presented to their own children, Catholics could offer a rebuttal to their portrayal as potentially subversive newcomers to America. They started with Columbus.

## A PREEMINENTLY CATHOLIC ENTERPRISE

The story of Columbus had been a staple in school histories since early in the nineteenth century, but in the hands of Catholic writers it took on new meaning. Columbus the daring adventurer who sailed west seeking the riches of the spice trade was combined with Columbus the devout Catholic, whose personal motives in undertaking the voyage included converting the natives of East Asia and gathering money for a military campaign to recapture Jerusalem from the Turks.

Parochial school students, unlike their peers in the public schools, learned that the Italian navigator's eventual success with Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain was due to the intercession of his friend Juan Perez, the prior of the Franciscan monastery in Palos. Perez, who almost always merits an illustration in these texts, believed in the "globular theory of the form of the earth" that had been "preserved during the Middle Ages partly by Arab philosophers, but chiefly by the great monastic and secular scholars of the Catholic Church." The "worthy priest" also helped secure a crew for his friend by convincing the townspeople of Palos "of the feasibility of the voyage and the unreality of imaginary ocean terrors." Now properly fitted out, Columbus could set sail "relying firmly on God and his own scientific theory."<sup>22</sup>

In addition to showing a prominent member of the clergy unencumbered by superstition, passages like this one present the European discovery of the Americas as a partnership between an individual, the state, and the Church. Beginning with Columbus's landing at San Salvador and the chanting of the *Te Deum*, a prayer of thanksgiving, Catholic ritual plays a key role in the narratives of discovery and exploration. Where it is almost always absent in illustrations in common school texts, a prominent cross invariably appears with Europeans when they arrive in the New World in these histories. The cross, notes Sister Mary Celeste's *American History*, "always accompanied, and sometimes even preceded the banner of earthly conquest."<sup>23</sup> America became a "veritable geographic litany of saints," according to this author.<sup>24</sup> In some cases, such as the St. Lawrence and St. John's rivers, the Catholic names stuck; in others, they did not. DeSoto's River of the Holy Ghost became Marquette's River of the Immaculate Conception, only to revert to its original Indian name, the Mississippi. Nevertheless, the Catholic histories usually include these lost appellations.

The work of martyrs also fills the early pages of these textbooks. Often the "sublime death of missionaries" is not for the squeamish. In Sadlier's *History*, which appears designed for readers at (contemporary) seventh-or eighth-grade levels, we hear of the end of the "renowned Father Bréboeuf and the gentle Lalemant:"

Amid the din rose the voice of the old Huron missionary [Bréboeuf] consoling his converts, denouncing God's judgments on the unbeliever, till his executioners crushed his mouth with a stone, cut off his nose and lips, and thrust a brand



FATHER PEREZ PLEADING WITH ISABELLA.

**Figure 1:** In Catholic textbooks, unlike their public school counterparts, the timely intercession of a Franciscan prior made the “discovery” of America possible. (*Sadlier’s Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools, 1879*)

into his mouth, so that his throat and tongue, burnt and swollen, refused their office.

They tore off his scalp, and thrice, in derision of his baptism, poured water over his head. . . . Hacking off his feet, they clove open his chest, took out his noble heart and devoured it. . . .”<sup>25</sup>

The account appears opposite a full-page woodcut illustration showing a Jesuit about to be burned at the stake, staring skyward at the crown of martyrdom. At one level, the author is trying to overcome the “‘dryness’ of American history [that] is, at present, proverbial with teacher and student,” which he notes in his preface. But stories like this one also serve a larger rhetorical purpose. They show, as another text states, that missionaries had “consecrated America with blood shed for Christ, and made our country a holy country before it was ever a republic.”<sup>26</sup> Often these death scenes are placed explicitly in the locations of future American states such as Kansas, New Mexico, Michigan, and Maine, giving Catholicism a spiritual claim to the land well in advance of Protestant settlers.





**Figure 2:** Catholic missionaries “consecrated America with blood shed for Christ,” according to one text, making it a holy country “before it was ever a republic.” (*Sadlier’s Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 1879)

Each of the histories argues that Catholic legitimacy in America, whether through the efforts of lay explorers, missionaries, or colonists, is centuries old and can be traced at least as far back as Columbus and Juan Perez, and perhaps even further to Norse and Irish Catholics who appear to have arrived on the continent before 1492. “The discovery of America was pre-eminently a Catholic enterprise. In fact, Protestantism did not yet exist,” writes the author of *Sadlier’s History*. Columbus and his immediate contemporaries departed from a united Europe that still recognized the pope as the successor to Saint Peter and arrived in a world where millions of “souls might be harvested for heaven.”<sup>27</sup> None of the texts acknowledge the schism that had created the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches almost a millennium before 1492, though one notes, oddly, that Constantinople had been the center of Christendom until the Turks conquered it in 1453.<sup>28</sup> The authors thus place America’s discovery in an almost mythically Edenic era of spiritual harmony. Luther had smashed that unity in the Old World, seriously disrupting the continued exploration of the New World, according to one history.<sup>29</sup> But, the America these writers depict held the promise of eventually restoring sectarian peace, despite the hardships that Catholics would have to endure amidst a Protestant majority in the English settlements.

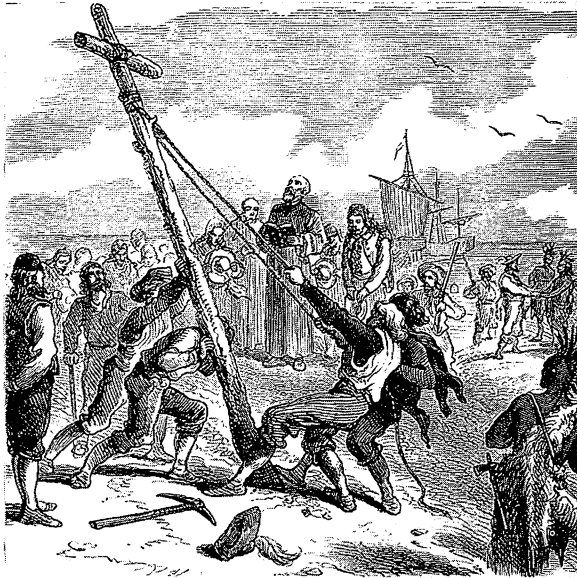
## A TALE OF TWO COLONIES

While the Catholic histories treat the exploration and settlement by the French and Spanish more thoroughly than their common school counterparts, all the texts devote the largest portion of their pre-Revolutionary narrative to the English colonies, usually with a short chapter on the founding of each, from Virginia in 1607 to Georgia in 1733. The Catholic books, however, create strong tension between Massachusetts and initially Catholic Maryland. The Puritans, who dominate the common texts (not surprisingly, since most of the early authors were New Englanders) are often held up for ridicule. The Catholic writers acknowledge the Puritans' contributions to American culture, but offer this respect grudgingly and with a level of hostility uncommon in other histories.<sup>30</sup> Their most truly "American" colony is Maryland, which in its brief Catholic tenure became a model for religious toleration, home rule, and amicable relations with the Indians.

In Sadlier's *History*, the 1634 arrival of Lord Baltimore and 300 other colonists on the Festival of the Annunciation clearly vies with the landing of the *Mayflower* for America's founding myth. The pilgrims—the term is used for the Marylanders and not the settlers of Plymouth—arrived in the *Ark* and *Dove* after fleeing religious persecution in England. "Mass was celebrated for the first time in that wild region," writes the author. "A large cross was also erected as a symbol of Christianity, which had now taken possession of these shores." In another text, the pilgrims solemnly found St. Mary's "near the sites of the future Mount Vernon, and the future political center of the nation, the capital city of Washington." They are "imbued with the true colonizing spirit," a contrast not so much to the Puritans but to the originally dissolute colonists at Jamestown.<sup>31</sup> "In six months," notes John Hassard in what would become an almost stock refrain in the books, "St. Mary's made more progress than Virginia had in six years."<sup>32</sup>

While the first Lord Baltimore and his sons Cecil and Leonard Calvert set up the colony as a refuge for English Catholics, they welcomed all Christians and enshrined this principle in the Toleration Act of 1649. "There was never any departure from this rule as long as Maryland remained Catholic, and it was a rule that prevailed nowhere else," writes Hassard.<sup>33</sup> That Maryland was a proprietary colony in which Baltimore and his heirs were free, on paper at least, to act as "absolute lords" with the power to coin money, grant titles of nobility, and appoint judges, bothered the writers little. Disputes with the region's native inhabitants were virtually unknown. "Maryland, unlike most of the other colonies, never had any serious Indian troubles," according to one author. The settlers paid for the land, the Jesuit fathers learned the Indian languages and worked to convert and civilize the natives, and the "red men responded well to their zeal."<sup>34</sup>

Protestants, however, were always menacing this idyllic community. Anglican Virginia "was jealous from the beginning."<sup>35</sup> Baltimore welcomed Virginia's persecuted Puritans, who later, in league with the Commonwealth Parliament in



LANDING OF THE MARYLAND PILGRIMS.

**Figure 3:** The Catholics of Maryland compete with the Pilgrims of Massachusetts as America's mythic founders. (*Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools, 1879*)

England, disenfranchised Catholics and “sent Father Andrew White, the Apostle of Maryland, in chains to England,” where he was tried and later released.<sup>36</sup> Here, the writers draw implicit parallels to Columbus. All the texts note that the heroic navigator suffered a similar fate after his third voyage to the Americas, though none spell out the charges that prompted his removal to Spain. The experiences of Columbus, White, and numerous martyrs serve as metaphors for the hardships endured by all steadfast Catholics in the New World.

The fanaticism of the Puritans in New England, in turn, becomes a foil for this more proper devotion. In these histories Massachusetts is the tale of a colony gone wrong. While the authors are generally sympathetic with the Plymouth Pilgrims, they are much less so with the Puritan settlers of the Great Migration of 1630. “Although they had left England on account of religious persecution, they had no idea of granting to others the liberty of worship which they claimed for themselves,” notes Hassard. All the authors explain the persecution of Quakers, the ban on Jesuits in the colony, and the expulsion of dissenters such as Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams. They also seem to delight in trivializing Puritan faith and practice, from the prohibition of mince pie on Christmas day to the

sundry restrictions in the Blue Laws of Connecticut. Hassard also details the annual burning of an effigy of the pope, which continued until the start of the Revolutionary War, when no less a figure than George Washington rebuked Bostonians for the “ridiculous and childish custom” in the interest of wartime harmony.<sup>37</sup>

In the same text an Irish Catholic woman unable to recite the Lord’s Prayer in any tongue but Latin is the first victim of the witchcraft delusion of 1692. These trials and executions were an “extraordinary episode” that, according to another writer, “astonished the civilized world.”<sup>38</sup> Three histories published after 1910 note that belief in witches was common in contemporary Europe, but they still fail to put the affair in proper historical context. Not one of the books mentions similar incidents under the Inquisition. The Salem trials, concludes one history, shocked even the Indians of Maine, “who could not but contrast a religion which permitted such cruel fanaticism, and whose ministers had acted so prominent a part in the fearful tragedy, with that of the mild, devoted and self sacrificing Jesuit missionaries of Maine.”<sup>39</sup>

But Abnaki reactions to these hangings were the least of the Puritans’ Indian concerns, according to these Catholic texts. While they had first welcomed the colonists, the Indians soon discovered that the Puritan policy toward them was generally one of extermination. Frequent wars ensued. Often the histories link Puritan violence against Indians with that against Catholics, and almost all include an account of the death of Father Rasles, a Jesuit missionary among the Indians along the Kennebec River in Maine. In 1724, a party of New Englanders attacked the village where he ministered. Seeing he was the target of the assault, Rasles came out to meet them. “Pierced by several bullets, he fell at the foot of the mission cross. Seven chiefs, who had gathered about him, shared his fate, and the settlement was annihilated.” After “hacking his body to pieces,” the attackers “rifled the altar, profaned the Host and the sacred vessels, and burned the church.”<sup>40</sup>

Their attitudes toward Indians, Catholics, and their fellow colonists showed that “the Puritans practiced in the New World the same intolerance from which they suffered in the Old.”<sup>41</sup> In short, they betrayed the promise of America by introducing here the same sectarian strife that Luther and Calvin had begun in Europe. Maryland began its history by opening its doors to Catholic and Protestant alike; Massachusetts began hers by expelling to Rhode Island, Connecticut, or New Hampshire those colonists who failed to toe the line on narrow Puritan doctrines.

Slavery complicated the depiction of Maryland as a model colony and later state. Like their common-school counterparts, writers of these Catholic histories are reluctant to address so divisive an issue. Where they do, Maryland provides an ideal example of how benevolent owners could educate their slaves and introduce them to Christianity. The most bucolic depiction of the peculiar institution in Maryland appears in Sadlier’s *History*:

On the low verandas and balconies, climbed in wild luxuriance, the yellow jasmine, sweet honeysuckle, or the trumpet flower . . . Within the dwelling, the music of the harpsichord was oftener heard than the hum of the spinning-wheel, though the southern matron had, too, her own peculiar round of duties. Black slaves performed all the domestic labors; but the heart of the kind mistress was mindful of the wants of her large, and, in many respects, dependent household, in which she found sufficient employ.

A short distance from the family residence stood the kitchen, which, like the laundry, was always separate from the mansion. Conveniently retired might be found the negro quarters; a cluster of wooden cabins, each with its own little garden and poultry yard, and with numbers of black babies gamboling in the sunshine.<sup>42</sup>

Histories published after 1900 prove more critical of the institution, but they often shift blame farther to the South, where a “severer form of slavery existed,” or to New England. “The first colony to establish slavery by law was Massachusetts,” notes Hassard, “and the Puritans of Boston engaged in the slave trade as soon as they had any commerce at all.”<sup>43</sup>

### ONWARD CATHOLIC SOLDIERS

The Puritans, identified as such, usually make one last appearance in these histories on the eve of the Revolution. In 1774 the British Parliament passed the Quebec Act, which guaranteed Canadian Catholics recently added to the empire both freedom of worship and representation in legislative councils. The Catholic texts hardly praise Parliament for the move, seeing it as a transparent attempt by the “same power that cruelly persecuted Catholics in Ireland” to dissuade Quebec from joining the increasingly restive colonies to the South.<sup>44</sup> But their opposition to what became known as one of the Five Intolerable Acts cost the colonials union with Canada. “It was hard for the Puritans to learn the lesson of toleration,” reads one history. “It was Puritan intolerance and bitterness, rather than the action of England, which prevented the Canadians from sympathizing with the Revolutionary cause. For the Continental Congress to permit an address in which the Catholic religion was said to inculcate ‘persecution, murder, and rebellion,’ was, to say the least, not tactful.”<sup>45</sup>

These histories go to great lengths to show American Catholics’ wholehearted support for the War of Independence, the prejudices of their compatriots notwithstanding. Catholics constituted about one percent of the population of the United States in 1790, but their exploits in the Revolution fill far more than that proportion of the texts. Each history includes a roster of Catholic heroes (there are no heroines), many of whom go unmentioned in common school texts. There is

Maryland's Charles Carroll, the "richest man in the colonies," who risked his fortune by putting his signature on the Declaration of Independence. There is John Barry, the head of the American navy, who captured five British ships on the Delaware River without losing a man. Several lesser figures also usually merit mention, among them the Catholic Indian chief Orono, who aided Washington's army, and Father Pierre Gibault, a settler in the Old Northwest who "blessed the arms of the French volunteers in the American cause, administered in his own church the oath of allegiance to Congress, and enlisted the Christian Indians in favor of the Americans." And there are Catholics among the noble foreigners who "played a glorious part in the winning" of independence. They include the Poles Kosciusko and Pulaski, the German Baron De Kalb, and, of course, the Marquis de Lafayette, who is a fixture in common school histories as well.<sup>46</sup>

These Catholics do not replace what had already become a national pantheon; they supplement it. John Hancock always joins Charles Carroll, and John Paul Jones appears alongside John Barry. Catholic children also read the same stories of the Liberty Bell, Paul Revere's ride, and the treachery of Benedict Arnold. Several histories express ambivalence toward the political and religious radicalism of a few heroes, such as Ethan Allen and Thomas Paine. But most often, stock figures of the Revolutionary era present no problems, and the writers often attempt to link them with the Catholic Church, individual Catholics, or Catholic causes. At the close of the war in 1781, for instance, parishioners chanted a solemn *Te Deum* at St. Joseph's in Philadelphia. "Members of the United States Congress, Washington, Lafayette, and many of the distinguished generals and citizens attended," reads one of several histories that cover this event, which celebrated national unity under Catholic auspices.<sup>47</sup>

The texts' merger of political and ecclesiastical history becomes even more pronounced with the appointment of America's first bishop, a cousin to Charles Carroll: "It is interesting to note the fact that, simultaneously with the election of President Washington as the civil executive of the young nation, Divine Providence provided the infant American church with a spiritual executive in the person of the illustrious Right Reverend John Carroll," reads one history. "Franklin, Washington, and other leading builders of the Republic, highly esteemed Bishop Carroll for his saintly life and noble patriotism." Lest readers suspect the Church might vie with the elected government for authority in the new country—a charge nativists lodged repeatedly against Catholics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the passage continues by noting that the Pope had "inquired of Congress in what manner the arrangement" for the appointment could be made "without interfering with the laws of the nation." Congress "assured him that the United States had no jurisdiction over matters purely spiritual."<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps the greatest victory for Catholics in the war, however, was their newfound respect among their countrymen. "In the day of trial the Catholic faith had proven the grandeur of its principles," and with the faithful's unflinching

loyalty and the softening of recalcitrant Protestant hearts “dawned a new era for Catholicity in America.”<sup>49</sup>

Many of the same themes recur in coverage of the Civil War. Generals Philip Sheridan and William Rosencrans lead the roster of Catholic patriots. A national figure, this time Abraham Lincoln, is tied to the work of Catholics. In Celeste’s *American History* he is quoted praising the charity and benevolence of the “Nuns of the Battlefield.” Again, we see the “heroism, devotion, and self-sacrifice shown” by Catholic soldiers, and the priests and sisters who ministered to them, “lessening the ignorant prejudice felt against the Church.”<sup>50</sup> In this war, however, as individual Catholics joined the Union or Confederate armies, “Catholicity took no sides.” But this was no morally dubious act of equivocation. Whereas before the war “nearly every religious organization” separated into northern and southern branches, “at the end of the struggle” the Catholic Church “still stood undiminished in strength and unbroken in unity—the pride of her children and the admiration of thousands who, before the war, had looked upon her progress with pride and jealous concern.”<sup>51</sup>

The church in America showed that it is “always a peacemaker, never a partisan.”<sup>52</sup> This role was crucial to the Catholic mission in contemporary America, and the culmination of the narrative trajectory the authors create in their histories. The country had first been discovered and explored by Catholics; Catholics championed the cause of religious toleration, which created friction with other, less magnanimous settlers, especially the Puritans; Catholics and Protestants then united in the cause of independence; and now Catholicism had finally risen above the political and religious fray.

## RISE OF THE CATHOLIC NATION

In their discussion of then present-day America, these writers depict a Church that is becoming truly catholic, reaching out to all Americans and providing for them a source of moral, religious, and social values that transcends geography, class, race, and ethnicity. In doing so, they borrow heavily from prominent Catholic American thinkers, particularly Orestes Brownson.

Brownson, who had journeyed from Congregationalism to Presbyterianism and then Unitarianism before joining the Catholic Church, had the zeal of a convert. Writing at the start of the Civil War, he addressed what he saw as the great question facing the nation. If the people take responsibility for the government in a democracy, then who or what in turn oversees the people? Protestants might answer that all authority and direction for earthly affairs arises ultimately from God, but Brownson was unsatisfied with that response because Protestants determined on an individual or sectarian basis what God desired. Turning the anxiety of the nativists on its head, Brownson warned that these divergent interpretations endangered the republic. “The Roman Catholic Church, then, is necessary to sustain popular liberty because popular liberty can be sustained only

by a religion free from popular control, above the people, speaking from above and able to command them.”<sup>53</sup>

In his preface to Hassard’s *History*, Bishop John Spalding expands on Brownson’s argument. If religion is the surest guide to patriotism—a point readers could infer from Benjamin Rush’s essay on education a century before and one most Protestant critics would readily concede—then “the breaking down of religious beliefs in various modern nations, and notably in our own, is accompanied by a loss of patriotism.” In such an environment, local questions take precedence over national ones, partisan strife replaces the “passion of patriotism,” and the state may be driven to protect itself by force, as it had so recently done in the Civil War.

Nothing can avert this danger but the influence of a great moral power, endowed with all the attributes which create respect and encourage obedience.

The Catholic Church is that power, and the mission which she is destined to fulfil in behalf of American society is as yet hardly suspected, though an observant mind cannot fail to perceive its vast importance. No other religion in the United States has unity of doctrine and discipline, or the consciousness of definite purposes, or a great and venerable history, and the confidence born of a thousand triumphs and of victories wrung from defeat . . . Outside the Church there are shifting views, opinion, and theories; but there is no organic growth and progressive development of faith and discipline.<sup>54</sup>

In these textbooks nationally divisive forces always arise outside, and often in opposition to, the Catholic Church. During the 1770s, anti-Catholic prejudice doomed alliance with Canada. In the 1830s, nativists rioted in and around Boston, terrorizing a convent and setting fire to Church property, the “climbing flames” giving “notice to the peaceful dwellers in the shadow of Bunker Hill that the devil was abroad.”<sup>55</sup> In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan, “whose activities have been directed especially against Catholics, Jews, and Negroes,” interfered with state governments and disrupted a Presidential election.<sup>56</sup>

While the Church often serves as a target of prejudice, the authors argue that it remains free from the taint of bigotry. This nonpartisanship makes the Catholic the ideal historian. Thus Benziger’s *School History* can be “accurate and clear, yet simple, interesting, and, above all, impartial,” and at the same time “thoroughly Catholic in tone.”<sup>57</sup> These writers can join the movement that sought in the final decades of the nineteenth century to make history a professional calling and that venerated the ideal of objectivity; in fact, they would have to be Catholic to do so. In Hassard’s *History*, no “attempt is made to prove a point, or to establish a theory, or to arrange the events of our history so as to make them illustrate any particular



law or principle. Facts are stated simply as they occurred and are left to tell their own story."<sup>58</sup>

Such arguments appear to give a distinctly progressive impulse to the mission of the Church. But if Catholicism seriously threatened the status quo in America, then the charges of nativists would be valid. Not surprisingly, these texts are, in fact, distinctly conservative. The new American order that the Church will bring about largely conforms with the prevailing social and racial attitudes held by the nation's Protestant majority. These histories are "guardians of tradition" in much the same way Ruth Miller Elson described other schoolbooks published throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup> But unlike those other books, their attempt to unite Catholicism and status quo 'Americanism' produces several unresolved tensions.

Indians, for instance, occupy an ambiguous position with individual authors and the histories as a whole. They are both devil-worshipping savages and "faithful friends where they felt any love." Celeste can praise individuals like Orono for his courage and intellect, yet also sympathize with the plight of the missionary and his "life spent in miserable Indian wigwams among those who were treacherous, ungrateful, and at best very slow of comprehension."<sup>60</sup> While the histories attack the extermination policies of many English settlers, in contrast to the more humane approaches of the Spanish, French, and early Maryland colonists, they are more hesitant in condemning the culmination of that genocidal policy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One notable exception is Sadlier's *History*, which notes that in recent years it "must be admitted that the actual treatment they [the Indians] have received has been unjust and iniquitous beyond the power of words to express." But even his concern is partially tied to the Church, particularly President Grant's 1870 apportioning of religious jurisdiction for the tribes that gave "not a single superintendency" to Catholics. "What wonder the Indian Wars are darkening our country," he concludes, suggesting that unheeded tribal requests for priests had led to much of the violence.<sup>61</sup>

And what will these Indian converts offer to the state? Mostly, docility. Missionaries "have sought out the most savage Indian tribes, and have won them to Christianity and civilization," instilling in them "an appreciation of law and order."<sup>62</sup> They had rendered the Iroquois "gentle as a child." In California "roving savages" were "ultimately transformed into orderly, industrious, and expert farmers, masons, or weavers"—politically quiescent settlers on the periphery of a capitalist state.<sup>63</sup>

The authors vow much the same for African American Catholics, who also never appear as historical actors. After detailing the work of sisterhoods and brotherhoods ministering to Blacks and the creation of seminaries for the "education of a colored priesthood," Celeste concludes that "a great deal is being done to make the negro a better, more intelligent citizen; to make it possible for him to direct himself both morally and economically."<sup>64</sup> Another history puts it more bluntly: "The negro, naturally of a religious nature, is wholesomely

influenced by the Catholic faith, so that observing men and judges of courts have praised the law-abiding spirit existing in Catholic colored communities.”<sup>65</sup>

Readers also learn that the truly Americanized Catholic does not advocate radical change in the industrial system that has made the United States the envy of the world. Several of the texts treat unions, particularly those that strike, with little sympathy. In a passage entitled “Social Rank,” one history declares that while status differences separate the capitalist and laborer, “the masses of people” still lead “wholesome lives, and that principles of conscience will not tolerate abuses once abuses are exposed to view.”<sup>66</sup> And, taking a page from the common school texts, Celeste argues that the failure of initial experiments in “communism” at Jamestown prove that socialism is incompatible with the American environment.<sup>67</sup> Where two authors of a 1926 text more openly champion social justice, they do so to show how the Church transcends national divisions. The 1919 Bishops’ Program of Social Reconstruction issued by the National Catholic War Council, they write, “was hailed by Catholics and Non-Catholics as well as by capital and labor, as the most practical solution of social problems yet offered.” They offer no details.<sup>68</sup> The omission may have been for brevity’s sake, but the wish to avoid controversy seems more likely. The Bishops’ Program advocated groundbreaking social legislation: minimum wage, elimination of child labor, public housing, union rights, and public insurance for the elderly, sick, and unemployed. Liberals and progressives inside and outside the Church praised the program, much of which would be implemented later under the New Deal. But, business interests and more conservative bishops attacked it.<sup>69</sup>

Many of these same questions regarding race and class also went unresolved in common school texts. Were African Americans a part of the national community? Could Indians be agents in their own history, or merely recipients of the wrath of White settlers or charity of the federal government? On these questions the democratic, liberal ideals of almost all writers, Catholic or not, clashed with underlying prejudices. With Catholic authors, however, the universal, cosmopolitan ethos of the Church also militated against racism and class bias. Evidence of such conflict appears frequently in Catholic texts. “Mother Church folds her arms about all her children and questions not their color or their race,” proclaim the authors of one history. They then take a distinctly less inclusive tone: “These Indians played a conspicuous part in the history of the United States, for with them our people first came into contact, and with them first had to fight.”<sup>70</sup>

Writing in the 1920s, Sister Mary Celeste tells students that American “ideals of toleration, of liberty and democracy, have had their origin in Catholic sources or have been upheld by Catholic exponents.” The American belief that “‘the just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed,’ was first put forth by the Catholic theologians Bellarmino (1542-1621) and Suarez (1548-1617).” Here is evidence of “how Catholic America is.” But she also sees how her narrative makes the United States the unique culmination to providential plans, how the sacred quality of the nation blends with that of the Church. She warns her readers that “because they are members of a universal church, which belongs not

to one nation but to all, they ought to look with respect on governments and customs not their own.”

Presentation of European immigration, and how newcomers should Americanize, best exposes these diverging pulls of Church and nation. A history published in 1914 seems to side with nativists in asserting that earlier arrivals from northern Europe made “intelligent” and “enterprising citizens,” but that recently “a less desirable element” had made its way to America from southern Europe and eastern Asia (a remarkable concession, when many of the undesirables were Italian Catholics). The author then admits that some immigrants earlier in the nineteenth century had been too vocal in maintaining Old World ways, and suggests that institutions like parochial schools can best conduct the Catholic newcomer on the path to assimilation.<sup>71</sup>

Though somewhat oblique, the reference is clearly to a central issue in the “Americanist Controversy” that divided Catholic leaders late in the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> The earliest and most prominent immigrant group keeping their Old World ways were Germans, who established ethnic churches, German-language parochial schools, and often entire German American communities in the Midwest. In 1890 editors at the Buffalo, New York, *Volksfreund* questioned the need for linguistic and cultural assimilation: “America is no nation, no race, no people like France, Italy or Germany. We have citizens of a republic, but no nation and, therefore no national language outside the languages which the immigrated races speak in their families.”<sup>73</sup>

This vision of America as a federation of national communities could not co-exist peacefully with the nationalism that developed in the United States after the Civil War. At their best, nationalists conceived of Americans as a unique people, drawn together by something more than common laws, the mere apparatus of a central state, or common commitment to democratic ideals. The vision could be broadly inclusive—racially, ethnically, politically, and geographically.<sup>74</sup> At their worst, especially during the First World War, nationalists turned xenophobic. To many native-born, the “hyphenated American” was suspect, a captive of divided loyalties.<sup>75</sup>

Church “liberals” in the Americanist controversy opposed ethnic nationalism like that espoused in the *Volksfreund* above. It forced Catholic immigrants to prove loyalty on two fronts. Liberals thus tried to separate religious and ethnic identities in their discussion of assimilation. The former could be actively promoted and, as these histories show, equated with many Protestant conceptions of Americanism. The latter had to be downplayed. Conservatives argued just the opposite. Trying to strip immigrants of their Old World cultural heritage, especially national languages, imperiled their faith. German immigrants since the late eighteenth century had declared that “language saves faith.” Other Catholics who established ethnic parishes—Poles, Italians, Croatians, French Canadians, and Mexicans—followed their lead.

Orestes Brownson took a strong stand on the issue as early as 1862. Immigrants, he wrote, lived up to neither Catholic nor American expectations:

The civilization they actually bring with them, and which without intending it they seek to continue, is, we being judges, of a lower order than ours. It may be national prejudice and our ignorance of other nations, but it is nevertheless our firm conviction, from which we cannot easily be driven, that, regarded in relation to its type, the American civilization is the most advanced civilization the world has yet seen, and comes nearer to the realization of the Catholic Ideal than any which has been heretofore developed and actualized.<sup>76</sup>

The American Church, then, should slough off the antiquated cultural trappings of immigrants and embrace the American tradition.

The emerging nationalism was clearly Anglo American for Brownson, who often appeared uncomfortable with his Irish co-religionists in New England. He found his most vocal opponent in an Irish-born archbishop, John Hughes. Hughes did not equate middle class, Anglo-American culture with what was appropriately American, as Brownson did. He also feared too closely mixing Church and nation. Confident that the country's republican tradition welcomed religious pluralism, Hughes encouraged the development of a Catholic identity that embraced various national traditions and the mostly working-class culture of Catholics in America.<sup>77</sup> Ironically, the mostly Irish American wing of the hierarchy would take up Brownson's call for assimilation at the turn of the century.

When it came to school policy, Americanizers accepted a modified version of the nativist argument that all schools should cultivate a single, national character. The public schools could do that best for Protestant children, and ought to be praised for their achievements, not condemned as some less tolerant Catholics had done. But for Catholics, parochial schools could bridge the gap between a foreign national identity and a developing American one. The school question did not reveal, as Daniel Dorchester charged, two peoples "struggling within the womb of a nation."<sup>78</sup> Catholicism and Americanism made a natural fit, as long as ethnic Catholics did not cling unreasonably to a foreign past.

Liberal positions on American cultural and political practices, particularly their stand on the separation of church and state, triggered Pope Leo XIII's condemnation of the "Americanist heresy" in his *Testem Benevolentiae* of 1899. The liberals' ideas about assimilation and the inherent compatibility of Catholicism and the prevailing American environment, however, permeate the history in Catholic schoolbooks published before and after this papal letter. They grow even more pronounced in those that appeared during the First World War and the anti-immigrant backlash that followed it. Often the texts blur cross and flag. In the "Note to the Teacher" at the beginning of *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, the authors advise teachers that children should be taught "to

appreciate the proper setting of United States history” and understand clearly the “difference between Sacred history and Profane, or Secular history.” Yet on the previous page students are told to “build a temple in the inner sanctuary [their hearts] in which the Blessed Mother, Patroness of the Republic of Washington and Lincoln, may be honored with devotion undying.”<sup>79</sup>

When these writers sought to prove Catholic loyalty to the nation, they progressively lost the ability to articulate a unique vision of that nation and its history. They mixed the sacred symbols of Church and country. Devotion to saints like Mary merged with the veneration of statesmen common in public school texts. Calls for children to embrace the dominant cultural tradition, to Americanize, grew more frequent. Catholic ideals of the equality of individuals under God and the supremacy of moral law over law defined by the state, no longer seemed to threaten the cultural and political status quo in the United States. Catholicism, which in the 1870s John Spalding had seen as a powerful, unifying (and to nativists, threatening) national institution, was tamed.

The mid-1920s, when the last textbooks in this study were produced, proved to be a watershed in the history of Catholics in the United States. At the national level, the Supreme Court gave official sanction to the right of the Church to maintain its schools in *Sisters of the Holy Names vs. Pierce*. Congress, meanwhile, severely restricted immigration and reduced the waves of Catholic immigrants to a trickle. Federal law thus championed both religious pluralism and a cultural exclusivity with strong racial overtones. Both policies hastened the movement of White, ethnic Catholics into the American mainstream. The history curriculum in parochial schools followed. After 1930 the market for Catholic histories shrank, in part because public school textbooks integrated Catholics into their narratives and more openly embraced the cause of religious diversity. By 1960, the year an Irish American would win the White House by convincing voters that his national loyalties did not conflict with his Catholic ones, that market had virtually disappeared.

## NOTES

1. Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: What History Textbooks Have Taught Our Children About Their Country, and How and Why Those Textbooks Have Changed in Different Decades* (New York, 1980), 73. Emphasis added.

2. Daniel Dorchester, *Romanism vs. the Public School System* (New York, 1888), 276, 284.

3. (New York, 1926).

4. Almost all historians of American Catholicism have explored this tension between the religious and national identity of Catholics. Here I employ phrases from Dorothy Dohen, which seem particularly apt in discussing textbook narratives. See Dorothy Dohen, *Nationalism and American Catholicism* (New York, 1967).

5. Sister Mary Celeste, *American History* (New York, 1926); Franciscan Sisters of the Perpetual Adoration, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools* (New York, 1914); John Rose Greene Hassard, *An Abridged History of the United States of America, for the use of Schools* (New York, 1887); John Rose Greene Hassard, *A History of the United States of America* (New York, 1885) (First edition appeared in 1878); William H.J. Kennedy and Sister Mary Joseph, *America's Story: A History of the United States for the Lower Grades of Catholic Schools* (New York, 1926); William H.J. Kennedy and Sister Mary Joseph, *The United States: A History for the Upper Grades*

of *Catholic Schools* (New York, 1926); Charles H. McCarthy, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools* (New York, 1919); *Sadlier's Elementary History of the United States* (New York, 1896) (First edition appeared in the late 1870s); *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools, by the author of Sadlier's Elementary History* (New York, 1879); *Sadlier's Preparatory History of the United States* (New York, 1886); *A School History of the United States* (New York, 1892).

6. Karen Fox and Jack Thompson note that by "mid-century nearly half of the northern and western states had legislated national history courses into public schools in one way or another. By 1896, all but eleven states had similar laws." Karen A. Fox and Jack C. Thompson, "To What End: The Aims of Two Centuries of American History Instruction," *Teachers College Record*, 82 (January 1980), 4. The status of history in the classroom received a further boost with the publication of the National Education Association's "Committee of Ten" report in 1892. The committee, which included Woodrow Wilson, recommended expanding history instruction to eight years in the public schools and called for a more analytical approach to the subject in place of the memorization and recitation common at the time.

For statistical evidence of the changes in the history curriculum, see Arthur Woodward, "Teaching Americans About Their Past: History and the Schools 1880-1930," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982.

7. Three of the eleven texts use the catechism method for children in early primary grades. The rest are designed for students in the upper elementary grades, academies, and high schools, and combine traditional narration with numerous illustrations. The publishers usually did not assign books for particular grades. Trying to do so retroactively can be more troublesome than helpful because these years saw significant restructuring of public and private schools. Thus, I have kept these grade assignments fairly broad. All of the books were prepared specifically for Catholic schools.

8. Daniel Webster, "On the Education of Youth in America," in *Essays on Education in the Early Republic*, ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 45, 65. I am indebted to the work of Jack Carter Thompson, which first directed me to these essays by Webster and Rush.

9. Benjamin Rush, "Thoughts Upon the Modes of Education Proper in a Republic," in *Essays on the Education in the Early Republic*, ed. Rudolph, 10; Webster, "On the Education of Youth in America," 72.

10. Lloyd Jorgenson argues that the most vocal opponents of Catholic schools took the position that state interest in education should supersede that of parents and churches only very late in the nineteenth century. They adapted this "scientific" theory from the writings of Lester Ward, even though its secularist underpinning clashed with the ideology of the founders of the common school movement, which emphasized the primacy of individual conscience and the central role of religious instruction. Lloyd P. Jorgenson, *The State and the Non-Public School 1825-1925* (Columbia, Mo., 1987), 146-158.

11. Sister Marie Leonore Fell, *The Foundations of Nativism in American Textbooks, 1783-1860* (Washington, D.C., 1941).

12. James Aloysius Burns, et al., *A History of Catholic Education in the United States: A Textbook for Normal Schools and Teachers' Colleges* (New York, 1937), 209.

13. The public schools *did* sometimes provide bilingual instruction, especially in institutions in large cities where immigrant communities had gained significant political power. German-Americans were the most successful in this effort. See David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).

14. *American Protestant Vindicator*, October 5, 1840. Quoted in Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (Gloucester, Mass., 1963; first ed., 1938), 148.

15. Dorchester, *Romanism vs. the Public School System*, 134. Changes in the nineteenth-century Church played into the hands of nativists. The hierarchy crushed a policy of lay trusteeship of American churches and their property that had arisen in the absence of firm ecclesiastical control in the eighteenth century. Efforts to centralize power in Rome culminated with the doctrine of papal infallibility in 1870. In Catholic pews now increasingly filled with immigrants a once relatively plain style of faith emphasizing personal union with Jesus gave way, as Jay Dolan writes, "to a demonstrative, emotion-packed religion distinguished by its emphasis on the practice of external rituals of devotion, communion with a heavenly host of saintly relatives, and devotion to a suffering savior, all of which was mediated through a sacramental system controlled by the clergy." Dolan argues that parochial schools became "cultural factories" for this devotional Catholicism, whose origins stretched back centuries. It was natural for nativists who saw the Church as increasingly anti-democratic and culturally foreign in character, to direct their ire toward the schools. Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, N.Y., 1985), 219.

16. Jorgenson, *The State and the Non-Public School*, 69-70.

17. James Henneseay, S.J., *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States*, 173; Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C., *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1969), 265.

18. Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit* (Detroit, 1990), 88-89; Daniel F. Reilly, *The School Controversy (1891-1893)* (Washington, D.C., 1943), 107.

19. Reverend Michael Mueller, *Public School Education* (Boston, 1872), 107-108; cited in Jorgenson, *The State in the Non-Public School*, 127-128.

20. Harold A. Buetow, *Of Singular Benefit: The Story of Catholic Education in the United States* (New York, 1970).

21. Jorgenson, *The State and the Non-Public School*, 132.

22. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States*, 23, 29. I have spelled Pérez without the accent mark to conform to the style in the textbooks.

23. *Ibid.*, 62.

24. Celeste, *American History*, 615.

25. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 100. A similarly graphic account appears in McCarthy's *History*, though in this version the "baptismal" water is boiling hot. Charles H. McCarthy, *History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 130.

26. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, iv; Kennedy and Joseph, *America's Story: A History of the United States for the Lower Grades of Catholic Schools*, v.

27. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 21; Celeste, *American History*, 110.

28. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 22.

29. *Ibid.*, 53.

30. The Puritans, however, are not unstained heroes in other histories, either. Jack Carter Thompson argues that in these texts the New Englander, lacking "the restraint of toleration," and the Southerner, with his moral lassitude, reveal the virtues of settlers in Middle Colonies such as Pennsylvania. Thompson's thesis is insightful, but he often groups Catholic and public school texts together. I believe it is important to distinguish between them. Jack Carter Thompson, "Images for Americans in Popular History Surveys, 1820-1912," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976.

31. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 121; Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 85-86.

32. Hassard, *A History of the United States of America*, 80.

33. *Ibid.*, 81.

34. Kennedy and Joseph, *The United States: A History for the Upper Grades of Catholic Schools*, 125; Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 87; *Sadlier's Elementary History of the United States of America*, 122.

35. Celeste, *American History*, 86.

36. *A School History of the United States*, 63.

37. Hassard, *A History of the United States of America*, 62-65. Hassard and the other writers in this study took many of their cues from John Gilmary Shea, the most prominent Catholic American historian of the nineteenth century. Their dependence on his work is especially apparent in their treatment of Puritans and the partial shifting of America's genesis from Massachusetts to Maryland.

38. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States*, 83.

39. *Ibid.*, 83.

40. *Sadliers' Preparatory History of the United States*, 90; Hassard, *A History of the United States of America*, 113.

41. *Ibid.*, 66.

42. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 125.

43. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 150; Hassard, *A History of the United States of America*, 54.

44. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 179.

45. Celeste, *American History*, 184.

46. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 207; Kennedy and Joseph, *The United States: A History for the Upper Grades of Catholic Schools*, 256.

47. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 240.

48. *Ibid.*, 254. Daniel Dorchester called the "politico-ecclesiastical hierarchy" of the Church "directly and irreconcilably hostile to the republic." The texts that Catholic schoolchildren used, moreover, were guilty of "inculcating the fundamental tenets of the papal hierarchy—as clearly and distinctively sectarian and antirepublican as they can be." Dorchester, *Romanism vs. the Public School System*, 185, 189.

49. *Ibid.*, 239.

50. Celeste, *American History*, 424-425; *A School History of the United States*, 246.

51. Celeste, *American History*, 422; Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 453.

52. Celeste, *American History*, 422.

53. Orestes A. Brownson, *Essays and Reviews, Chiefly on Theology, Politics, and Socialism* (New York, 1862), 372-373; 381.
54. Hassard, *A History of the United States of America*, vi-vii.
55. McCarthy, *History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 307. The mention of the historically sacred site of Bunker Hill hardly seems accidental.
56. Celeste, *American History*, 613.
57. *A School History of the United States*, vii.
58. Hassard, *A History of the United States of America*, vii-viii.
59. Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln, Neb., 1964).
60. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 15; Celeste, *American History*, 116.
61. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 359, 373.
62. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 573.
63. *Sadlier's Excelsior Studies in the History of the United States for Schools*, 116. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 366.
64. Celeste, *American History*, 460.
65. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 553.
66. *Ibid.*, 552.
67. Celeste, *American History*, 57. Reflecting the Red Scare environment of the early 1920s, Celeste's history is the most adamant in separating radical politics from the Catholic Church. She also carefully outlines the purposes of Catholic education, and defends them against potential attack. Again, her approach appears geared to current events, particularly the Oregon law mandating that all children attend public school.
68. Kennedy and Joseph, *The United States: A History for the Upper Grades of Catholic Schools*, 631-32.
69. Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 344-345.
70. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 3, 19. Emphasis added.
71. *Ibid.*, 542, 347.
72. Most historians limit discussion of the Americanist Controversy to the 1880s and 1890s. The central questions of the debate, however—the extent to which the Church would accommodate itself to the American environment, and the role of “national” or ethnic parishes—can easily be traced back to the 1850s, as Philip Gleason has shown. I use the term in this broader sense. See Philip Gleason, “‘Americanism’ in American Catholic Discourse,” chapter 11 in *Speaking of American Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1992).
73. *Buffalo Volksfreund*, February 17, 1890. Quoted in Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States*, 195.
74. See Elisha Mulford, *The Nation: The Foundations of Civil Order and Political Life in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass., 1875).
75. Even in this climate, a few thinkers still championed the federation of nationalities idea. Horace Kallen was the most prominent among them, and his once largely forgotten *Culture and Democracy in the United States* has recently been exhumed by multiculturalists. For a discussion of Kallen and his contemporaries, see Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York, 1986).
76. Orestes A. Brownson, “Catholic Schools and Education,” *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, 3:66-85. Reprinted in *Catholic Education: A Book of Readings*, eds. Walter B. Kolesnick and Edward J. Power (New York, 1965), 11.
77. R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, 1986), 50-58.
78. Dorchester, *Romanism vs. the Public School System*, 4.
79. Franciscan Sisters, *A History of the United States for Catholic Schools*, 4-5.