



IMMIGRATION

BEWARE OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE:

Nativists and Immigrants 1830-1860

**OVERVIEW**

Students will focus on the conflict between Irish Catholic immigrants and the public school system to learn about immigrant and Nativist activism in 19th-century New York.

STUDENT GOALS

- Students will learn about immigrant activism by analyzing a biography of Bishop John Hughes.
- Students will examine a nativist political cartoon to explore the conflict between Irish Catholic immigrants and the New York City public school system.
- Students will study the components of a biography and create their own biographies of prominent activists.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**Grade 5**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Grades 6-8:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Grades 11-12:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

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KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY

- Immigration/Immigrant
 - Famine
 - Catholic
 - Protestant
 - Nativism/Nativist
 - Cartoonist
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ACTIVISTS

- Bishop John Hughes
- Samuel F.B. Morse
- Thomas Nast



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BEWARE OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE: Nativists and Immigrants 1830-1860**INTRODUCING RESOURCE 1****"People & Ideas: John Hughes." *God In America*, PBS.**<http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/john-hughes.html>

Between 1820 and 1860, a wave of Irish Catholic immigrants fleeing Ireland's Great Potato Famine arrived in New York City, which was predominantly Protestant. Irish-born Bishop John Hughes believed that New York's public schools, with their required reading of the Protestant King James Bible, threatened Catholics' religious freedom and their children's faith. He mobilized Catholics, challenged nativist organizations and political parties, and helped create a private Catholic School system. Read Bishop John Hughes's biography to learn about his impact on Irish Catholics: in New York City.

Born in Ireland, John Hughes immigrated to the United States as a young man. Harassed by Protestants in his native country, he looked to the United States as a bastion of religious freedom. But he discovered that freedom had its limits.

Ordained into the priesthood in Philadelphia, Hughes rose swiftly through the ranks, and by 1850 he was appointed archbishop of New York. In the mid-1800s, Catholic immigrants were swelling the population of the city, and Catholic children were offered the option to attend the public schools of New York. These schools were nominally nondenominational, unaffiliated with any particular faith or denomination, but Hughes and his fellow Catholics recognized that they were, in fact, highly influenced by the prevailing Protestant ethos. Textbooks reflected a widespread prejudice against Catholics, portraying the Irish immigrants as "extremely needy, and in many cases drunken and depraved ... subject for our grave and fearful reflection."

Tension between Catholics and Protestants erupted over the traditional practice of daily Bible reading. Public schools used the King James Bible; Catholics argued that this Bible was Protestant and that the daily readings undermined their beliefs. They demanded that the schools offer students the Catholic version of the Bible, the Douay-Rheims approved by the Vatican. School officials declined.

Hughes assumed leadership of the Catholic cause and took on the Protestant establishment. In speeches, sermons and writings, he demanded that public funds be used to support Catholic schools in addition to the Protestant public schools. The state Legislature refused.

Hughes then set his sights on the creation of a separate Catholic school system where Catholic children could be educated according to the tenets of their faith. Spurned by Protestants, Catholics established a series of their own institutions -- churches, hospitals and orphanages -- that paralleled those of the Protestant establishment.

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In 1858, in a ceremony that fulfilled his dream of announcing the arrival of Catholicism in America, Hughes laid the cornerstone of St. Patrick's Cathedral, which upon completion years later would become the crowning symbol of Catholic determination in the country. More than 60,000 people turned out for the ceremony. The New York Herald reported, "It was the largest assemblage our reporter ever saw in this city." But construction of the cathedral came to a halt two years later, and the building remained unfinished, with walls only reaching 35 feet high, throughout the Civil War. His dream came to be known as "Hughes' Folly."

Known as "Dagger John," Hughes could be aggressive, demanding, and insistent. He made enemies but was beloved by the Catholic immigrant community. He also won the respect of William Seward, New York's governor and later Lincoln's secretary of state. Fearing that European nations might come to the aid of the Confederacy, Seward sent Hughes to Europe to bolster the Union cause. Returning to the States in 1862, Hughes preached a sermon in support of the Union at St. Patrick's.

The following year, a violent riot broke out in New York protesting the institution of the draft for the Union Army. Many of the rioters were Irish laborers who worried that freed slaves would take their jobs. Rioters attacked and killed African Americans, even descending upon an orphanage for black children. The New York Times reported, "The rabble exhibit an abandonment of human feeling, that was hardly deemed possible in any portion of American society, even the foreign-born."

Ailing and weak, Hughes addressed a crowd gathered outside the balcony of his home and called for an end to the violence: "I address you as your Father. ... I am a minister of God, and a minister of peace, who in your troubles in years past as you know, never deserted you. With my tongue and my pen I have stood by you always, and so shall to the end of my life." The crowd reacted with cheers and cries of "No, never."

He continued: "I have been hurt by the reports that you are rioters. You cannot imagine that I could hear these things without being pained grievously. ... If you are Irishmen, and the papers say the rioters are all Irishmen, then I also am an Irishmen, but not a rioter, for I am a man of peace." His speech is credited with helping stem the violence.

Hughes died six months later. His body was exhumed and reburied under the altar of St. Patrick's after the cathedral was dedicated in 1879.

"People & Ideas: John Hughes." *God In America*, PBS.

<http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/john-hughes.html>

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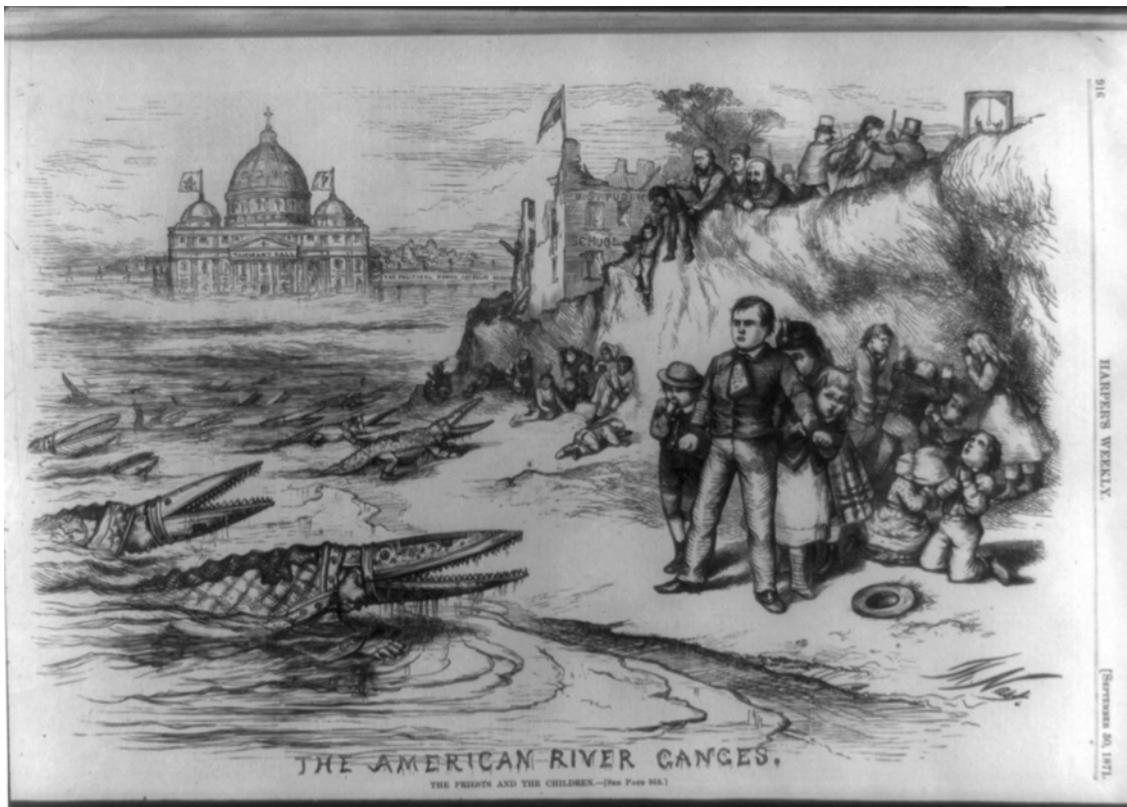
DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- Who was Bishop John Hughes?
- What did Bishop John Hughes find problematic about the public school system in New York City? Why did he want to create separate Catholic schools?
- Why is the building of St. Patrick's Cathedral especially significant in the history of Irish Catholics in New York City?
- What are the defining features of a biography?

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BEWARE OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE: Nativists and Immigrants 1830-1860**INTRODUCING RESOURCE 2****Thomas Nast, *The American River Ganges*, 1871. *Harper's Weekly*.**

From 1820 to 1860, 3.7 million people landed in New York Harbor – at a time when the city’s population was less than one million. Some native New Yorkers blamed immigrants for the city’s poverty, crime, and overcrowding. In June 1835, inventor Samuel F. B. Morse helped create the first political party against immigration: the Native American Democratic Association. As Bishop John Hughes advocated for federal funding of Catholic schools, nativists like Reverend W. C. Brownlee fought back, appalled that tax dollars would make it possible for Catholics “to train up their children to worship a ghostly monarchy of vicars, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and Popes!” Examine the following political cartoon by Thomas Nast to discover the nativist perspective on Irish Catholics in public schools.



Thomas Nast, *The American River Ganges*, *Harper's Weekly*, September 1871.



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DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- How does cartoonist Thomas Nast portray Irish Catholics?
- Compare and contrast the “Political Roman Catholic School” and the “U.S. Public School.”
- According to the cartoon, what would happen if Irish Catholics attained federal funding for their own schools?
- Why is the public school’s American flag upside down?
- How do you think Bishop John Hughes might respond to the political message of this cartoon?

 IMMIGRATION**BEWARE OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE:** Nativists and Immigrants 1830-1860**ACTIVITY 1**

Have your students imagine a scenario in which Bishop John Hughes meets cartoonist Thomas Nast. Encourage your students to think creatively about an interaction between these two figures. Have your students work in pairs to write a dialogue between Bishop John Hughes and cartoonist Thomas Nast that reveals their political beliefs about Irish Catholics and the public school system. Invite your students to perform these scenes for the class.

ACTIVITY 2

Considering PBS's biography of John Hughes, encourage your students to write biographies of their own. List on the board the components of a biography such as date of birth, information about early life, meaningful quotations, and historical context. Next, have your students each select an activist to research or interview before writing their own biographies of these figures. Create a booklet for your class that compiles these biographies. Compare and contrast the activists in the biographies focusing on what drives a person to fight for social change.

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ADDITIONAL READING

THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES

“Walks Among the New York Poor,” by C. L. Brace, October 11, 1852, is a part of a series of *New York Times* articles that tells stories of impoverished immigrant households. In this article, the author meets an Irish girl in Five Points who works long hours sewing garments.

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=940DE6DC1231E13BBC4952DFB6678389649FDE>

“Nativism,” by Horwitz, June 20, 1854, outlines the Nativist agenda, portraying Irish immigrants as untrustworthy foreigners.

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9E02E2D81230E23AA15753C2A9609C946592D7CF>

“Irish Immigrants in Cities,” October 20, 1873, explains why Irish immigrants settled in New York City instead of moving westward.

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9B07E5DD1339EF34BC4851DFB6678388669FDE>

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

“Refugees, Stuck in Grinding U.S. Process, Wait and Hope” by Somini Sengupta and Anne Barnard, October 10, 2015, explains the current regulations on immigration from the Middle East.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/11/world/middleeast/refugees-stuck-in-grinding-us-process-wait-and-hope.html>

“Undocumented Immigrants Line Up for Door Opened by Obama” by Julia Preston, December 14, 2014, describes an information session that was given to undocumented immigrants about recent changes in immigration policy.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/15/us/politics/undocumented-immigrants-line-up-for-door-opened-by-obama.html>

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SOURCES

Foner, Nancy. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

Nast, Thomas, *The American River Ganges, 1871*. *Harper's Weekly*.

"People & Ideas: John Hughes." *God In America*, PBS.

<http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/john-hughes.html>