

# KNOW-NOTHING OATH UNCOVERED

A New Jersey man who dabbles in acquiring historical documents found by happenstance the oath taken by members of the Know-Nothing Party, the 19th century anti-Catholic nativist group. He turned the document over to professors at Boston College.

“To defend our Republic Institutions against the encroachment of the Church of Rome...and its ignorant and deluded followers,” the oath says, “we are associated on a secret Military Order.” Prospective members were then asked to “raise your right hand up before the floating flag of your country [and] place your right foot on the emblem of the Church of Rome.”

The greatest legacy of the infamous Know-Nothing Party is found in those provisions of state constitutions that bar public monies for private schools. Such provisions were anti-Catholic in origin and remain so today. It is one of the principal obstacles standing in the way of school vouchers.