PICTURING NATIVISM IN ANTEBELLUM BOSTON:

Unit Outline

NEH Summer Institute 2010: “Picturing Early America: People, Places & Events, 1760-1870”
Salem State College, Salem, MA
Director: Professor Patricia Johnston, Art History
Tia Esposito, Director of Library, Videoconferencing Coordinator
Boston College High School
Unit Overview

• Who were the Irish Catholic Immigrants in the 19th century? Why did they come to Boston in such large numbers? What was life like for them? What values did they bring with them that helped shape Boston today?

• Working with primary sources, visual culture, and library resources to answer these questions, students reach an understanding of the impact that the Jesuits and Irish Catholics have had in the face of “bitter racial and religious tensions” in antebellum Boston.
### Objectives

#### Content Objectives

- To help enrich existing unit on immigration by including visual culture in Library Study Skills class to give students an opportunity to view American history from the point of view of the Jesuits and their school’s own 150 year history
- To orient students to the school’s library, history, and culture through a thorough investigation of the strong anti-Catholic, anti-Irish, anti-immigrant sentiments that the school’s first students faced in the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century

#### Skills Objectives

- Explore visual culture and primary sources related to Nativism in Boston 1820-1870
- Research related primary and secondary source materials in library online databases to aid in their interpretation
- Discuss and analyze these primary sources in library archives exhibit
- Compare local history of Nativism with contemporary Nativism through videoconferences with other schools
- Create final project for publication in school media outlets
Making Connections

- **Time Required:** Approximately 7-8 class periods in library (one class period every 7-day cycle)

- **Recommended Grade Level:** Middle school

- **Curriculum Fit:** history, reading/writing, visual arts, religion, writing lab

- **Political** – fears that Irish Catholics will undermine American democracy (papism, monarchism).

- **Economic** – fear for the loss of status or security of American workers

- **Religious** – fears about religious differences

- **Social** – fears of violence

- **Intellectual** – fear of Catholic Schools educating Protestant children and filling children’s minds with “popish ideas”

- **Artistic** – Puritans did not want their art to look “too Catholic” – different artistic styles, Catholics wanted more elaborate style in their churches
Lesson 1: Introducing Nativism in Boston

Essential or Guiding Question

There is one line on the school’s website which states:

“The school was founded to educate a burgeoning population of Irish immigrants during a period of bitter *racial* and *religious* hatred in the City of Boston.”

As you begin to explore immigration, what does this mean to you?
Procedure

• Read the overarching question on the board
• Log on to network, scavenger hunt to find quote on school’s website, open word document and use guiding question as writing prompt
• Log on to email account, send & print document
• Discuss guiding question as a class
• Play “Mingling Game” with Nativism Q’s
• Assign vocabulary words to be looked up in Oxford English Dictionary OED ONLINE
Lesson 2: Looking at Visual Culture of Boston in the 19th Century

- Powerpoint presentation of visual culture in political cartoons, newspapers, engravings, broadsides, sculptures, portraits, photographs, letters, primary documents
- Discuss visual culture in images as a class
- Play the “Dot Game”
- Check out book on immigration from library
When Massachusetts Was A British Colony
There Was A Law Banning Jesuit Priests - 1647

“There no Jesuit... shall henceforth at any time ... come within this jurisdiction; And if any person shall give just cause of suspicion that he is one of such society or order he shall be brought before some of the magistrates... to be tried or proceeded with by banishment ... and if any person so banished shall be taken a second time within this jurisdiction: Massachusetts Bay Colony jurisdiction upon lawful trial and conviction ... he shall be put to death.”

-- Massachusetts General Court, 1647
John Trumbull, Declaration of Independence
What is an American?

“The American is a new man who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions.”

– Letters from an American Farmer, 1782
“You will see by the Papers inclosed, that We have been obliged to attempt to humble the Pride of some Jesuits who call themselves Quakers, but who love Money and Land better than Liberty or Religion. The Hypocrites are endeavouring to raise the Cry of Persecution, and to give this Matter a religious Turnbut, they cant succeed. The World knows them and their Communications. Actuated by a land jobbing Spirit, like that of William Penn, they have been soliciting Grants of immense Regions of Land on the Ohio. American Independence has disappointed them, which makes them hate it. Yet the Dastards dare not avow their Hatred to it, it seems.”
"Those who come hither are generally of the most ignorant Stupid Sort of their own Nation...”

–Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin
Hiram Powers   (1805 - 1873)
Marble, 1862
Gilbert Stuart’s Portraits
Strong Anti-Catholic Sentiments Prevailed, But Cheverus’ Portraits Were Everywhere, Even In Many Protestants Homes.

Stuart, Gilbert. Bishop, 1823, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Cheverus was first Catholic Bishop of Boston)

Harriet Beecher Stowe Collected Madonnas
Robert W. Weir

Most Successful Painting: Taking the Veil, 1863

Most Famous Painting: Embarkation of the Pilgrims, 1837, Capitol Rotunda
Bishop Cheverus Established Ursuline Convent
Anti-Catholic political cartoon by Thomas Nast
“We have reason to fear not only the principles of the flood of Catholics who emigrate, but the wily priests who visit us, and the corruption spread by European money distributed by them... and the progress of Roman Catholic schools.”--Rev. Beecher (Harriet Beecher Stowe's Father)

(Only days after Beecher’s three inflammatory speeches in Boston, the Ursuline Convent was burned down.)

Reverend Lyman Beecher and the Roman Catholics in Boston

Sculpture of Rev. Beecher with William Lloyd Garrison (top)
Rebecca Reed was a Protestant young woman who had attended the school in 1831 as a charity scholar, but left shortly thereafter and published a pamphlet, then a book that caused much excitement in the city.
IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT FOR SOME DAYS PAST A GROUNDLESS RUMOR HAS PREVAILED IN CHARLESTOWN AND THE VICINITY, THAT A YOUNG LADY... PLACED IN THE CATHOLIC CONVENT, AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE VEIL, HAS BEEN SECRETED OR ABducted, THROUGH THE MACHINATIONS OF THE CONTROLLING AGENTS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, AND WAS NOT TO BE FOUND BY HER FRIENDS. IN CONSEQUENCES OF THIS RUMOR, A GREAT EXCITEMENT WAS CAUSED... AND OPEN THREATS OF BURNING DOWN THE CONVENT MADE.
"Ruins of the Ursuline Convent, at Charlestown, Massachusetts," historical print, 1834. Collection of the Charlestown Historical Society
A fire bucket from the Franklin Fire Society of Charlestown, circa 1834
David Claypoole Johnston’s Depiction of the Ursuline Convent Riot

Courtesy American Antiquarian Society
The Broad Street Riot in Boston, 1837: One of the most violent confrontations in the city's history

Riot involving over **fifteen thousand people**!

An Irish funeral procession and a company of Yankee firefighters came face-to-face in the streets of Boston. A fist-fight mushrooms into an insane riot of 15,000.

Riots like the one on Broad Street are occurring in major cities across the U.S.

"Riot at Hoboken, May 1, 1851." German immigrants battled nativists.
EDUCATION OF ROMAN CATHOLICS.

Mr. Tracy,—Sir,—In your Recorder of this day, there is an article copied from the Watchman, in which, after mentioning the fact of the Catholics having procured the seat recently owned by Hon. H. A. S. Dearborn, &c. it is said, "We hope they will furnish the means and appropriate a building in connection with this establishment, for giving a useful education to the numerous poor children of the Irish in Broad Street and other parts of the city. Whilst they are offering to educate the children of rich Protestants, we should be pleased to see their benevolence exercised towards their own poor, who are perishing in a state of ignorance."

Now, Sir, I want to ask, if you are not aware that an establishment for poor children from Broad St. and other parts of the city has been in existence some time, and that they not only instruct gratuitously, but also clothe them? The Bishop of Fort Onondaga, theirsuperintendent,
The Irish Potato Famine

Emigrants Leave Ireland, engraving by Henry Doyle (1827–1892)
Fr. John Bapst
stripped, tarred, and feathered
October 14, 1854
So how were the Irish Catholic Immigrants pictured?
We’ve seen the “religious hatred” but what about the “racial hatred” going on at this time?
Robert Morris, first African American Attorney in Boston

Robert Morris, Catholic Lawyer in Boston

The "Irish Lawyer" as Robert Morris was called, played an important part of BC history. He was not Irish, but African American. He lived from 1823 - 1882 in Boston and was the first practicing African-American lawyer in the city. He was involved with BC and donated his entire estate upon his death to the Jesuits in Boston.

Robert Morris’ id card 1863
Morris Helped to Free Shadrach Minkins and Worked with Thomas Sims
Robert Morris Represented Anthony Burns and was in the crowd of 50,000 As Burns Was Taken Away
When most people think of segregated schooling, they think of the American South during the first half of the twentieth century. But the earliest court case to battle against separate schools for African-American children came over a hundred years earlier in Boston, Massachusetts, at Robert Morris’ suggestion to Sumner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emigrated from County Cork</th>
<th>First Irish Catholic Immigrant to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robert Morris Trained Patrick Collins

- Be elected to Congress
- Serve as consul general
- Be elected Mayor of Boston (1901-1905)

Morris took note of an 11 year old Irish immigrant who was being picked on. Remembering the bigotry he faced as a child, Morris took the young boy in and trained him in the law.
“I went to my office. I sat down and cried. I thought of the mighty odds against which I must contend and then it was that I made the vow I have never broken. It was this: I would prove myself to be a man and a gentleman, and succeed in the practice of law, or I would die.”

—Robert Morris after being ridiculed by the lawyer he’d just beaten in court.
Morris Unsuccessfully Petitioned for African American Unit in 1859 (54th Regiment came shortly thereafter)

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS [1848–1907], Shaw Memorial, 1884–1897

Note: St-Gaudens himself was an Irish Famine Immigrant who once said, “Love and Courage are the great things.”
Morris thought so highly of the Jesuits of Boston that he left his entire estate to them.

“...that the Irish Americans of Boston are so earnestly and consistently friendly to their colored fellow citizens is due largely to the great influence exercised by Robert Morris.” — American Catholic Tribune, November 24, 1888, pp. 1-2.
“We honor him because he stood  
Calm mid the raging sea;  
True to his God, his race himself;  
His country, Liberty.”

Bringing it back around to the essential/guiding question:

What do you think Elijah William Smith meant by *raging sea*?

Do you think he was speaking of the “bitter racial and religious hatred” of the time?
Lesson 3: Student Research Component
Nativism in Boston in 19th Century

Students will come to the computer labs in the library and do research in the online databases, exploring their own examples of nativism in antebellum Boston, recording their findings on the “That Was Then, This Is Now” THEN side of the worksheet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEN</th>
<th>NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NATIVISM
That was then, This is Now Worksheet
Lesson 4: Students Have Personal Experience with Visual Art from Archives

- Students will explore the school’s archives exhibit
- NOTE: If a school does not have a school archives, local or state archives or museums could be visited through a field trip or videoconference with museums with online education programs.
- Museum videoconferencing programs can be found in the directory below using keyword search: Immigration
Materials

• “Reading” Portraiture Guide for Educators, Smithsonian, National Portrait Gallery worksheet
  http://www.npg.si.edu/docs/reading.pdf

• National Archives Document Analysis Guides
  http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/
Procedure

Students will come to the library archives and after going through the exhibit, will find one portrait, photograph, or artifact, and will complete the appropriate worksheet on the piece from the exhibit that they most identify with. Students will write a story about the piece they selected as an assignment.
What was Lincoln’s hope for the future after the Civil War?
What was Homer’s?
Were their hopes realized?

Abraham Lincoln, Alexander Gardner 1865
Veteran In A New Field, 1865
Homer Winslow
Immigrant advocates protesting Arizona Gov. Brewer as she attends the National Governors Association meeting in Boston. They are protesting Arizona’s controversial immigration law.

Protesters said Brewer was a bigot and called for the end of what they said was “racist deportation.”

New law requires police to question people about their immigration status if there’s reason to suspect someone is in the country illegally.

Protesters march during a rally against Arizona's immigration law.
Saturday, July 10, 2010, in Boston.
(AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)
Procedure

- Students introduced to comparison of Nativism Then and Now in video “Wrong Then, Wrong Now”
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljyxzCShh_4
- Students use online library resources to investigate Nativism in America today and record their findings on the That Was Then, This Is Now Worksheet NOW side.
- Discuss with students how attitudes toward the Irish Catholics in the 19th century are similar to attitudes toward immigrants today. How do these attitudes affect the way immigrants are treated and the kinds of legislation that is passed?
Lesson 6: Expanding the Lesson Beyond the Classroom Via Videoconference

Using their research from their “That Was Then, This Is Now” worksheet students will engage in a Socratic Seminar with a class in Arizona and a class in Dublin Ireland via videoconference.

Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration
http://www.cilc.org

Collaborations Around the Planet a social networking tool for educational videoconferencing
http://projects.twice.cc
Lesson 7: Reflecting on Nativism in Boston Assessment

- Recall with students the original guiding question. Hand back original pieces students wrote and discuss as a class. Do the students feel as though they have come to a better understanding of nativism? Students rewrite original draft.
- Brainstorm as a class ways in which the students can demonstrate their understanding through art, music, or literature.
- Assign students to create a piece of prose or poetry, a newspaper article, a piece of art work, a piece of music or a podcast demonstrating their understanding of nativism in Boston. Let students know that the finished work will be submitted to the school newspaper, the school literary magazine or the school podcast club for publication.
Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Addressed

Social, Political, and Religious Change, 1800-1860

USI.31 Describe the formation of the abolitionist movement, the roles of various abolitionists, and the response of southerners and northerners to abolitionism. (H)

USI.32 Describe important religious trends that shaped antebellum America. (H)

A. the increase in the number of Protestant denominations
B. the Second Great Awakening
C. the influence of these trends on the reaction of Protestants to the growth of Catholic immigration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary To Be Looked Up In Oxford English Dictionary for Historical &amp; Contemporary Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesuitical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Know-Nothing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotype</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

- **Burning of Ursuline Convent.** [http://www.massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=234](http://www.massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=234)
List of Slides from Picturing America

- “Benjamin Franklin” Hiram Powers, Marble, 1862
- “George Washington” (The Landsdowne Portrait) Gilbert Stuart, 1796
- “Veteran in A New Field” Winslow Homer, 1865
- “Abraham Lincoln” Alexander Gardner, 1865
- “Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Regiment” Augustus St. Gaudens, 1884
A very heart-felt thank you to all of the NEH program coordinators, especially Dr. Patricia Johnston, Jessica Lanier, Kayleigh Merritt, Steve Schmidt, and all of the NEH Institute participants. I would also like to thank the many librarians, archivists and curators who gave so graciously of their time and resources.