

## THE KNOW-NOTHING PARTY PLATFORM

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### Questions:

- 1) **What are the major goals of the Know-Nothing Party? Why would someone find these demands attractive?**
- 2) **What does the rapid rise and fall of the Know-Nothings suggest about politics in the 1850s?**
- 3) **If the Know-Nothings existed today, do you think that they would have many supporters? Explain your answer.**

*Between 1840 and 1860, 4.2 million European immigrants arrived in the United States. Three-quarters of the emigrants were Irish or German and many were also Catholic. Their arrival sparked a wave of nativism [anti-immigrant sentiment] and anti-Catholicism throughout the country. Many Protestant Americans believed that the immigrants posed a threat to their economic security and religious beliefs. In 1849, a secret nativist group called the Order of the Star Spangled Banner formed in New York City and soon spread throughout New England. When members were asked about its activities, they replied, "I know nothing. " As the organization grew more powerful and less clandestine, it evolved into the American Party, also known as the Know-Nothing Party. The party endorsed limits on immigration, restriction of voting and political offices to native-born Americans, and a twenty-one year residency requirement for naturalized citizenship. By 1855, Know-Nothings had gained scores of adherents and controlled several political offices but broke apart the following year.*



### The Know-Nothing Party Platform

1. Repeal of all Naturalization laws.
2. None but native Americans for office.
3. A pure American Common School system.
4. War to the hilt, on political Romanism.
5. Opposition to the formation of Military Companies, comprised of Foreigners.
6. The advocacy of sound, healthy and safe Nationality.
7. Hostility to all Papal influences, when brought to bear against the Republic.
8. American Institutions and American Sentiments.
9. More stringent and effective Emigration Laws.
10. The amplest protection to Protestant Interests.
11. The doctrines of the revered Washington....
13. Formation of societies to protect American interests.
14. Eternal enmity to all who attempt to carry out the principles of a foreign Church of State.
15. Our Country, our whole country, and nothing but our Country....