

To this, Mr. Bonniwell attached (and the House Report and Congressional Record dutifully reprinted) a copy of the purported “Knights of Columbus Oath” that had been circulated during the campaign. The purported oath included verbatim the language given above. (That language constitutes, roughly, the second half of the purported oath as it appears in the Congressional Record). Note that it is at all times referred to as a purported “Knights of Columbus” oath – the Jesuits are never mentioned. Also included in the House Report (and reprinted in the Congressional Record) is the response submitted by Mr. Butler. He admitted that the activities alleged by Mr. Bonniwell had, in fact, occurred, but denied any knowledge of or connection to those activities. A portion of his response follows:

You state in this paragraph of your objection that an editorial publication was made in these papers as follows:

“The Hon. Thomas S. Butler, the Republican nominee for Congress, was born and reared in the Society of Friends, and is proud of his Quaker ancestry. His opponent, Eugene C. Bonniwell, is a Roman Catholic.” . . .

While I never saw or heard of it until I read the paragraph of your objection, I admit the truthfulness of it with pleasure so far as it relates to me. I did not in any manner inspire it. Since your notice served on me, Mr. Eyre informs me that he had not seen or heard of the article of which you complain, although it appeared in his own newspaper. I have no knowledge of “any man, set of men, political organization, or its representative, employing or procuring messengers to traverse this congressional district and to circulate on my account or on any account the publication which you characterize as a blasphemous and infamous libel, known as Knights of Columbus oath.” That this paper was circulated through this congressional district during this campaign I both admit and regret. I deny that I had anything whatever to do, directly or indirectly, with either its publication or its circulation. It came into this district through the mails, I am informed, and as fast as it appeared those who took my advice destroyed it. I am advised by those who know, that the same article was circulated and distributed in other parts of Pennsylvania than this congressional district during the last campaign, and I am further informed that this same article has been circulated not only in Pennsylvania, but in other States during political campaigns for many years. I had no knowledge whatever of it until it appeared here during the last campaign, and from a source I know nothing about. Two or three of my political advocates showed

me copies of this paper, which they had received through the mails. I requested them to ascertain where other copies of it had been received and to have all of them destroyed. I apprehended with alarm the use of such a document in a political campaign, or at any other time.

I do not believe in its truthfulness, and so stated my judgment concerning it on November 4, 1912 (as soon as complaint was made to me of its general circulation), through the columns of the West Chester Daily Local News

So what we have is a document anonymously circulated during a heated election campaign. Both sides disavowed its authenticity. It was included in a House Report summarizing an investigation of that election, because it was attached to a document submitted by one of the candidates. The Report was reprinted in the Congressional Record.

All in all, no sane person could conclude that this constitutes any sort of “authentication” of this document by Congress.

Anyone who is interested in checking behind my research can read all about it – any law school library will have a copy. The citation is H.R. Rep. No. 62-1523 (1913), reprinted in the Congressional Record for February 15, 1913, at pp. 3215-3220.

Without a doubt this shows that neither Oath is credible. The Committee on Elections for the Congressional Record, states the following:

This committee cannot condemn too strongly the publication of the false and libelous article referred to in the paper of Mr. Bonniwell, and which was the spurious Knights of Columbus oath, a copy of which is appended to the paper. (H.R. Rep. No. 62-1523 (1913), reprinted in the Congressional Record for February 15, 1913, at p. 3221)

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Pamphlet 179

The Jesuit Oath Debunked

There are two versions of the Oath that are most commonly cited. The first is located in the Library of Congress; the second is located in the Congressional Record.

Jesuit Oath found in the Library of Congress

This version of the Jesuit Oath is one of the two most popular versions cited. It is probably cited so often due to the fact that it can be located in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Library of Congress Catalog Card # 66-43354. Anti-Catholics seem to believe that because it is found in the Library of Congress, that it is a credible document, which I will show is not always a given. On the other hand, perhaps certain anti-Catholics wish to prey on ignorance, and they know exactly what I am about to expose. But, before I do, here is a complete copy of the aforementioned Oath:

I furthermore promise and declare that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly or openly, against all heretics, Protestants and Liberals, as I am directed to do, to extirpate and exterminate them from the face of the whole earth; and that I will spare neither age, sex or condition; and that I will hang, burn, waste, boil, flay, strangle and bury alive these infamous heretics, rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women and crush their infants heads against the walls, in order to annihilate forever their execrable race. That when the same cannot be done openly, I will secretly use the poisoned cup, the strangulating cord, the steel of the poinard dignity, or authority of the person or persons, whatever may be their condition in life, either public or private, as I at any time may be directed so to do by any agent of the Pope or Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Faith, of the Society of Jesus.

In confirmation of which, I hereby dedicate my life, my soul and all my corporeal powers, and with this dagger which I now receive, I will subscribe my name written in my own blood, in testimony thereof; and should I prove false or weaken in my determination, may my brethren and fellow soldiers of the Militia of the Pope cut off my hands and my feet, and my throat from ear to ear, my belly opened and sulphur burned therein, with all the punishment that can be inflicted upon me on earth and my soul be tortured by demons in an eternal hell forever!

All of which I, M_____, N_____, do swear by the blessed Trinity and blessed Sacrament, which I am now to receive, to perform and on my part to keep inviolably; and do call all the heavenly and glorious

host of heaven to witness these my real intentions to keep this my oath.

In testimony hereof I take this most holy and blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, and witness the same further, with my name written with the point of this dagger dipped in my own blood and sealed in the face of this holy convent."

Jesuit Oath found in the Congressional Record

This version of the Jesuit Oath is another popular version, and is quoted by such anti-Catholics as Ian Paisley. It is a part of the U.S. House Congressional Record, 1913, p. 3216. The oath was originally made public in the year 1883. This version of the Jesuit Oath reads as follows:

I do further promise and declare that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly and openly, against all heretics, Protestants and Masons, as I am directed to do, to extirpate them from the face of the whole earth; and that I will spare neither age, sex nor condition, and that will hang, burn, waste, boil, flay, strangle, and bury alive these infamous heretics; rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women, and crush their infants' heads against the walls in order to annihilate their execrable race. That when the same cannot be done openly I will secretly use the poisonous cup, the strangulation cord, the steel of the poniard, or the leaden bullet, regardless of the honour, rank, dignity or authority of the persons, whatever may be their condition in life, either public or private, as I at any time may be directed so to do by any agents of the Pope or Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Father of the Society of Jesus.

In confirmation of which I hereby dedicate my life, soul, and all corporal powers, and with the dagger which I now receive I will subscribe my name written in my blood in testimony thereof; and should I prove false, or weaken in my determination, may my brethren and fellow soldiers of the militia of the Pope cut off my hands and feet and my throat from ear to ear, my belly be opened and sulphur burned therein with all the punishment that can be inflicted upon me on earth, and my soul shall be tortured by demons in eternal hell forever. That I will in voting always vote for a Knight of Columbus in preference to a Protestant, especially a Mason, and that I will leave my party so to do; that if two Catholics are on the ticket I will satisfy myself which is the better supporter of Mother Church and vote accordingly. That I will not deal with or employ a Protestant if in my power to deal with or employ a Catholic. That I will place Catholic girls in Protestant families that a weekly report may be made of the inner movements of

the heretics. That I will provide myself with arms and ammunition that I may be in readiness when the word is passed, or I am commanded to defend the Church either as an individual or with the militia of the Pope.

All of which I, _____, do swear by the blessed Trinity and blessed sacrament which I am now to receive to perform and on part to keep this my oath.

In testimony hereof, I take this most holy and blessed sacrament of the Eucharist and witness the same further with my name written with the point of this dagger dipped in my own blood and seal in the face of this holy sacrament.

The Congressional Record, published daily when Congress is in session, is the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress. It is the responsibility of the Government Printing Office, and the information can be accessed by going through the Federal Depository Libraries, an extension of the Library of Congress. You can't "send" or even "submit" things to the Congressional Record. The only way to get anything into the Record is to have them said or entered into the Record by a Congressman. So, exactly how did the Jesuit Oath get into the Congressional Record in 1913?

In the 1912 elections, the two candidates for Congress from the Seventh Congressional District in Pennsylvania were Eugene C. Bonniwell, a Democrat, and Thomas S. Butler, a Republican. Mr. Bonniwell, the unsuccessful candidate, filed an objection with the Speaker of the House, asking that Mr. Butler not be seated to represent the district. His objections were investigated by a House Committee on Elections, which prepared a report (House Report 1523). That report was submitted to the House on February 15, 1913, and, upon request of a Congressman Olmsted, was included in the Congressional Record.

The House Report reproduced, in its entirety, Mr. Bonniwell's written statement of objections. Among other items, Mr. Bonniwell's objection included the following discussion of religious slanders perpetrated by supporters of Mr. Butler:

The West Chester Village Record is a local newspaper largely owned and controlled by T. L. Eyre, Republican boss of Chester County, and personal representative of Thomas S. Butler.

The Chester Republican is a local paper largely owned and controlled by Senator William C. Sproul, a Republican boss, and personal representative of Thomas S. Butler in Delaware County. On August 15, 1912, the West Chester Village Record published the following editorial:

"The Hon. Thomas S. Butler, the Republican nominee for Congress, was born and reared in the Society of Friends, and is proud of his Quaker ancestry. His opponent, Eugene C. Bonniwell, is a Roman Catholic."

On August 28, 1912, the Chester Republican reprinted this editorial. Coincident with the two said editorials messengers in the employ of supporters of Thomas S. Butler traversed the district, having in their possession and circulating a blasphemous and infamous libel, a copy of which is hereto attached, pretended to be an oath of the Knights of Columbus, of which body the contestant [Bonniwell] is a member. So revolting are the terms of this document and so nauseating its pledges that the injury it did not merely to the contestant but also to the Knights of Columbus and to Catholics in general can hardly be measured in terms.

I charge that the circulation of this oath and the publication of the two editorials herein referred to were part of a conspiracy . . . for the purpose of arousing religious rancor and of defeating the Democratic nominee. The Constitution of the United States prohibits any religious test for office. The organization supporting Thomas S. Butler created such a test, blazed bigotry in the hearts and minds of the ignorant, and slandered and vilified a great body of honorable men.

I file no complaint because of adverse election returns. The Democracy of Pennsylvania is inured to adversity. Nor is this complaint registered because of defeat resultant upon faith or race. In these things I own a just pride and do not protest if, because of either, political honors are to be denied men. But when a calumnious, viperish attack upon either faith or race is launched, injecting religious bigotry into the political affairs of this Nation, then this protest is made in the certain confidence that all patriotic men, mindful of the religious as well as the political liberty that the forefathers designed should be our heritage, will rise and strike down the beneficiary of such a treacherous and dastardly movement.

For myself I make no appeal to your honorable body that I may be seated. . . . This I do maintain, that this man, receiving his election under these circumstances, adding the felonies of forged papers, perjured acknowledgements, and violated grand jury to the more wicked crime of religious slander, ought not to be tolerated in the House of Representatives.