



The Irish in the Atlantic World

The Irish in the Atlantic World

The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World

Sponsored by the Program in the Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World of the College of Charleston

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The Irish in the Atlantic World

Edited by David T. Gleeson

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The Irish Atlantic?

David T. Gleeson

In July 2000 at a meeting of the American Bar Association held in Dublin, the minister of enterprise and *tánaiste* (deputy prime minister) of the Irish government, Mary Harney, in a speech describing Ireland's relationship with the European Union (EU) and the United States, stated, "Geographically we [the Irish people] are closer to Berlin than Boston." But, she continued, "spiritually, we are probably a lot closer to Boston than Berlin."¹

The speech focused mainly on the Irish economic model, which Minister Harney described as somewhere between the social system of Europe and the free-enterprise system in America. She explained this spiritual kinship by acknowledging the close historical connections between Ireland and the United States, particularly the fact that millions of Irish immigrants had moved across the Atlantic "down the centuries." The speech caused quite a stir in Ireland, an Ireland that, at the time, saw itself as one of the most pro-EU countries in the Union. The main reaction from Irish politicians and the commentariat focused on the impact the speech would have on Ireland's relationship with its European partners, not with the United States. The criticism highlighted the perceived insult to other European countries and/or the fact that Ireland seemed to be endorsing the "neoliberal" economy of the United States over the European model. No one, however, criticized Harney's description of the continued good relationship with the United States. Politicians and journalists alike, even those concerned about the "Americanizing" of Ireland's economy and culture, accepted the close historical and contemporary connections between Ireland and America.²

In 2000 perhaps fresh in many Irish people's minds was the important role President Bill Clinton and the U.S. government had played in the achievement of the 1998 Northern Ireland Good Friday Peace Accord and the fact that almost 25 percent of Ireland's gross domestic product was generated by foreign companies, most of which were American.³ Or perhaps it was something deeper. Was there an "Irish Atlantic World" that transcended the ocean to the thirty-odd million North Americans of Irish ancestry? The "idea of Atlantic history," as pioneering scholar

Bernard Bailyn puts it, began with the Anglo-American alliances of World War I and World War II, but especially of World War II and its aftermath. That war gave us the Atlantic Charter between Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt and later the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949). To some scholars there seemed a commonality of values in the English-speaking Atlantic World that had built up over centuries of transatlantic trade—trade in terms of people, commodities, and ideas. From its “Anglo” roots Atlantic history expanded rapidly to include other European nations and their colonies in the Americas and Africa and ultimately led to the idea that there was an Atlantic World, particularly between the 1400s, when the Portugese began to explore the West Coast of Africa, and the 1820s, with the breakup of the last major European empires in the Western Hemisphere (Spain).⁴ This Atlantic World was, as one scholar put it, “the scene of a vast interaction rather than merely the transformation of European onto American shores.” This “vast interaction” did not just affect the Europeans and Americans directly involved in “the sudden and harsh encounter between two old worlds that transformed both and integrated them into a single New World.” It also created “new human geographies” that moved “not only westward upon the body of America but eastward upon the body of Europe and inward upon and laterally along the body of Africa.”⁵

Where did Ireland fit in the Atlantic World? The island of Ireland of course sits in the Atlantic Ocean. “Next stop America” is a phrase many use when they look at the ocean off the western coast of Ireland. From the Atlantic comes most of Ireland’s active weather and the Gulf Stream, which keeps the island’s inlets and harbors ice free even though Ireland is on the same latitude as Labrador, Canada. But what of Ireland in the historical Atlantic World? Ireland first makes its appearance as part of an Atlantic World in the early modern era. Indeed it would be Ireland’s connection to her island neighbor to the east, Great Britain, which dragged the country, willingly or not, into the nascent English/British Atlantic. Aggressive nation-state and empire building in England during the sixteenth century forced English monarchs and their minions to look closely at Ireland. Irish historian Nicholas Canny showed how the Elizabethan conquerors of Ireland, emulating their Spanish counterparts who had sought fame and fortune in the Americas, began their colonization efforts in Ireland. In terms of personnel and practice, a lot what the English did in Ireland in the 1560s and 1570s would be perfected later in the American colonies. Ireland, in some ways, was the prototype for the whole transatlantic English colonial enterprise of the 1600s. This Ireland, as the sixteenth-century English imperial “laboratory,” remains the most acknowledged “Ireland” in the Atlantic World. In the most recent Atlantic World textbook, for example, Ireland is discussed in-depth on only 2 pages (out of 674), both of which cover the Elizabethan and later Stuart conquests of the island.⁶

Ireland's link to Britain and its empire continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, in some ways, modernized Ireland. Historical geographer Kevin Whelan states that "at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Ireland was a very lightly settled, overwhelmingly pastoral, heavily wooded country, whose economy was characterized by its quasi-autarchic state, its lack of integration, its weak urbanism, and technological archaisms." Yet by the late 1700s, Irish society had been transformed. Whelan describes the reasons for this transformation succinctly: "Two processes were central to this transformation; the initial subjugation, subsequent colonization and final integration into the expanding mercantilistic state, and the concurrent enhancement of Ireland's location, with the rapid articulation of the North Atlantic Commercial World."⁷

Ireland, however, remained somewhat on the "periphery" of the Atlantic system in the early modern period.⁸ British conquest and control meant restrictions on direct trade with the colonies in the Americas. Nonetheless trade, both indirect, that is, through Britain, and direct, between Ireland and the American colonies, grew to substantial levels.⁹ As a result connections between Irish people and the Atlantic World grew. Many of those disaffected by the English takeover either were deported or left Ireland to seek their fortunes elsewhere. During the Cromwellian era (1649–60) the English authorities sent numbers of Irish Catholics, particularly young priests, to Barbados. These Irish were usually indentured to a period of service, which, if they survived, meant they could try to earn a living for themselves at the end of their term. Other Irish went willingly to work as British administrators in both the Caribbean and the mainland British colonies in North America.¹⁰ The non-British Atlantic World also attracted Irish émigrés and exiles. Throughout the 1600s, but especially after 1690 and into the 1700s, many Irish Catholics left Ireland to avoid the discriminatory and confiscatory policies of the post-1690 "Ascendancy" governments' "penal laws." They often sought a new life in the armies of Catholic nations across Europe, especially France and Spain. Others established mercantile interests to trade with their former homeland. Some of these "Wild Geese," as they were called in Irish folklore, came to the Americas in service to their new governments. Soldier Alejandro O'Reilly, for example, who had been born in Ireland, served as the Spanish governor of Cuba and later, in the mid-eighteenth century, as governor of Spanish Louisiana. Irish regiments also served throughout the Spanish Empire.¹¹

The largest and most important transfer of people from Ireland to the Americas, however, came in 1700s. Between about 1720 and the American Revolution tens of thousands of Presbyterians, whose ancestors had originally come from Scotland, left the northern province of Ireland, Ulster, for British North America. These people were what became known in North American popular culture as the "Scotch-Irish," although historian Patrick Griffin, who recognizes the complicated nomenclature of this group, refers to them as the "people with no

name.” These Ulster Scots, Scots-Irish, Presbyterians, or whatever they called themselves, had a profound effect on the British colonies in North America, particularly from Pennsylvania to Georgia. They brought with them their Presbyterianism, their whiskey making, and a strong desire to participate in colonial politics. Some, such as clergyman and intellectual Francis Allison, brought their Scottish Enlightenment ideas with them to disseminate to impressionable young colonial minds. They were present in towns and cities as well as on the front line in the conflict with the Native Americans. Many also played a leading role in the fight against the British during the American Revolution. After the war their descendants would move west from the southeastern coast to settle places such as the Mississippi Territory and become among the first and most patriotic “Americans.”¹²

Scholars now recognize that thousands of these Scots-Irish were of English and Anglican or native Irish and Catholic stock, often subsumed into the larger Presbyterian migration. Irish Catholics usually came as indentured servants, convicts, or soldiers. Participants in this predominantly male migration disappeared into the majority population to some extent, because they were mostly illiterate, had to learn and speak English, and thus lost contact with a Gaelic-speaking Ireland. If they married, it was usually to a Protestant. Many converted because there was no structural Catholic Church outside of Quebec in British North America. There were exceptions, such as the Carrolls of Maryland, who produced a Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence and the United States’ first Catholic bishop, but in general but these were rare exceptions to the rule. The Anglican Anglo-Irish came too to seek their fortunes as British subjects in the British Empire. Although proud of their Britishness, some also showed an increasing acknowledgment of themselves as Irish. Wealthy Irish people of all religious persuasions, however, took advantage of the economic opportunities offered by the integrated empire. Irish mercantile interests could be found in everything from fishing in Newfoundland to trading for sugar and slaves in the Carribean.¹³

The increased “family” and business connections between Ireland and the Atlantic World in the eighteenth century began to have an effect on Ireland as well. The American Revolution, in particular, put pressure on the British government to give concessions to the Irish Parliament in Dublin, one dominated by Anglicans. Irish Presbyterians took a keen interest in the American Revolution, too, especially the participation of their “cousins” in it. Even the Gaelic Catholic Irish, who had seen America as a place of banishment, where friends and family went to and were never heard from again, now viewed America in a more favorable light. The American conflict, along with the French Revolution (1789), inspired a number of Irish Protestants to form the Society of United Irishmen in an attempt to create a new Irish identity, one not based on religion. A government crackdown in the mid-1790s and a failed United Irish rebellion in 1798

drove many in the society abroad, in the process helping to create a “Green Atlantic” of radical Irishmen with radical ideas. These political exiles had a major impact in the United States, where they were active on behalf of Thomas Jefferson and his Republican party. They drew the ire of the opposition Federalists, who drew up and passed the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts (1798) to control and deport these foreign agitators. In less controversial circumstances the United Irish exiles founded Hibernian societies throughout America, embraced the symbols of the United Irishmen—the harp, the color green, and so on—and gave shape to the first consciously Irish American communities. As a result, however, in some ways the Irish exiles in America changed what it meant to be American as well as Irish American in the early Republic.¹⁴ By 1820, the “official” end of the Atlantic World, the Irish had contributed commodities, ideas, and, most important, people to this “New World.”¹⁵

The Irish experience of the Atlantic World did not, however, end neatly with the fall of the Spanish Empire in the 1820s. In many ways it was only beginning. From 1815 to 1845 more than a million Irish people left Ireland for North America. When the Great Famine hit in 1845, another two million left in about ten years, again primarily for North America. The American Civil War ended this massive emigration, but substantial emigration continued through the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Indeed it was U.S. immigration restrictions and national quotas in 1924 that finally curtailed Irish migration to the Americas. (Although it would take off again in the 1980s in an “illegal” fashion.) The effect on the Americas was an Irish presence in virtually every province of Canada and every state of the United States, and even a significant presence in parts of Argentina. British capital and “British” subjects, most of whom were Irish, played a huge role in the continued transatlantic economy as raw materials came eastward and manufactured goods went westward. The Irish were particularly vital in the movement of this commerce, dominating many docks as well as the construction of canals and railroads. As a result of this large Irish presence, most North American cities had large Irish communities, while in the countryside one could find Irish settlements, Catholic and Protestant, such as Wexford, Iowa, or Cavan, Ontario. Irish societies, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the United States or the Orange Order in Canada, grew to become important political lobby groups. Irish nationalist and unionist causes found important support in the Atlantic World. Nationalist groups such as the Fenians and the Land League were particularly dependent on American support.¹⁶

Irish immigrants thus had a huge impact on transatlantic institutions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Catholic Church in the United States and Canada became almost Irish in this period, occasionally drawing the ire of other ethnic groups. The Irish were very active in politics too, perfecting the political “machine” in many U.S. cities. Some leading politicians from these machines would rise to state and national political office, culminating with Al

Smith's nomination for the presidency in 1928 and John F. Kennedy's election to that office in 1960. The descendants of the famine generation had now reached the heights that the Scots-Irish John C. Calhoun, Andrew Jackson, and James Buchanan had attained in the nineteenth century. Even politicians without an explicit Irish connection, such as Harry Truman, could find political success in Irish machines. All native U.S. politicians, especially Democrats, had to cater to the Irish / Irish American vote. Despite his natural sympathies toward Great Britain, for example, President Woodrow Wilson had to be very careful about antagonizing the Irish vote and not rush to Britain's aid too precipitously during World War I. This Irish American success in politics peaked the continued interest of politicians back in Ireland. Éamon de Valera, the Irish politician who eventually would become *taoiseach* and the nation's president, spent most of 1920 and 1921 campaigning for recognition of the "Irish Republic" from the Republican and Democratic parties.¹⁷

After the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the transatlantic connection became less important to Ireland. Irish Americans seem to lose interest in Ireland, now that there was less of an "Irish question." Simultaneously a period of Republican dominance in the 1920s with a rise in nativism, thanks to anti-immigrant groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, led to the aforementioned national quota system and restricted the numbers of Irish coming to America. Increasingly, Irish immigrants went to Britain instead. Other reasons for the decline included the Great Depression, which led to the fall off in Irish American organizations, and Ireland's neutrality in World War II and the cold war (Ireland never joined NATO). Awareness revived, however, with John F. Kennedy's election and subsequent visit to Ireland in the early 1960s. The outbreak of the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland in the latter part of that decade led to the growth again of Irish American interest in Irish politics. That interest led to aid for the Provisional IRA (Irish Republican Army) but also to support for the various efforts at compromise that culminated with the 1998 Good Friday Accord.¹⁸

This outline shows, I believe, the continued importance of an Atlantic World, beyond the collapse of the European empires in the Americas, to Ireland and Irish people as well as the continued importance of Irish people in the Atlantic World. It was with this in mind that the Program in the Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World (CLAW) at the College of Charleston decided to host a conference on the Irish in the Atlantic World in 2007. Indeed, Charleston itself had seen the influence of Irish immigrants throughout its history, so much so that the president of the Irish Republic, Éamon de Valera, visited the city in 1920 to drum up support and money for the Irish War of Independence (1919–21). Recognizing the colonial and Protestant origins of many of the city's Irish connections, he made sure to bring an Irish Presbyterian supporter with him to highlight the "ecumenical" nature of the struggle back in Ireland. The conference culminated in a final plenary discussion that tried to answer one question: was

there an Irish Atlantic? There was some disagreement, with some seeing Irish transatlantic networks as very important to both Ireland and the host countries and others believing that Ireland, as a colony of Great Britain, could not have been a major player in the Atlantic World.¹⁹

There is a lot more research to be done on the Irish in the Atlantic World, but what was clear from this meeting of scholars is that there already has been a lot of innovative work under way and that the usual chronological parameters of the Atlantic World need to be expanded. This book indicates clearly that it is still useful to think about Ireland in an Atlantic context well beyond the late eighteenth century. Whether there ever was an Irish Atlantic, and if there was, how long it lasted, along with what shape it took, remain open questions. In three areas, however, the Atlantic perspective is still important for understanding Ireland and its people, both those who stayed at home and those who left. First, there is no doubt that the continued Atlantic World of trade and communication affected Ireland. The increasing commercialization and technological advancement of transatlantic trade made it easier to exchange goods and information.

Indeed, from the nineteenth century onward the Irish at home and abroad became more connected in these senses than they ever had been in the heyday of the Atlantic World. With a growth in literacy, the rise of popular journalism, the transatlantic cable, and steam power in this century, the peoples around the Atlantic remained close to one another despite the breaking of most direct imperial ties. For the Irish at home and abroad it was especially true as they now could maintain contact like never before with their friends and relatives on the other side of the Atlantic. As a result Ireland remained influenced by the ongoing Atlantic World. Part 1 of this book, "Ireland in the Atlantic World," highlights how the Irish who did not leave the island continued to be part of an Atlantic World, in both positive and negative ways. It also shows how aware many Irish were of events across the Atlantic.

The first chapter, Paul Townend's "Mathewite Temperance in Atlantic Perspective," indicates how what in many ways the very Irish story of Father Theobald Mathew's campaign for temperance in the 1830s and 1840s is one that can also be understood in a transatlantic context. For temperance to succeed in Ireland, Father Mathew knew that it had to have an international component. William H. Mulligan Jr., in "The Anatomy of Failure: Nineteenth-Century Irish Copper Mining in the Atlantic and Global Economy," examines how Ireland fell victim to the continued Atlantic World economy. Tied closely to a mother country (Britain) that embraced free trade and a ruling class not very interested in industrial development, the nascent copper industry in Ireland could not compete in the Atlantic economy without protection.

The next two chapters, "Transatlantic Migrations of Irish Music in the Early Recording Age" by Scott Spencer and "The 'Idea of America' in the New Irish State, 1922–1960" by Bernadette Whelan, highlight how, despite the fact that the

Irish in America were the least likely of any immigrant group to return to Ireland, the Atlantic Ocean remained a two-way highway. Spencer describes how Irish traditional tunes traveled across the Atlantic with Irish immigrants to be played in America. These tunes were eventually preserved there through recordings, and those records, along with the machines to play them, came back to Ireland. Whelan shows that even with the fall in Irish immigration to the United States from the 1920s onward, America still captured the imagination of Irish people. Their familial connections remained, and as a result, so too did a positive image of the United States.

Part 2 of this volume, “Irish Identity in the Atlantic World,” in some way overlaps with part 1. Ireland, although enhanced by the geographic reality of being an island, is indeed an “imagined community.” It exists as an identity created in the modern maelstrom of the ideas of the Enlightenment and romantic eras. The symbols of Ireland, including the harp and the shamrock, arose because of the Society of United Irishmen. The concept of Ireland as a unified nation crystallized when young cultural nationalists, who would refer to themselves as “Young Ireland,” founded the *Nation* newspaper in 1842. Some would break with constitutional Irish nationalism and, inspired by events around Europe, call for and eventually launch an unsuccessful rebellion in 1848.

Ireland’s current national flag, the tricolor flag of green, white, and orange, flew first in that year but only became truly popular after its prominent display in the 1916 Easter rebellion. This “manmade” nationalism was, as Benedict Anderson has shown, based heavily on the written and, particularly, the published word. Modern communications made the concept of nation possible. Irish identity, at home and abroad, was therefore influenced by the Atlantic World of ideas, cultures, and struggles. Indeed Declan Kiberd, a scholar of Irish national identity, finds that, for example, the Irish diaspora of the nineteenth century was key in developing modern Irish identity. He writes that the “massive exodus which followed the famines of the 1840s left hundreds of thousands of Irish men and women in the major cities of Britain, North America and Australia dreaming of a homeland, and committed to carrying a burden which few enough on native grounds still bothered to shoulder: *an idea of Ireland.*” They helped, in important ways, define what it meant to be Irish. Because of their immigration experience, these preservers and reconstructors of the “idea” of Ireland sent this idea back to their homeland and influenced the growing national movement in the late nineteenth century. Kiberd continues that these Irish immigrants, “though often berated by recent historians for their fanaticism and simplemindedness, were keenly aware of the hybrid sources of their own nationalism.” In turn the Irish nationalists remaining in Ireland often looked to France and, later, America for national inspiration.²⁰

The chapters in this part recognize the “hybrid” transatlantic nature of Irish identity and the importance of race in this Irish identity. Susan M. Kroeg’s chapter,

“The Transmigrated Soul of Some West Indian Planter’: Absenteeism, Slavery, and the Irish National Tale,” examines the work of Anglo-Irish writers Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson and how they used West Indian metaphors to tell the Irish “national tale.” Although they both ultimately rejected direct comparisons between Ireland and British colonies of the West Indies, they “mobilized a transatlantic discourse about race and class as a means of situating Ireland’s post-Union nationalist struggles within an Atlantic World of colonies, plantations, slavery, and absenteeism.” Angela F. Murphy’s “Slavery, Irish Nationalism, and Irish American Identity in the South, 1840–1845” highlights the ways Irish leaders in the South picked what parts of their Irish identity suited them and fit with their new American identity. In a sophisticated way they chose “à la carte” which parts of their “hybrid” identity to emphasize at what times. As a result they managed to negotiate well their Irish nationalism with the growing southern one of the early 1840s. Bruce Nelson’s “From the Cabins of Connemara to the Kraals of Kaffirland’: Irish Nationalists, the British Empire, and the ‘Boer Fight for Freedom,’” examines how the imperial racial theories of the Atlantic World played a major role in the Irish national support for the white South Africans in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. Nelson believes that ultimately this war “served to recast the fight for Irish freedom as part of a global struggle for the rights of ‘white men.’ In doing so,” he continues, “it blinded even the most progressive Irish nationalists to the rights and grievances of black Africans.” Catherine M. Burns in “Kathleen O’Brennan and American Identity in the Transatlantic Irish Republican Movement” tells the remarkable story of how Irish immigrant, feminist, and nationalist Kathleen O’Brennan adopted an “American personae” to achieve recognition of the Irish Republic during World War I and its aftermath. Like the men described in Angela F. Murphy’s chapter, O’Brennan adopted a hybrid identity, although from a different side of the political spectrum. Her ultimate failure to sustain a public left-wing Irish American position highlights how conservative definitions of Irishness and Americanness were becoming on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1920s. The last chapter in part 2, “Blues Coming down Royal Avenue’: Van Morrison’s Belfast Blues” by Lauren Onkey, gives an account of the growth of American blues in Belfast in the 1960s and how this scene helped many people overcome the narrow Catholic/Irish and Protestant/British identities assigned to them. Many young people from both communities found a safe haven where they could come together through American music and thus viewed Ireland “as part of a transatlantic world[, a world] that could be accessed as a source of inspiration and power.” This movement then perhaps encouraged others in Northern Ireland to look for transatlantic solutions to the other problems stemming from identity issues.

Finally, part 3, “The Irish in the Atlantic World,” examines the impact of Irish immigrants on the Atlantic World. Yes, Ireland never had colonies in the Atlantic World, although some Irish played important roles in British and

Spanish imperialism. But the sheer numbers of Irish immigrants, Catholic and Protestant, along with their concentration in certain areas, between the late 1600s and the 1920s, meant that they were bound to have an impact on their host societies in all kinds of ways.²¹ Orla Power, in “The ‘Quadripartite Concern’ of St. Croix: An Irish Catholic Experiment in the Danish West Indies,” continues and adds to the work of scholars such as Donald Akenson, highlighting the economic acumen of certain Irish immigrants, no matter whose colony they lived in. The story of Nicholas Tuite, John Baker, and friends, and their exploitation of imperial rivalries in the West Indies, is indeed remarkable and displays, as Power puts it, that “the Irish were not passive victims of the Atlantic economy.”

Marsha L. Hamilton’s piece, “The Irish and the Formation of British Communities in Early Massachusetts,” is a very welcome addition to the historiography of the Irish in America for a couple of reasons. First, she tells us something about group of “native” Irish whose story has never been told. The history of these Irish in colonial America has usually been ignored because when compared to the immigration to other colonies, their numbers seemed minuscule. Also, many native Irish hated the Puritans and, indeed, painted all of America as a land dominated by these “Cromwellian” enemies.²² Second, despite their small numbers, the Irish, as Hamilton clearly illustrates, played a crucial role in the creation of “British communities” in early Massachusetts. Richard K. MacMaster’s “From Ulster to the Carolinas: John Torrains, John Greg, John Poaug, and Bounty Emigration, 1761–1768,” like Hamilton’s piece, shows how the Irish, in this case Ulster merchants and migrants, affected the growing colony of South Carolina. The Irish entrepreneurs Tourans, Greg, and Poaug played a very active role in the peopling of Carolina. They exploited their transatlantic experience to prosper in the emigration business, seeing the Ulster migration not as a depopulating calamity but as a commercial opportunity.

Michael D. Thompson in “‘The Unacclimated Stranger Should Be Positively Prohibited from Joining the Party’: Irish Immigrants, Black Laborers, and Yellow Fever on Charleston’s Waterfront” describes the continued importance of the Irish to Charleston’s economy beyond the colonial period. The growing Irish presence after 1845 not only “[diversified] the waterfront labor force” and “[complicated] the city’s race relations” but also “influenced public health debates and policies.” This book concludes with Donald M. MacRaild’s “The Orange Atlantic.” MacRaild’s work highlights that Irish Protestant involvement in the Atlantic World continued well beyond the eighteenth century and that those of the loyal “Orange” tradition were just as good as those of the “Green” in maintaining transatlantic networks.

In some ways it is fitting to end with MacRaild’s chapter, which moves us away from the idea that any Irish Atlantic could be described as a “Green” one,

a title first suggested for the conference behind this book in its early planning stages but quickly rejected as too narrow for our purposes. We wanted to be as inclusive as possible and tell new, rather than rehash old, stories. This is thus quite an eclectic collection for which the editor makes no apology. I see its variety as a strength rather than a weakness. This inclusivity of course does not mean that this work is in any way comprehensive. It spans places, traditions, disciplines, and time periods, but there are many gaps in all these areas. As a whole, however, those of us involved with this book hope to move, as much as possible, our definition of the Atlantic World and Ireland's place in it beyond the traditional chronological, topical, and ethnic paradigms. Ultimately we hope it encourages those who examine the Irish experience in specific places around the Atlantic, in whatever time period, to do so in a transnational and comparative way. As a result we will be able to further define and refine the idea of an Irish Atlantic.

NOTES

1. "Remarks of Tánaiste Mary Harney to American Bar Association Meeting at the Irish Law Society of Ireland, in Blackhall Place, Dublin, July 21st, 2000," Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment web site, Government of Ireland, <http://www.entemp.ie/press/2000/210700.htm/> (accessed November 2, 2008).

2. For reaction, see various Opinion and Letters pages from the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* in late July and early August 2000. For the deeper implications of the "Boston/Berlin" speech, see Karin Gilland, "Irish Euroscepticism," in *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, ed. Robert Harmson and Menno Spiering (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 171–91, esp. 173–80. See also Fintan O'Toole, *The Clod and the Continent: Irish Identity in the European Union* (Dublin: Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2002), 1–7, available at <http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/essay1.pdf/> (accessed March 1, 2009).

3. George Mitchell, *Making Peace: The Inside Story of the Good Friday Accord* (London: William Heinemann, 1999); Timothy J. Lynch, *Turf War: The Clinton Administration and Northern Ireland* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2004), esp. chaps. 3 and 4; Declan de Breadun, *The Far Side of Revenge: Making Peace in Northern Ireland*, 2nd ed. (New York: Collins, 2008). For U.S. investment, see R. F. Foster, *Luck and the Irish: A Brief History of Change from 1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10–11. For a more critical view, see Denis O'Hearn, *The Atlantic Economy: Britain, the US and Ireland* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2001).

4. Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Bailyn's views have been challenged as overstated in Peter A. Coclanis, "Drach Nach Osten: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 169–82; and Peter A. Coclanis, "Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?" *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (October 2006): 725–42.

5. D. W. Meinig, quoted in Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 55.

6. Nicholas Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization From Ireland to America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (October 1973): 575–98. Canny also explored and expanded these ideas in *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560–1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988). He gives initial credit for his interest in these connections to historian David B. Quinn, but it is Canny who explored this issue to its fullest. For more on Irish place in the early British Empire, see Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580–1650* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). The textbook is Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 236–37. There is a brief mention of the influence of the French Revolution on Ireland on page 560.

7. Kevin Whelan, "Ireland in the World-System 1600–1800," in *The Early-Modern World-System in Geographical Perspective*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Nitz (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), 204 [204–18].

8. The idea of the "core" and the "periphery" as a way to explain a "World economic system" remains a controversial one in historical geography, but it is one I find applicable to the Irish experience. For a good description of the debate, see Hans-Jürgen Nitz, "Introduction," 1–25, Robert A. Dodgshon, "The Early Modern World-System: A Critique of Its Inner Dynamics," 26–41, and Gerard A. Hoekveld, "World-System Theory: Implications for Historical and Regional Geography," 42–61, all in *The Early-Modern World-System in Geographical Perspective*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Nitz (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993).

9. Whelan, "Ireland in the World-System," 205–18. The best overview of this trade is Thomas Truxes, *Irish American Trade, 1660–1783* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

10. The issue of numbers of Irish immigrants in America in the seventeenth century, whether they were voluntary or not, remains a lively debate. The best coverage of it is Louis Cullen, "The Irish Diaspora in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 113–49. The strongest and most remarkable Irish presence in the Caribbean was on Montserrat. See Donald H. Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630–1730* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queens, University Press, 1999). For colonial administrator on mainland, see, for example, Arthur Dobbs of North Carolina, who though born in Scotland spent most of his life and early career in Ireland before attaining governorship of North Carolina in 1753. "Dobbs, Arthur," in *American National Biography*, ed. John A. Garrity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

11. Harman Murtagh, "Irish Soldiers Abroad, 1600–1800," in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffrey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 294–314; J. G. Simms, "The Irish on the Continent, 1691–1800," in *New History of Ireland*, ed. T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 4:629–56; John McGurk, "Wild Geese: The Irish in European Armies (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)," in *The Irish Diaspora Worldwide*, vol. 1, *Patterns of Migration*, ed. Patrick O'Sullivan (Leicester, U.K.: Leicester University Press, 1992), 36–62. See also Eric Beerman, "Alexander O'Reilly, an Irish Soldier in the Service of Spain," *Irish Sword* 15

(1982–83): 101–14; and Thomas J. Mullen, “The Hibernia Regiment of the Spanish Army,” *Irish Sword* 8 (1967–68): 218–25. For more information on the Irish in Colonial Latin America, see the excellent web site founded by Edmundo Murray at <http://www.irelandeses.org/>.

12. The best book on this migration is still R. J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718–1775* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1966). Also useful are James Leyburn, *The Scotch Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); and Carlton Jackson, *A Social History of the Scotch-Irish* (Lanham, N.Y.: Madison Book, 1993). For a good and concise overview, see Maldwyn Jones, “The Scotch-Irish in British America,” in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 284–313. For a very good interpretation of this migration and its impact on Pennsylvania, see Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland’s Ulster Scots, America’s Scotch Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001). For intellectual connections, see Elizabeth I. Nybakken, “New Light on the Old Side: Irish Influences on Colonial Presbyterianism,” *Journal of American History* 68, no. 4 (March 1982): 813–32; and the essays in David A. Wilson and Mark G. Spenser, eds., *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

13. Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 137–92; Bruce Boling, David Doyle, Kerby Miller, and Arnold Schrier, *Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Ronald Hoffman, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery, 1645–1865* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), esp. chap. 2; Allan Dwyer, “A Different Kind of Newfoundland: Planter Success in 18th-Century Notre Dame Bay,” *Newfoundland Quarterly* 99, no. 2 (2006): 38–45; John Mannion, “Genealogy, Geography and Social Mobility: The Family Background of Thomas Francis Meagher,” in *Thomas Francis Meagher: The Making of an Irish American*, ed. John M. Hearne and Rory T. Cornish (Portland, Ore.: Irish Academic Press, 2005), 14–22.

14. David N. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1981); Kevin Whelan, “The Green Atlantic,” in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 216–38; Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism, and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760–1830* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 59–98; David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998); David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815–1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 60; and “Smaller Differences: ‘Scots-Irish’ and ‘Real Irish’ in the American South,” *New Hibernia Review* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 68–91. The most extensive claim for the Irish influence on American identity is the recent and excellent Maurice Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-Invention of America, 1760–1800* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008).

15. Bernard Bailyn's world renowned International Seminar in the History of the Atlantic World has a cut-off date at 1825. See <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic/> (accessed February 5, 2009).

16. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 280–344; Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (New York: Longman, 2000), chaps. 3 and 4; Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997); Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999); David A. Wilson, ed., *The Orange Order in Canada* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); David N. Doyle, "The Irish as Urban Pioneers in the United States, 1850–1870," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 36–59; Patrick McKenna, "Irish Emigration to Argentina: A Different Model" in *The Irish Diaspora*, ed. Andy Bielenberg (New York: Pearson, 2000); Peter Way, *Common Labor: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780–1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Jim Rees, *Farewell to Famine* (Arklow, Ireland: Arklow Enterprise Centre, 1994); Timothy J. Meagher, *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880–1928* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); Thomas N. Brown, *Irish American Nationalism, 1870–1890* (New York: Lippincott, 1966).

17. For Irish machine politics, see Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish Americans and the Dilemmas of Urban Machine Politics, 1840–1985* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); and Gene Schmidlein, "Harry S. Truman and the Prendergast Machine," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 7, no. 2 (1966): 27–35. For the dominance of Irish in the nineteenth-century American church, see Charles Morris, *American Catholic: The Saints and Sinners Who Built America's Most Powerful Church* (New York: Random House, 1997). For Irish nationalism and American politics, see Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations, 1890–1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969); David Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution, 1887–1922* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2003), 120–264; Diarmaid Ferriter, *Judging Dev: A Reassessment of the Life and Legacy of Eamon de Valera* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007), 33–36; and Tim Pat Coogan, *De Valera: Long Fellow, Long Shadow* (London, England: Hutchinson), 135–96.

18. Kenny, *American Irish*, 254–57; Sylvia A. Ellis, "The Historical Significance of President Kennedy's Visit to Ireland in June 1963," *Irish Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (May 2008): 113–30.

19. For the Irish in Charleston, see Gleeson, *Irish in South*; David T. Gleeson and Brendan J. Buttimer, "'We Are Irish Everywhere': Irish Immigrant Networks in Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia," in *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities since 1750*, ed. Enda Delaney Donald MacRaild (New York: Routledge, 2007), 39–61; and Donald M. Williams, *Shamrocks and Pluff Mud: A Glimpse of the Irish in the Southern City of Charleston, South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: privately printed, 2005); "Was There an Irish Atlantic?" panel discussion, Irish in the Atlantic World conference, Program in the Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World, College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina, March 2, 2007. For the full conference lineup, go to <http://www.cofc.edu/atlanticworld/> (accessed February 1, 2009).

20. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Press, 1983). There have been two revised editions, most recently in 2006. Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 1–2, 21.

21. For a specific Atlantic world case study, see J. Matthew Gallman's *Receiving Erin's Children: Philadelphia, Liverpool, and the Irish Famine Migration, 1845–1855* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

22. For the native Irish attitude toward colonial America, see Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 137–38, 146–47; and Boling et al., *Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 3–10.

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Mathewite Temperance in Atlantic Perspective

Paul Townend

Outside his native Ireland, Father Theobald Mathew would rank high on any list of the forgotten famous of the last two centuries. Yet in his own day, Mathew, along with Daniel O’Connell, was indisputably the most popular man in Ireland, and over the course of the nineteenth century, halls, statues, and towers were erected in his honor all over Ireland, Australia, Canada, Britain, and the United States. For more than a decade, beginning in 1838, the charismatic Capuchin friar led history’s most successful temperance movement. Mathew’s crusade transformed Ireland and then swept through the Irish diaspora communities in Britain and North America, converting millions of hard-drinking Irish men and women to the strict practice of total abstinence. In hundreds of emotional open-air meetings, Mathew affected an astonishing if ultimately short-lived cultural transformation. Massive crowds of tens of thousands of enthusiastic postulants waited as Mathew met with countless “batches” of dozens or hundreds, who made the sign of the cross and took a short pledge to abstain from alcohol for life. After pledging, Mathew’s disciples formed a vast, international network of vigorous local temperance societies, complete with meeting halls, reading rooms, burial societies, and bands. The scale of Mathew’s success amazed observers on both sides of the Atlantic. Mathew and his movement were much discussed in his day and captured the imagination of better remembered contemporaries such as William Thackeray, Thomas Carlyle, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass. His cause’s success intrigued popes, monarchs, and presidents. Designated a “Commissary Apostolic” in 1841 by Pope Gregory XVI, Mathew was honored with a pension by Queen Victoria in 1847 and, on a visit to Washington in 1849, dined with President Zachary Taylor, becoming the first man since Lafayette to receive the privilege of honorary seats in both the U.S. House and Senate. Millions of his medals and cards were carried with pride, and

his mass-produced smiling portraits graced countless cottage and tenement walls a century and a half ago.¹

Mathew's fame, and his successful career as a social reformer, intertwined with the practical reality of the mature Atlantic system of which Ireland was an integral part. His remarkable movement was inspired, spread, nurtured, and sustained by patterns of commerce, communication, and migration. Whatever its lasting significance to Irish history, his campaign stands dramatic witness to the significant ability of the Atlantic social and economic system established by the middle of the eighteenth century to transmit change and transform lives. Indeed, one of the most tangible evidences of its maturing power, and its distinctiveness from other regional global trading networks Europeans participated in, was the striking succession of transatlantic social movements that emerged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Historical sociologists have noted that these emergent movements were radically different in structure, scale, and objectives from earlier forms of popular agitation, and that they were "modular" in the sense that they consciously adopted and exchanged rhetoric, organization, and tactics across regional and national boundaries.² Dependent on shared notions of acceptable public action and organization, informally and formally protected liberal notions of free speech, and voluntary association, as well as networks of trust and communication across a range of civil societies, these campaigns were most noticeable in, but were by no means confined to, the anglophonic Atlantic World. The international antislavery crusade is often identified as the first fully developed example of the phenomena. That cause, however, clearly derived from the social energy, and webs of personal and professional connections, fostered by burgeoning trade, the rapid emergence of an Atlantic World "language of liberty," and, perhaps most vital, the inspirational and practical example of the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century.³

The next great social movement of the era, the cluster of temperance campaigns of the middle quarter of the nineteenth century of which Mathew's Cork Total Abstinence Society (CTAS) was a part, was by practically any measure a much more broadly based and practically culturally transformative cause. Unlike the antislavery crusade, however, which has been studied in comparative and transatlantic terms, the temperance movement has almost always been seen through the lens of national history. This despite the fact that it was in many cases clearly seeded through port towns by captains and crews of "temperance" ships sailing under the auspices of distinctive "Marine Temperance Societies."⁴ Such scholarly myopia surely reflects the close connection of historians to the rhetoric and organizations of the various temperance movements and associations of the era, which characteristically framed their struggles for radical reform in local or national terms. It may also reflect the unwillingness of many Atlanticists, broad minded as they are about the need to see beyond national frameworks but often

trained as colonial historians, to spend too much time in the nineteenth century. It may also reflect the relative attractions to the academic temperament of anti-slavery crusades over antialcohol movements. Nevertheless, the relative lack of interest in temperance by Atlantic historians is a curious phenomenon that deserves to be redressed.⁵

To begin with, it is fundamental to recognize the connections between temperance movements and the broader social circumstances that inspired them. From their national perspectives, social historians have noted a spike in production and consumption of hard liquor across the eighteenth-century Atlantic World, intensifying noticeably in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁶ The interaction of dynamics of supply and demand can be difficult to disentangle and clearly varied nationally, but viewed collectively, the apparent upward trend in drinking must be understood in relation to the maturation of the Atlantic market economy. Over the course of the eighteenth century, farmers throughout the Atlantic World became more closely integrated with the broader marketplace as producers and consumers, and alcohol production offered access. This increasing integration of rural crop production with cash economies developed alongside the much-studied eighteenth-century consumer revolution, and the attractions of new consumer goods gave farmers added incentives to increase spirit production.⁷ Novel and often cheaper and easier to produce forms of spirits, such as rum and gin, helped to popularize new patterns of consumption among Europeans. Native African and American populations were exposed to alcohol produced for the anonymous marketplace in a variety of culturally novel forms. In general, from one end of the Atlantic World to the other, all cultures incorporated and imbibed (with varying degrees of alcohol-related social chaos) new drinks in new ways as fast as they could be developed and distilled.

On a bewildering number of levels, exhaustively and usefully cataloged by temperance reformers in order to be condemned and reformed, alcohol meanwhile moved to the center of the cash economy of the urban working classes.⁸ Foremen typically served as go-betweens for bars and pubs eager for customers, and these same bars and pubs often functioned as banks and paymasters for ordinary workers. Alcohol often served directly or indirectly as a substitute for cash, and indeed most tradespeople and laborers “ritually” consumed alcohol, steadily while working and systematically after hours. In general, in urban areas around the Atlantic World, crowds of apprentices, mill and dock workers, tradesmen and sailors all took advantage of the simultaneously associational and anonymous character of the burgeoning cities to indulge the growing promiscuous taste for hard alcohol.

In sum, large-scale migrations, urbanization, and associated disrupted patterns of work and exchange created a range of conditions conducive to greater binge drinking.⁹ All of these dramatic changes in long-established patterns of alcohol production and consumption were socially transformative throughout

the Atlantic World of the period. Even where it is difficult to assess the relative change in alcohol consumption during these years, there is much evidence that long-established patterns were disrupted in a variety of ways that disturbed contemporary observers and took alcohol use and abuse out of the realm of established custom, shifting it closer to the center of social life and public discourse.

The well-known precursor to this transformation was the English “gin craze” of the early and middle decades of the eighteenth century. The sudden availability of a new product, combined with government policies designed to maximize revenue from alcohol taxes, fueled a remarkable consumption spike that the fluid nature of urban life during an era of population growth, migration, and changing family structures and work patterns only reinforced.¹⁰ If English thirst for gin leveled off in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the social disruptions typical of rapid urbanization continued to reinforce the allure of cheap spirits to Britons. British spirit and beer consumption continued to expand into the nineteenth century as populations concentrated in the new industrial cities.¹¹ By the nineteenth century, urbanization, industrialization, and declining prices invigorated and transformed long-standing whiskey drinking traditions in Scotland.¹² In still-rural Ireland, like Scotland largely a whiskey-drinking culture for several centuries at least, consumption and production both rose as well. A potato-fueled, socially disruptive population increase multiplied occasions for heavily ritualized communal Irish drinking, and the increasing profitability of grain distillation certainly appears to have increased per capita consumption in the same period.¹³ The trend was exacerbated by concerted attempts by the British exchequer to encourage legal whiskey production in order to raise urgently needed revenue for the rapidly expanding state.¹⁴

In the Americas, meanwhile, urban centers became, like their British counterparts, zones of heavy consumption. The booming slave trade and the rising demand for alcohol as an affiliated trade good hugely stimulated rum production in the Caribbean and North America over the course of the eighteenth century, while trading patterns within the Atlantic system often encouraged the “dumping” of cheap rum across the American market.¹⁵ Revolutionary era disruptions of the rum trade and the subsequent opening of the relatively remote Northwest Territory to farming led to market dynamics consistently favorable to the production of cheaper, higher quality, and increasingly popular whiskeys within North America.¹⁶ European travelers were often struck by the heavy consumption of whiskey and rum that they found in America at all levels of society.¹⁷

Despite its American origins and the patriotic rhetoric of many early advocates, the temperance movement, like the rise in consumption that preceded it, was fundamentally a transnational phenomena. Organized temperance societies, traditionally thought to have descended from the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, established in 1813, or perhaps its successor organization, the American Temperance Society (ATS), founded in Boston in 1826,

actually began appearing in many locales in a variety of recognizable forms in the first decades of the new century on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁸ Given the deeply imbedded significance of alcohol consumption in Western cultures, these organizations worked toward nothing short of collective and individual transformation, a radical revision of social life of remarkably ambitious proportions. Such a vision, however, understood in relation to the highly destabilized drinking patterns of the previous generation or so, is perfectly understandable. Temperance societies naturally drew on long-standing, complex concerns and discourses, primarily rooted in Christian scriptures, theology, and moral philosophy, about alcohol consumption. They also drank deeply from emerging “scientific” sensibilities and Enlightenment era rational reexamination of custom in all of its forms.¹⁹ But ultimately, in its early-nineteenth-century form, temperance amounted to a radical reaction to an equally radical change—a considered, ideological, “modern” response to a perceived dramatic escalation in drinking. That perception, most likely informed by an actual increase in alcohol production and consumption, was at the end of the day only indirectly related to empirical realities. The cause’s pivot was a renewed sense of urgency about the alcohol “problem,” grounded in the above-noted array of social disruptions and associated changes in long-standing, broadly socially acceptable patterns of consumption, itself occasioned by the growing integration of ordinary people into the market economy. Concern about drinking and its consequences increased at all levels of society, not just, as it is sometimes depicted, among modernizing middle-class reformers interested in sobering up factory workers and instilling workplace-related time discipline. This is particularly obvious in the case of Ireland, where temperance developed largely independently of urban, industrial circumstances.

The ideology and rhetoric of many temperance societies—and the broad cross-cultural shift in the mid-1830s from elite-led, often church-sponsored moderation and antispirit campaigns aimed at preserving the respectably sober toward more plebian, more ecumenical or secular, and more radical “water-drinking” total abstinence organizations aimed at reclaiming hard drinkers and rejecting alcohol in all its forms—offer variations on a small number of shared and well-established themes. Members were assured that their sobriety would bring respectability, prosperity, improved family relations, and better health.²⁰

The temperance message was broadly appealing and was usually delivered in a quasi-scientific, animated, entertaining, and often comedic fashion, rich in lively anecdote and graphic accounts of the speaker’s troubles with “demon rum.” Oriented equally around cajolery, shock, shame, and threat, temperance rhetoric and its often graphic printed propaganda was designed to cross denominational and national boundaries and appeal to as broad an audience as possible. Temperance propaganda drew on its advocates’ knowledge of advertising and the networked print culture of the era.²¹ Converts signed or swore an oath to avoid drink and often took away a temperance badge, medal, or card as a token of

fidelity. Collectively the societies incorporated, by the 1840s, as many as five million people in the United Kingdom and the United States. More than 12 percent of the adult population of the United States had “taken the pledge” by 1836. Thus at least one in five free adults belonged to the ATS or one of its auxiliary organizations, even before the surge in temperance society membership that all scholars agree occurred after the Washingtonian movement began in the early 1840s.²² If temperance seems to have attracted a smaller proportional following in England, it thrived in Scotland and Wales, while an astonishing 50 percent or so of the adult population of Ireland, or more than two million men and women, were sworn teetotalers after the successes of the “moral revolution” of Mathew’s CTAS between 1838 and 1842.²³

The pre-famine successes of the CTAS in Ireland, therefore, represent the high-water mark of an international temperance crusade. I and others have previously written about Mathew’s crusade narrowly, as an Irish national phenomena.²⁴ The stunning achievements in Ireland certainly must be understood in relation to the singular local conditions that preceded the introduction of the temperance system, notably Ireland’s profound sense of political disempowerment and religious persecution, as well as the collective cultural crisis of the first half of the nineteenth century, itself related to the unprecedented population explosion and the rapid loss of Gaelic traditions and language, all compounded by the practical inability of the pre-famine Catholic Church to minister to the people across much of the country.²⁵ The temperance campaign, the “single most remarkable social movement in pre-famine Irish history,” was not only symptomatic of Irish colonial circumstances but also transformative of contemporary Irish political and ecclesiastical history, and seminal on a number of levels for subsequent Irish social and political movements.²⁶ For the remainder of this chapter, however, I want to draw attention to three truths about the origins and Mathewite phase of the temperance movement in Ireland, each of which serves to underscore the significance of its Atlantic context. Taken together, they serve to illustrate the powerful influence of that context in shaping a movement that has typically been portrayed as distinctive and local.

In the first place, Irish temperance, despite a number of notably different emphases and local modifications, was fundamentally situated within a transnational framework and was directly derived—in terms of propaganda, structures, techniques, and “objects”—from the broader Atlantic World temperance movement. Second, the specific appeal of the CTAS to the Irish was related to the strong connection of Ireland to the outside world. Indeed its astonishingly successful rhetorical appeal to the Irish people was crucially dependent upon the widely accepted, uncomfortable Irish sense of their dysfunctional place in the Atlantic World as the humiliated target of foreign derision and a provider of exploited labor. Such resonant propaganda elucidated the critical role of alcohol in degrading the Irish people. Third, as a practical matter, Mathew saw the fate

of his movement, in the long run, as dependent on the international community, and he believed its long-term success to be a matter of profound international consequence. Irish temperance, therefore, like American or British temperance of the era, whatever its significance for the nation, was symptomatic of the growing interconnectedness of Atlantic World popular culture, consumption patterns, and social life, and its success reveals much about the nature of the transatlantic community.

The centrality of established patterns of growth and development within the wider temperance movement to the emergent antialcohol cause in Ireland has been acknowledged, particularly in the work of Elizabeth Malcolm, John Quinn, Diarmaid Ferriter, Colm Kerrigan, and, most systematically and thoroughly, the fascinating unpublished dissertation of George Bretherton.²⁷ Although a scattering of forgotten local organizations may have thrived earlier, the official beginning of the crusade in Ireland came in 1828/29 through the same evangelical/commercial/communication networks that carried so many products, some of them ideological, across the Atlantic. In the late 1820s John Edgar, a Belfast Presbyterian minister, was sold on the notion of systematic temperance by a student of his, Joseph Penney, who had come to America some years before and involved himself in the work of the ATS. Edgar in turn enlisted his colleague George Carr, a reform-minded independent minister based in New Ross, county Wexford. Edgar's Ulster Temperance Society adopted the practice of vigorous tract distribution used by the antislavery movement, and by 1835 more than two hundred thousand temperance pamphlets, many of them reprints of popular English and American antialcohol sermons and discourses, had been distributed around the country.²⁸ These early efforts caught the attention of socially conscious reformers such as Dublin Quakers Joshua Harvey (a physician), James Haughton (a flour merchant), and Richard Webb (a printer), who formed an affiliated organization, the Dublin (after 1830, Hibernian) Temperance Society, which immediately sponsored its own sophisticated and intensive media campaigns to discourage spirit-drinking.²⁹ Edgar himself published more than ninety temperance tracts and established a temperance newspaper, the *Belfast Temperance Advocate*, one of several such journals that appeared in Ireland over the course of the 1830s.³⁰ Everywhere one looks the cause was supported by an outwardly focused, internationally aware, socially conscious, and mutually acquainted band of ministers, merchants, professionals, and printers. Local societies followed the lead of British and American organizations and imported and exported speakers across the Irish Sea. Edgar was a frequent guest at temperance gatherings in Preston and Liverpool, where he updated crowds on the progress of the cause in Ireland, and English teetotal advocates such as John Finch and John Hockings found Irish audiences for their rousing denunciations.³¹ Many of the early advocates were already acquainted through evangelical, antislavery networks, and fledgling Irish societies frequently met in spaces already in use by antislavery societies.³² The

efforts of these men and others, mostly Protestants, produced hundreds of small societies and thousands of pledged temperance men by the late 1830s. The tiny Irish Quaker community, exceptionally connected to Atlantic World trade and communication networks, were prominent everywhere the organization established itself, notably in Cork, where, in 1838, the Quaker shopkeeper William Martin persuaded the much-admired Father Theobald Mathew to help lead his struggling society.³³

Like maritime Boston, Liverpool, Belfast, and Bristol, maritime Cork—perhaps the most cosmopolitan city in Ireland with its bustling mercantile activity—served as an ideal incubator for the temperance cause.³⁴ Mathew himself fit the pattern of early temperance reformers, with his broad-minded, independent, and evangelical temperament. Aware of Cork’s commercialism and determined that incoming sailors would see his church, he had, against all professional advice, built it so close to the quays that a fortune in pilings had to be sunk underneath the structure to prevent it from sinking into the harbor.³⁵ Mathew was unusual among Catholic clergy in that he was ecumenical in his friendships and renowned for his ability to coordinate and mediate.³⁶ There were Protestants in his immediate family, and he was well known for his ability to work with Protestant clergy and community leaders in connection with his philanthropic, civic-minded ministries in Cork, to such an extent that William Higgins, the bishop of Ardagh, later dismissed him as a “notorious” latitudinarian, while the powerful archbishop of Tuam, John McHale, lamented his “heterodox” character.³⁷ While unusual for its Catholic leadership, Mathew’s movement was also typical of the radical shift toward teetotalism, which energized the antialcohol movement at around the same time in Britain and the United States.

In its early days Father Mathew’s CTAS followed well-established patterns of self-promotion, distributing lurid, dramatic antialcohol propaganda, inviting English and Irish “celebrity” temperance reformers to Cork to promote the cause, administering a short antialcohol pledge, and adopting the practice of attempting to fund its efforts by selling converts temperance medals after the visit of medal-distributing English temperance evangelist John Hockings.³⁸ One account of an early meeting noted that Father Mathew presided over a series of speeches by lay advocates, including “Peter Rush, a reclaimed drunkard, an individual named Tobin, and George Cox, a member of the Society of Friends.”³⁹ Along the same lines the early movement sponsored by-now-familiar tea parties and sober entertainments, and encouraged the spread of associated reading rooms and temperance associations, all of which were common practices of other societies.⁴⁰

In fact the development of the fledgling society can be tracked in detail precisely because its lay leadership, who initially ran the organization day to day while Mathew tended to his spiritual duties, followed established patterns of self-promotion. They communicated local success to the wider movement and

produced home-grown, self-congratulatory propaganda, both practiced means of expanding membership. James McKenna, the Cork temperance advocate who was vice president of the society and, eventually, Mathew's private secretary, for example, sent regular gushing updates on the society's progress to the short-lived Dublin-based organ of the total abstinence movement, the *Philanthropist and National Temperance Advertiser*, and to a rival publication, the *Dublin Weekly Herald*.⁴¹ This model of promoting the cause culminated in the establishment by John Francis Maguire of the *Cork Total Abstainer* (the present-day *Irish Examiner*) in 1841, dedicated to furthering the CTAS.⁴²

Maguire, whose subsequent journalistic, parliamentary, and literary career demonstrate a sound instinct for shaping and responding to public opinion, had earlier produced the most substantial piece of extant propaganda from the early days of Mathew's society, *The Doctrine of Total Abstinence Justified*, written in the summer of 1838 before the membership explosion of 1839 transformed the organization into something quite unique.⁴³ Maguire's pamphlet reiterates the common themes of other contemporary societies, emphasizing the material prosperity and respectability that membership in the organization offered. It made specific appeal to the success of total abstinence outside of Ireland, in Britain and America, to convince Cork men and women of the cause's legitimacy.⁴⁴

As the popular response to Mathew's specific movement overwhelmed even its own leaders, and as Mathew's own role in selling the cause and inspiring massive crowds of postulants transformed the CTAS into a dynamic and a nearly universal mass national movement, for very practical reasons the crusade came to resemble previous, far more narrowly based temperance efforts less and less.⁴⁵ But in self-conception and self-presentation, the significance of temperance in Ireland remained anchored in Ireland's relationships to the outside world and, crucially, in an explicit sense of national degradation. Of course the notion that alcohol affected the Irish in the same way that slavery degraded Africans was foundational to the movement's appeal, and this seminal rhetorical point clearly was rooted in ideas spread by the antislavery campaign, in which so many of temperance's early supporters were so well versed. References to the "slavish degradation" of the Irish and the role that alcohol had played in perpetuating Irish "slavery" were ubiquitous in the movement's early promotional rhetoric and emotional propaganda, and the public's familiarity with such terminology was due in no small part to the rhetorical traditions and successes in the previous generation of the antislavery movement, as well as Daniel O'Connell's campaign for Catholic emancipation of the teens and twenties.⁴⁶ Thus James Bermingham, Mathew's contemporary biographer and the author of the enormously popular pamphlet history of the cause published early in 1840, described the people of pre-Mathewite Ireland "groan[ing] under a bondage worse than Egyptian servitude" as they "sighed for," but "had not the courage to effect, their delivery."⁴⁷

Father Mathew's secretary James McKenna likewise pronounced that temperance "breaks the fetters of moral slavery, and delivers a nation from self-degrading thralldom" while self-appointed advocates such as W. J. O'Neill Daunt insisted that "Ireland intoxicated, was Ireland enslaved," even as the Young Irelander and editor of the *Nation*, Thomas Davis, condemned Irish intemperance as "the saturnalia of slaves."⁴⁸

If the Irish were goaded into joining Mathew's crusade by such rhetoric, they were also constantly further reminded that their degrading enslavement to alcohol rendered them despicable in the eyes of the outside world. Ireland's relationship with England, naturally enough, loomed large in this rhetoric, but so too did the imagined and often-invoked perceptions of Americans and other Europeans. Father Mathew's own secretary, in one of his early accounts of the movement's rapid growth, boasted to the *Dublin Weekly Herald* that, at this rate of increase, "the time is fast coming when [Ireland] will no longer be held up to scorn and degraded among the nations of the earth."⁴⁹ In reference to Irish emigrants, Cork merchant and temperance advocate Richard Dowden adopted American slang in decrying the infamous Irish penchant for "firewater," which he insisted had rendered "the name of Irishman a terror and a disgrace" in North America.⁵⁰ In his early pamphlet, Maguire told his readers that Irish intemperance had "kept her far behind her sister—England, in refinement and civilization, and has given a peculiarly savage tone to the character of her peasantry."⁵¹ Bermingham placed just such a "foul stigma" at the very center of his framing of the temperance cause.⁵² The "habitual intemperance of her sons" had "form[ed] part of the national character" in the minds of outsiders. On the London stage in particular, "an Irishman and a drunkard [had become] synonymous terms." "Whiskey was everywhere regarded as our idol," Bermingham confessed, while "our friends were ashamed" and "our enemies sneered." In a typical piece of platform rhetoric, Nicholas Foran, bishop of Limerick and a strong supporter of the crusade, encouraged his flock to pledge by noting that by the "universal" prevalence of "this hideous, this monstrous vice, Ireland had become a byword to the nations, the anathema of Europe, and the reproach of the civilized world."⁵³

The increasingly evident existence of a gigantic, triumphant, public mass refutation of such European and American stereotypes clearly delighted temperance's supporters and played a dramatic role in fueling enthusiasm for the cause. Mathew's secretary, in his unpublished history composed at the movement's apogee, repeatedly returned to just this point. Ireland now "presented to the nations of the world a spectacle of self-denying virtue, that puts to the blush all yet read of Greek or Roman story—a spectacle, on which the earth must look with admiration."⁵⁴ Daniel O'Connell, the "uncrowned king of Ireland," after joining the campaign himself at an emotional gathering of tens of thousands, absolutely promised the delirious crowd "that the waves of the Atlantic, as swiftly

as steam can bear it, shall convey to the shores of free and independent America, a description of how the people of Limerick conducted themselves today,” and O’Connell’s own conversion, oratorical talents and international profile suggested such an announcement would be heard.⁵⁵ On another occasion O’Connell scorned the “mighty boastings from America that in one village there were fifty teetotalers, in another one hundred or one thousand.”⁵⁶ “In England,” he further observed, “they make similar noise about some hundreds or thousands; one of their papers had three columns filled the other day about a temperance festival in one of their towns,” but in Ireland “I can hear talk of 5,000,000 teetotalers.” “I ask,” he concluded triumphantly, “where is the nation which has exhibited so majestic a proof of determined virtue as Ireland (hear hear)? Haughty England may threaten with her legions. I do not want to battle with her, but I merely wish to show her the triumphant morality of Ireland (Loud cheers).” Father Mathew and other leaders of the crusade often encouraged audiences by urging them to impress foreigners. “At that present moment the nations of Europe looked upon them with wonder,” went one such invocation, “and could scarcely bring themselves to believe that such a state of things existed in Ireland.”⁵⁷ There is ample evidence that teetotalers themselves reveled in such rhetoric, and indulged in it themselves. The imagined amazement of the outside world was a dominant, recurring theme, for example, in temperance addresses to Father Mathew, composed by local societies.⁵⁸

Temperance also developed in relation to widespread anxiety in Ireland about mushrooming emigration. Mathew and his lieutenants opportunistically exploited the complex nest of Irish hopes and fears about emigration in order to encourage conversions, often suggesting not only that temperance would initially improve emigrant prospects but also that it would in time produce the long-term prosperity that would keep young Irish men and women at home. Rejoicing at Mathew’s success, his Cork colleague Richard Dowden attended a farewell party for teetotaling emigrants and told the crowd that “we can now see with pleasure our countrymen taking leave of their native land, for we know our character will be upheld by them.”⁵⁹ Indeed, Dowden added reassuringly, “we know they must prosper.” At Naas a year earlier, Mathew for his part had lamented such “heart-rending scenes of human woe and wretchedness.”⁶⁰ “Husbands and wives parting with each other—parents tearing themselves away from their children.” Such scenes, “exceeding the power of language to convey,” Mathew pointed out, could be prevented by the sober, industrious cultivation of “waste ground” in Connemara and elsewhere. “All parties,” he insisted, “could live at home comfortably and happy together in their native land if they would but abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks.” Mathew often repeated this opinion, deploring on another occasion that the Irish were seen by other nations as “vagabonds driven to foreign lands to seek that bread which they could not procure at home.” Temperance

would provide the antidote, and “under the present prospects that so brightly dawned upon them they might not any more expose themselves to the horrors of Australia or the unhealthy forests and backwoods of America.”⁶¹

If Irish temperance failed to slow the tide of emigration, its practice no doubt provided many poor emigrants the wherewithal to travel, with emigrant ships sailing at the movement’s height under the banner of total abstinence, while teetotalers were recruited, particularly by Australian agents, as desirable settlers.⁶² Mathew’s medals were worn by Irish emigrants in England and the United States, and “Father Mathew societies” throughout the Atlantic World welcomed sober Irish emigrants of the period and long after, offering structure, continuity, and fellowship to many thousands.⁶³ In the sense that its practice enabled many to emigrate and supported and nurtured Irish communalism in new settings, the Irish temperance movement’s unheralded contribution to sustaining emigrant identities and numbers mean that its consequences may in many ways have been more persistent in the long run outside of Ireland than at home.

Although temperance succeeded in Ireland, for a time, beyond even Mathew’s wildest dreams, the movement’s long-term success depended, Mathew clearly believed, on support from the outside—moral support from Rome and Catholic Europe, financial support from England and America, and the physical expansion of his crusade by restless, eager, and sober Irish emigrants. In 1840 Mathew undertook a persistent and urgent, if ultimately unsuccessful, campaign in Rome to have his crusade endorsed by his Capuchin brothers and, particularly, the pope in order to offset a lack of Irish clerical enthusiasm.⁶⁴ And as his expenses and debts mounted, Father Mathew repeatedly turned to American and English supporters of temperance to save him from bankruptcy in the middle forties. The “Mathew Committee” in Dublin was dominated by Mathew’s network of Protestant friends, and he noted to its Quaker chair, Richard Webb, that his fund-raising appeal was not to Ireland but to “the Empire at large.”⁶⁵ Mathew also attempted to raise funds in England through the good offices of his friend Joseph Sturge, the Birmingham Quaker merchant and influential antislavery activist, and often acknowledged that most of his badly needed financial assistance came from England.⁶⁶

Like so many Irish politicians and reformers before and after him, Mathew ultimately came to see America as the best hope for preserving his movement’s success. Mathew was at times frustrated by the resolve of American bishops (notably Bishop Kenrick of Baltimore) to alter the structures and rules of his societies, but he was encouraged by the flowering, in America, of Mathewite temperance.⁶⁷ Some Washingtonian societies appear to have been inspired by him, and at least one wrote to Cork in search of his blessing.⁶⁸ His long-promised, long-awaited, two-and-a-half-year American tour, between 1849 and 1851, which sought to uphold and expand teetotal societies among Irish immigrants as well as to raise sufficient funds to revitalize the movement in Ireland, strengthened

temperance in America and produced hundreds of thousands of pledges, although it did little to retrieve Father Mathew's financial debacle and may have finally broken his health.⁶⁹ His sojourn was marred by the controversies that attended Mathew's unwillingness to, on American soil, condemn slavery, and public attacks on him followed at the hands of some antislavery activists, such as Frederick Douglass and William Garrison, who had up to that point been his friends and allies.⁷⁰ But the tour reinforced the fact that Mathew's movement was in many ways a transatlantic crusade and an important chapter in the international history of the temperance movement. The failure of Mathew's emotional, voluntary model no doubt contributed, in the long run, to the decision by many in the movement (including Mathew himself at the end of his life) to pursue prohibitory legislation along the lines of the "Maine Law."⁷¹

John Francis Maguire, in his early description of the temperance cause, noted that "the doctrine of Temperance was scouted at as the day-dream of some enthusiastic visionary, who proposed an impossibility for adoption." It was widely seen, he insisted, as "a wild scheme that could never be reduced to practice, unless, perhaps, through the devotion of some few fanatics, who would cling to it with a desperation equal to its impracticability."⁷² Temperance, then, appeared just so in its early decades. Indeed it is often still understood in these terms, even by scholars who should know better—as a radical whim promoted in relative isolation by single-minded men and women such as Mathew, arriving in North America, Britain, and beyond, at about the same time to trouble the stream of living, evolving national histories. In fact, of course, by 1838 the temperance ideals, leadership, propaganda, and structures Maguire saw Corkonians scoffing at were part of a rising international system, even while the very need for so radical a movement, in Ireland and elsewhere, was itself generated by shifts in alcohol production and consumption throughout the Atlantic World. The international movement thrived as a loosely affiliated, consciously connected coalition of local or national mass movements primarily focused on voluntary association but also on collective moral force. Its progress wherever it was pushed forward varied; local economic and social circumstances, local cultural dynamics, local grievances, and local personalities were clearly hugely important to the fate of the cause.

The Mathew movement, although singular and nationally specific in so many ways, in its origins, development, successes, expansion, and even its collapse, remained fundamentally and inseparably an Atlantic phenomena. Its exceptional success in Ireland has much to do with Ireland's peculiar sensitivity and degree of connection to the outside world. While temperance thrived in Ireland for peculiar reasons, many of these related ultimately to the anxieties the Irish people had about how others saw them. The success of Mathew's movement depended, financially and otherwise, as he and others understood, on transnational influences, even while Mathew and others were eager to attribute temperance's singular successes in Ireland to national character and national destiny.

The story of the remarkable social transformation of Ireland in the 1840s cannot be told except in relation to Atlantic dynamics detailed above. It also indicates that broader Atlantic opportunities, along with, no doubt, continental and Catholic influences (which themselves were in some sense “Atlantic”), provided the Irish with significant counterweights to otherwise overwhelming English economic and cultural power. Indeed, with the possible exception of the Caribbean archipelago, no place was less insular and more directly affected by the complex circulations of people, goods, and ideas that characterized the Atlantic World than Ireland. Atlantic history in all its diversity is clearly a vital context for understanding Irish history.

NOTES

1. For overviews of Mathew’s career, see Paul Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002); and John Quinn, *Father Mathew’s Crusade* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002). For a broader overview of temperance and Irish society, see Elizabeth Malcolm, *“Ireland Sober, Ireland Free”: Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

2. See, for example, the work of Charles Tilly, especially *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (London: Paradigm, 2004); Michael Young, “Confessional Protest: The Religious Birth of U.S. National Social Movements,” *American Sociological Review* 67 (October 2002): 660–88, esp. 679–81; and Michael Young and Stephen Cherry, “The Secularization of Confessional Protests: The Role of Religious Processes of Rationalization and Differentiation,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44 (December 2005): 373–95. See also Jackie Smith and Hank Johnston, *Globalization and Resistance: Transnational Dimensions of Social Movements* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). For commentary on the need to historicize our understanding of social movements, see also Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Historical Precursors to Modern Transnational Social Movements and Networks,” in *Globalization and Social Movements: Culture, Power, and the Transnational Public Sphere*, ed. John Guidry, Michael Kennedy, and Mayer Zald (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

3. Accounts from historical sociologists of the emergence of transnational social movements have emphasized their relationship to increasingly influential and powerful nation-states. See Ian Tyrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800–1860* (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 69–70, for discussion of the similar roots in Great Awakening enthusiasm and rhetoric for temperance and anti-slavery. Clare Taylor, among others, has presented the antislavery movement as an Atlantic world phenomena. *British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974). See also Sidney Tarrow and Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire’s Slaves* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005). For a brief but useful discussion of the nature of transatlantic communication networks, see Carol Shamma’s introduction to *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Shamma Mancke and Elizabeth Mancke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), and for a good overview of the transatlantic nature of the Great Awakening, see Frank Lambert’s *Peddler in Divinity: George Whitfield and the*

Transatlantic Revivals (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994) as well as his *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). See also Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*, (Downer's Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2004).

4. Stephen Park, "'Three Sheets to the Wind': Marine Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Antebellum America," *International Journal of Maritime History* 13 (June 2001): 137–49. According to Norman Longmate and others, temperance was introduced to England by American captains of temperance ships in Liverpool. Norman Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers: A History of Temperance* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968). For an interesting discussion of the origins of Atlantic maritime communication networks, see April Hatfield's "Mariners, Merchants, and Colonists in Seventeenth-Century English America," in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Carol Shammas and Elizabeth Mancke (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 139–59. There have been some encouraging recent developments in taking a broader look at alcohol and antialcohol movements in the Atlantic world—a recent conference at York University in Toronto organized by José C. Curto and David V. Trotman, *Alcohol in the Atlantic World: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, promises to nurture some good scholarship on the subject. Although still fundamentally national in focus, Ian Tyrrell's work, most substantially *Women's World, Women's Empire: The Women's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), does a fine job of presenting the international dimension of later temperance.

5. Interestingly there has been better attention paid very recently to alcohol itself, in connection with the commodity-based scholarship descended from Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1986). Useful recent alcohol-focused works include Sharon Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Patrick Dillon, *The Much-Lamented Death of Madam Geneva: The Eighteenth-Century Gin Craze* (London: Justin, Charles, 2004); and Frederick Smith, *Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

6. See, for example, Ian Tyrrell, *Women's World, Women's Empire*, 25–28.

7. See, for example, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); T. H. Breen, "Baubles of Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the 18th Century," *Past and Present* 119 (February 1988): 73–104; and Roy Porter, *The Creation of the Modern World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), esp. 268–70, 390–94.

8. The best and most exhaustive catalog of these dynamics is Scottish temperance reformer John Dunlop's *Philosophy of Artificial and Compulsory Drinking Usage in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1839).

9. Thomas Pegram, *Battling the Demon Rum: Drinking and Temperance in the Age of Reform* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 10. For more on the demand side of rapidly increasing alcohol consumption in America, see W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 125–27.

10. Longmate, *Waterdrinkers*, 14–16; Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 37–63. See also Jessica Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 2003).

11. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 41–43, Lillian Shiman, *The Crusade against Drink in Victorian England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 244–45. Harrison suggests that the sharp rise in British spirit consumption from the 1820s, although widely accepted and condemned at the time, may have been exaggerated by contemporary methods of tracking consumption. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 66–68.

12. For an interesting contemporary perspective on this, see John Dunlop, *On the Extent and Remedy of National Intemperance* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1829).

13. See Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 10; Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 44–46.

14. Malcolm, "Ireland Sober, Ireland Free," 23–24.

15. Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*; Park, "Three Sheets to the Wind," 141.

16. Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washintonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 33.

17. See, for example, Alexis de Tocqueville on the widespread heavy use of cheap whiskey in his *Democracy in America*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), 239.

18. Jack Blocker, *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 11. See, for example, the history of early local temperance societies such as the one in Skibbereen, county Cork, as related by Malcolm, "Ireland Sober, Ireland Free," 77–78.

19. Physician Benjamin Rush's seminal pamphlets critical of alcohol are a good example of this sort of approach, although Rush also included Christian critiques of the moral consequences of intemperance. See Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 39–46, 107, 114.

20. Longmate's *Waterdrinkers* offers a good summary of patterns of temperance rhetoric of the 1820s and 1830s.

21. See Woodruff Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600–1800* (London: Routledge, 2002). For an authoritative appreciation of eighteenth-century marketing and advertising networks, and their usefulness for spreading ideological and social change, see also T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). On advertising/publishing networks in Britain, see, for example, John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 132, 176.

22. Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 14.

23. The numbers involved in Mathew's movement are impossible to assess precisely but must have included at least two million at one point or another. See Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 72–73; Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 3. Historians of temperance in England have been strangely reluctant to provide even ballpark (cricket ground?) estimates of the movement's numerical strength at any period of its development but particularly for the early, populist years of the movement. Brian Harrison's lengthy work is remarkably evasive on this fundamental point, and Lillian Shiman, in an otherwise excellent book, contents herself with the observation that "no one could ever discover how many teetotalers there were in England." Shiman, *Crusade against Drink*, 247. For a variety of reasons (including the popularity of beer and the strength of class differences and intradenominational sectarian tensions), the movement in England appears to have been less successful than in Ireland and the United States. See Shiman, *Crusade against Drink*, 40–42; Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 352–68. Temperance

seems to have been comparatively stronger in the North of England, and in Scotland, than elsewhere. Dunlop, *Philosophy of Artificial and Compulsory Drinking*, 34–41.

24. The very worthwhile work of John Quinn noted above has been particularly conscious of the American dimension of Mathew's campaign.

25. Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 260–70.

26. The quote is from Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 1.

27. Malcolm, "Ireland Sober, Ireland Free," esp. chaps. 1 and 2; Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 40–56; Colm Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement 1838–1849* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1992); and George Bretherton, "The Irish Temperance Movement, 1829–47" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1978).

28. Kerrigan, *Father Mathew*, 28–29.

29. Malcolm, "Ireland Sober, Ireland Free," 69.

30. *Ibid.*, 82.

31. *Ibid.*, 98–99; Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 52.

32. Kerrigan, *Father Mathew*, 27; Richard Harrison, *Richard Davis Webb: Dublin Quaker Printer* (Cork, Ireland: Red Barn, 1993), 1; Douglas Riach, "Richard Davis Webb and Antislavery in Ireland," in *Anti-Slavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

33. Bretherton, "Irish Temperance Movement," 177–78, Harrison, *Richard Davis Webb*, 2. There were perhaps five thousand Quakers in Ireland in the 1830s. For more on the crucial role the Quaker community played in Atlantic world communication networks, see Karen Wulf, "'Of the Old Stock': Quakerism and Transatlantic Genealogies in Colonial British America," in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Carol Shammas and Elizabeth Mancke (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 304–20.

34. For Cork's peculiarly cosmopolitan development, see David Dickson's *Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster 1630–1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005). See also Kerrigan, *Father Mathew*, 42–45.

35. Malcolm, "Ireland Sober, Ireland Free," 106.

36. *Ibid.*, 104–5.

37. Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 257–58.

38. See the *Cork Standard*, June 11, 1838, for accounts of John Hocking's visits. Maguire describes the reluctant adoption of the medal by Mathew as a fund-raising device in imitation of Hocking's techniques. John Francis Maguire, *Father Mathew* (London: Longman, Roberts and Green, 1863), 52–53. For Dublin teetotaler advocate John Smith's sponsored trip to Cork, see *Philanthropist and National Temperance Advertiser* (hereafter cited as *PNTA*), October 27, 1838.

39. *Dublin Weekly Herald* (hereafter cited as *DWH*), July 13, 1839.

40. For an account of the propaganda and techniques of the early movement, see Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 16–25.

41. See, for example, McKenna's updates in the *PNTA* of September 8, 1838, and October 27, 1838, and in *DWH*, December 1, 1838, March 23, March 30, May 4, May 11, and August 10, 1839.

42. Maguire's interesting career as an author, journalist, mayor of Cork, and longtime minister of Parliament for Dungarvan and then Cork between 1852 and 1872 has not

attracted much attention. A biographical sketch can be found in Edward James Stellwagen and James Wills, *The Irish Nation: Its History and Biography*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton, 55–59). His biography, *Father Mathew*, and his study *Irish in America* (New York: D&J Sadlier, 1868) were among his several popular works.

43. John Francis Maguire, *Doctrine of Total Abstinence Justified* (Cork, Ireland: William Morten, 1838).

44. *Ibid.*, 3.

45. I have discussed this phase of the movement's development at length elsewhere; see Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 20–54.

46. For examples, which could be multiplied, see an extended editorial on the subject in the *Southern Reporter*, November 23, 1839, and John Bowles's letter to the *DWH* advocating the CTAS, which laid out an extended analogy between Irish drinking and African enslavement, in *DWH*, August 10, 1839.

47. Rev. James Bermingham, *A Memoir of the Very Rev'd Theobald Mathew, With an Account of the Rise and Progress of Temperance in Ireland* (Dublin: Milleken and Son, 1840), 19.

48. *DWH*, May 4, 1839; *Freeman's Journal*, October 11, 1841; *Nation*, January 28, 1843.

49. *DWH*, March 11, 1839.

50. *Cork Examiner*, October 5, 1841.

51. Maguire, *Doctrine*, vi.

52. Bermingham, *Memoir*, 3.

53. *Freeman's Journal*, July 31, 1840. Foran's language was often echoed by Mathew; see, for example, *Freeman's Journal*, August 31, 1840.

54. James McKenna, unpublished manuscript on the history of the Mathew movement, Capuchin Archives, Church Street, Dublin (hereafter cited as McKenna MS), 49.

55. *Freeman's Journal*, October 7, 1840.

56. *Freeman's Journal*, December 30, 1840.

57. For Mathew's, and others', invocation of the international community, see *Freeman's Journal*, August 31, 1840, January 10, 1841, June 5, October 9, 1842, and so on.

58. Some sixteen of the ninety-six temperance addresses preserved by James McKenna make explicit reference to the reaction of the rest of the world to Irish temperance, including the quoted one from the Callan Society. McKenna MS, 636–37.

59. *Cork Examiner*, October 5, 1841.

60. *Freeman's Journal*, August 15, 1840.

61. *Freeman's Journal*, April 1, 1840. For other temperance speeches by Mathew along the same lines, see, for example, *Freeman's Journal*, August 30, 1840, March 29, 1842.

62. See, for example, the farewell party at Father Mathew's Church Street rooms in Cork in 1841 for "over 100 South Australian emigrants," sponsored by the colony's agent in Ireland. *Freeman's Journal*, October 9, 1841. The immigrant vessel *Manlius*, for example, regularly sailed on "teetotal principles" between Quebec and Ireland. *Waterford Chronicle*, April 11, 1840.

63. For some discussion of Irish American temperance organizations, see Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade*, 179–89; and Tyrell, *Women's World, Women's Empire*, 299–300. Harrison mentions Irish temperance organizations inspired by his example in *Richard Davis Webb*, 168.

64. For details, see Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 181–91.

65. Father Mathew to Richard Webb, n.d., Father Mathew Correspondence A 1904, Capuchin Friary, Dublin (hereafter cited as FMCA).

66. See Father Mathew to Joseph Sturge (“private”), n.d., FMCA 782; Father Mathew to Rev. Hincks, n.d., FMCA 1477; Father Mathew to James Haughton, n.d., FMCA 1602.

67. Quinn, *Father Mathew’s Crusade*, 157–58; see also Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 265–66. See also the discussion of Mathew’s temperance movement in “Pastoral Letter Issued by the Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore, Fifth Sunday of Easter, 1843,” in *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops*, vol. 1, ed. Hugh Nolan (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1984), 143–44.

68. Father Mathew to Hugh Egan, n.d., FMCA 169.

69. John Quinn, “Father Mathew’s American Tour,” *Eire-Ireland* 30 (Spring 1995): 91–104; Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance, and Irish Identity*, 259.

70. See Quinn, “Father Mathew’s American Tour”; see also Richard Hardack, “The Slavery of Romanism: The Casting Out of the Irish in the Work of Frederick Douglass,” in *Liberating Sojourn: Frederick Douglass and Transatlantic Reform*, ed. Alan Rice and Martin Crawford (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999) for an interesting account of Mathew and Douglass’s relationship, which included Douglass’s visit to Cork in 1845.

71. For a good summary of the Maine Law and its effects on temperance in America, see Blocker, *American Temperance Movements*, 52–60. For the course of temperance in Ireland after Father Mathew, the best source remains Malcolm’s “*Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*,” but see also Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes: The Pioneers in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999).

72. Maguire, *Doctrine*, 1.

The Anatomy of Failure

Nineteenth-Century Irish Copper Mining
in the Atlantic and Global Economy

William H. Mulligan Jr.

The widely held image of nineteenth-century Ireland as having an almost exclusively agricultural economy has truncated our understanding of Ireland's economy. Without denying the dominant role agriculture played in the Irish economy at that time, other aspects deserve attention. One of these is copper mining. Beginning around 1805 Irish copper resources attracted significant attention from British investors and over the next seventy-five years employed thousands of people. Further, the British mining industry press portrayed copper mining as a potential solution to the "problem" of Ireland broadly defined, which attracted additional attention to the potential of Irish copper mining. The long-term failure of Irish copper mining to fulfill this perceived potential and survive the nineteenth century is owing to a number of factors, the actual extent of the mineral resource and the lack of investment capital being two of the principal reasons. While historians may debate whether Ireland was a colony of Great Britain in political terms, there can be little doubt that in terms of its economy nineteenth-century Ireland was a colony. The absence of an Irish government committed to developing an independent Irish economy would surely be another reason Irish copper mining failed. However, an additional factor that has not received much attention, if any, is the changing nature of the context within which the British and Irish copper industries operated after 1845. Before the 1840s copper was a largely British Isles industry. Mining was concentrated in Cornwall and Devon in England, with a number of mines in Ireland, the most important of which were at Allihies in county Cork, Knockmahon in county Waterford, and Avoca in county Wexford. Swansea, Wales, was the major center for copper smelting and served the global market. In fact the market for Britain's copper went beyond the Atlantic basin—it was worldwide—and at this stage in the industry's

development, Irish mines, although smaller in scale than those of Cornwall and Devon, could compete and were attractive as potential investments.

After development of the rich copper mines of Upper Michigan began in the mid-1840s—combined with the development of rich copper reserves in Chile and Australia—Irish, as well as Cornish mines, were increasingly uncompetitive. The use of Swansea for processing Chilean and Australian ores made this competition direct. While American ore from Lake Superior was never processed at Swansea, the United States quickly became self-sufficient in copper and then became an exporter. Irish and Cornish mines became increasingly uncompetitive and mines shut down as a result. New ventures, whatever their ostensible promise, faced a very different market. By the early 1880s copper mining in Ireland was finished.

Economic history has not been among the heavily worked (I am tempted to say mined) aspects of Irish history, especially when compared to political or literary/cultural history. Very basic historic economic data for Ireland is generally hard to find, and many of the most basic questions about the nature and scale of the Irish economy in the past remain unexplored or at best only initially developed.¹

Sir Robert Kane's study *The Industrial Resources of Ireland*, first published in Dublin in 1844, with a second edition appearing quickly in 1845, is in many ways the key work for understanding nineteenth-century Irish economic development efforts. Kane extensively and exhaustively cataloged and discussed various mining and manufacturing operations in Ireland. He also called attention to a wide range of economic resources in Ireland, such as water-power sites and mineral deposits that were suitable for development.² Kane's work was regularly cited in newspaper and magazine articles and other essays on Irish economic potential during the second half of the nineteenth century and attracted a great deal of favorable notice among those interested in Irish economic development. Yet the level of investment activity and economic diversification for Ireland Kane envisioned never developed.

Several decades before Kane's work, Col. Robert Hall, a retired English army officer who had served in Ireland with a Cornish regiment, began promoting copper mining ventures in Ireland, an area that enjoyed substantial interest among English investors.³ Among the earliest of these mines were those at Allihies on the Beara Peninsula in southwestern county Cork, generally known as the Berehaven Mines. The Puxley family were the principals in this venture, eventually becoming the sole operators before selling out in 1869. The success of the venture can best be estimated not only from the returns in the *Mining Journal* but also from their immense home, Dunboy, which was built a short distance from the ruins of the castle of the O'Sullivan Bere, which it dwarfs.⁴

In the mid-1820s Irish mining boomed with the establishment of four firms that built on Hall's promotional work. Of the four, the Hibernian Mining Company, the Mining Company of Ireland (MCI), the Royal Hibernian Mining

Company, and the Imperial Mining Company, only the Mining Company of Ireland lasted beyond 1842 as an active, working company. Its mines at Knockmahon in county Waterford were very successful into the 1870s.⁵

Mining, particularly of copper, came to be a major focus for efforts to develop alternatives, or supplements, to agriculture as the principal foundation of the Irish economy through the 1860s. Hall's various efforts had had mixed success. In several instances, especially the Berehaven mines at Allihies in county Cork, the Knockmahon mines in county Waterford, and the Avoca (sometimes spelled Ovaca) mines in county Wicklow, success was substantial enough to suggest to proponents of mining development that with sufficient capital and "proper" (that is, English) management many more successful Irish mining ventures were possible. These three successful mining operations in areas became models for what proponents of Irish copper mining saw as possible with sufficient capital investment and efficient management. The repeated failure of mining ventures was invariably attributed to poor management. In the case of the "Audley Mines," and some others in county Cork, however, there is a very strong case for criminal mismanagement and possibly fraud.⁶

In the forefront of the promotion of mining in Ireland as a solution to the problem of poverty in Ireland—and, interestingly, as a way to bring about political peace in Ireland (defined as acceptance of English control)—was the *Mining Journal, Railway and Commercial Gazette*, a weekly trade paper (hereafter simply the *Mining Journal*). Published in London beginning in 1835, the *Mining Journal*—with occasional variations in the title reflecting its broader, if subsidiary, interest in railway and industrial development generally—was the paper of record for the British mining industry and thoroughly covered the mining industry in Ireland.

Copper mining received a great deal of detailed coverage—much more than any other form of mining. And there were several other types of mining in nineteenth-century Ireland, including coal and lead, as well as quarrying. Like many industry publications, the *Mining Journal* could be as much (or more) a promoter of an industry as it was a reporter on its condition. One must read it with that in mind.

The *Mining Journal*, for example, was especially reticent about discussing negative aspects of the Irish mining industry throughout the 1860s and on numerous occasions "bought into" overly optimistic assessments of the future of individual mines. When ventures that had drawn extravagant editorial praise ended up in the wonderfully named "Winding Up Court" or the principals were indicted for fraud, there was seldom editorial comment or notice in a formal article. One has to read the fine print (literally) for letters from subscribers who were shareholders in the failed ventures or the occasional column of the paper's always unnamed "Dublin Correspondent" to find any hard questions being posed or negative information reported. The *Mining Journal*, to be kind, remained optimistic in

face of mounting evidence that copper mining in Ireland was not going to be a profitable industry on an extensive scale.⁷

Changes in the world market that began in the 1830s and accelerated rapidly during the 1840s dramatically changed the situation for Irish mining ventures as well as the much larger and better established Cornish copper mines. Miners from both Cornwall and Ireland were beginning to emigrate in significant numbers because of the contraction of the industry and declining incomes.⁸ In Ireland this was made worse by the large number of short-term ventures that brought people into mining or, as appears more to be the case, led them to relocate to the newest venture that promised work.⁹

While the Cornish soon became ubiquitous in hard-rock mining districts around the world, Irish miners were more likely to go to the United States or Australia than other mining areas. The *Mining Journal* was very slow to acknowledge the significance of the Lake Superior copper district or the mineral potential of the United States in general. In January 1846 a long letter (letters were a standard feature) from J. W. of Pimlico (London) mocked reports of rich mineral resources in the several U.S. mining areas, including the Lake Superior copper country. The space he was given seems to reflect how much the paper wanted to undermine the idea that Lake Superior's mines represented a serious challenge:

Sir, I have somewhere observed another of those funny paragraphs, respecting American mining, which occasionally find their way into the London papers; the one now alluded to purports to be copied from "Rubio's Rambles"; but who Mr. Rubio is, or what his profession may be, I know not. Of one of two facts I am, however, convinced, that he is a genuine Yankee himself, or his blazing description of the "American Lead and Copper Mines," must have been obtained from one of those imaginative souls. . . .

Lastly, Mr. Rubio tells us, that "at Copper Harbour, in the neighbouring state of Michigan, on the shores of Lake Superior, a company in Boston had secured us what *they* consider the richest copper mines in the world, extending over 250,000 acres." "This enterprise is quite in its infancy, having been only just discovered, but 1000 tons of ore were shipped to Boston at the opening of the navigation in 1845, which produced 700 tons of metal." Only in its infancy yet! Bless us, what is to become of us in all this part of the globe? At no distant period, and America will supply the whole world with lead, iron, and copper. Talk about Corn Laws being "doomed," and the effect of their repeal on the interests of the country! Whew! a mere bagatelle, compared with those which must inevitably result from the stupendous mining operations in brother Jonathans, *sic* prolific dominions. . . . Our home market is safe; or, if all I hear be true, our exports are better than they were a few years back. In a

word, Sir, the American mines are all surface mines, and consequently, very uncertain in their duration.¹⁰

The sentiments expressed here about the rich new copper resources in the Great Lakes region of the United States also applied to the lead and iron deposits being developed in the Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes region, respectively. Numerous letters, articles, and short notices appeared for some months dismissing the potential of the new mining districts in the United States.¹¹ Only gradually did the sustained production and success of the Lake Superior copper mines result in more positive coverage. But there was still little recognition of how much the Lake Superior mines, as well as those of Cuba, Chile, and, slightly later, Australia, were changing the environment within which the British and Irish copper industries operated.

As mentioned above, the *Mining Journal* also was slow to discuss the problems of Irish mine failures. Many ventures were promoted through prospectuses published in the paper as advertisements and frequently endorsed by positive editorial comment that never shipped ore to Swansea or shipped only a few small consignments before disappearing. A large proportion of these failures were not noted. The constant comparison of proposed ventures to the successful mines at Avoca, Knockmahon, and most of all Allihies, because by far the largest number of these ventures were in county Cork, appeared in print unchallenged. It is clear that the *Mining Journal's* view of the condition, and potential, of mining in Ireland was seriously flawed. While especially obvious during *An Gorta Mór* (the Great Hunger), when the population was debilitated by hunger and disease, it was also true in the two following decades. Its desire to promote industrial development, especially mining, in Ireland led its editor to underestimate the problems facing any effort to develop mining ventures in Ireland.

This inability to assess the industry's problems and present an accurate view of the condition and potential of the Irish copper mining industry was never clearer than during the great crisis of Irish history, *An Gorta Mór*, which devastated Ireland between 1845 and 1849.

In its September 12, 1846, issue under the heading "Distress in the County Cork Mining Districts," the *Mining Journal* stated what would become, in various phrasings, its standard call:

Our chief object in our present notice of the condition of the poor in the districts referred to is to urge the propriety of different companies working mines and quarries therein to as extensive an employment of the poor in the respective vicinities, as the nature of their operations may allow. By their so doing, it may be very fairly assumed, that so far from suffering a loss, or even a reduction of their profits, in all remunerative mines they will increase those profits—because it is a well-ascertained fact, that there

is nothing like a sufficient application of labour and capital to the development of the wealth of even the most productive mines in the mineral districts of the county of Cork.¹²

Such appeals for investment in Irish mines were a regular feature during the course of *An Gorta Mór*. Occasionally a variation stating that government aid money would be better spent expanding mining in Ireland to provide employment and thus a long-term solution to both the current crisis and the long-term economic problems of Ireland than on public works or direct relief would appear. A correspondent from West Carbery, a mining district in county Cork, who signed himself “A Miner,” highlighted one major problem with the approach suggested. While calling for assisted emigration from Ireland to the mines in Australia, “A Miner” describes

our starving fellow-creatures, hundreds and thousands of whom are dying daily in this country from *starvation*?—men, who a few days ago were in full vigour, health and strength, are now reduced to mere skeletons; and such is the misery and extreme destitution to which they are reduced, that when employment on the public work is afforded them, they are unable to perform it—and numbers who stagger out in the morning to the roads and other works now being carried on, drop dead from exhaustion.¹³

The debilitated condition of the Irish working class was a serious impediment to solving Ireland’s problems, at the very least in the short run, with industrial occupations, such as mining, that required physical energy and skill. If the public works jobs provided by the Russell government were beyond the physical ability of the population, underground hard-rock mining jobs were even more so.¹⁴

Reading the various articles in the *Mining Journal* one sometimes wonders if the editor or other writers actually read the other articles in their own paper. The 1840s began as a time of deep crisis for the British copper mining industry. The Swansea copper market, where Irish copper ores were sold, was beginning to receive large quantities of very rich ore from Chile, Cuba, and, as the decade moved on, Australia. Demand for copper did not expand as rapidly as supply, however, depressing prices. In addition the new ores were far richer than Cornish or Irish ore, which seems to have further depressed their price. The return on Irish mines, as well as for the much larger and better established Cornish copper mines, declined and the profits of the mining companies were in decline. Berehaven, Knockmahon, and Avoca survived for a time (into the 1870s), but the other Irish copper mines suspended operations and shut down.¹⁵ Efforts to revive them during and after *An Gorta Mór* invariably failed within a short period.

The half-yearly meeting of the Mining Company of Ireland in July 1849 sought ways to reduce expenditures, cutting the directors’ fees. Salaries of

employees had been reduced in 1847, the last year in which a dividend had been declared. MCI's half-yearly meetings during the course of the Great Famine are a catalog of existing business problems made worse by the disaster affecting Ireland. MCI was a stable firm—it had paid dividends steadily during its first twenty years and its shareholders had more than recouped their initial investment before *An Gorta Mór*. Less well established firms, such as the General Mining Company for Ireland (GMCI), found the going more difficult. At the end of 1847 GMCI reported that “operation of the company at present time provided for 1014 persons in the immediate neighbourhood of the mine, in the county of Tipperary; and that have been distributing to their work people three tons of meal per week at first cost cash price.”¹⁶ Their Lackamore mine was “not at present more than paying cost.” The annual meeting of the small Killaloe Imperial Slate Company held in January 1847 provides a very good summary of the condition Irish mining generally found itself in:

The Chairman addressed the meeting, and spoke of the difficulty with which the company had to contend in Ireland in the working of those quarries—a difficulty which he had on a former occasion spoken of, and which had been increased by the present unfortunate state of that country; . . . The concern was now working well; and he had no doubt that, when the gloom in which almost every Irish speculation was at present had passed away, the slate quarries would yield a more satisfactory dividend to them all. They had erected mills, and supplied their labourers with meal at cost price, and had not, therefore, burdened the poor-house of that district; but he did not think many companies in Ireland could say as much; these expenses, entailed by the exigency of the times, of course, took from the present profit of the shareholders, If the calamity, which had visited the country, had not occurred, they should have been able to show a very large profit.¹⁷

In their efforts to promote industrialization, the *Mining Journal's* editors were doubtless sincere, but their failure to see the changing nature of the industry as the result of new mining districts in the United States, Cuba, Chile, and Australia is hard to understand. The catastrophe of the Great Famine exposed, for those who were willing to see them, the flaws in both Ireland's economy and its infrastructure for development. This extended well beyond agriculture and the land system. The underdeveloped transport system was one problem for economic development and diversification, but problems regarding land ownership were of much greater concern for those interested in Irish mining.¹⁸

The Berehaven mines in county Cork were largely on land owned by the mines' proprietors, the Puxley family (and to a lesser extent on land they leased from the earl of Bantry), and those at Avoca were on lands owned by a company with the same directors as the mining company. This saved these ventures serious

problems. MCI, however, and the many unsuccessful ventures, frequently dealt with high rental or royalties for land and the unwillingness of landowners to negotiate reduced rents when copper prices were low. MCI had an especially hard time negotiating lease terms that would reduce the rent on its Knockmahon mine. The issue appears regularly in the reports of its business meetings. In addition the separate Irish poor law included mining properties as ratable property, while an Elizabethan statute provided an exemption from poor rates for Cornish mines. This rate became an increasing claim on mining company funds during the Great Famine. These difficulties ultimately contributed significantly to the failure of mining in Ireland. Whether an Irish government based on home rule or full independence would have been more responsive is impossible to know, but the idea has strong appeal. A great deal more research is needed on nineteenth-century Irish economic history and the interest or lack of interest of Irish Parliamentary party in developing an independent Irish economy, but it appears to have been of little interest.¹⁹ It is clear that the problems Irish copper mines faced were rooted, at least in part, in the subordinate and colonial nature of the Irish economy in relationship to the larger economy of Great Britain.

At the same time that MCI was reporting a variety of problems, some long-standing, such as the high royalty demanded by the owners of the land the mines were on, and others, such as the rising poor law union rate, specific to the “calamity,” the company appealed its poor law rate to the Waterford Board of Guardians. Their case reveals a great deal about the challenge of operating the mines during the Great Famine disaster: “In consequence of the great increase in the price of provisions, they were obliged to supply food to their men at a serious loss.”²⁰ The loss amounted to some £1,600. The company went on to say that despite the difficult times and the fact that prices for copper ore were declining, the landlords had not granted a reduction in rents or royalties:

The Company received no assistance from the landlords, and was, consequently, at great loss in keeping the mines open, which they did for the purpose of giving employment to the poor, in order to keep them out of that house. They had again and again applied for leases, even for that purpose. During the last eleven years they paid 200,000£ in hard cash for labour, and yet the village of Bonmahon was in a worse state at present than at the commencement of that period. The landlords are averse to giving leases.²¹

Living conditions for Irish miners had never been good, and they declined as the hunger hit.²² At the Berehaven mines conditions were, perhaps, worst of all. The small number of Cornish miners there received free housing, higher wages, and other benefits, while their Irish co-workers fended for themselves for housing and food—subsisting on small patches of potatoes.²³ Conditions at Knockmahon were somewhat better, but there are references to delays in getting work

done because the men were away tending their potato crops. To its credit, during the worst of *An Gorta Mór* MCI did provide food for its workers at “first cost,” despite the reduction in profits that resulted. The General Mining Company for Ireland reported in June 1850 that it had maintained employment at 525 for the previous three years and distributed thirty-eight tons of meal per month at “cost price.”²⁴

Wages in the Lake Superior copper country were higher, and the same reports that downplayed the significance of its copper deposits as competition for Irish and Cornish miner reported the wages paid there. In February 1846, for example, R. Kenwick Jr. wrote at the end of a lengthy description of the area around Copper Harbor, Michigan,

As you might expect, there is not much good mining among them; but they are employing Cornish miners, and bid fair to mine effectually during the next year. Their stamping machinery is ineffectual, and the system of dressing their ores bad. They have it in contemplation to commence smelting on the mines next year; and from the excitement prevailing among the capitalists, it is probable that next year a vast track of land will be mined, and very many miners employed they are giving to miners \$25 per month, and board and longing [*sic*].²⁵

Increased emigration from Irish mining areas to the copper and iron mines on Lake Superior followed these and other reports. This was not the beginning of emigration by Irish miners, who can be found in the lead mines in Wisconsin in the 1820s, but the number leaving appears to have increased substantially.²⁶ Emigration, the traditional safety valve for economic problems in Ireland, did not eliminate conflict between labor and management at Irish mines, however.²⁷

Conflict manifested itself in several ways, mainly in refusal to work or, more accurately, to take up the contracts the mining company offered. Irish mines used the Cornish tribute, or contract system, in which teams of miners agreed to do specific work for an agreed upon compensation, often bidding against other teams. Refusing to take the contracts constituted a strike. It is difficult to know exactly how much conflict there was or even how the strikes were resolved because the *Mining Journal* very seldom mentions work actions of any kind and press coverage was inconsistent.²⁸

In August 1832, miners at Allihies refused to take up the contracts and held out for several weeks for more generous terms. While mine management connected this to agitation regarding the tithes to the Church of Ireland, there was a similar action in December that carried over into 1833.²⁹ In 1835 miners again refused to take up the contracts and held out into December before returning to work.³⁰ Miners at both the Allihies and Knockmahon mines struck or were locked out in disputes over wages and working conditions in the 1860s. A July

1861 strike at Allihies was attributed to low wages in the press, but mine officials countered that it was due to concerns about safety conditions, which had been quickly addressed.³¹ A few days earlier miners at Knockmahon had walked out over wages, and the directors ordered the mines closed. After three weeks the dispute ended, but the miners had to reapply for their jobs and accept new work conditions.³² A lengthy strike that began at Allihies in October 1864 led to the dismissal of mining captain John Reed in May 1865. Reed's family had been at Allihies for several generations, and he was popular with the Irish miners (there were a small number of Cornish miners at Allihies). Henry Puxley came to see him as too soft during the strike, preferring the more militant approach of one of his other mine captains. On May 6, 1865, when Reed and his family left Allihies, the miners refused to work. Instead they accompanied the family for part of their trip.³³ The final action for which there is evidence began at Allihies in late January 1868 over wages and working conditions. When Puxley returned from a European trip in March, he was able to get the miners to agree to return in exchange for "fair wages and fair treatment in the future."³⁴ This strike attracted considerably more attention in the press, including at least four pieces in the *Nation* as well as extensive coverage in both the *Cork Constitution* and, especially, the *Cork Examiner*.³⁵ The increased coverage was in large part related to the dismissal of the Church of Ireland curate in Castletown Berehaven, Rev. G. T. Stoney, by the rector for his strong, public support for the miners and criticism of Puxley. The miners at Allihies marked Stoney's departure from the Beara as they had Captain Reed's a few years earlier. Under the header "Exciting Scene at the Berehaven Mines," the *Cork Examiner* reported,

On Thursday last, when it became known that the Rev. Mr. Stoney, the Protestant curate, was about to bid farewell to the mines, an unusual demonstration took place. Notwithstanding persuasions to the contrary, the miners made it a holiday. They gave up work and proceeded in a body to his house, very enthusiastic in proclaiming the popular esteem which the rev. gentleman had won in their opinions. Their impression was that he had lost his curacy, on account of the earnest manner in which he publicly advocated a remedy for their late grievances. They had Mr. Puxley's promise for fair wages, and fair treatment for the future, but they are indignant that the Rev. Mr. Stoney should be made to suffer on their account. . . .

The Rev. Mr. Stoney proceeded to Castletown, where he has also won public sympathy. It is an unusual thing with a Protestant clergyman in Berehaven to be a favourite with the people, and disliked by those of his own creed, but his letter to the *Examiner* gave offence in high quarters. The people of Berehaven have presented him with a public address.—*Correspondent*.³⁶

After “the settlement” the *Examiner* continued to follow the situation at the Allihies mines and in May 1868 reported that two miners who had “made themselves more particularly clamorous on their hard fate and bad treatment” had been fired. Their appeal to Puxley, who had promised “fair wages and fair treatment,” was rebuffed.³⁷ The last short paragraph is informative: “It will be remembered that the managers are all Cornish, the workmen almost all Irish at present. The lately revealed miseries of the Berehaven Miners excited the indignant feelings of Irishmen away in California and on the shores of the Canadian Lakes.”³⁸ Soon after, Puxley began negotiating the sale of the mines.³⁹

After emigrating, Irish miners remained willing to act to protect their economic interests. They were more assertive apparently than miners from Cornwall or Germany, the other large ethnic groups in the Lake Superior district during the early period. In response to Irish demands for higher wages, in 1863 the larger mining companies had pooled their resources to send agents to Norway and Sweden to recruit miners.⁴⁰ The Quincy Mining Company alone contributed between fifteen and eighteen thousand dollars. A large number were recruited and made it all the way to Portage Landing. At that time the Great Lakes boats could not go directly to Houghton or Hancock, the two principal towns on what was then the Portage River. Passengers were dropped off at Portage Landing, from where they would take shallower draft boats to complete the journey. The Scandinavians were met by recruiters for the Union army who induced most to take a substantial bounty and enlist. The next Quincy Mining Company Annual Report stated that “the several projects for bringing laborers to the country have not worked as well as we expected.”⁴¹ The large Boston-based mining companies were not as open to hiring and, more important, promoting Irish Catholics as the pioneer era promoters had been, hence the desire for properly Protestant Scandinavians. By 1887 limiting the Irish in the copper mines was company policy. Thomas F. Mason, president of the Quincy Mining Company, the largest employer in Hancock, instructed mine superintendent Capt. S. B. Harris, “I have been a little fearful that the organizing of Knights of Labour up there might bode trouble, but hope we may escape any trouble from that source for the near future—The Irish being the worst disturbing element I suggest that in any changes that are being made it may be well to keep in mind that it is not best to *increase* in that nationality.”⁴²

Labor conflict in the Irish copper mines was clearly related to their declining prospects, just as conflict in the Lake Superior mining districts was related to the emergence of discrimination against the Irish miners there. Succeeding decades would demonstrate the difficulties facing mining ventures in Ireland. The high rents for land and the underdeveloped transportation system continued to pose serious challenges. The absence of an Irish government interested in developing an independent Irish economy contributed to the failure to address these issues. The landowning elite showed little interest in working with mining companies

or other industrial alternatives to Ireland's agrarian economy. The large number of ventures that failed without returning anything on investment and that come more and more to look like frauds made the problem of raising capital for Irish mining ventures ever more difficult to resolve. There was no Irish government to address these issues or protect Irish interests. The emerging Atlantic and the world copper markets continued to work against Irish and Cornish copper mines and miners. The *Mining Journal* consistently missed these problems or minimized them out of existence. This suggests that perhaps the greatest problem facing Irish mining, and perhaps the entire Irish economy in the middle of the nineteenth century and afterward, was a profound ignorance about the realities of the economic potential and the environment for industrial development in Ireland among the investor classes of England. The Atlantic and world economies were changing rapidly as advances in transportation and other communications changed the basic premises of economic relationships. Other than the Puxley family, who built a great fortune on the profits of the Allihies mines, there were few landed families that pursued the development of the mineral wealth on their land. One exception would be the ill-fated efforts of Lord Audley in west Cork.⁴³ The problems the Mining Company of Ireland had in attempting, unsuccessfully, to negotiate reduced rents to keep the mines profitable in the changing market underscore the lack of interest the landowning class had in a diversified Irish economy or in true innovation. Much more research is needed to identify the investors in Irish mines, railroads, and other industrial ventures, but thus far it is clear that because the government was not committed to Irish economic independence, it offered no counterweight to the landowners' attitudes.

NOTES

1. Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) is a good synthesis of the state of Irish economic history. The works of L. M. Cullen, especially *An Economic History of Ireland from 1660* (London: Batsford, 1972; reprint, London: Batsford, 1987), offer a good overview and some case studies. Examples of the type of basic quantitative research needed include A. Bielenberg, "The Irish Brewing Industry and the Rise of Guinness 1790–1914," in *The Dynamics of the International Brewing Industry since 1800*, ed. R. G. Wilson and T. R. Gourvish (London: Routledge, 1998); and A. Bielenberg and D. Johnson, "The Production and Consumption of Tobacco in Ireland 1800–1914," *Irish Economic and Social History* 25 (1998): 1–21.

2. Robert Kane, *The Industrial Resources of Ireland* (1845; reprint, Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1971).

3. Hall's career is recounted often in accounts of Irish mining. The standard account is that he was an officer in a regiment serving in Ireland with a larger number of Cornish troops who showed him "surface showings," or visible evidence of a mineral at the surface, of copper ore. His son and daughter-in-law wrote two books that discuss his career as well as their own travels throughout Ireland. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its*

Scenery, Character, &c., 3 vols. (London, 1845); and S. C. Hall, *Retrospect of a Long Life from 1815 to 1883*, 2 vols. (London, 1883).

4. Some records for the Allihies Mines are on microfilm (Geological Survey of Ireland); C. Ó Mahony, "Copper Mining at Allihies, Co. Cork," *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 92 (1987): 71–84; R. A. Williams, *The Berehaven Copper Mines*, Northern Mine Research Society, British Mining No. 42, 1991 (repr., County Kerry, Ireland: A. B. O'Connor, Kenmare Bookshop, 1998).

5. Des Cowman, "The Mining Boom of 1824–'25: Part 1," *Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland* 1 (2001): 49–54; 2 (2002): 29–33. For a general history of the mines at Knockmahon, see Des Cowman, *The Making and Breaking of a Mining Community: The Copper Coast, County, Waterford 1825–1875+* ([Dublin]: Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland, 2006).

6. See D. Cowman and T. A. Reilly, *The Abandoned Mines of West Carbery: Promoters Adventurers and Miners* ([Dublin:] Geological Survey of Ireland, 1988).

7. William H. Mulligan Jr., "Through a Different Lens: The Irish Landscape as Seen by Mining Promoters, 1835–1880," in *Land and Landscape in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, ed. Úna Ní Bhroiméil and Glenn Hooper (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008).

8. Ronald Rees, *King Copper: South Wales and the Copper Trade, 1584–1895* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), offers a sound, brief discussion of the changing world production of copper ore. For the United States, see Charles K. Hyde, *Copper for America: The United States Copper Industry from Colonial Times to the 1990s* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998). On migration from copper-mining areas in Ireland to the Michigan copper country, see William H. Mulligan Jr., "From the Beara to the Keweenaw: The Migration of Irish Miners from Allihies, County Cork to the Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan, USA, 1845–1880," *Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland* 1 (2001); William H. Mulligan Jr., "Irish Immigrants in Michigan's Copper Country: Assimilation on a Northern Frontier," *New Hibernia Review* 5, no. 4 (2001); and William H. Mulligan Jr., "Irish Immigrants in the Early Keweenaw Mines: A Research Note," *Superior Signal* 15, no. 2 (May 2000).

9. Allen Buckley, *The Story of Mining in Cornwall* (Fowey, U.K.: Cornwall Editions, 2005); and D. B. Barton, *The History of Copper Mining in Cornwall and Devon* (Truro, U.K.: Bradford Barton, 1978).

10. *Mining Journal*, January 24, 1846, 49.

11. Mulligan, "Through a Different Lens"; and William H. Mulligan Jr., "The Problems of Ireland Solved: *The Mining Journal* and Copper Mine Development, 1835–1880," paper presented at the annual meeting Economic and Social History Society of Ireland, National University of Ireland–Maynooth, November 12–13, 2004.

12. *Mining Journal*, September 12, 1846, 388.

13. *Ibid.*, January 16, 1847, 31.

14. There is an extensive literature on the Great Famine. James S. Donnelly Jr., *The Great Irish Potato Famine* (Phoenix Mill, U.K.: Sutton, 2001) includes an extensive summary of the historiography. Christine Kinealy has published a number of valuable monographs, including *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845–52* (Boulder, Colo.: Roberts Rinehart, 1995); *A Death-Dealing Famine: The Great Hunger in Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 1997); and *The Great Irish Famine: Impact, Ideology and Rebellion* (New York:

Palgrave, 2002). Older works also remain useful. See R. D. Edwards and T. D. Williams, eds., *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History* (New York: New York University Press, 1957); and the popular work, Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland, 1845–1849* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

15. By the time of *An Gorta Mór*, the Berehaven mines were operated by the Puxley family of Dunboy. Earlier partners had been bought out. As a private company little information about its operations appeared even in the industry press, except for the reports on the Swansea ticketings. The *Mining Journal* assumed from what information was available that it was very profitable, and the size of Dunboy and the lifestyle of the Puxleys support such a conclusion. The mines at Knockmahon were owned by the Mining Company of Ireland (MCI). It held a half-yearly shareholders' meeting and issued half-yearly reports. The mines at Avoca were operated by the Wicklow Copper Mine Company on a lease from the Hibernia Mining Company, an early example of an interlocking directorate. It too held regularly scheduled shareholder meetings and issued public reports.

16. *Mining Journal*, December 18, 1847, 597.

17. *Mining Journal*, February 6, 1847, 57.

18. The short-lived *Irish Railway Gazette* (1844–49) promoted and reported on railway development in Ireland. It occasionally reported on Irish mining, most often by reprinting articles from the *Mining Journal*, although at times that was reversed. Unlike the *Mining Journal*, it was published in Dublin.

19. Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule and Irish History, 1800–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); David Dickson and Cormac Ó Gráda, eds., *Refiguring Ireland: Essays in Honor of L. M. Cullen* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2003); and Cullen, *Economic History of Ireland since 1660*, 1987 ed.

20. *Mining Journal*, March 27, 1847, 137.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Des Cowman, "Life and Labour in Three Irish Mining Communities circa 1840," *Saothar* 9 (1983): 10–19; Des Cowman, "Life and Work in an Irish Mining Camp c. 1840: Knockmahon Copper Mines, Co. Waterford," *Decies* no. 14 (1980): 28–42; Ó Mahony, "Copper Mining at Allihies," 71–84.

23. Williams, *Berehaven Copper Mines*.

24. *Mining Journal*, June 8, 1850, 270.

25. *Mining Journal*, February 21, 1846, 86.

26. Mulligan, "From the Beara to the Keweenaw"; David G. Holmes, *The Irish in Wisconsin* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2004); Grace McDonald, *A History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Arno, 1976).

27. Williams, *Berehaven Copper Mines*, 96–97; Cowman, *Making and Breaking*, chap. 5; "The Berehaven Miners," *Nation*, March 14, 1868, 473; "Paying the Penalty," *Nation*, March 28, 1868, 505; "Paying the Penalty," *Nation*, May 2, 1868, 588–89; "Paying the Penalty," *Nation*, May 16, 1868; *Corck Examiner*, March 24, May 19, 1868.

28. *Mining Journal*, 1835–1890.

29. Williams, *Berehaven Copper Mines*, 96–97.

30. *Ibid.*, 105–6.

31. *Ibid.*, 147–49.

32. Cowman, *Making and Breaking*, 110–17.

33. Williams, *Berehaven Copper Mines*, 147–49.

34. *Ibid.*, 151–58.

35. “Berehaven Miners,” 473; “Paying the Penalty,” March 28, 1868, 505; “Paying the Penalty,” May 2, 1868, 588–89; “Paying the Penalty,” May 16, 1868.

36. *Cork Examiner*, March 24, 1868.

37. *Cork Examiner*, May 19, 1868.

38. *Cork Examiner*, May 19, 1868.

39. Most conveniently, Williams, *Berehaven Copper Mines*, chap. 25. The *Mining Journal* covered the sale and the resulting dispute within the Mining Company of Ireland.

40. *Report of the Directors to the Stockholders of the Quincy Mining Company for the Year 1863* (New York, 1864), 5.

41. *Report of the Directors to the Stockholders of the Quincy Mining Company for the Year 1864* (New York, 1865), 7.

42. Thomas F. Mason to Capt. S. B. Morris, April 20, 1887, MS-001, Box 336, Folder 015, Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, J. Robert Van Pelt Library, Michigan Technological University, Houghton.

43. Cowman and Reilly, *Abandoned Mines of West Carbery*.

Transatlantic Migrations of Irish Music in the Early Recording Age

Scott Spencer

In the early twentieth century, recordings of Irish musicians in America had a major impact on traditional musicians in both Irish America and Ireland. This idea has often been repeated in Irish music circles, and academic discourse surrounding the movement of these recordings generally includes a version of the same generic sentence: “These early 78-rpm records made their way to Ireland and had a profound effect upon the tradition.” Publications on the subject employ a wide variety of verbs to describe the means by which these recordings moved through what is often described as a somewhat murky Atlantic trade route. In these statements agency has been left to question, and as a result myths of origin have developed. As London-based Irish musician and scholar Reg Hall has noted, “I’ve heard of ‘Returned Yanks’ coming home with a new dress or new suit, a wind-up gramophone and a few records, but the story eventually becomes a bit of a myth.”¹

Musicians and historians alike have hinted at the engines behind this murky Atlantic trade route, many times implying an innate and inexplicable tendency among Irish American 78-rpm records to migrate across the ocean toward their spiritual home: “The music they recorded in the United States during the three decades prior to the 1950s found its way back to Ireland on 78rpm records, and became enormously influential.”² Some publications suggest a system of natural osmosis (or possibly reverse osmosis): “McKenna’s discs made a tremendous impact when they filtered back home.”³

Anecdotal evidence and the recollections of Irish musicians have pointed to their moving through the postal system. Harry Bradshaw’s entry in *The Companion to Traditional Irish Music* on fiddler Michael Coleman mentions that “Coleman’s records . . . were sent back to Ireland, where they gave inspiration to players.”⁴ However, many Irish Americans doubted the ability of the American or Irish postal systems to deliver the brittle 78-rpm records intact. As musician

Tommy Gilmartin has said, “They’d imagine if they posted them they’d be broken, which they would at the time.”⁵

The following chapter should help to illuminate this elusive and undocumented migratory pattern through a study of the economic, technologic, and cultural facets of commercial and subcommercial recordings of Irish traditional music in the early twentieth century. The result will be a window onto the ways in which Irish traditional music became a cross-Atlantic phenomenon with the dawn of the recording age and will demonstrate how musicians both in the diaspora and in the geographic center of the tradition have engaged in debates on ideas of traditionality and authenticity—a dialogue that continues today.

At the dawn of the age of sound recording and in the early years of record companies, advertising and marketing was modeled on the mindset of the nineteenth-century furniture business. Companies were eager to sell phonograph players and lavish record cabinets to the general public, as these items represented large single-ticket expenses. The first decades of the industry were marked by a focus on marketing expensive gramophone cabinets over the relatively inexpensive records. In 1897 Edison Home Phonograph machines were selling for forty dollars, and the year 1899 saw 151,000 phonographs manufactured in the United States.⁶

Initially the industry focused on marketing these cabinets to the American middle class, but as the industry tapped out this early market demographic, companies began to introduce improved versions of the gramophone to cater to the middle-class market and fresh attention was focused on creating new markets. Just after the turn of the century, the most underdeveloped market in the United States for gramophone players was that of ethnic communities, and so in the early 1900s, the recording industry turned a good deal of attention toward immigrant communities:

By about 1905 the record companies had jumped into the new ethnic market with enthusiasm. Of the three major firms, Columbia, which usually ranked second in its sales performance and was generally interested in marketing innovations, seemed the most eager to sell directly to foreign newcomers. Columbia was probably the first national American firm to consciously aim an elaborate ethnic catalogue at its foreign customers. Its 1906 catalogue offered musical records in twelve languages, and within three years the company had issued two additional sets of catalogues for immigrant audiences.⁷

Marketing departments in the major record companies knew that if ethnic pride could be tapped, records would be sold and sales of record cabinets would follow. Trade journals began to reflect this mindset, encouraging record merchants to explore potential ethnic markets. It became obvious to the major companies that

immigrant communities were a potentially lucrative market, and considerable marketing efforts were devoted to instill interest in these potential customers:

By 1910, American record executives began to consider their immigrant customers more designedly. From then until about 1930, when the depression began to devastate the industry, the major companies adopted a new policy of marketing records consciously and specifically for ethnic groups. Record company executives were well aware that a buyer of a cylinder or disc, whether immigrant or native, was also a potential buyer of a record-playing machine, and ultimately of more records. Victor, Columbia and Edison all wanted a share of the immigrant trade. Businesspeople understood that foreigners wanted their own music; it would not take much effort to turn that craving into record-buying.⁸

Though Victor, Edison, and Columbia previously had offered only a select few commercial Irish vocal recordings, the stage was set. The ethnic markets had been proven in many of America's Eastern European communities, record companies were expanding into new ethnic enclaves, and the Irish community was clamoring for records of their own music. Ellen O Byrne, a native of county Leitrim, may have provided the final push to bring the recording companies to the Irish market.

O Byrne had opened a store in New York City in 1900 at 1398 Third Avenue.⁹ She stocked the shelves with, among other things, musical instruments and recordings of Irish musicians such as singer John McCormack. Irish music was in great demand at the time, but there were very few records available. The store had stocked early Edison wax cylinders and Gennett 78-rpm records, yet they were always in short supply. In an interview with Mick Moloney, Ellen's son, Justus O'Byrne DeWitt, explained the situation, "The Gennett company was willing to make records for anybody at that time while some of the other companies weren't. . . . Now when Gennett stopped making Irish records, my family was at a loss for new Irish records."¹⁰

Most of the commercial Irish recordings to that point had been vocal pieces, and O Byrne perceived a demand for instrumental dance tunes. With her customary entrepreneurial spirit, she became the driving force behind the first major label recording of instrumental Irish musicians. Her son explains:

Irish people were always coming in and asking for old favorites like "The Stack of Barley." Well, she'd no records to give them because there weren't any. So she sent me up to Gaelic Park in the Bronx to find some musicians. There was always music there on Sundays. Well, I found Eddie Herborn and John [James] Wheeler playing banjo and accordion, and they sounded great. So my mother went to Columbia, and they said that if she would

agree to buy five hundred copies from them they would record Herborn and Wheeler. She agreed, and they both recorded “The Stack of Barley,” and the five hundred records sold out in no time at all.¹¹

Herborn and Wheeler were recorded on either September 15 or 18, 1916, in New York, and as agreed, Columbia pressed five hundred copies for Ellen O Byrne.¹² This first pressing marked the beginning of an era in which Irish musicians in America were being recorded and in which the resulting 78-rpm discs, and the more expensive cabinets and players, could be marketed to American Irish communities. The next few years produced a few very influential records, including those by Tom Ennis (Victor, 1917) and P. J. Conlon (Columbia, 1917). After a few dozen Irish pressings, the Okeh recording label was the first to dedicate a portion of their record numbering matrix to an Irish series, the Okeh 21000 series. Columbia followed in 1925 with the Columbia 33000-F series, Victor dedicated its V-29000 series to Irish music in 1929, and Decca later established its 12000 series.¹³

As can be seen in concurrent issues of the trade journal *Talking Machine World*, by the close of 1926, ethnic recording was fully established and regional record distributors were being encouraged to market within immigrant communities:

Few people are more interested in music and entertainment than those hardy foreign-born Americans who constitute so large a portion of the population of the average town or city, and . . . although they may live thriftily in many ways, music plays an important part in their lives and they spend annually large sums of money for this entertainment. Ordinary sales methods do not always reach this class of population. They group together and keep to their own language. Their purchasing of an article is oft-times stimulated by the experience of friends.¹⁴

Columbia, in particular, was quick to tout successes in the Irish community, particularly in urban centers on the East Coast:

The company is quick to release hits and it has just issued a remarkable Irish and French catalogue. . . . It is no wonder that the company is adding new accounts each week to its list of Columbia dealers. New England’s own Irish entertainer, Shaun O’Nolan, has just approved the test records of six of the recordings that he recently made at the New York laboratory. These records will shortly be released. Twenty-five new dealers now carry the complete Irish catalogue.¹⁵

The age of ethnic music recordings had arrived, just as Irish America was striving to throw off the stigma of recent immigration and plant itself firmly in the middle class.

Just before the dawn of the recording age, the context of Irish traditional music in Irish America was subtly diverging from that in Ireland. In the homeland the second half of the twentieth century saw traditional instrumentalists playing for informal social gatherings: crossroads dances, house parties, and community celebrations. A variety of influences, both political and social, pushed these dances into more established institutions, such as local parish halls.¹⁶ Many other informal social gatherings took place in private homes, and dancing played a large part. As James Kelly has mentioned in a recent interview,

In the '30s, there was a bit of a switch and the clergy in Ireland at the time played a role in that. They started to discourage the crossroad dances and the country dances and encourage people to go to the bigger towns and villages into these halls. In a sense it kind of put a stop to all that stuff, you know. The music itself went through a period in the '40s and '50s where there wasn't much going on at all. In a lot of cases people just played in their own homes—you might invite people in, get together and play. It wasn't as if you'd go for a festival like you would these days.¹⁷

In the years before and immediately after the Irish Rising (1916) and the creation of the Free State (1921), social dancing in Ireland was somewhat redefined in an effort by the Gaelic League to discard British influence and return to what they considered more authentic forms of Irish social dances. With an emphasis on figure dancing, the Gaelic League promoted and presented what has come to be called *ceilidh* dancing.¹⁸

In America many of the waves of Irish immigrants had arrived with instrumental dance traditions and songs in both Irish and English. The dance music carried by the immigrants reflected a repertoire suited for set dances, solo step dances, and couple dances popular in Ireland at the time of emigration, prior to the influence of the Gaelic League. In America the decades before the recording age saw a huge demand for this style of Irish dancing in major urban centers such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. One scholar notes that “support for Irish music and dance was so strong that in 1892 the ‘Golden Age of Irish Music’ was formally ushered in with the completion of New York City’s Celtic Hall, a major venue for Irish music and dance located at 446 West 54th Street in Manhattan.”¹⁹ As the various recording companies began to develop their ethnic markets, talent scouts would take an approach opposite to that of Ellen O Byrne, who had recruited musicians solely on talent. Instead record companies recruited instrumentalists with a proven popularity in the dance halls and on the concert stage. Fortunately the standard of musicianship in the dance halls was tremendously high, and the performers recorded were usually (but not always) at the higher levels of the tradition.

By the 1920s the recording companies had proven that Irish music would sell. By far the most popular recordings were songs on Irish themes sung in English.

John McCormack had become a household name for his recordings of “Mother Machree” and “Kathleen Mavourneen” and is often said to have been the first million-record seller. German American accordionist John Kimmel had recorded a number of Irish tunes for Zonophone in 1904 and 1905²⁰ and for Victor Talking Machine Company in 1907,²¹ and O Byrne had persuaded Columbia to record Herborn and Wheeler in 1916. Aside from these first attempts and a few commercial wax cylinders, Victor Records was the first company to record a commercial record of instrumental Irish music played by an Irish-born musician. The artist was uilleann piper and vaudevillian Patsy Touhey, recorded in New York in 1919, and the 78-rpm record was released in 1920 and advertised in the February issue of the Victor Records supplement as “one of the historic performers” of the “old traditional Irish minstrel tunes.”²²

After these initial pressings, a wide variety of labels began releasing Irish instrumental recordings. According to S. C. Hamilton’s dissertation on the Irish recording industry, “There were around 40 companies that released recordings of Irish music between 1899 and 1942. As the three major producers, around 40 percent of total releases were for Columbia, 18 percent for Decca, and 16 percent for Victor.”²³ Of these releases, 47.7 percent were songs and 53.3 percent were instrumental.²⁴ In the American market sales figures were increasing each year, especially in the postwar years, until the Depression. Roughly 3 million cylinders and discs were sold in 1900, a number that increased to 140 million in 1921.²⁵ Phonograph production also increased dramatically over these years. The year 1909 saw the production in America of 345,000 gramophones, 1914 saw the production of 514,000 gramophones, and 1919 saw 2,230,000!²⁶

After the U.S. court system broke the Columbia-Edison-Victor monopoly on record production patents in 1920, smaller labels began to produce Irish recordings, including Bluebird (a subsidiary of Victor), Cameo, Cardinal, Crown, Emerald, Emerson, Gaelic, Keltic, Lyric, O’Byrne DeWitt, Odeon, Pathé, and Yorktown.²⁷ The larger labels included M. & C. New Republic, Edison, Brunswick, Vocalion, Parlophone, Gennett, and, of course, Victor, Columbia, and Decca.²⁸ During this time two of these companies sent engineers to Ireland to record material—Parlophone (1929, 1930) and Columbia (1931)—resulting in special catalogs and including the first commercial recording of Ireland’s Ballinakill Ceili Band.²⁹

These companies, especially the smaller labels, were in constant flux. Many smaller outfits were purchased by larger companies, and with purchase came the label’s library—usually with the original metal masters from which the original 78-rpm records were literally pressed. Today a dedicated and meticulous subculture is devoted to untangling the intertwined histories of these early labels. Any attempt to find the source of Irish recordings issued on the smaller labels is liable to set abuzz a subset of these dedicated historians and record buffs. A perfect example of the intricate web of interconnected histories in Irish records (and

I will only bother the reader with one example, as this type of exploration (a slippery slope into the obsessive world of the record collector) is to be found in Irish records produced through the Regal imprint of Columbia Records.

The United Kingdom branch of Columbia Records began Regal as a budget imprint in 1914. A merger of the British Gramophone Company and the U.K. branch of Columbia, called the Columbia Gramophone Company, produced the British label EMI. EMI went on to purchase Columbia and its library in 1932. In the next year Regal was paired with another of EMI's smaller labels, Zonophone, to create the label Regal Zonophone. During the 1930s and 1940s Regal Zonophone was used primarily to reissue recordings from the Columbia American library, though later it added reissues from Victor subsidiary Bluebird. Regal Zonophone continued to reissue classic Irish recordings until the 1970s. It is rumored that tracing matrix numbers for specific recordings throughout this period requires a specialized degree.³⁰

Musicians recording for these companies during this era would receive a single payment for each recording session, without rights to royalties or mechanical reproductions. Musicians had little or no control over their recordings, which were considered the property of the recording company. Metal masters of these records would move with recording companies as they were bought and sold, and musicians would sometimes be surprised to find their recordings being reissued on other labels. Louis Quinn recorded with the Shamrock Minstrels for Columbia in the late 1930s and saw his recordings issued on a variety of labels. "They went out on Brunswick, they went out on Parlophone, they went out on Decca," he said.³¹ The most influential label in the migration of traditional Irish dance music between America and Ireland was Decca Records. Decca was founded in 1929 by Sir Edward Lewis after his purchase of London's Decca Gramophone Company. In 1932 Decca purchased the U.K. branch of an American company, Brunswick Records (with its Vocalion library), and quickly added the libraries of the Melotone and Edison Bell companies. With ownership of these libraries, which included a vast quantity of both U.K. and American releases, Decca launched its American subsidiary in 1934. Decca's transatlantic nature and wide range of musical genres allowed great flexibility and access to multiple markets. With a number of savvy choices in the jazz realm, the company quickly came to rival EMI as the largest label in the United Kingdom and had the potential to reissue its previous recordings to opposite sides of the Atlantic for decades without saturating either market.

A number of major social and political movements collided in the first decades of the twentieth century to allow Irish recordings a chance to flourish and become essential to the dialogue surrounding traditional music on both sides of the Atlantic. Hibernian politics saw the formation in the late nineteenth century and subsequent influence of the Gaelic League, the 1916 Irish Rising, and the creation of the Free State in 1921. Post–Great Famine emigrants from Ireland

had prospered in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Economic success, ethnic pride, continuing immigration, and a strong sense of community spurred a boom in the early twentieth century (later called the golden age of Irish American music and dance) in Irish American dance halls. The advances in recording technology, the number of recording studios in the New York City area, and the push by recording companies to tap ethnic markets facilitated widespread recording of these musicians and a resurgence of interest in Irish folk music. Finally, with economic security, nationalist pride, and aspirations for middle-class status and its trappings, Irish Americans were hungry for records of their own music. The boom economy of the 1920s in America meant disposable income to purchase records and an increased interest in music. A new invention, the portable windup gramophone, became omnipresent in households in both America and Ireland. It seemed that every Irish household, no matter how poor, had a gramophone and a collection of 78-rpm records of Irish music, which was being recorded almost exclusively in America at the time.³²

The first American recordings of Irish music to arrive in Ireland did so at the perfect time. With the creation of the Free State, nationalism was at a new high, both in Ireland and the Irish diaspora. The quest for and promotion of native culture by Ireland's Gaelic League had instilled a national desire for aspects of Gaelic culture thought to be lost or on the verge of vanishing. Through their writings and works, the authors and artists of the Gaelic Revival had brought about a national search for Irishness as well as a public dialogue on ideas of authenticity and purity in arts and culture. Finally, as Kenny Goldstein has argued, "each major technological advance in mass communications media helped to produce a folksong revival. . . . The invention of the sound recording machine, and later of the disc phonograph record, each produced major folksong revivals."³³

The new leap in recording technology and the American commercialization of Irish ethnic recordings helped to spur simultaneous musical revivals in Irish communities on both sides of the Atlantic. The makers of Irish traditional music in America had the potential to have a great impact on the tradition precisely because supply and demand were strongly in their favor: Ireland was searching for authenticity and pre-Great Famine Gaelic culture, and the American Irish music was in a golden age—and American Irish musicians were the only musicians recording. As fiddler James Kelly has said, "The early recordings were coming into Ireland from the States and the musicians who were making those recordings were becoming influential *because* they were making recordings—no one had made them before."³⁴

There are many accounts of musicians in Ireland listening to recordings of Irish traditional musicians from America. In an interview with Harry Bradshaw, Tommy Gilmartin recounted that the 78-rpm recordings of flute player John McKenna

made a tremendous impact when they filtered back home. Around his native area, no matter what the cost, if you were to sell the last cow, you'd buy one of his records at the time. If you were to be without a meal a day, you have got the record in preference to anything else. And then there might be a local gramophone about—and maybe not very many at the time either. That house would be full to capacity that night because John McKenna's record had arrived new that day. And there would be no work done that day in the area till it be heard, or there would get no contentment in it till it would be heard. That was the atmosphere that existed, that's what went on.³⁵

James Kelly has described the excitement generated when a new recording would arrive in rural Ireland: "A family in the locality might have an old gramophone player, and when some of the 78 records would come from the States, it was like going to Disneyland! People would get together at whoever's house it would be and they'd listen to this record over and over and over again. It was a great time for excitement, you know. So that was going on when the early recordings were coming into Ireland from the States."³⁶ Some particular recordings had major impact, particularly in the regions from which the musician had originated. An early Columbia recording, credited as *Irish Bagpipes, Violin and Piano*,

hit the jackpot and captured the hearts of a whole generation, *Black Rogue / Saddle the Pony and Londonderry Hornpipe*, credited anonymously as *Trio: Irish Bagpipes, Violin and Piano*, is said, rather wildly, to have been in every country cottage in Ireland, and it is also said that so many people asked at the record shops, the company was forced to reverse its normal policy and name the artists: Ennis, Morrison and Muller. It soon got around that this was Jimmy Morrison, the schoolteacher from County Sligo, who had left for America only a short time before.³⁷

As many musicians were highly experienced in a regional style and repertoire, these records also functioned as a window onto the riches of regional styles within Ireland. So how did these recordings of Irish American traditional musicians make their way to Ireland to make this great impact?

The first cross-Atlantic transfer of recorded Irish music most probably originated with Francis O'Neill, chief of the Chicago Police Department and Irish music enthusiast. O'Neill was born in Tralibane, county Cork, in 1848.³⁸ After years of adventure as a sailor, schoolteacher, and shepherd, he settled in Chicago in 1870 and joined the Chicago police force in 1873. O'Neill demonstrated himself a worthy police officer and was promoted through the ranks until 1901, the year he attained the rank of chief of police. O'Neill had come from a musical family and was known to play flute, though he was not fluent in musical notes.

As chief of police O'Neill was known to employ Irish musicians as they passed through town, and his circle of friends and musical associates would send word to him of newly arrived Irish musicians. O'Neill began to collect traditional Irish tunes in the late 1880s, and with the help of his friend and musical transcriptionist, James O'Neill (no relation), he quickly gathered hundreds upon hundreds of tunes from a wide variety of sources.³⁹ His collected transcriptions met with great approval, and in 1903 he published his first tune collection, *O'Neill's Music of Ireland*. This publication was followed by eight additional books of tunes and biographies of musicians, each of which have become standard resources for Irish musicians around the world.

O'Neill was at the epicenter of Irish musical life in Chicago. He hosted many evenings of music in his home and at local clubs and helped organize a great number of concerts of Irish music. As Irish or Irish American musicians passed through Chicago, many would visit O'Neill, and if they had an unusual repertoire, Captain O'Neill would send for Sergeant O'Neill to transcribe the tunes or would memorize them himself for later transcription. O'Neill also made use of a wax-cylinder recorder in his residence, and it must be assumed that many visitors to his house must have been recorded.⁴⁰ After the tragic death of his last and oldest son, Rogers, in 1904, O'Neill gave his cylinder recorder and collection of wax-cylinder recordings to friends.

At roughly the same time an uilleann piper also was pioneering the use of the wax-cylinder recorder for his music. Patrick J. "Patsy" Touhey was born in Cahertinna, county Galway, in 1865 and emigrated from there to America with his family at the age of three.⁴¹ After having learned the uilleann pipes from his father and from a variety of pipers on the U.S. East Coast, Touhey began his performing career on the road with piper John Egan. After a number of years on the stages of New York and other cities, Touhey was invited to play as a part of an Irish cultural display in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.⁴² Touhey was extremely well received, garnering high praise in the local press from Irish musicians.

Touhey most probably ran into an Edison phonograph machine at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.⁴³ Edison had received patents for his wax-cylinder machine in 1878 and had immediately gone into production, marketing the machine for dictation purposes, though the mass-produced machines did not gain widespread use until the 1890s. In any event, before the turn of the century Touhey was approached by the Edison recording company to enter a recording contract. However, as Francis O'Neill wrote in a 1911 letter to a friend in Ireland, Touhey "could not get enough for his time from the record people. His theatrical business is more profitable. . . . They found a cheaper man McAuliffe and cheaper work of course."⁴⁴

Patsy Touhey must have taken notice of the potential market for recordings of his performances, as on April 20, 1901, the following advertisement began appearing in the *Irish World*:

IRISH BAGPIPES ON THE PHONOGRAPH
ORIGINAL Phonograph Records of the Irish
Pipes made to order by the BEST IRISH
PIPER IN AMERICA.
ONE DOLLAR EACH. TEN DOLLARS PER DOZEN.
Send for catalogue of 150 Irish airs,
Jigs, reels, hornpipes, etc.
P. TOUHEY
1388 Bristow Street,
New York City.⁴⁵

It is not known how many wax-cylinder recordings were made by Touhey, but it is assumed that he made them in his home, on a private machine purchased just for this purpose. At the publication of *The Piping of Patsy Touhey*, by Pat Mitchell and Jackie Small (1986), fewer than fifty of these cylinders were in the hands of archives and private collectors. Since the publication another two dozen have recently been located in private collections and donated to public archives.⁴⁶ (It is interesting to note that three weeks after this advertisement was published, members of Cumann na bPíobairí, the short-lived Dublin Pipers' Club, discussed and later took contributions toward the purchase of a phonograph machine. In minutes dated Friday May 14, 1901, the secretary notes, "discussion took place upon Phonographs, with the idea of recording pipe music."⁴⁷ Later entries record donations toward the purchase of such a machine but record neither a purchase nor the use of a wax-cylinder recorder.)

It is unlikely that Touhey used his mail-order business to send wax-cylinder recordings to Ireland, but there is ample evidence that Capt. Francis O'Neill, a devoted fan of Touhey's, sent a large number of his recordings to his own colleagues in Ireland. In a letter to a friend, William Halpin of county Clare, Ireland, O'Neill wrote about one of his first musical parcels sent to Dr. Reverend Henebry in Waterford, Ireland, and the recipient's response:

As a Christmas present which was sure to be appreciated, I forwarded in 1907 to Rev. Dr. Henebry, at Waterford, Ireland, a box of Edison phonograph records which Sergeant Early generously permitted me to select from his treasures. Among them was *The Shaskeen Reel* played by Patrick Touhey. The clergyman's comment is best expressed in his own words:

"The five by Touhey are the superior limit of Irish piperling. One of his, 'The Shaskeen Reel,' is so supreme that I am utterly without words to express my opinion of it. . . . Why, there is no Irish Musician alive at all now at all in his class! If things were as they ought to be, he should be installed as professor of music in a national university in Dublin. And that is what I think of Patsy Touhey and his piperling."⁴⁸

Henebry and O'Neill were musical friends and maintained an ongoing correspondence throughout O'Neill's life. In other letters to Halpin, O'Neill mentions a number of cylinders he had posted to his colleague in Waterford. In a letter dated March 9, 1912, O'Neill writes of a number of cylinders he had posted to Henebry in a shipment that included music by three musicians. In the letter he refers to the cantankerous piper Bernard Delaney: "Although pulled out of obscurity and befriended for more than a fourth of a century by yours truly proved an ingrate, and I have none of his records though I sent some years ago to Dr. Henebry I think. And that reminds me that I sent a dozen from Touhey and a dozen from John McFadden our best traditional fiddler to his Reverence January 1911. . . . From Mr. Wayland I know they arrived safely."⁴⁹

In O'Neill's letter to Halpin, dated November 15, 1911, he mentions, "I sent a dozen fiddle records from John McFadden to Rev. Dr. Henebry of Queens College, Cork (a branch of the Catholic University) 8 months ago. They arrived safely."⁵⁰ This statement allows us to date the McFadden recordings, or at least their shipment, to roughly March 1911. In the same letter, O'Neill notes that "lately Patsy Touhey made me two dozen [cylinders] but not for money just a compliment."⁵¹ Furthering his prior statement about sending on some Touhey recordings (and continuing his digs at Barney Delaney), he writes, "I may succeed in getting Patsy Touhey to make a few records. If I do you can have them at cost. Delaney now a rich man won't do anything for anyone."⁵²

This final line implies that Delaney may have had the same Edison cylinder setup as Touhey. O'Neill verifies this in two of his 1912 letters, in which he mentions that "yesterday [March 8, 1912] Bernard Delaney the smoothest and most rhythmic piper 'twas ever my lot to hear left Chicago to reside permanently at Ocean Springs on the Gulf of Mexico, 900 miles away."⁵³ In a letter later that year he bitterly mentions that Delaney "sold his machine and records to a stranger although planting himself and his wife on my hospitality for a few days before his departure."⁵⁴

O'Neill also mentions the means by which these early recordings made their way to Ireland. In his March 9, 1912, letter to Halpin, he writes, "Your consignment of Touhey tunes were shipped just a week ago via United States Express Prepaid. Patsy announced the names himself so you have a record of his voice as well. They were made in Sergt. Early's residence and now they are yours and I wish you luck with them."⁵⁵

The dates of the above correspondences suggest a number of things about O'Neill's use of technology and his distribution of recordings. O'Neill had vowed to remove music from his household after the death of the last of his five sons. As he mentioned in a 1912 letter, "I buried my last son in 1904 of spinal meningitis. . . . Since his death I have not sounded a note of music in my own house, out of respect to his mother's feelings. . . . The Edison cylinder phonograph which I purchased to hear Touhey's tunes on is at a friend's house."⁵⁶ From the above

correspondence, we can infer that after 1904, O'Neill may either have continued his recording of Irish music on his Edison cylinder recorder at Early's house or, more probably, continued to solicit recordings by mail from Touhey and post them to Ireland along with other previously recorded cylinders from his collection housed at Early's residence. In either case O'Neill's cylinders are the first documented recordings of Irish music to be sent across the Atlantic to Ireland, and they were sent, at least in part, by "United States Express Prepaid."

One of the most interesting bits of information gleaned from the O'Neill/Halpin letters of 1911 and 1912 is an offhand mention of recordings of a piper named Mr. Andrews being sent to O'Neill in Chicago from Halpin in county Clare, Ireland, on 78-rpm record. In his March 9, 1912, letter, O'Neill mentions, "Yours came to hand less than two weeks ago. I could not find a Victor or Columbia phonograph among my friends, they all had the Edison cylinder machine, so I was obliged to go to Lyon and Healy music house to test them this very day!"⁵⁷ The music store of George W. Lyon and Patrick J. Healy—the publishers of O'Neill's books—was located at the corner of State and Monroe streets in downtown Chicago and was known for sheet music, though by 1912 the store was also selling 78-rpm phonograph machines.⁵⁸ O'Neill had received a package from Ireland with a recording in a format he couldn't play at home. The Irish musician had proven the Chicago musician behind the technologic times.

By 1907, as can be seen by O'Neill's letter, early recordings of Irish music certainly were sent between Ireland and America by post. From O'Neill's letters to Halpin we know that between 1907 and 1911, Francis O'Neill sent to Reverend Henebry at least a dozen recordings of Patsy Touhey, a dozen recordings of the fiddler John McFadden, and an unknown number of recordings of Bernard Delaney. We also know that by 1912, an unknown number of Touhey cylinders were sent to Halpin in Clare.

These are the first documents with descriptions of recordings migrating to Ireland, and it is very telling that within one of these accounts there is already a description of a reverse migration—from Ireland to America. As these letters only document one side of the correspondence between O'Neill and just one of his colleagues, we can assume that the more than two dozen recordings mentioned are only a portion of those sent to Ireland by O'Neill. As O'Neill mentions having sent the cylinders by "United States Express Prepaid," we can also assume that most, if not all, of his packages were sent in this way.

Nicholas Carolan, director of the Irish Traditional Music Archives (*Taisce Cheol Dúchais Éireann*) in Dublin, suggests that, even with misgivings about the postal systems on either side of the Atlantic, many Irish Americans sent recordings by post or other forms of parcel delivery.⁵⁹ It seems that this was one of the only means by which records were brought to Ireland in the early years of recording, as the cost of purchasing records in Ireland was too dear for most people. John Vesey, in an interview with Rich Nevins, discussed the prohibitive cost of

following his father's advice to copy the styles of the early Irish American records: "Of course, my dad hadn't heard Coleman or Paddy Killoran. Now, the reason why . . . I don't believe they could afford to buy the recordings over there, back in those days. It was very hard to buy the recordings; [you had] to pay two shillings or whatever it was, when I was about 13, 14, 15 years old."⁶⁰

Philadelphia musician Eddie Cahill, in an interview with Mick Moloney in 1978, mentioned his experience with records in the early days, mainly posted from America:

MM: Were there many gramophones around home?

EC: Oh there were.

MM: Was it hard to get the records?

EC: No. Most of the records were sent from this country here—you knew, sent home. Somebody would get them.

MM: They just sent them as presents home?

EC: As presents. Like the *poitin* [a traditional Irish alcoholic beverage].⁶¹

Early Irish American records were also brought back from Ireland both as gifts by Americans returning for visits and by "returned Yanks"—Irish Americans who had returned to Ireland to find their roots or to settle in their homeland for their retirement.

Tommy Gilmartin, in a 1987 interview by Harry Bradshaw, remembers the way in which records returned to his community when he was growing up, and the excitement surrounding the arrival of new records:

Well, they used to come by emigrants coming home on holidays, mostly, because they'd imagine if they posted them they'd be broken, which they would at the time, and it was all returned Americans coming home to see their own native place again that brought both the gramophones and the records. And there was as much lookout for an emigrant returning home that time as there would be for—I don't know what now, to see an aeroplane going into orbit or something off the ground. Because there was an awful lookout for John McKenna's records, an awful lookout.⁶²

Nicholas Carolan has mentioned that despite the assumptions that exorbitant costs would prohibit the shipping of large or heavy objects such as a gramophone or record collections, in fact, it was quite feasible:

Well, [early recordings] were physically brought back by visitors, people who visited, and they were sent back in the post . . . or parcel delivery. Sometimes retirees, when they came back from the States after maybe 20 or 30 years, brought those things they most valued, you know—furniture, clothes, and some of them included the phonograph, which was quite portable, you know. The weight of the material wasn't as significant if you

were transporting by shipping rather than by air. So, the 20s and 30s, it wouldn't have been a major problem and even the odd person brought back an American car!⁶³

This idea of "returning Yanks" bringing with them records and phonographs was so present in the popular consciousness that it was even promoted by early radio advertisements in America. Johnny O'Leary, who had made a name for himself on the dance band stages of New York and Boston as the lead player of O'Leary's Irish Minstrels, had recorded a number of 78-rpm records and had become a fixture in the Irish American music scene. In the 1940s he had an Irish music radio show on Boston's WEEI on which he brought into the studio musicians to play with him live on air. In between sets he would promote local dances, and eventually he began selling advertisements. Ellen O Byrne DeWitt, who was responsible for the Columbia recording of Herborn and Wheeler mentioned above, in typical entrepreneurial fashion had started a travel company—DeWitt Travel. Her son, Justus O'Byrne DeWitt, became one of the first and most reliable advertisers on O'Leary's radio show. His spots combined the family's two businesses—advertising travel to Ireland and encouraging those who went to bring with them a phonograph and records of Irish music.⁶⁴ This trend was also seen in Chicago, with the Bowen Travel Agency contracting Columbia Records to make recordings of Patrick Doran (flute) and Joe Owens (fiddle), presumably with intent to sell records to those returning to Ireland through their agency.⁶⁵

Records were also purchasable in Ireland, but their availability seems to have been severely limited until a few years after the 1921 creation of the Irish Free State. London-based musician and scholar Reg Hall has mentioned that in his long life of searching for early and rare recordings of Irish music, he has "never seen an American pressing in Ireland or Britain, apart from some Kimmel Emersons I bought in Dublin (new from stock) in 1971. They'd been on the shelf since the early 1920s! I reckon they were imported from the States by that shop keeper in the gramophone shop off Grafton Street."⁶⁶ Hall mentions that in his experience, Irish American records were available in Ireland in the early years, but mostly through mail order catalogs issued by London-based record companies:

Irish records were issued in the British catalogues and were thus available all over the United Kingdom (Ireland being then part of the UK), and continued to be sold in the Free State after Independence. There were some early Kimmels on cylinder, but from the early 1920s there were recordings by Coleman, Morrison, Peter Conlon, Tom Ennis, O'Leary's Irish Minstrels, Four Provinces, Dan Sullivan, The Flanagan Brothers, Frank Quinn and others . . . mostly from American Columbia issued on Regal, and there were a few Vocalions issued on Beltona, and some other odd ones. ⁶⁷

As mentioned above, through a complex set of mergers, EMI's Regal imprint began reissuing recordings in 1931 from the American Columbia Records library. Irish records from the Regal imprint must have been some of the first to be marketed in Ireland. In 1932, with EMI's merger of the Regal label with the Zonophone label, new Regal Zonophone records were issued and a new era of Irish American reissues began. Nicholas Carolan of the Irish Traditional Music Archive in Dublin agrees: "Well, in the 20s and in particular the 30s . . . I think that American recordings heard in Ireland were heard on reissues. It was entirely through London until the second half of the 1930s in Ireland. There was no industry here [in Ireland] before then, it was merely a regional distribution center."⁶⁸

Fiddler John Vesey, in an interview with Mick Moloney in 1977, mentioned that he learned a sizable portion of his early repertoire from these reissues of early Irish American 78-rpm records, which he purchased on business trips to Tubercurry as a child, beginning in 1936:

I used to go to Tubercurry, Co. Sligo; my father used to sell turf there. And I would be allowed to buy a record every day I'd go down to load . . . two loads of turf I'd bring to Tubercurry. He would tell me that I was allowed to buy a record, so I would buy a record in Tubercurry and bring it home. Then the point was there; we had to have a wind-up gramophone. That's all we had, was a wind-up. My father paid four or five pounds for it at that time and bought it for me so I could learn from the gramophone. Along with Gorman's teaching, I bought Coleman's records, I bought Killoran's records, James Morrison, I bought one of two of his records, and I bought Paddy Sweeney's recordings. He had one or two at that time; all he made was one or two.⁶⁹

Finally, with Decca's 1929 incorporation of an American Irish recording matrix, its 1932 purchase of Brunswick Records, and its 1938 incorporation of an Irish subsidiary in Dublin, Decca records made the final push into the Irish popular consciousness. With its massive library of American Irish recordings and its global reach, Decca became the main resource in Ireland for traditional Irish records. In the early 1930s virtually all of the records came through London as reissues of American records from the 1920s and 1930s. After 1938 Decca opened a subsidiary in Dublin, and the reissues began to be produced within Ireland.

Reg Hall has noted that the mid-1930s saw the waning of the availability of the smaller labels and the start of the Decca empire in Ireland:

Decca was a British company dating from about 1934, so it's not surprising that discs made by their American subsidiary were issued over here. By 1938, British issues stopped being retailed in the Free State, and Irish

Decca re-issued them. They were by Coleman, Killoran, Gillespie, Sweeney, Pat Roche, McKenna, the McNulty Family, Dan Sullivan, Joe Maguire, etc., and a few singers. Columbians from the Depression years (eg. McGettigan, Morrison & Quinn) sold poorly in America; some were issued on (British) Regal-Zonophone but were not re-issued after 1938 in the Free State.⁷⁰

With tastes changing in America and Ireland, and with the effects of the American Depression on international record sales and American recording companies, the late 1930s saw a major decline in traditional Irish instrumental recording, and with the advent of radio in Ireland, a substantial drop in Irish record sales.

As put forth in many publications on Irish music, these early records had a major impact on Irish traditional music. Musicians in Ireland were profoundly influenced by the recordings issuing from the American Irish. The artists with the greatest impact—Coleman, Killoran, Morrison, McKenna, Ennis, and Touhey—may have had such influence precisely because they were the first to record and their records were among the first to arrive in Ireland.⁷¹ This is not to say that their music was not of top quality. As Harry Bradshaw has written about the records made by Michael Coleman,

Coleman's records are now regarded as classics of their kind and are among the finest examples of recorded folk music in the early twentieth Century. They were sent back to Ireland, where they gave inspiration to players; his style and repertoire were learnt and reproduced credibly by better players. Listened to all over the country, his articulation, phrasing, bowing and dynamics became a "standard" style. Through his prowess he exercised direction on repertoire too; the effects of this can be heard today in that some of his particular combinations in tune sets are still being played. Indeed, his . . . medium of the 78 rpm record itself has determined the duration of sets of tunes to this day: players still stick to the three-tune "track" which would fill one "side" on a standard 78.⁷²

The records were also prevalent in Ireland, even in the rural areas:

I was told by one musician who would have been 80+ now that Ennis Morrison and Muller's *Saddle the Pony / Black Rogue* and *Liverpool Hornpipe* on Regal from American Columbia was in every cottage around his home in Co. Offaly, which is, of course, a gross exaggeration as few people had gramophones. However, it was issued here anonymously as "Irish Pipes, Violin & Piano," though later pressings gave the artists' names.⁷³

Seamus Connolly, renowned fiddle player and Sullivan Artist in Residence at Boston College, mentioned in an interview with Mick Moloney in 2004 that he

first heard the Irish American fiddle players who had recorded on the early 78s from his father, a bargeman on the river Shannon. He recalled the impact those recordings had on his playing:

My father, he was a great collector of the old 78 records. We still have a lot of them back in Killaloe. The first time, I suppose, that I heard the music, would be my father playing the old 78 records, and he told me about Leo Rowsome and some of the great musicians up and down the Shannon. He talked a lot about Michael Coleman because he had heard records of Coleman on his visits to different houses. So he brought me home a recording of Coleman. I was probably about ten years old when I heard that [1954], and I actually cried when I heard Coleman playing. I thought it was . . . to me, it didn't sound like a fiddle, or a violin as I thought a violin should sound. It had that lonesome sound to it.⁷⁴

Mick Moloney, in a piece on Irish music recordings in America, has mentioned the tangible results of these recordings in the playing of diasporic musicians in Chicago: “The influence of the recordings in America can be illustrated by an afternoon of music I recorded in Chicago in 1977, by fiddler Johnny McGreevy and uilleann piper Joe Shannon. At the end of the session I asked both men where they learned the tunes they had been playing. No fewer than 75 percent of the tunes, it turned out, had been learned from 78-rpm recordings. In addition, their playing style was very closely modeled on that of the musicians whose recordings they had listened to.”⁷⁵ So Irish American recordings indeed made their way back to Ireland and had a profound impact, echoes of which can still be heard today in both Ireland and the diaspora.

A number of social movements converged in a way that made the success and subsequent impact of early Irish American recordings almost inevitable. The anticolonial movement in Ireland, its resulting quest for authenticity, and the golden age of Irish music in America coincided perfectly with the arrival of the recording age. Prior to this musical exchanges by Capt. Francis O’Neill with his colleagues in Ireland had established a migratory route for recordings between America and Ireland in the early 1900s, relying almost exclusively on individual agency for transportation.

Recordings of Irish Americans did not just “make their way” to Ireland. The mythic cross-Atlantic trade route can be viewed in defined periods—each of which were influenced by advances in technology, social movements, and changes within the corporate structures of the major recording companies. Early musical migrations (roughly 1895–1926) involved individual agency: American enthusiasts posting cylinders or records to friends and family in Ireland and visitors to America returning with records and phonograph players. During this time some records were also available, in a limited capacity, through recording

companies in London. The mid-1920s saw an increase in the availability of records being produced in the United Kingdom (though creation of the Irish Free State restricted importation of U.K. records) and a resurgence in diasporic nationalism that spurred more people to send or bring records of Irish music to Ireland. In the early 1930s, with the mergers of a number of American subsidiaries of U.K. record labels, reissues of these early Irish American records became available from U.K. sources. By the time of the creation of Irish Decca in 1938, Irish reissues of American records were readily available. These reissues, along with those by Regal and Regal Zonophone, remained the most available and influential recordings in Irish music until the global sales slump surrounding the American Depression and subsequent dominance of radio as popular musical medium.

The commonly repeated phrase “These early 78-rpm records made their way to Ireland and had a profound effect upon the tradition” simplifies a very detailed and intricate musical exchange route during a formative time in Irish traditional music, the Irish Free State, and the global diaspora. These early systems of commercial and subcommercial musical exchange and the dialogues surrounding these exchanges seem to be the start of the system we still see in operation today in Irish and other folk musics. That is, an underground network of musicians and enthusiasts trading audio recordings through lines of friendship and familial ties, usually surrounding patterns of regional musical interest or common instrument.

This type of an underground music-sharing system would strike most as a modern phenomenon, yet the earliest manifestation of this system in Irish traditional music appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century. Even then it functioned as a means by which musicians could learn repertoire and through which musicians both at the geographic core of the tradition and in the diaspora were able to negotiate ideas of authenticity and traditionality. Younger generations of traditional musicians still freely circulate copies of these early recordings, and recent decades have seen the incorporation of a wide variety of recording technologies to capture and carry music back and forth across the Atlantic. The dialogue surrounding ideas of authenticity in Irish traditional music is much the same today as it was in the first decades of the anticolonialist movement in Ireland, and enthusiasts still rely upon these cross-Atlantic lines of dialogue in their search for the traditional and authentic in Irish music.

NOTES

I would like to thank Dr. Mick Moloney for his lifelong dedication to Irish music, especially Irish music in America. After arriving in America, Moloney took it upon himself to interview the oldest generations of Irish musicians, catching many of them years after their recording and performing careers had ended. His relentless effort to track down and record oral histories and his willingness to help interested scholars and students have allowed countless researchers access to an era that has otherwise vanished.

Much of this study is based on the information in his personal recordings or on work that has relied upon his interviews. In much the same way, Harry Bradshaw has steadily worked a second career tying up musical loose ends in Ireland. Irish music and the study of it are all the better for the efforts of these two gentlemen.

1. Reg Hall, correspondence with the author, December 20, 2006.
2. Kenny Mathieson, ed., *Celtic Music* (London: Outline Press, 2001), 21.
3. Harry Bradshaw and Jackie Small, "Leitrim's Master of the Concert Flute," *Musical Traditions Magazine* 7 (1987); available online at <http://www.iol.ie/~jfflynn/kenna.htm> (accessed November 30, 2009).
4. Harry Bradshaw, "Michael Coleman," in *The Companion to Traditional Irish Music*, ed. Fintan Vallely (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1999), 75.
5. Bradshaw and Small, "Leitrim's Master of the Concert Flute."
6. Pekka Gronow, "The Record Industry: The Growth of a Mass Medium," *Popular Music* 3 (1983): 53–75, 54–55.
7. Victor Greene, *A Passion for Polka: Old-Time Ethnic Music in America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 73.
8. *Ibid.*, 71.
9. Méabh Ní Fuartháin, "O'Byrne DeWitt and Copley Records: A Window on Irish Music Recording in the U.S.A., 1900 to 1965" (master's thesis, University College Cork, National University of Ireland, 1993), 56; Harry Bradshaw, personal communication with the author, September 2, 2007.
10. Mick Moloney, "Irish Music in America: Continuity and Change" (Ph.D. diss., University of Indiana, 1992), 522.
11. Justus O'Byrne DeWitt, taped interview with Mick Moloney, April 4, 1977, Dedham, Mass., Mick Moloney Archive of Irish-American Music and Popular Culture, Archives of Irish America, Bobst Library, New York University, New York (hereafter cited as MMIAM). See also Ní Fuartháin, "O'Byrne DeWitt and Copley Records," 57–58; and Greene, *Passion for Polka*.
12. Ní Fuartháin, "O'Byrne DeWitt and Copley Records," 58; Bradshaw personal communication.
13. Richard Spottswood and Philippe Varlet, liner notes to album *From Galway to Dublin: Early Recordings of Traditional Irish Music*, Rounder Records 1087, 1993.
14. *Talking Machine World* 22 (1926): 78, courtesy of the Library of Congress Archives American Memory Collection, Washington, D.C.
15. *Ibid.*, 96.
16. The Gaelic League had worked very hard to canonize certain dance forms as Irish—that is, without British influence—and the Catholic priesthood were decrying the informal dances as bastions of drinking, fornication, and other such lascivious behavior. See Terry Moylan's wonderful treatment of social dancing in Ireland, *Irish Dances* (Dublin: Na Píobairí Uilleann, 1985); and Brendan Breathnach, *Dancing in Ireland* (Miltown Malbay, Ireland: Dal gCais Publications with the Folklore and Folk Music Society of Clare, 1983).
17. Hollis Payer, "Irish Fiddler James Kelly: A Matter of Tradition," *Fiddler Magazine* (Winter 1997/1998).

18. See Breathnach, *Dancing in Ireland*; and Moylan, *Irish Dances*.

19. Mary P. Corcoran, "Emigrants, *Eirepreneurs*, and Opportunists: A Social Profile of Recent Irish Immigration in New York City," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald Bayor and Timothy Meagher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 484.

20. Varlet personal communication.

21. Ní Fuartháin, "O'Byrne DeWitt and Copley Records," 56.

22. Pat Mitchell and Jackie Small, *The Piping of Patsy Touhey* (Dublin: Na Píobairí Uilleann, 1986), 10.

23. Johanne Trew, "Treasures from the Attic: Viva Voce Records," *Journal of American Folklore*, 113, no. 449 (Summer 2000): 305–14, 305.

24. *Ibid.*, 306.

25. Gronow, "Record Industry," 59. The first figure is quoted by Gronow from the article by Tim Brooks, "Review of Murrells' *The Book of Golden Discs*," *Antique Phonograph Monthly* 5, no. 2 (1977): 8–13.

26. Gronow, "Record Industry," 59.

27. Varlet personal communication.

28. Moloney, "Irish Music in America," 527.

29. Varlet personal communication.

30. Please refer to the undisputed masters of American and ethnic record labels, Pekka Gronow, Richard Spottswood, and Philippe Varlet.

31. Louis Quinn, taped interview with Mick Moloney, n.d., MMIAM.

32. Susan Gedutis, *See You at the Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 20.

33. Kenneth S. Goldstein, "The Impact of Recording Technology on the British Folk-song Revival," in *Folk Music and Modern Sound*, ed. William Ferris and Mary L. Hart (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982), 3–14.

34. Payer, "Irish Fiddler James Kelly."

35. Bradshaw and Small, "Leitrim's Master of the Concert Flute."

36. Payer, "Irish Fiddler James Kelly."

37. Tony Engle and Reg Hall, liner notes to the album *James Morrison and Tom Ennis* (London: Topic Records, no. 127390, 1980). Thank you to Philippe Varlet for the original label information (Columbia Records, 1923).

38. Nicholas Carolan, *A Harvest Saved: Francis O'Neill and Irish Music in Chicago* (Cork, Ireland: Ossian Publications, 1997). Carolan's wonderful work on O'Neill is (as always) meticulous and thorough, and it is the default resource for information on O'Neill.

39. *Ibid.*, 34.

40. *Ibid.*, 24.

41. Mitchell and Small, *Piping of Patsy Touhey*, 1.

42. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

43. *Ibid.*, 9.

44. *Ibid.* O'Neill's letter was published in *An Píobaire* 16/17 (1974): 4. James C. McAuliffe was the American-born replacement piper and recorded a few wax cylinders for Edison to lackluster reviews.

45. Mitchell and Small, *Piping of Patsy Touhey*, 9.

46. Roughly three dozen O'Neill cylinders were donated to the Ward Archives of Irish Music in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the close of 2006. Of these, twenty-three were solo or ensemble wax-cylinder recordings of Patsy Touhey, though it is not known if they were recorded by Touhey or O'Neill. Barry Stapleton, personal communication with the author, January 11, 2007. Many of these can be heard on their Web site, and on the Web site of the Irish Traditional Music Archives (www.itma.ie).

47. Minutes from the record book of the first Dublin Pipers' Club, from a meeting dated Friday, May 14, 1901. This manuscript is held at the Allen Library, Christian Brothers, Edmund Rice Centre, Dublin, and is electronically available through the Archive of Na Piobairí Uilleann, Dublin.

48. Mitchell and Small, *Piping of Patsy Touhey*, 10, republished in *An Piobaire* 16/17 (1974): 5–6. It should be noted that the name of the recipient of the letter is taken from Mitchell and Small (1986), as it is not noted in *An Piobaire*. The letter is not dated in either publication, but it was probably written in late 1911 or early 1912.

49. *An Piobaire* 18 (1974): 5.

50. *An Piobaire* 16/17 (1974): 3.

51. *An Piobaire* 16/17 (1974): 3.

52. *An Piobaire* 16/17 (1974): 3.

53. *An Piobaire* 18 (1974): 4.

54. *An Piobaire* 20/21 (1975): 2.

55. *An Piobaire* 18 (1974): 4.

56. *An Piobaire* 20/21 (1975): 2.

57. *An Piobaire* 18 (1974): 4.

58. Evan M. Klock, "Music Merchandising Moves into a House of Many Mansions," *Notes*, 1, no.2 (March 1944): 16–26, 18–19.

59. Nicholas Carolan, recorded interview with the author by phone, January 4, 2007.

60. John Vesey, interviewed by Rich Nevins, n.d., MMIAM.

61. Eddie Cahill, recorded interview by Mick Moloney, January 1, 1978, MMIAM.

62. Bradshaw and Small, "Leitrim's Master of the Concert Flute."

63. Carolan interview.

64. Ní Fuartháin, "O'Byrne DeWitt and Copley Records," 56.

65. Varlet personal communication.

66. Hall correspondence.

67. Ibid.

68. Carolan interview.

69. John Vesey, interviewed by Mick Moloney, January 8, 1977, MMIAM.

70. Hall correspondence.

71. Many would argue that the major recording figures were predominantly from Sligo and that as a result, a Sligo fiddling style became dominant in Ireland and America. Even today in New York City, most native New York fiddle players still carry aspects of a Sligo style introduced in these early recordings.

72. Bradshaw, "Michael Coleman," 75.

73. Hall correspondence.

74. Seamus Connelly, recorded interview by Mick Moloney, December 7, 2004, MMIAM.

75. Mick Moloney, "Irish Ethnic Recordings and the Irish-American Imagination," in *Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage* (Washington, D.C.: American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1982), 92.

The “Idea of America” in the New Irish State, 1922–1960

Bernadette Whelan

Much has been written about the extent, nature, and significance of the links and ties that bind Ireland and the United States together, particularly in the period 1856 to 1914.¹ Kevin Kenny recently noted that the study of Irish America in the twentieth century is still in its infancy.² Much of the work concentrates on the emigration from Ireland and on the political dimensions of the relationship, particularly within the context of the revolutionary period, 1916 to 1923, although Kenny’s collection of essays, *New Directions in Irish-American History*, and *The American Irish: A History*, which devotes two chapters to the twentieth century, goes some way to redressing this gap.³ Nevertheless it is surprising that after more than two hundred years of emigration from Ireland to North America, there are few other monographs dedicated to other aspects of the twentieth-century relationship. But it is clear from Miller, Bolling, and Neville’s work that by 1914, the “idea of America” was an established part of the Irish emigrant mentality. By then America was generally perceived as the “land of gold” more than the “land of sweat and snakes”—and the myth of America as an “earthly paradise” was set.⁴ Such diametrically opposed images of America were not specific to Ireland, as other European emigrant societies constructed similar views of the New World.⁵ Furthermore, this generic view of America saw it as a country of political freedom, a place where land could be obtained, and a country of urban and industrial growth. Hoerder suggests that the extent to which these features took hold in European emigrant societies depended upon conditions in those countries and the power of the channels of communication through which information about America was conveyed back.⁶

This chapter reflects on the following questions: How was “America” perceived and understood by some Irish men and women who did not leave Ireland and retained a transatlantic consciousness in the twentieth century? How did it

manifest itself in the popular consciousness? And what were the sources of that popular image? It seeks to identify how America was perceived, imagined, and understood at least by a cross-section of people living in rural and urban settings in the period, 1922 to 1960.⁷ The use of the term "America" as opposed to the "United States" in this work is deliberate. Because people from European societies, at least, went to the myth-shrouded America, their contact was with America, and people returned from America, not the political entity called the United States of America.⁸

By 1922 a number of sources informed the popular image and understanding of America. The first and perhaps most significant one was emigration. When the new Irish Free State was established in 1922, emigration generally was an accepted part of Irish life. By 1890 one in four people born in Ireland lived in the United States and almost every household had been affected by the migration to the United States either directly through family or indirectly by friends' departures from village, town, or city. The counties that recorded the highest rate of outward movement, particularly to the United States, between 1876 and 1914 were those in Connacht and the west, but people in all counties were affected to some degree.⁹

Johanna, born in 1907 in Thurles, county Tipperary, felt that she did not have many American connections but then recalled an uncle and neighbors who had gone to America prior to her birth.¹⁰ Whereas Tomás, born in Limerick city in 1919, knew "a lot of people" who had gone there by the time he was born. Of ten members of his wife's family, three went to America before the early 1920s.¹¹ These people were born into a society where emigration from home, specifically to the United States, was not only embedded but also remained a reality for them despite changes in conditions in both countries.

The establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 might have been expected to signal the end of emigration, which Sinn Fein leaders denounced, to use J. J. Lee's words, as the "single most serious obstacle to the prospects of social regeneration in Ireland." But as table 1 indicates, the "curse of emigration" continued largely because the leaders of the new state had few economic solutions to the difficulties.¹² By the mid-1920s emigration rates from Ireland to the United States had almost returned to the immediate prewar levels, and if any one year represented the end of the post–Great Famine wave it was 1931.

Table 1. Immigrants admitted into the United States from Ireland, 1920–1960

FROM THE 32 COUNTIES

1921–30 (total)	220,591
1930	23,445

Table 1 (*continued*)

FROM THE IRISH FREE STATE	
1931–40 (total)	13,167
1931	801
1935	314
1941–45 (total)	1,059
1942	42
1946–50 (total)	26,444
1950	5,842
1951–60 (total)	75–90,000

Sources: *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1937* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1938), tables 98, 99; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1951* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1951), table 107; Lee, “Emigration, 1922–1998,” in *The Encyclopaedia of the Irish in America*, ed. Michael Glazier (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 264–65.

The recovery in emigration levels to the in the period after 1918 was noticeable in the testimony. Tomás described the events surrounding Tom’s departure from Limerick city in 1928: “He lived in Blackboy Heights . . . just above Mulgrave Street in Limerick and I chanced to be up there . . . and he was going from door to door bidding goodbye to people shaking hands and hugging each other.”¹³ The reasons for this emigrant’s departure are unknown, but increased and rapid unemployment after 1920 in Ireland contributed to many departures at this time.¹⁴ Eilís’s mother died in April 1925, and her father had six children to care for at their home in Ennis, county Clare. He was a casual laborer with no regular income, so he wrote to his late wife’s sister in New Haven, Connecticut, to ask if she would “take” his eldest daughter for whom there was no chance of employment locally. The girl, aged fifteen years, left home in November 1925 and, after three years working as a housekeeper for a Catholic priest, sent back the passage money for her eldest brother, aged seventeen years, who then departed and worked in the railway system. A third sibling was assisted in leaving a few years later.¹⁵ In this case chain migration or the preexisting family network assisted the departures, as was the case with Maireád’s two aunts, who left from Crusheen, county Clare, for New York in the early 1920s to go to cousins already there. The two girls immediately found work in house cleaning.¹⁶ Bridget Dirrane from Inishmore in the Aran Islands came to Boston in 1927 because “Boston is the place where so many Inishmore people before me had gone and where so many of my relatives and friends lived.”¹⁷

Even for those born into a farm-owning family, impartible inheritance embedded after the 1845–49 famine meant that emigration remained a reality for sons of farmers. Jim, born in 1928 in Mullinahone, south Tipperary, recalled two

uncles who left for the United States because there was not enough land to be shared by three sons. As youngest sons of a farmer, they had little choice but to leave. One found work in low-paid jobs but went to night school and was employed eventually by the U.S. Post Office.¹⁸

In the early 1920s emigration also seems to have offered asylum for political refugees, as was the case so often in the nineteenth century. During the Irish Civil War (1922–23), approximately ten thousand antitreaty Irish Republican Army (IRA) fighters were imprisoned, and with the victory of their opponents, many believed they had little chance of employment in the new Irish Free State. Tomás recalled that “those on the losing side, I think most of them cleared out because they wouldn’t get any state jobs. . . . It was mostly to America they went.”¹⁹ It is unclear how many emigrated, but Ernest W. Pentz, a fieldworker for the New Jersey Ethnic Survey conducted between 1939 and 1941, found it difficult to get interviews from a “great number of Irish” who were “very suspicious of the purpose of the interview.” Among those who came into that category was one unnamed republican who worked on the home farm until 1927 and then crossed to Canada, waited six months, and came to the United States. Not only was he unable to find any other work in the new Irish Free State, but he was still waiting for a pension. Jeremiah Murphy, the IRA fighter, noted in his memoir “the bitterness that the fighting and the atrocities had produced was quite obvious. There was a lot of talk about emigration.” Although he found work as a taxi driver in Killarney, county Kerry, by 1925, he yearned for the “gaiety of the past” and left for the United States.²⁰ For those who left either voluntarily or involuntarily, America still offered refuge. In this case America was the land of freedom, unlike Free State Ireland.

Evidence offered to the 1926 Coimisiún na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht Commission, a commission of inquiry into Irish-speaking areas), investigating the decline in Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht parts of counties Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Galway, Mayo, and Donegal, was peppered with references to departures for America and its attractions. One witness, Seán O Muirthile, reported:

The eyes of the youth of the Gaeltacht are on America for three reasons:

1. the fact that they are encouraged to emigrate to the States by those who have gone there ahead of them, and who, in many cases, send prepaid passages
2. the lack of profitable employment
3. the gloom and lack of amusement in the Gaeltacht.

In addition to the above, other witnesses identified, first, that “a better education” and “better spirit” was offered in America than in Ireland; second, for those living in Connemara, when they got to America “they are amongst their own people, their own relatives . . . [and] if they came to Dublin they would know

nobody”; and finally, that “even if they have to work hard, they will be independent anyway.”²¹

Thus in the period 1922 to 1931, at least for these emigrants, their families, and friends, whether prompted to leave by desire, duty, or economic or political necessity, the myth of “America” persisted irrespective of the reality. This perception of the United States as a land of opportunity is heavily influenced by the reasons for departure and appears not to have been greatly altered in the subsequent decades to 1960. Even though 1931 marks the end of the postfamine movement to the United States because of the slump in the American economy arising from the Wall Street crash in 1929, the outward flow of Irish people does not cease completely.²²

From the mid-1930s onward, the numbers leaving expanded again, but it was Britain with its revived economy and, during World War II, its ease of access and war economy, which drew most Irish emigrants. After 1945, when the migration to America resumed, as indicated in table 1, most who left still sought work. Tony recalled that “at that time east Galway was no different to the rest of Ireland, there was precious little employment in the country, and both Britain and America provided that . . . everybody that went got work.”²³ Not only was employment to be found but so also was an improved standard of living, which will be discussed further later on. Noírín from Passage West in county Cork, recalled, “My brother-in-law went [to the United States] around I’d say 1955 or ’6, and he’s still out there, even though they often thought about coming back home, but I think they find life is too good out there now for them and if they came home they mightn’t settle with our weather and whatever and they enjoy themselves and brought up a family out there.”²⁴ Furthermore, throughout the period under review, departures were still marked by the “American wake,” even though Schrier suggested that it was only a vivid memory among “old men and old women” in rural Ireland.²⁵ This rite of passage, which still marked the emigrant’s departure, indicated, in Neville’s words, an “acute awareness of thresholds being crossed and new lives being embarked upon.”²⁶ For most, leaving for America differed little from dying, thus relatives, neighbors, and friends gathered the night before departure to spend a night drinking, singing, dancing, and storytelling. Jeremiah Murphy described his own American wake in 1925 in Ballyvourney in county Kerry.²⁷ Tomás was on the platform of Limerick’s Con Colbert railway station and seems to have caught the end of a “wake” some time in the 1930s:

There was a train taking off for Cork, for Cobh, because that time there was no aeroplanes and they were going down to Cobh to get a liner to take them to New York, and they were from the country, they weren’t city people and they had a big following who came to see them off from county Clare and county Limerick. . . . They certainly were going to make an occasion of it. . . . They had a session there, a half-hour, [it] started before

the train was due to take off and they had “melogians” and accordions and they had a dance session and it was some yahooing I can tell you. . . . It was sad. . . . They were leaving families and they didn’t know would they ever see them again.²⁸

The arrival of the age of air travel after World War II did not signal the end of the American wake. Matthew Mangan and William Byrne, both from Edenderry, county Offaly, noted in 1955 that the American wake was still a practice in the locality. If the intending emigrant was a member of the Gaelic Athletic Association, he would be presented with a sum of money at an event.²⁹ A few years later Maireád from Clarecastle, county Clare, was at

the greatest American wake . . . in 1958 down in Shannon. . . . And it started at about four o’clock in the evening and we were told the flight was going at eight, and the Tulla Ceílí Band was there. . . . There must have been about fifty people down there. . . . It was absolutely fantastic. They were calling the flight from about eight o’clock in the evening, “The last call for the flight to New York.” I’d say it went on till about one o’clock in the morning. And everybody was below, and the tears were unbelievable. . . . It was like a death because they didn’t expect to come back, you see.³⁰

Undoubtedly the form of the American wake adapted to changing circumstances, becoming less formalized. By the late 1950s friends and family simply “called at the home of the intending emigrant or emigrants and wished them god-speed.”³¹ But the note of sadness remained unchanged, and the event still marked an awareness of new lives being embarked on.

Until 1960, at least, emigration remained an integral part of people’s lives and a choice for, if not an obligation on, young people. The reasons for going in particular to America remained unchanged, as did the attendant rituals. In other words the lure of America remained strong for many migrants, which perpetuated the idea of America as a land of opportunity among their family and friends at least until they heard otherwise.

Indeed those who stayed behind soon experienced the indirect consequences of the departure, which Schrier described as the “American return tide.” The letters, money, and packages continued to flow in the twentieth century and shaped the perception of America. Between 1850 and 1900 more than \$250 million in individual remittances was sent back to Ireland. Approximately 40 percent of this was in the form of prepaid passage tickets and financed over three-quarters of the emigration from Ireland. The remaining 60 percent paid for rent, shopkeepers’ bills, and repairs on farmhouses as well as bought animals and, sometimes, financed education.³² By 1922 this pattern was well established, and the return tide further explained the persistence of the positive image into the period after 1922.³³

Although additional research is needed on the twentieth-century context, in 1925 Rev. S. J. Walsh, Catholic parish priest for the Aran Islands in county Donegal, believed that the “government would have had to be supporting the Aran islands for the past three years were it not for America.” In 1947 emigrant remittances and legacies comprised \$13.2 million, equaling almost half of Ireland’s dollar earnings.³⁴ Not surprisingly, the arrival of dollars into a home was welcomed and not forgotten by recipients. It was noted also when relatives failed to send any dollars home. Throughout the period Eilís’s sisters sent dollars, which were used at Christmas time to buy the turkey and extra coal for the fire, even though she recognized that it “wasn’t easy for them to help us but they did help a lot.” Sometimes Eilís’s father could not afford to pay the grocery bill in the local shop, and the shopkeeper refused to give him any more credit. On one occasion her “father was so desperate . . . he told the shopkeeper to send the bill to one of my sisters in the States whose address he gave. My sister paid the bill and from then onwards, she paid our monthly grocery bill so that we could eat. That went on for some time.”³⁵

These monies could be used also to buy land and extend family holdings. Arensberg and Kimball, writing about the 1930s in county Clare, noted the case of a family in which the mother wrote to children in America to request money to buy additional land from the Land Commission. The latter was established in 1881 to facilitate the transfer of land ownership from landlords to farmers and to redistribute land, with much of its work taking place in the period after 1903. The children sent the purchase price, and the daughter sent her usual remittance at Christmas time also. She wrote to her parents, “I would think it wasn’t Christmas and I hadn’t any father and mother if I didn’t send them something.”³⁶ Seán Tom Ceárnaí from the Blasket Islands off the coast of northwest Kerry concluded in 1955 that “a good lot of money or remittances has come from America down through the years for three or four generations. . . . It would buy necessities, food, clothes, pay debts or rent and make improvements in the house or lands, buy land, pay costs to the U.S., buy drink.”³⁷ Pattern days and sibling’s birthdays could be marked also by the arrival of dollars.³⁸

But the arrival of a package of clothing caused mixed reactions. First, even a small amount of money could make a significant difference to a family by allowing them a measure of independence in its expenditure, but the arrival of a package removed that element of choice. Second, sometimes the recipient had to find the money to pay the duty, otherwise the package would be returned to the Customs and Excise authorities. Eilís was “always so afraid” her father could not pay the duty.³⁹ But once the package was opened, it was possible that not all would be satisfied. Peggy’s friends were sent secondhand, “very fussy, frilly and sequined” dresses belonging to American cousins who were of “a bigger frame.” The father thought they were “wonderful” and insisted they be worn to the “local dance,” but the girls “hated them.” They used to bring their own clothing to change into and “dreaded these American things.”⁴⁰ Matt’s sisters “were reared on American

parcels," although, again, "wearing something new" might provoke jibes from class mates: "Oh ye got an American parcel didn't ye?"⁴¹ Eilís's sisters, on the other hand, sent clothes that were practical and useful: "My sisters were good to us. They sent us parcels with lovely clothes and things for the home. We got nice, warm, winter clothes and I remember especially my brother and I getting lovely, warm pyjamas and slippers. They were much appreciated as our Irish homes were very cold during winter. At Christmas we got toy parcels with books, games and many other toys. One year I got a beautiful doll which I cherished very much."⁴² The response to such clothes, therefore, depended on the economic circumstances of the Irish household and the kind of clothes sent. Packages of food, including tea, sugar, flour, and rice, were much appreciated particularly during World War II when rationing was in place.⁴³ For some families the arrival of money, clothes, and packages made the difference between a comfortable and uncomfortable existence at particular times. Moreover, the packages, along with the accompanying letters outlining "how they were getting on themselves in America" also helped create an impression of America as a prosperous place and had significant consequences for teenagers and young people thinking about the future.⁴⁴ For Maireád, whose family received packages from her aunts in New York every six or eight weeks in the 1950s, it was the letters that created an impression. One of her two aunts living in New York raised eleven children; the other had two; and both provided frequent bulletins of their progress through life. Maireád recalled that "we felt by the letters that . . . it was a great country. . . . They seemed to have had so much more than we had."⁴⁵ In other words, just as the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems identified in 1954, it was the positive information that made a "more favourable" impression "than the facts warrant"—facts that included exploitation, bad housing, and irregular employment.⁴⁶ Neither was the myth corrected by emigrants who were unsuccessful because, as Dirk Hoerder suggests, they were more likely to lose contact with their home communities or, as will be seen later, bad news was filtered out of their memories.⁴⁷ Thus another explanation for the persistence of the positive image was the selective flow of information and contact.

Similarly, just as the successful emigrant could afford to spend money on postage for letters and packages, she or he could afford to return home—or at least later generations could. As noted previously the Irish return rate was low, but table 2 reveals that every county in the Republic of Ireland registered U.S.-born residents in the period 1926 to 1961.

Table 2. People in twenty-six counties in Ireland born in the United States, 1926–1961

	1926	1936	1946	1961
Leinster	2,507	3,005	2,741	2,590
Carlow	55	74	67	53

Table 2 (*continued*)

	1926	1936	1946	1961
Dublin*	966	1,339	1,333	1,527
Kildare	127	131	135	106
Kilkenny	207	165	124	92
Laois	92	100	90	58
Longford	206	213	139	109
Louth	158	199	170	115
Meath	162	179	153	126
Offaly	147	153	130	85
Westmeath	173	168	157	116
Wexford	136	169	128	102
Wicklow	78	115	115	101
Munster	2,716	3,031	2,605	1,918
Clare	219	282	211	178
Cork*	1,001	1,128	937	681
Kerry	529	586	456	368
Limerick*	422	473	499	325
Tipperary				
County N.R.†	136	152	134	91
Tipperary				
County S.R.†	212	218	189	147
Waterford*	197	192	179	128
Connacht				
County	2,361	2,594	2,030	1,272
Galway	794	908	706	440
Leitrim	296	251	177	118
Mayo	655	769	605	390
Roscommon	392	374	301	187
Sligo	224	292	241	137
Ulster	1,348	1,481	1,133	667
Cavan	363	341	257	158
Donegal	747	872	623	370
Monaghan	238	268	253	139

*City and county borough

† North Riding or South Riding (A riding is an administrative unit.)

Sources: *Census of Population of Ireland, 1926*, vol. 3 (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965), table 6a, 152; *Census of Population of Ireland, 1961*, vol. 3 (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1965), table 3, 84.

It may be suggested, then, that as every county in Ireland experienced some level of emigration in the nineteenth century and had American-born residents

located there in the twentieth century, popular exposure to the emigrant experience was widespread. But it is the personal testimony that provides texture to the patchy statistics. One of the common features of the testimony collected in 1955 and 2001 was the reference to the returning emigrant from America. In the nineteenth century, emigrants came home for various reasons: to marry, owing to bad health or an inability to cope with the pace of life and work, to retire, because of the death of a parent and finally, or to visit for a short period.⁴⁸ Similarly in the twentieth century, such motives are identifiable and the impression on the home community was significant and helped form an image of America as a place of transformation.

In 1955 most of the people Seán Tom Ceárnaí knew in the locality of the Blasket Islands had more relatives in America than in Ireland, and he provided an overview of the incidence of returned emigrants in the locality:

So every household of the six households now in Cill has a close connection with America.

Three of the men of the houses were in America one married there, and came home to the bit of land after a spell.

The fourth yank is dead a few years.

So that if the returned yanks with their families were taken [out] of the population there would not be many left.⁴⁹

In Kilmore, county Wexford, in 1955, seven men from six families who had left for the United States had returned to live in the area, and in the neighboring Kilrane townland, John Roche, Tess Hayes, and Mrs. Keating (formerly Moore) were identified as the “returned yanks.”⁵⁰ This trend emerged also in testimony obtained for Limerick city and counties Clare, Cork, Galway, and Offaly during the period under consideration, with men sometimes known throughout their lives as “Yank”—for example, “Yank Kennedy” in Thurles in county Tipperary, “Yank Breen” in Drumcullen in county Offaly, and “Yank Slattery” in Clarecastle in county Clare.⁵¹ Nicknames were also a feature in other receiving communities in Europe; “Americano” (Italy), “Amerikanci” (Slovene), “Amerikan-kävijöitä” (Finland), and “Amerykanty” (Poland). Their use of American phrases also distinguished them; in Greece they were known as the “all-right boys,” the “okay-boys,” and the “hello-boys,” and in Ireland some were known as the “I-guessers.”⁵²

After witnessing three or four generations of emigration from the Blasket Islands region to America, by 1955 Seán Tom Ceárnaí believed that many reasons accounted for their return from the United States:

- (a) some made good and returned to settle down in Ireland. Some bought farms, others married into farms, and some bought public houses or shops or married into them. Others who were too old to marry or settle down lived on their savings generally with their relatives.

- (b) some others returned to Ireland because the climate did not agree with them, or for health reasons.
- (c) some returned because they could not stick the work or keep to the clock. A lot of fishermen came back and went fishing again. They preferred that free life to bosses and clocks. Were it not for the fishing the most of them would have remained over.
- (d) A good few ran home at the time of the depression
- (e) some ne'er do wells returned.⁵³

This grouping of motives for remigration accords with Wyman's model based on a survey of explanations for return by Europeans between 1880 and 1930;

- (1) Success; goals attained in America.
- (2) Failure, through injury or other causes, to reach goals.
- (3) Home-sickness, nostalgia and patriotism, including the various calls of relatives and family obligations (caring for elderly parents, saving the family farm).
- (4) Rejection of the United States, often for political or religious reasons . . . inability to assimilate.⁵⁴

The return to Ireland of female emigrants was remembered specifically because some returned with dowries and savings and often married soon after.⁵⁵ Nellie Owens, who emigrated from Edenderry, county Offaly, to America in 1900, worked in a department store and then the Hotel Commodore in New York, married there, but returned with her husband in 1927 and "lived on their savings." George McGuire's aunt returned to county Wexford "after making an awful lot of money in America and lived with her nephew."⁵⁶ The ability of these women to use their labor and create wealth for themselves in America made their presence in a rural society where women had few such opportunities until the 1960s noteworthy and again emphasized the positive image of America as a place of opportunity and prosperity for men and women alike, despite the misgivings of religious and political leaders about the damage to the family of women working outside the home.⁵⁷

The presence of the returned American for a short or long period became a feature of society, particularly after World War II. For example, 11,000 American tourists visited Ireland in 1937 and 1947; 15,000 visited in 1948; and 33,000 did in 1953.⁵⁸ Each government after 1945, when referring to this group in the context of tourism, promulgated the myth of America. For example, John A. Costello, leader of the second Inter-Party Government, told his cabinet on October 5, 1956, that "there is still a vast untapped source of tourist traffic in the United States. . . . There are approximately twenty million people of Irish birth, or Irish extraction, in the United States, and if . . . we could induce them to spend a holiday in Ireland once every ten years it would electrify our economy."⁵⁹ In

other words he saw each emigrant as wealthy and their lucrative potential was not just a given fact but one to be exploited to financially benefit Ireland.⁶⁰

Irrespective of the length of stay of returned emigrants or the reasons for their return, each created an impression in the local community, which then shaped ideas about America. Not only were they seen to be wealthy because they could afford to return, but they expected certain standards in domestic facilities. Accommodation and amenities in relatives' houses were subjected to serious attention and sometimes underwent a transformation. Johanna, who witnessed three generations of emigration in county Tipperary, recalled a sense of embarrassment "when they came home first" because "there was no toilet. There was no such thing as the toilet or bath or anything like that."⁶¹ Maireád remembered the occasion when a first cousin visited Clarecastle, county Clare, from New York in the early 1960s: "We painted, we papered . . . a new bathroom went in . . . you name it, it was in the house."⁶² The improvement in facilities, specifically bathrooms, for the American visitor suggests an awareness that Irish standards of domestic amenities were lacking, especially in rural areas.

By the late 1950s the Electricity Supply Board had provided electricity to more than half of rural households. Regarding water and sanitary services, in 1946, 92 percent of urban homes had access to piped water and 35 percent had a fixed bath, whereas 91 percent of rural homes relied on a pump, a well, or a stream for water and less than 4 percent of rural homes had a fixed bath.⁶³ Approximately half of all private households in 1946 had no sanitary facilities, and just one-third had flush toilets, with rural householders least equipped.⁶⁴ Moreover, Daly's research on the provision of running water for rural homes highlights that as recently as 1971, approximately 42 percent of rural homes lacked a supply and less than one-third of rural households contained a fixed bath.⁶⁵ Indeed, in the 1970s, when a cousin of Proinsias started visiting Clarecastle from the United States, he had to go to "neighbours down the road, who had a bathroom, for his bath."⁶⁶ At the very least these visiting Americans drew attention, to use Noirín's description, to the "very backward" nature of rural Ireland.⁶⁷

The clothing and behavior of returned emigrants also transmitted certain messages. Referring to the turn of the twentieth century, Tadgh Ó Murchadha of An Coireán, south Kerry, said "the clothing of the returned emigrant was always much admired," while Johanna in Thurles, county Tipperary, took it further and said that "they were more stylish." Similarly, Tony, remembering the more recent 1950s, recalled "they wore brighter clothing. . . . They were dressed differently and probably better dressed as well. . . . People at home had the one suit from one end of the year to the next."⁶⁸ Although "never copied," their apparel reflected a certain affluence also.⁶⁹ Seán Tom Céarnaí from the Blasket Islands stated "the most of them wearing fine clothes and having a watch and chain and plenty of cash created a favourable impression of the U.S.A."⁷⁰ The clothes were also considered "too loud," but the general opinion was held in

Tadhg Ó Murchadha's locality that the individual who had such clothing "must be possessed of great wealth." Or as Maireád in Clarecastle put it, the "Americans when they came home . . . had full and plenty."⁷¹ For those who returned and stayed permanently, they soon settled down to retirement or to eke out a living on a farm or pub. In county Kerry, at least, they always "had the name of . . . money." While Jerry O'Leary claimed in 1955 that every pub in Killarney, county Kerry, was run by a "Yank" and "there is scarcely a town or village in Mayo but has a few shop keepers who started life in America." In Edenderry, county Offaly, the returnees were "level-headed people who did not 'show off' their wealth."⁷² Some returned Americans in Ireland and elsewhere were associated with agricultural innovation. In parts of Ulster the term "Yankee" was applied to any farm tool brought in from outside. In county Galway, although the returnees did not introduce "American ways" and "people did not take kindly to new-fangled ways," some of them sowed vegetables such as lettuce, "which were unknown here," just as tobacco was planted in Norway and tomatoes in Finland.⁷³ Others became "a bit disgusted with the old country and left again."⁷⁴ In other words America had transformed some returnees—they looked American, talked American, and acted American.

But America was not just associated with opportunities to prosper and become wealthy; some who returned also represented an ethic of hard work. In the first place, to be able to come back to Ireland meant that, in Maireád's words, "they probably had worked very hard."⁷⁵ Although their stories about life in America were known to be exaggerated at times, as Seán Tom Ceárnaí stated, "Most of them were good workers . . . [and] the most of them praised the U.S.A. in a way. A good country for the man who was not lazy to work."⁷⁶ The qualities noticeable in the emigrant returned to the Edenderry locality in county Offaly were "love of work and industry, personal cleanliness, thrift, early to rise in the morning, efficiency in their work. The women were good housekeepers and good cooks. The men folk improved their homes and farms. They showed no class distinctions."⁷⁷ While these informants identified and praised the work ethic of the returned Americans, the reality of life for most American factory workers was absent from the personal testimony. Yet tuberculosis was known in parts of the west of Ireland as the "American sickness," and public health workers in Italy, Finland, and Sweden noticed the prevalence of work-related diseases and sicknesses among returned Americans. Moreover, Irish commentators throughout the period under review deplored the effect of factory and office work on family life and health.⁷⁸ These were signs of another side to the American experience.

Seán Tom Ceárnaí suggested that some emigrants from northwest Kerry had not prospered and had little choice but to return to Ireland.⁷⁹ Jim came home to Drumcullen, county Offaly, "during Prohibition . . . [due to the] bad times in America."⁸⁰ Indeed, Leo McCauley, the Irish consul general in New York, noted

on May 11, 1932, that “consequent on the serious unemployment and distress at present prevailing in this country, I am daily being approached by our nationals to obtain reduced steamship fares to enable them to return to Ireland.” By July the flow had not abated and requests for assistance toward payment of the steamship fare were “becoming more numerous daily.”⁸¹ Recollections of emigrants who returned in these circumstances were not extensive; details are hazy and do not refer at all to those who came to the attention of the American and Irish authorities. But this latter category offered the home community another view of life in America.

On October 7, 1922, a hearing was held at Ellis Island, New York, by the Immigration Service of the Office of Commissioner of Immigration. Michael Carroll was charged, first, with being a stowaway at the time of his entry into the United States, second, with being a “person likely to become a public charge,” and third, with having “entered by water at a time or place other than as designated by immigration officials.” Carroll was thirty-nine years of age, born in Waterford on October 4, 1883 or 1884, and had a number of aliases and had been deported previously from the United States in July 1914. He had no passport or money and stated that he did not want to be represented by a lawyer because he wanted “to be sent back—I cannot make a living here.” The immigrant inspector, Thomas J. Conry, noted that “he admits having performed no work since he came to the U.S., just loafing around, and is destitute.” Conry recommended that a warrant be issued for the “alien’s deportation.”⁸² He could not be deported immediately, however, because the next step in the procedure was to verify his identification, which could be undertaken only by his relatives in Ireland. By June 12, 1923, Carroll had not been deported because his brother and sister living in Waterford could not recognize his picture or perhaps were unwilling to do so. Carroll’s fate is unknown.⁸³

By 1923 Carroll was a citizen of the Irish Free State and needed an Irish passport to enter the country of his birth, whereas non-Irish citizens required a visa. Applications for both had to be made first to an Irish consular representative in the United States who would then contact the Department of External Affairs (Irish State Department) in Dublin. In the event of a visa being required, the latter department requested that the Department of Justice, through the Garda Síochána (Irish police force), check out the financial circumstances of the returnees’ family and recommend whether or not a visa should be issued. From 1932 onward this information was used also in the decision on whether to grant assisted passages to needy emigrants of Irish ancestry who wished to return to Ireland. In these cases the Irish state paid the fare or the steamship company was requested to reduce the price of the fare. If the applicants did not have sufficient funds to pay the fare and, more important, to support themselves in Ireland, or if their families refused to keep them, a visa and assisted passage of either sort could be refused. This function became particularly significant during the 1930s.

Among the more detailed cases in External Affairs' files was that of Elizabeth Doyle, a widow who was "not destitute" but was being "maintained" by the Department of Social Welfare in New York City.⁸⁴

In December 1936 the New York Department of Social Welfare requested that Leo McCauley in New York issue a passport to Doyle, who wanted to return to Ireland. She provided the name and address of her son, with whom she proposed to live. The Garda Síochána at Union Quay, Cork city, investigated and discovered that John Mahoney resided with his wife, three daughters, and one grandchild. He worked with Cork Corporation, was in receipt of a pension of one pound per week from the British army, and rented rooms at 21 North Main Street, Cork. Mahoney told the police that he was "willing to support his mother" in the event of her return and had a vacant room for her but he would "not contribute in any way to her assisted passage." The Garda report stated that Mahoney "was known to be respectable and . . . assisted passage be recommended on behalf of Mrs Doyle." Seán Murphy, assistant secretary in External Affairs, recommended to McCauley that the visa, passport, and assisted passage be granted to allow her to return.⁸⁵ Neither Doyle nor Geary would return with any resources and expected to be maintained by family members, as did Mrs. Annie Tucker (formerly Lally), her husband, and eight children.

Tucker, a U.S. citizen who lived in New York, applied to McCauley in March 1937 for a visa to return to live permanently with her mother in Bohermore, county Galway. But the Garda Síochána report noted that accommodation in her mother's house was limited as there were already five people living there. Seán Murphy wrote to McCauley on April 22, 1937, that "it is understood from the Department of Justice that none of Mrs Tucker's relatives in this country are in very comfortable circumstances and that they would not be in a position to support Mr Tucker in addition to his wife and family."⁸⁶ The visa was denied, but it was clear from the circumstances that the family had not prospered in the United States and, therefore, could not financially support themselves upon returning home.

It was also the case that families in Ireland learned about difficulties encountered by emigrants who were in the care of institutions, such as Alice Stapleton from Kilkee in county Clare. In 1937 she was an inmate of the State Hospital in New York City, and on her behalf the U.S. Department of Mental Hygiene requested that McCauley issue her a passport. She was described as being "in a very comfortable mental and physical condition at the present time" and wished to return to Kilkee to live with her parents.⁸⁷ The Garda in Kilrush reported on March 1, 1937, that her parents were in poor circumstances and that "unless she has means of her own, they will be unable to support her."⁸⁸ She was not granted assisted passage.⁸⁹ It is unknown if she returned, but if she did, she also represented the negative side of the American experience.

Other channels through which information about America was received and noted by the informants were cinema, comic books, magazines, and fashion catalogs from America. Irish newspapers and magazines were not mentioned as sources of information about America, even though many carried regular advertisements, news reports, articles, and editorials about events in America. However, Hugh Oram argues that to a large extent Irish advertising and consumption were influenced more by British than U.S. trends. Indeed the image of the "flapper" used in Irish newspaper advertisements for many products in the 1920s was regarded as representative of Englishness. Noirín equated advertisements for women's clothing more with wealth than any specific society.⁹⁰ However, Eilís's father regularly received a copy of the *New Haven Journal*, which "he enjoyed looking through" as did she as a child in county Clare in the 1920s and 1930s because "there were photographs of people and houses and countryside . . . that . . . were lovely." She continued: "We had this idea about America, and looking at the paper would bring it all home to us."⁹¹ Similarly, magazines such as *Time*, *Life*, and *Picture Post* provided Tony with information about America in the 1940s and 1950s.⁹²

The role of film in projecting positive and negative images of American life, which vividly contrasted with life in Ireland, has been noted elsewhere. Browne has written that in the 1930s "countryside, town and city were . . . addicted . . . to the Hollywood film." Just as in the rest of the English-speaking world, in villages, towns, and cities throughout Ireland, halls, walls, and cinemas of all sorts showed the "celluloid dreams from California."⁹³ By 1950 one in every three people in Ireland went to the cinema at least once a week, and £3.5 million was spent on tickets. Hollywood-made films had become the dominant force in world cinema.⁹⁴

Attending the cinema was a popular form of entertainment, but its impact on society remains difficult to measure. According to Tomás, who went to the cinema regularly from the 1920s onward, films represented America as a place of "crime . . . a place where the almighty dollar was God."⁹⁵ In other words the negative image of America as unsafe, materialistic, and lacking in spiritual values prevailed with him and in fact partly influenced Tomás's decision not to emigrate. On the other hand, from the 1940s onward Peggy went to the cinema weekly after she moved to Johnstown in county Kilkenny, and she thought "America was everything" from the films she saw.⁹⁶ For her, cinema confirmed America as a place of great size, growth, speed and affluence. Furthermore, it contrasted sharply with life in rural Ireland.⁹⁷

These diametrically opposed images of America emerged from a variety of sources, mostly connected with America itself, but among the primary sources of authority in Irish people's lives were the state and church. Twentieth-century political and religious leaders maintained their predecessors' position and viewed emigration generally as a necessary "evil" that they could not resolve. For

example, the onset of the economic crisis in America in 1929, which reduced the levels of Irish departures, was welcomed in a Catholic Church publication: “For this we thank God . . . the drain of emigration was threatening the very survival of our people.” Yet the hierarchy offered no plans to keep potential emigrants at home.⁹⁸

Éamon de Valera, in office as *taoiseach* (prime minister) for more than half of the period under review (1932–48, 1951–54, 1957–59), was born in America; his mother and half-brother resided there, and he constantly recognized the common ties of kinship and friendship. Like earlier nationalist leaders, he often turned to the American public for financial and “moral aid,” particularly at times of political crisis during the fight for Irish independence, and later on he recognized America as Ireland’s primary diplomatic relationship.⁹⁹ Yet when he perceived Irish American nationalist leaders such as Judge Daniel Cohalan of the Friends of Irish Freedom putting American interests over Irish ones in 1920–21, their alliance sundered and he established a rival organization under his control, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, his personal and political imbibing of Catholic social teachings contributed to his and other secular leaders’ wish for an Ireland that was rural, economically self-sufficient, socially traditional, and legislatively conservative. Paradoxically this Ireland could not sustain the needs of the many thousands who departed, mainly for the United States until 1931 and then for Britain, where the antithesis of this model seemed to prevail. In the twentieth-century search for this idyll, American influence on Irish society was, it might be suggested, quietly unwelcome and perforated the proceedings of various commissions investigating the major problems of Irish society.

The 1926 Coimisiún na Gaeltachta noted dependence on “American money” as one factor contributing to the persistence of congestion of Irish speakers on land that could not support them. For those who left, it was the “connections and association with people from their own district” in American cities that lured them away. In fact the chairman and Irish Free State government minister for local government, Richard Mulcahy, believed that the main “influences at work against [the] Irish [language]” were “the work of administration [conducted in English] and the American idea.” In other words people abandoned Irish to learn English and immigrate to America—from where they sent money home to relatives and thereby perpetuated the cycle of departure—and they wrote home in English. Money sent home for general survival was problematic also. Despite the importance of dollar remittances to the economy, as noted above, after six weeks of taking evidence, Mulcahy asked a new question: “How far . . . does this income from America tend to stimulate the people to improve their economic conditions from the resources they have at their hand?” Reverend Duggan replied it was not “any incentive” and, in fact, he believed it to be a “problem.”¹⁰¹ This view prevailed in the heart of another organ of the state—the civil service. In 1937–38 the

Inter-Departmental Committee on Seasonal Migration to Great Britain admitted that only “emigrants’ remittances” and state assistance kept people above the level of “chronic poverty” in Gaeltacht areas, but it acknowledged also that without these supports, people would not be living on “bad land” and “uneconomic holdings” and would be forced to improve themselves, echoing Mulcahy and Dugan’s views.¹⁰²

Another dimension to the “return tide” was offered in 1926 by Patrick Conroy, a school master from Claddaghduff, Clifden, county Galway, to Coimisiún na Gaeltachta:

This source of money is not without its drawbacks (a) money received in this way is soon spent on shop goods, and tastes are acquired for things the people should be at least as well off without. For instance, there has been a radical change in the dietary and dress of North Connemara in the past fifty years. . . . (b) the influx of money makes the young people look to America as El Dorado. They see nothing of the failures or the tragedies behind it all.¹⁰³

Thus those who stayed behind suffered because American money either dampened initiative or raised expectations or, as in Ballysaggart in county Waterford on the southeast coast, “Americanized” the district.¹⁰⁴ National and local leaders identified the “return tide” from America as a barrier to the consolidation of their vision of Irish society. In 1927 J. B. Whelehan, a civil servant and member of the University College Galway governing body, emphasized to the Commission on Technical Education inquiring into the educational requirements of trade and industry that “a false standard of the ideal life has been created for him [the Irish youth], with the result that when he grew up he sought the El Dorado of life in the town or in a foreign country rather than the ideal life—life in rural Ireland.”¹⁰⁵ Similarly the effect of the returnee who entertained his relatives in bars was a cause for concern in the mid-1920s, while the “well-dressed” returned emigrants with an “air of prosperity,” glowing accounts in letters of “high incomes and easy conditions,” and the “practical demonstration in the remittances” were identified in 1954 by the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems as causing “dissatisfaction with . . . the more prosaic conditions at home, especially in rural areas.”¹⁰⁶ It is difficult to identify whether those negative influences of individualism and materialism were regarded as specifically American, and not British, or seen simply as modern. This evidence suggests that Miller’s contention that by the early twentieth century the predominant Irish Catholic view, which stigmatized the United States itself as a “vicious materialistic, ‘Godless’ society that corrupted the emigrants’ morals and destroyed their faith,” continued into the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷

From the 1920s onward, concerns were constantly voiced by Catholic priests and bishops, writers, politicians, and public figures about Irish society being able

to withstand the immoral, atheistic values portrayed in American films, music, magazines, and, from 1941 to 1945, about the “licentiousness” spreading from the presence of American troops in Northern Ireland.¹⁰⁸ This criticism of Americans and American cultural exports might suggest a thread of anti-Americanism in Irish society by midcentury. Moreover a similar complexity is evident in the reaction of some civil servants and labor and industry leaders to importing American technical know-how after 1945. On the one hand, the value of applying up-to-date, modern technological techniques and ideas to the underdeveloped Irish economy was recognized. But on the other hand, some did not welcome the “indoctrination of a cross-section of our people in the American way of life.”¹⁰⁹ Thus for some there was a level of identification between America and threats to the nation’s moral well-being.

By 1948 the need to provide the Irish with a more nuanced view of American society led Vinton Chapin, the counselor at the U.S. legation in Dublin, to recommend the establishment of a United States Information Service program in Ireland because the Irish (both the elites and the public) were prone to view America “as a country without a soul whose spiritual guidance has something of an Hollywood slant.” He lamented that little opportunity had been afforded to the Irish people to appraise “the intellect and moral forces that exist, and to some extent lie latent, in the American character.”¹¹⁰ The State Department agreed and decided that in order to correct “misconceptions of the United States,” a modest program of information and educational exchange would take place in order to provide a “true picture” of American society and culture.¹¹¹ Obviously such efforts were motivated also by geostrategic concerns and the heightened importance of consolidating U.S. links to Ireland despite the shared opposition to communism and Ireland’s participation in the U.S.-backed Marshall Plan.

It might be argued that after World War II, when Ireland emerged unscathed by the war and rejoined the international community, and emigration, largely to Britain, regained its momentum, that Irish elites’ attitudes toward America became more positive. In the emerging cold war context, the Irish Catholic hierarchy praised American foreign policy makers’ determination to defeat communism. The Most Reverend Dr. Browne, the bishop of Galway, emphasized in his October 1949 welcome for the Roman Catholic archbishop of Boston, Richard J. Cushing, that “Mother Ireland is very proud of the part that her children have taken in building up the great free democracy known as the United States, a bulwark of liberty.”¹¹² And his political counterparts gratefully accepted assistance under the Marshall Plan, formally known as the European Recovery Programme (ERP). Despite the misgivings of unlikely bedfellows such as civil servants, left-wing intellectuals, and some trade unionists, who, for different reasons, equated American aid with American political, economic, and cultural hegemony, there was minimal opposition to Ireland’s involvement in the ERP.¹¹³ Marshall Plan

dollars, goods, and advice channeled through the Dublin ERP mission in cooperation with American legation officials, Irish state and semistate agencies, and private groups were gratefully accepted, even if, as James Dillon, minister for agriculture, said, the ERP officials “wanted to put Stars and Stripes stickers on all consignments.”¹¹⁴

Simultaneously, the revived and expanding outflow of people to the industrial towns of Britain combined with the public attention devoted to the “real and imagined” threat to the virtue of the female emigrant in England’s streets seemed to grant America a more positive status in some eyes.¹¹⁵ Bishop Browne noted in late 1949 that if “people wanted to go . . . from this country there was no place where they prefer to see them settle than in the United States.”¹¹⁶ A further insight into this is offered by the writer Bryan MacMahon, born in 1909 in Listowel in county Kerry, which was one of eight counties that had endured the most extensive population loss. In 1953 MacMahon saw emigration as an “open wound through which the brilliant arterial blood of Ireland is constantly leaking.” But departing for “America! That was a *noble* emigration!” MacMahon concluded, “To-day an Irish immigrant to the United States feels about him the pulse beat of home.”¹¹⁷ It was just fifty years earlier that Father Guinan had worried about the “fate worse than death that awaited the unsuspecting country girl in America”—but his concern elicited no response from Irish or British ruling elites.¹¹⁸ By way of comparison, it was partly in response to the Catholic Church’s concern “to protect the moral and social interests of the girls going to domestic service” in England that the Irish government established in 1948 the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems.¹¹⁹ Undoubtedly, vastly different conditions existed in Ireland, England, and the United States in 1948 and 1909. It might be suggested, however, that the Irish had made certain gains in American society, economy, and politics, and therefore certain parts of America were now regarded as an extension of “home,” whereas Irish relations with England were still politically problematic, Irish gains were comparatively less there, and it was portrayed in newspaper editorials and by some church and political leaders to be a dangerous place. Indeed one of the commission’s members, Peadar O’Donnell, a novelist and socialist, objected to its discussion on “moral delinquency among exiles” because he believed most of the “Irish in Britain live miraculously normal lives.”¹²⁰ Nonetheless, in many minds the link between moral danger and immigration to England had been set, just as it had been in relation to America in earlier decades and centuries. Much more research and analysis needs to be conducted on the attitude of church and state institutions and their representatives to the idea and reality of “America,” particularly the components of that idea that related to generic themes of urbanization, modernization, materialism, and individualism—or in the words of Most Rev. Dr. Lucey, the Catholic bishop of Cork, the “spirit of the age” and its influence on Ireland.¹²¹

But it is clear that Irish elites, who shunned responsibility for emigration and after 1922 could no longer blame British “malevolence or landlord tyranny,” increasingly shifted the blame to the emigrant himself or herself for deserting “God’s own island.” As Lee notes,

However blandly they [policy makers] might rationalize the experience that relieved the pressure on themselves to improve their performance, however opportunistically they might blame the victim for their plight, however frequently the emigrants might return as travel conditions improved, indeed however individually liberating emigration may in fact have proven (in itself, a sad reflection on the “imponderable values and liberties of our traditional society”), the emigration figures for the forties and fifties stand as a permanent commentary on the collective caliber of the possessing classes.¹²²

The late 1950s finally saw the Seán Lemass–led generation of policy makers accepting the links between emigration and economic development and performance, standards of living, and quality of life.¹²³ There were church initiatives regarding emigration too. In 1959 the Church of Ireland Commission for the Sparsely Populated Areas found that the “one major problem facing the Church . . . is that of emigration,” and it arranged for the publication and distribution of more than twelve thousand copies of a handbook titled *Careers in Ireland*, detailing employment opportunities in Ireland.¹²⁴ But until then this contradiction in attitudes toward emigration prevailed and perhaps was mirrored in public perceptions of America. It can be noted, however, that none of the oral testimony or folklore material of the time referred to prevailing “official” attitudes as influencing that view of America.

An image of America existed in parts of Ireland in the period 1922 to 1960 that had its origins in American and Irish societies, respectively, and it was two-dimensional in nature. America was imagined as a land of wealth, a place of freedom and opportunity, and this positive perception appears to have persisted from the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries. This image was heavily influenced by emigration from three perspectives. First, there were the financial and practical benefits of emigration, which accrued to individuals, families, and friends in Ireland. Second, there were the letters and presence of the “returned Yanks.” Third, there was the power of the myth among communities that persisted from generation to generation and well into the twentieth century.

This positive image remained intact even when evidence of negative experiences existed and was endorsed by secular and religious leaders. The individuals in this study accepted, first, that economic conditions in the United States were depressed from time to time; second, that not all Irish emigrants did well in the United States; third, that some returned emigrants from the United States

displayed vulgar characteristics; and finally, that American society could be materialistic, dangerous, and unsafe.¹²⁵ But ultimately a sufficient number of people were perceived to have prospered in the United States, to have exploited the opportunities available, and to have sent money and goods home and paid for a passage home for a holiday or to return permanently to outweigh the inglorious actuality of life for many in America. It seems that the "idea of America," in Matt's words "was something to dream about" in 1960 just as it had been in 1922.¹²⁶ America remained the transatlantic El Dorado, and the myth remained intact.¹²⁷

NOTES

1. This chapter is part of a work in progress. An earlier version was published in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 43 (2003): 85–104, and a further version is forthcoming in *Chronicles*, the journal of Glucksman House Ireland. The article has benefited from the advice provided by Liam Irwin and from discussions at the Famine and Diaspora seminar in Glucksman House, New York University, in April 2005 and the Irish in the Atlantic World conference, College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina, February 2007. For example, see Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Kerby Miller, "Paddy's Paradox: Emigration to America in Irish Imagination and Rhetoric," in *Distant Magnets: Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840–1930*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Horst Rössler (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993), 264–94; Kerby Miller and Bruce D. Boling, "Golden Streets, Bitter Tears: The Irish Image of America during the Era of Mass Migration," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (Fall 1990–Winter 1991): 16–36; David Noel Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland / Mercier Press, 1981); David Noel Doyle and Owen Dudley Edwards, eds., *America and Ireland, 1776–1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection*, proceedings of the United States Bicentennial Conference of Cumann Merriman, Ennis, August 1976 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Andy Bielenberg, ed., *The Irish Diaspora* (Harlow, U.K.: Longman, 2000). See Maurice Bric, "Patterns of Irish Emigration to America, 1783–1800," in *New Directions in Irish-American History*, ed. Kevin Kenny (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 17–36; James Kelly, "The Resumption of Emigration from Ireland after the American War of Independence: 1783–1787," *Studia Hibernica* 24:61–88 on the eighteenth-century context to Irish immigration to the United States.

2. Kevin Kenny, "Ireland and Irish-America in the Twentieth Century," keynote address at Ireland and Irish-America Conference, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Ireland, May 28–9, 2004.

3. Kevin Kenny, ed., *New Directions in Irish-American History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (New York: Longman, 2000). A more recent contribution is the excellent collection of essays in J. J. Lee and Marion Casey, eds., *Making the Irish American* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

4. Miller and Bolling, “Golden Streets, Bitter Tears,” 25; Grace Neville, “‘Land of the Fair, Land of the Free’: The Myth of America in Irish folklore,” in *Exiles and Migrants: Crossing Thresholds in European Culture and Society*, ed. Anthony Coulson (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1997), 57–71; Donald H. Akenson critiques Millers’s larger thesis in “Irish Migration to North America, 1800–1920,” in Bielenberg, *The Irish Diaspora*, 128–31. The phrase “idea of America” comes from a session of the Coimisiún na Gaeltachta; on June 4, 1925, the chairman, Richard Mulcahy TD, while examining Domhnall Ua Corcra from Cork, twice referred to the “idea of America” and its primary influence in the declining use of the Irish language in the west of Ireland. At a further session on June 16, Padraig O Siochhradha (An Seabhadh) questioned Seaghan P. MacÉinrí of Conradh na Gaedhíge (Gaelic League), about the reasons people left the Connemara Gaeltacht and the latter replied that “there is no influence as powerful as America.” *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta: Report and Minutes of Evidence* (Dublin: Government Publications Office, 1926), 7.

5. Dirk Hoerder and Horst Rössler, eds., *Distant Magnets: Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840–1930* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993).

6. See Dirk Hoerder, “From Dreams to Possibilities: The Secularization of Hope and the Quest for Independence,” in Hoerder and Rössler, *Distant Magnets*, 1–27.

7. The oral testimony derives from an oral history project that consisted of ten interviews with five men and five women in 2001. Some of the participants requested that pseudonyms be used. The author is grateful to all who participated and wishes to thank Catherine O’Connor, Margaret Hogan, and Tony Hogan for their work and commitment to this project. The project was funded by the University of Limerick College of Humanities Research Fund and the University of Limerick Foundation Seed Fund. The University of Limerick Oral History Project (hereafter cited as ULOHP) interviews provided information for Limerick city and counties Clare, Cork, Galway, Offaly, and Tipperary. Other testimony used was consulted by kind permission of the Irish Folklore Collection (hereafter cited as IFC), University College Dublin, Ireland (hereafter cited as UCD). This material covered counties Kerry, Wexford, Offaly, Westmeath, and Galway and Mayo. The ULOHP tape recordings will be located in the University of Limerick Library Special Collections Division and will be available for academic purposes subject to the copyright conditions requested by the individual informants. This article is not an exhaustive study of the topic. Instead it attempts to analyze and provide a framework for the understanding of the personal experiences of people living in nine counties. The gender dimension of this topic is being researched as part of a 2007/10 project funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS).

The advantages and disadvantages of using oral history as a source in history have been well documented elsewhere, most recently by Caitriona Clear in her study of women’s household work in Ireland between 1922 and 1961. Caitriona Clear, *Women of the House: Women’s Household Work in Ireland, 1922–61* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000); Caitriona Clear, “Oral History and Women’s Household Work in Ireland, 1922–1961: Some Reflections,” *Oral History and Biography, Women’s Studies Review* 7:53–63.

8. The term “America” is used throughout the ULOHP and IFC testimony and in the work of Hoerder and Rössler, *Distant Magnets*; and Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to*

America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880–1930 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

9. David Fitzpatrick, "Emigration: 1801–1921," in *The Encyclopaedia of the Irish in America*, ed. Michael Glazier (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 254–62; David Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration 1801–1921: Studies in Irish Economic and Social History 1* (Dundalk, Ireland: Dundalgan Press, 1990), 5, 11.

10. Johanna (aged 94), housewife, born in Thurles, county Tipperary, interviewed March, 28 2001, Tape 7, ULOHP.

11. Tomás (aged 82), retired civil servant, born in Limerick city, interviewed June 27, 2001, Tape 4, ULOHP.

12. J. J. Lee, "Emigration, 1922–1998," in *The Encyclopaedia of the Irish in America*, ed. Michael Glazier (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 263.

13. Tape 4, ULOHP.

14. J. J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 126. Lee notes the controversy that surrounds the official reporting of unemployment rates in the 1920s.

15. Eilís (aged 81), housewife, Ennis, county Clare, interviewed July 18, 2001, Tape 5, ULOHP.

16. Maireád (aged 64), retired nurse, Clarecastle, county Clare, interviewed May 27, 2001, Tape 3, ULOHP.

17. Bridget Dirrane, *A Woman of Aran* (Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1997), 45.

18. Jim (aged 71), retired veterinary surgeon, Mullinahone, county Tipperary, interviewed on October 24, 2001, Tape 10, ULOHP.

19. Tape 4, ULOHP. Bridget Dirrane, a member of Cumann na mBan (Women's League) and an antitreatyite who emigrated in 1927, recalled "a number of the volunteers from the troubled times had been deported or had emigrated." Dirrane, *Woman of Aran*, 46.

20. David Steven Cohen, ed., *America: The Dream of My Life: Selections from the Federal Writers' Project's New Jersey Ethnic Survey* (Camden, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 45–46; Jeremiah Murphy, *When Youth Was Mine: A Memoir of Kerry, 1902–25* (Dublin: Mentor Press, 1998), 280, 300.

21. *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, evidence furnished but not examined, June 16, 1925, 11; June 17, 1925, 22; October 1, 1925, 22.

22. The introduction of restrictive U.S. legislation is often identified as the cause of the decline in emigration from Ireland during the 1920s. The Irish Free State was allocated a quota of 28,567 under the 1924 Immigration Act, but it was never reached, and neither was a reduced quota of 17,853 set in 1929. After 1929 it was economic factors specifically increasing unemployment in the United States, and the increasing bureaucratization of the application procedure for a visa, that caused a fall in numbers rather than the legislation. The quota increased slightly to 18,700 in 1952 and remained in place until 1965. There is no reference in any of the interviews to quotas. Lee, "Emigration," 263, 264; *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1951* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1951), 93, table 106; Matthew J. O'Brien, "Transatlantic Connections and the Sharp Edge of the Great Depression," in Kenny, *New Directions*, 78–81. The diplomatic and

political background to the introduction of the quotas for the Irish Free State is examined in Bernadette Whelan, *United States Foreign Policy and Ireland, 1913–29: From Empire to Independence* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006).

23. Tony (aged 64), retired teacher, Woodford, county Galway, interviewed May 27, 2001, Tape 6, ULOHP. Between 1956 and 1961, forty-three thousand left per annum, the highest rates since the 1880s. Lee, *Ireland*, 359.

24. Noirín (aged 62), housewife, Cobh, county Cork, interviewed May 22, 2001, Tape 1, ULOHP.

25. Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850–1900* (Chester Springs, Pa.: Dufour Editions, 1997), 93.

26. Neville, “Land of the Fair,” 58.

27. Murphy, *When Youth Was Mine*, 30.

28. Tape 4, ULOHP.

29. Matthew Mangan (aged 76), farmer, Clonmullen, Edenderry, county Offaly, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1407, 1–78, IFC, UCD; William Byrne (aged 54), farmer, Killane, Edenderry, county Offaly, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

30. Tape 3, ULOHP.

31. Thomas Harpur (aged 72), farmer and laborer, Kilmore, county Wexford, interviewed March 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD; John Murphy (aged 80), publican, Kilrane, County Wexford, interviewed March 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD; Matt O’Reilly (aged 75), farmer, Kilbride, Trim, county Meath, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

32. Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration*, 151. A further issue to be examined in future research is the money sent out of Ireland to those who left for America.

33. See Hoerder, “From Dreams to Possibilities,” 6.

34. *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, minutes of evidence, August 20, 1925, 4; Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan 1947–1957* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 328. See also J. P. McHale, “Ireland and the U.S. Dollar,” *Irish Monthly* 78 (December 1950): 566; External Affairs memorandum, May 1948, Department of Taoiseach (hereafter cited as D/T), 305/571, National Archives of Ireland (hereafter cited as NAI).

35. Tape 5, ULOHP.

36. Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland*, 3rd ed. (Ennis, Ireland: Clasp, 2001), 144. This work presents an idealized version of many aspects of life in rural Ireland after the 1845–51 Great Famine. Byrne, Edmondson, and Varley have identified the weaknesses in the work relating to exaggerated conclusions but do not include the veracity of the participant observations. See Anne Byrne, Ricca Edmondson, and Tony Varley, “Introduction to the Third Edition,” in Arensberg and Kimball, *Family and Community*, i–lxix; Vincent Comerford, “Land Commission,” in *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, ed. S. J. Connolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 296.

37. Seán Tom Ceárnaí (aged 72), fisherman, Blasket Islands, county Kerry, interviewed January 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

38. Tape 3, ULOHP; Tadhg Ó Murchadha, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD. Pattern days were parish religious celebrations held on the feast day of the local patron saint. Sharon Gmelch, “Fairs and Pilgrimages,” in *Irish life and Tradition*, ed. Sharon Gmelch (Dublin: O’Brien Press, 1979), 172.

39. Tape 5, ULOHP.

40. Tape 8, ULOHP.

41. Tape 9, ULOHP.

42. Tape 5, ULOHP.

43. Tape 5, ULOHP. Rationing and shortages of sugar, tea, butter, and potatoes, particularly in urban areas, were a feature of the "emergency" period in Ireland. The situation did not improve after 1945. In the following year bread rationing was reintroduced, the butter ration was reduced by half, the margarine ration was doubled, and petrol was in short supply. In addition to the packages that arrived informally, in 1947 the Fianna Fáil government concluded an agreement with an American organization, Co-operative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc. (CARE), which collected donations in the United States from people who nominated a recipient in a European country and CARE delivered the package to the nominated recipient. Foodstuffs, blankets, and needles were sent. *Irish Trade Journal* (September 1947): 117.

44. Tape 5, ULOHP.

45. Tape 3, ULOHP.

46. *Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems, 1948–54* (Dublin: Government Publications Office, 1954), 135, 174.

47. Hoerder, "From Dreams to Possibilities," 6.

48. Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration*, 130.

49. Seán Tom Ceárnaí (aged 72), fisherman, Blasket islands, county Kerry, interviewed January 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

50. William Cahill (aged 65), retired post man, Ballask, Kilmore, county Wexford, interviewed March 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD; John Murphy; Richard Joyce (aged 90), farmer, Hayesland, Kilrane, county Wexford, interviewed March 1955, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

51. Tapes 6, 4, 1, and 7, and Proinsias (aged 57), victualer and farmer, Clarecastle, county Clare, interviewed May 27, 2001, Tape 2, ULOHP.

52. Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 12, 13; Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration*, 136.

53. Tadhg Ó Murchadha, An Coireán, county Kerry, collector, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

54. Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 76.

55. Richard Joyce (aged 90), farmer, Kilrane, county Wexford, interviewed March 1955, Ms. 1408, IFC, UCD. See also testimony about women returning with money by Bartley O Beirne, tuberculosis officer for County Galway to Coimisiún na Gaeltachta on June 13, 1925, 4, and by Seaghan P. MacEinri, Conradh na Gaeghilge on June 16, 1925, *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, 7.

56. Mrs. O Connor (Nellie Owens) (aged 85), housewife, Edenderry, county Offaly, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1408, IFC, UCD.

57. The Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems report and the minority report noted that "in this country, unlike many others, married women do not usually take up regular gain employment outside the home. . . . We regard it as deplorable that there are cases in which economy necessity forces married women to take up employment and so prevents them from giving full attention to their homes." Although the rider that this pattern was the "custom" elsewhere was accepted by Rev. Dr. Lucey, Catholic

bishop of Cork, in his minority report he criticized “housewives” disposed toward “going out to pictures, dances, races, clubs or perhaps jobs.” *Commission on Emigration*, 81, 341.

58. Inter-Departmental Working Party on Dollar Earnings, First Interim Report on Tourism, November 18, 1949, D/T, S13087B, NAI; Whelan, *Marshall Plan*, 339. These figures are approximate and include those who traveled to Ireland directly by sea and air but do not include those who traveled via Britain or Northern Ireland. In June 1953 the U.S. Department of Commerce published a figure of 23,800 Americans as having departed the United States for Ireland in 1952. “Notice,” *Irish Trade Journal* (September 1953): 159.

59. Extract from the *taoiseach*’s speech at Inter-Party Government meeting on October 5, 1956, D/T, S16095, NAI. In 1949 the first Inter-Party Government negotiated an easing of restrictions on visa requirements with the American government whereby the Irish visa requirement for American citizens entering Ireland as tourists was abolished provided they held a valid American passport. “Notice,” *Irish Trade Journal* (September 1949): 174.

60. Visiting relatives was one reason for such short-term visits, and others related to attendance at specific events such as the Tailtean games in 1924 and 1928, the Eucharistic Congress in 1932, the holy year celebrations in Rome in 1950 (drawing American visitors to visit en route), and An Tóstal in 1953. By 1950 it was evident to successive governments and leaders of tourism that while these events had drawn in American visitors to Ireland, the numbers were small in comparison to the numbers of Americans visiting Europe in general. This was particularly obvious after 1945, when shortages of dollars and the pressure from Marshall Plan administrators pushed Irish governments to become active on the matter. Fógara Fáilte, Annual Report and Accounts, 21 September 1951 to 31 March 1953, to the Minister for Industry and Commerce, D/T, S15674A, NAI; T. J. Sheehy, “The Irish Hotelier,” Oifig an Taoiseach to the government, June 13, 1950, D/T, S13087G, NAI.

61. Tape 7, ULOHP.

62. Tape 3, ULOHP.

63. Mary E. Daly, “‘Turn on the Tap’: The State, Irish Women and Running Water,” in *Women and Irish History*, ed. Maryann Valiulis and Mary O’Dowd (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997), 206–7.

64. Central Statistics Office, *That Was Then, This Is Now: Changes in Ireland, 1949–99* (Dublin: Government Publications Office, 2000), 22.

65. Daly, “Turn on the Tap,” 218.

66. Tape 2, ULOHP.

67. The importance of providing fully equipped bathrooms in Irish hotels was identified in 1950 by a group of Irish hoteliers who visited the United States under the auspices of the Marshall Plan. The facility was deemed a basic requirement for touring Americans and an area requiring capital investment by owners of Irish hotels. Brendan O’Regan and Patrick F. Dornan, Economic Co-operation Administration Technical Assistance Programme in travel, hotel and allied activities, 1950, April 29, 1950, D/T, S13087A, NAI; Tape 1, ULOHP44.

68. Tadgh Ó Murchadha, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD; Tapes 7 and 6, ULOHP.

69. Matthew Mangan (aged 76), farmer, Clonmullen, Edenderry, county Offaly, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1408, IFC, UCD.

70. Seán Tom Ceárnaí, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

71. *Ibid.*; Tadgh Ó Murchadha, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD; Tape 3, ULOHP.

72. Tadgh Ó Murchadha, Ms. 1407, and Matthew Mangan, Ms. 1408, IFC, UCD; Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration*, 138; Michael Corduff, Ms. 1410, Rosport, Ballina, County Mayo, notes, February 24, 1955, IFC, UCD.

73. Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 139; Seán Glennon (aged 78), small farmer, Eochail parish, Claregalway, county Galway, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1409, IFC, UCD.

74. Matthew Mangan, Ms. 1408, IFC, UCD.

75. Tape 3, ULOHP.

76. Seán Tom Ceárnaí, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

77. William Byrne (aged 54), farmer, Killane, Edenderry, county Offaly, interviewed February 1955, Ms. 1408, IFC, UCD. All testimonies identified a talkative, occasionally boastful nature as characteristics of the returnees, and the distinctive accent and use of slang emphasized their presence in a gathering; many were sought out for information about America.

78. Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 85; Clear, *Women of the House*, 34; Congress of Irish Unions, *Report on the Visit of a Team from the Congress of Irish Unions to the USA in 1951* (Dublin: Congress of Irish Unions, 1952), 21–23.

79. Seán Tom Ceárnaí, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD.

80. Tape 9, ULOHP.

81. Leo McCauley to Secretary, External Affairs, May 11, 1932, and McCauley to Secretary, July 14, 1932, Department of External Affairs (hereafter cited as D/EA), 21/116, NAI.

82. Enclosure to Despatch, No. 16 of 21, December 1922, Duke of Devonshire to Alexander Geddes; Thomas J. Conry, summary, n.d. (probably October 1921), NAI.

83. Timothy Healy to the duke of Devonshire, June 12, 1923, D/T, S2033, NAI.

84. See D/EA, 102/143, 102/32, NAI for other examples. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the Social Security Act on August 14, 1935, to provide for unemployment benefit, pensions, and help to needy members of society.

85. Leo McCauley to External Affairs, December 30, 1936, D/EA, 102/143, NAI; External Affairs to Justice, January 12, 1937, D/EA, 102/143, NAI; Garda Síochána, Cork to Justice, April 8, 1937, D/EA, 102/143, NAI; External Affairs to Leo McCauley, April 27, 1937, D/EA, 102/143, NAI.

86. Leo McCauley to External Affairs, April 8, 1937, D/EA, 102/32, NAI; Justice to External Affairs, May 18, 1937, D/EA, 102/32, NAI; Seán Murphy to Leo McCauley, April 22, 1937, D/EA, 102/32, NAI.

87. Leo McCauley to External Affairs, February 4, 1937, D/EA, 102/34, NAI.

88. Superintendent Dawson to Justice, February 16, 1937, D/EA, 102/34, NAI.

89. Seán Murphy to Leo McCauley, March 8, 1937, D/EA, 102/34, NAI.

90. Hugh Oram, *The Advertising Book: The History of Advertising in Ireland* (Dublin: Mo Books, 1986); Louise Ryan, *Gender, Identity and the Irish Press 1922–37* (Lampeter, U.K.: University of Wales Lampeter Press, 2002); Tape 1, ULOHP. These conclusions are being revisited in a research project examining the American influences on Irish society, 1922–60, funded by the IRCHSS.

91. Tape 5, ULOHP.

92. Tape 6, ULOHP.

93. Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922–79* (London: Fontana Press, 1985), 153.

94. *Furrow* 6, no. 1–2 (1955): 304; Brian Mellroy, *Irish Cinema: An Illustrated History* (Dun Laoghaire: Anna Livia Press, 1988), 39; Kevin Rockett, “The Silent Period,” in *Cinema and Ireland*, ed. Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons, and John Hill (London: Routledge, 1988), 39.

95. Tape 4, ULOHP.

96. Tape 8, ULOHP.

97. Pierre Sorlin, *European Cinemas, European Societies, 1939–1990* (London: Routledge, 1991). See also David Ellwood, ed., *Hollywood in Europe; Politics, Governments, Markets* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press 1994); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

98. Kerby Miller, “Emigration, Ideology and Identity in Post-famine Ireland,” *Studies* 75 (1986): 519; Cormac Ó Gráda, *A Rocky Road: The Irish Economy since the 1920s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 212; Enda Delaney, *Irish Emigration since 1921*, vol. 8 of *Studies in Irish Economic and Social History* (Dundalk, Ireland: Dundalgan Press, 2002), 33–36; Lee, *Ireland*, 374–77; *Capuchin Annual* (1931): 247. Despite the anti-emigration rhetoric promulgated by Irish political and religious leaders, there was no official encouragement for emigrants to return to the new independent Irish state unlike that offered by the Serb, Croat, and Slovene governments. Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 115.

99. *New York Times*, July 16, 1932; for more on the U.S. role in Irish revolutionary events, see Whelan, *United States Foreign Policy and Ireland*; Earl of Longford and Terence O’Neill, *Eamon de Valera* (London: Hutchinson, 1970).

100. See Whelan, *United States Foreign Policy and Ireland*, 261.

101. *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, report, 45, 54–55; *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, minutes of evidence, June 4, 1925, 4; *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, minutes of evidence, August 18, 1925, 7.

102. *Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Seasonal Migration to Great Britain, 1937–1938* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1939), 25, 26, 27.

103. *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, minutes of evidence, August 31, 1925, 15.

104. *Ibid.*, October 9, 1925, 2.

105. *Commission on Technical Education Report and Minutes of Evidence* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1927), minutes of evidence, February 7, 1927.

106. Evidence provided to the Intoxicating Liquor Commission in 1925 by J. C. Foley representing the Provincial Hotels Association was critical of Americans staying in hotels “bringing in all his relatives and drinking all day and all night,” and he proclaimed that “Americans don’t drink in America but do in Ireland.” However, this negative presence was balanced by praise for U.S. prohibition legislation. *Intoxicating Liquor Commission Report, 1925* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1925), minutes of evidence, June 30, 1925, May 18, 1925; *Commission on Emigration*, 137. Although this latter report offered a more nuanced analysis of the emigration problem and recommendations than hitherto, it was ignored.

107. Miller, "Emigration," 518.

108. In 1924 the Lenten pastorals of the Catholic Church hierarchy were preoccupied with "abuses," such as "women's fashions, immodest dress, indecent dancing, theatrical performances and cinema exhibitions, evil literature, drink, strikes and lock-outs." The extent to which these "evils" were associated with America is the subject of further research. Jim Smyth, "Dancing, Depravity and All That Jazz: The Public Dance Halls Act of 1935," *History Ireland* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 51–54. Whelan, *Marshall Plan*, 362; Clair Wills, *A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War: That Neutral Island* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 322; Mary Pat Kelly, *Home Away from Home: The Yanks in Ireland* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1994).

109. Whelan, *Marshall Plan*, 315–59.

110. USIS in Ireland, December 18, 1948, File 842, Box 16, State Department, RG 84, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.

111. U.S. Department of State, "Relations of the United States with Ireland, August 15, 1950," in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977), 3:1470–71.

112. *Enniscorthy Echo*, October 1, 1949. The author is grateful to Dr. Catherine O'Connor for providing this reference. Although the Catholic hierarchy and public in America divided along political lines, during the McCarthy anticommunist crusade, a prominent McCarthy supporter was Cardinal Francis Joseph Spellman of New York as well as Archbishop Cushing. Bishop Bernard Sheil of Chicago vehemently opposed Senator McCarthy's tactics. For more on McCarthyism and the Catholic Church, see Donald F. Crosby, *God Church and Flag: Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the Catholic Church 1950–1957* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1978).

113. Till Geiger, "'What Does America Hope to Gain?' Irish Left-wing Intellectuals and the Marshall Plan," in *Ireland, Europe and the Marshall Plan*, ed. Till Geigerl and Michael Kennedy, 154–77 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004). One politician, Deputy Peadar Cowan of the Clann na Poblachta party, opposed Marshall aid for Ireland and was expelled from his party for disloyalty to the leadership. Whelan, *Marshall Plan*, 389–90.

114. Whelan, *Marshall Plan*, 212–13. Further work is required on the impact of returned Irish Americans who took part in Irish organizations and local and national politics in a twentieth-century context. It has been argued for the nineteenth century that Irish Americans, particularly Fenians, who experienced American democracy were motivated to replicate it in Ireland, although others disagree. Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 159; Bernadette Whelan, *American Government in Ireland: A History of the US Consular Service, 1790–1913* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

115. Lee, *Ireland*, 377.

116. *Enniscorthy Echo*, October 1, 1949.

117. Bryan MacMahon, "Getting on the High Road Again," in *The Vanishing Irish*, ed. John O'Brien (London: W. H. Allen, 1955), 207; Delaney, *Irish Emigration*, 13.

118. Quoted in Lee, *Ireland*, 377.

119. External Affairs memorandum, August 30, 1947, D/T, S11582B, NAI.

120. Donald M. MacRaild, "Crossing Migrant Frontiers: Comparative Reflections on Irish Migrants in Britain and the United States during the Nineteenth Century,"

Immigrants and Minorities 18, nos. 2–3 (1999): 64; *Commission on Emigration*, Reservation no. 9, 283.

121. *Commission on Emigration*, Minority Report no. 1, 341. This work is being undertaken in the project referred to in note 90.

122. Lee, *Ireland*, 384–85.

123. *Ibid.*, 385.

124. *Commission for the Sparsely Populated Areas: Reports to General Synod 1957–1965* (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 1965), April 15, 1959, 6; April 7, 1960, 6. I am grateful to Dr. Catherine O'Connor for providing this report, which is located in the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland library, Dublin.

125. Seán Tom Ceárnaí, Ms. 1407, IFC, UCD; Tape 2, ULOHP.

126. Tape 9, ULOHP.

127. Tapes 5, 9, 8, and 4, ULOHP.

“The Transmigrated Soul of Some West Indian Planter”

Absenteeism, Slavery, and the Irish National Tale

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The complexities of Irish identity in the eighteenth century shaped and were shaped by Ireland’s varied roles within the British Empire. As historian Alvin Jackson argues, “Irish people were simultaneously major participants in Empire, and a significant source of subversion. For the Irish the Empire was both an agent of liberation and of oppression: it provided both the path to social advancement and the shackles of incarceration.”¹ Ireland’s physical proximity to England rendered the people more culturally familiar than those inhabitants of the distant reaches of empire, so that within Ireland, the native Gaelic (Catholic) population could at best serve as imperfect colonial subjects, “others” against which the English colonizers could define themselves. The creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland under the 1800 Act of Union only amplified the ambiguities of Irish identity. The descendants of the Englishmen who, in the seventeenth century, had dispossessed the remaining Irish landowners represented Britain’s imperial power in Ireland; however, those Anglo-Irish gentry who left their Irish estates and sought a place in British society were rejected as mere colonials, neither English nor Irish. Although managing one’s colonial estates from afar was nothing new in British imperial policy, for some the practice had a particular association: Samuel Johnson said that the “phrase ‘Absentee’ . . . [is] used *with regard to Irishmen* living out of their country.”²

Irish colonial identity, difficult to “fix” at home, proved similarly unstable and destabilizing elsewhere in the British Empire. As Donald Akenson notes, the Irish “were imperialized quickly and became expert imperialists themselves.”³ Ireland was a major source of white migration to the New World, particularly in the seventeenth century.⁴ Comprising Protestant and Catholic merchants and landowners (the latter fleeing religious persecution), indentured servants, transported criminals, and others, those migrants were essential to the creation of

what scholars now call the Atlantic World. Because they owned, managed, and worked in bondage on West Indian plantations, their various forms of Irishness came to be associated with the violence of slave societies; the Irish were at once the colonizers—brutal overseers, capable of extraordinary cruelty, and the colonized—indentured servants and slave sympathizers, perhaps ready to join with enslaved Africans to foment rebellion.⁵

Anglo-Irish novelists Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan) were two important voices in the discussion of Ireland's place in the British Empire in the decades surrounding the Act of Union (1800). Maria Edgeworth was born in Oxfordshire in 1767 or 1768, educated in England, and first visited her father's Irish estate, Edgeworthstown (county Longford), in 1773; she became a permanent resident there in 1782. Her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Irish member of Parliament, inventor, and reformer, had a profound influence on his daughter, encouraging her to assist him in the management of his estate and writing introductions to and frequently editing her literary productions. She is perhaps best known for *Castle Rackrent* (1800), a satiric tale about the downfall of an Anglo-Irish family, widely considered the first regional novel. Her long and successful career as a novelist concluded with her death in 1849.⁶ Her contemporary, Sydney Owenson, was born in 1776 or 1783 (she liked to be vague on this particular point); she sometimes claimed she was born aboard a ship crossing the Irish Channel as her English Protestant mother, Jane Hill, traveled to join her Irish Catholic father, the actor Robert Owenson. Her identity as something in between—half Catholic, half Protestant; half English, half Irish—helped to authorize her position as a cultural go-between; however, she identified most strongly with her father and his romanticized Gaelic origins. She began her writing career in 1801 with the first of some twenty-seven published works, including novels, poetry, and travelogues. In 1812 she married physician Sir Charles Morgan. She lived most of her adult life in Dublin, making visits to England, France, and Italy. She was awarded a pension from the British government in 1837, the first woman writer to receive such an honor. She died in 1859.⁷

Both Edgeworth and Owenson used the medium of the national tale, an emerging and predominantly female-authored genre invested with an explicitly political agenda, variously to restore and refine a separate Irish culture in the face of political and economic incorporation. The two women were not necessarily allies, however. Neither appreciated the frequent comparisons of their work, Edgeworth calling such comparisons “odious,” and Owenson claiming that their work “did not come under the same category.”⁸ Although it is essentially correct to say that Edgeworth supported the Act of Union and Owenson resisted it, such a statement oversimplifies the women's complex political and cultural philosophies. A man of liberal principles who supported the Union, Edgeworth's father voted against the legislation in 1800, refusing to be bribed into endorsing an act that was not widely supported.⁹ Maria saw in him the model of a responsible

landowner, and her work indicates her belief that a resident Anglo-Irish gentry, supported by union with Britain, held out the best hope for Ireland’s future. Owenson, who identified with her Irish, rather than Anglo-Irish, roots, took a more radical and explicitly nationalist position against the Union, using her pen to document a native Irish culture and civilization threatened by absorption into the United Kingdom; she supported Catholic emancipation and was sharply critical of the failures of Ireland’s landowners. It should be noted, however, that both women lived and worked primarily in a post-Union Ireland and were cognizant of the realities (both positive and negative) that sprang from it. Two works in particular, Owenson’s novel *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) and Edgeworth’s novel *The Absentee* (1812), offer the reader useful insights into the writers’ attitudes toward the Union and the place of the Anglo-Irish landowning class within Ireland.¹⁰

Both works also make brief connections between Anglo-Irish absenteeism and West Indian plantation slavery. In Owenson’s novel the Irish lands of one “Lord M—,” an English earl, are poorly managed by his steward, whose cruel treatment of the tenants suggests that his body houses “the transmigrated soul of some *West Indian* planter”; at the conclusion of the novel, the earl’s son is given the estate on the condition that he resides there, with the stern injunction to remember that he is “not placed by despotism over a band of slaves” but is nonetheless responsible for the tenants’ economic and moral welfare.¹¹ Lord Clonbrony, title character of *The Absentee*, earns the epithet of “West India planter” based on his long absence from his Irish estate, while an Irish tenant is characterized as having once been “a good and willing *slave*” when Clonbrony was present “to give ’em *employ*.”¹² In making these references, Edgeworth and Owenson mobilized a transatlantic discourse about race and class as a means of situating Ireland’s post-Union nationalist struggles within an Atlantic World of colonies, plantations, slavery, and absenteeism. What the novels ultimately demonstrate, however, is the damaging effect on Ireland’s hopes that could result from carelessly drawing such parallels or behaving in ways that might reinforce negative stereotypes. Association with the Atlantic World was, for these Irish novelists, primarily an association with the British Empire and a reminder of Ireland’s colonial status within it. The West Indies’ inherently colonial identity is shown to be at odds with Ireland’s more indeterminate status and its attempts to throw off the mantle of colonial identity entirely, either through political independence or through union with Great Britain.

The National Tale and the Atlantic World

Through at least the early decades of the nineteenth century, the activities and identity of what scholars now call the “Atlantic World” were inextricably bound up with slavery and the slave trade. Even in the places least intimately familiar with the world of plantation slavery, the “extra-colonial expropriations of the language of slavery” exerted a powerful emotional pull, especially in an era of

intense debates over abolition and human rights.¹³ In *Subject to Others*, Moira Ferguson argues persuasively that British women writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries “displaced anxieties about their own assumed powerlessness and inferiority onto their representations of slaves”; she charts the birth of feminism in their usage of the rhetoric of slavery to depict white women’s oppression.¹⁴ Jane Austen’s sharp indictment of the treatment of governesses through a statement one character interprets as “a fling at the slave-trade” provides just one example of the pervasiveness of such usage to challenge gender and class inequities.¹⁵ In *Mansfield Park* Sir Thomas Bertram, the protagonist’s uncle, is an absentee West Indian planter. Austen’s references in this text to slavery in Antigua, made famous (or infamous) by Edward Said’s analysis in *Culture and Imperialism*, are similarly suggestive.¹⁶ Katie Trumpener has characterized Austen’s novel as an “overarching critique of imperial ideology,” “preoccupied with the indirect effects of slavery and the long reach of the plantation system into the heart of England.” If this seems a rather large interpretive burden to place on a brief exchange within the novel, Trumpener asserts that “indirection . . . is the key to Austen’s treatment of abolitionists’ concerns and what gives the novel its subtlety and power.”¹⁷ These apparently inconsequential references to, or in the case of *Mansfield Park* silences about, slavery form part of a tissue of signification in which all contemporary British readers would have been unavoidably enmeshed.

It should come as no surprise, then, that other British writers recognized the power of the rhetoric of slavery and employed it in their treatises on politics, economics, and other “domestic” issues. Travel narratives, a popular source of information about Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, frequently fell back on comparisons between West Indian slaves and Irish peasants in order to highlight the terrible living and working conditions of the native Irish. English law student George Cooper, who traveled through Ireland in 1799 and published his *Letters on the Irish Nation* in 1800, offered this typical comment: “The condition of the West India negro is a paradise to it [the situation of the Irish peasant]. The slave in our colonies has meat to eat and distilled spirit to drink, whilst the life of the Irish peasant is that of a savage who feeds upon milk and roots.”¹⁸ In fact so familiar was this trope that Bryan Edwards, in his *History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies*, asserted that the West Indian slaves’ habitations, although far from being “very tolerable” by English standards, actually “far excel the cabins of the Scotch and Irish peasants as described by Mr. [Arthur] Young and other travellers.”¹⁹

Travel narratives such as Cooper’s, combined with works such as Edwards’s *History* and Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, form one context within which the references to slavery and the West Indies in *The Absentee* and *The Wild Irish Girl* would have been understood by their readers. In her study of the role of empire in British fiction of the early nineteenth century, Suvendrini Perera remarks that

"the numerous ways in which slavery and the slave trade were written about in these years were part of the process through which the literary forms of the day were constituting themselves, discovering and ordering their proper concerns and boundaries, at the same time contesting, refining, or validating existing boundaries."²⁰ Although it falls outside the scope of Perera's study, one of the "literary forms of the day" attempting to discover and order its "proper concerns and boundaries" was the national tale, a genre initiated by and associated primarily with Union-era Irish writers. National tales, such as *The Wild Irish Girl* and *The Absentee*, combine elements of the travel narrative and the romance, as the protagonist tours Ireland and eventually falls in love with the country and its people. The plot "typically concludes with the cross-cultural marriage of an English or Anglo-Irish landlord hero (generally an erstwhile absentee) and a displaced native Irish heroine."²¹ Katie Trumpener has called the national tale a kind of "anticolonial tract" that resists traditional negative depictions of Ireland and attempts to supplant those images with a more complex examination of "cultural distinctiveness, national policy, and political separatism."²² Its imagined audience is primarily, if not exclusively, English.²³ The national tale, like the nation itself, "comes under severe pressure in sites of asymmetric power relations and at historical junctures when notions of national identity become unmoored from conceptions that have long pertained," argues Ina Ferris.²⁴ One such pressure point was of course the Act of Union, but the "asymmetric power relations" of colonialism in general, and slavery in particular, as Perera observes, helped to shape the boundaries of both literary genres and their frequently political "concerns."²⁵ The national tale's position vis-à-vis questions of cultural identity, economics, and power render even a momentary engagement with the issue of slavery significant.

Apart from her national tale, both Edgeworth's 1801 novel *Belinda* and her 1804 story "The Grateful Negro" reference the West Indies and slavery and openly draw information about slavery from the 1794 edition of Bryan Edwards's *History*. In addition to her familiarity with Edwards's popular work, her letters reflect at least a passing awareness of the efforts of the abolitionist movement. A 1792 letter records her skeptical response to an English boycott of West Indian sugar: "Whether it will at all conduce to the end proposed [an amelioration of the slaves' treatment] is perhaps wholly uncertain, and in the mean time we go on eating apple pies sweetened with sugar." The boycotters' recommended substitution of honey for sugar causes her to wonder, flippantly, "Will it not be rather hard upon the poor bees in the end?"²⁶ However, her letters also mention a visit to a slave ship in Bristol with her elder brother, Richard, and her evident disgust at "the dreadfully small hole in which the poor slaves are stowed together, so that they cannot stir."²⁷ The combined evidence of her letters and her published works suggests that while Edgeworth may have opposed the slave trade, she was not, as some critics have suggested, an advocate for the immediate and total abolition of slavery in the British colonies.²⁸ Rather, Edgeworth struggled to balance her

belief in paternalism, embodied by a responsible landowner, with her concerns over the dangers of “creolization” and corruption by the exotic other.²⁹

Because Edgeworth’s views on slavery are so tricky to pin down, it becomes increasingly difficult to claim, as some scholars have, that “she discerned parallels between the respective plights of enslaved Africans and a colonized Irish peasantry.”³⁰ Certainly Edgeworth’s “views of Britain’s Caribbean colonies inform and are informed by her analysis of colonial Ireland,” as Trumpener argues in *Bardic Nationalism*.³¹ However, given Edgeworth’s ambivalent engagement with the slavery debate and her personal experience with the tenants of her father’s estate, she would no doubt have recognized the limitations of appropriating the language of slavery to describe Irish experience. If the Irish peasants were “slaves,” then by extension the Anglo-Irish landlords were “West Indian planters,” with all the attendant negative cultural associations. Alternatively, behaving like a “West Indian planter” (an absentee, prone to excess) figuratively turned the Irish peasants into slaves, making it easier to racialize and ultimately subordinate them (and by extension all Irish, including the Anglo-Irish). Either scenario made Ireland a less-desirable partner for Britain. Owenson’s degree of familiarity with West Indian slavery is more difficult to trace, and her references to it in *Wild Irish Girl* are thus more challenging to contextualize. However, Owenson spends the greater portion of her novel demonstrating the ways in which an English nobleman may be improved by contact with the Irish national character, not denigrated, as he might be by an association with the West Indies and slavery. Owenson’s strongly anti-Union sentiments required an elevated native Irish population, not an “enslaved” one; Edgeworth’s desire to depict the Anglo-Irish landholding class in a positive light stemmed from her support for the Union and the emergent British national identity it made conceivable. Edgeworth and Owenson’s work highlights the perils of making a casual comparison to slavery merely to elicit sympathy. Such a powerful rhetorical device could have a potentially negative effect on Ireland’s efforts to reimagine itself.

West Indian Slavery and Irish Independence in The Wild Irish Girl

Set in the years just before the Act of Union, *The Wild Irish Girl* tells the story of an English nobleman’s dissolute second son with a “confirmed prejudice” against Ireland and the Irish. Horatio M— believes the Irish people’s “natural character . . . is turbulent, faithless, intemperate and cruel; formerly destitute of arts, letters, or civilization, and still but slowly submitting to their salutary and ennobling influence.”³² His father, determined to remove his son from the temptations of London, nevertheless “banishes” him to the family’s Irish estates, which came into their possession during the Cromwellian wars. Soon after his arrival Horatio discovers a ruin on his father’s estate, inhabited by an impoverished Irishman who styles himself as the “Prince of Inismore,” his daughter Glorvina, and a priest. In order to discover more about them, Horatio assumes the name of Henry

Mortimer and takes on the character of an "itinerant artist."³³ As "Henry" begins to fall in love with Glorvina, his appreciation for Irish culture grows and he develops sympathy for the people his forebears had dispossessed. Meanwhile the earl has arranged his son's marriage to an English heiress; Horatio, who wishes instead to marry Glorvina, learns that she is betrothed to a mysterious stranger. At the conclusion of the novel, Horatio disrupts Glorvina's marriage to the stranger, only to find that the stranger is his father. When the earl sees his son's genuine affection for Glorvina and for Ireland, he releases Glorvina to marry Horatio and grants his son the Irish estate, on the condition that he spend "eight months out of every twelve on that spot from whence the very nutrition of your existence is to be derived; and in the bosom of those from whose labour and exertion your independence and prosperity are to flow."³⁴

The Wild Irish Girl has been read most commonly as figuring the Act of Union through the marriage of its English and Irish protagonists.³⁵ The earl describes the "family alliance" of Horatio and Glorvina as "prophetically typical of a national unity of interests and affections between those who may be factiously severe, but who are naturally allied."³⁶ However, Owenson problematizes this reading in several ways. First, Glorvina, the wild Irish girl, is presented as having little real choice in whom she weds. Her father, the Prince, wants nothing to do with the Englishmen who have robbed his family of their rightful inheritance, so, to placate the Prince and endear himself to the family's nationalist sympathies, the earl has masqueraded as a United Irishman, fleeing capture after the 1798 Rebellion. Similarly, she does not know the real identity of the young man who has presented himself as a "poor, wandering, unconnected being."³⁷ Ireland, in the figure of Glorvina, has repeatedly been wooed by England under false pretenses.³⁸ Second, Owenson uses all the elements of her novel—characterizations, plot, and especially her extensive footnotes—to familiarize her readers with Ireland's distinctive history and culture. Thus the earl's final call to form a national union in which "the distinctions of English and Irish, of protestant and catholic" will be "inseparably blended" and "for ever buried" falls rather flat.³⁹ In fact the novel's conclusion (which takes place before 1800) may be read as Owenson's ironic statement, made from her post-Union perspective, on the inevitable failure of a Union founded on assimilationist principles.

Instead, *The Wild Irish Girl* demonstrates the ways in which an English nobleman may be improved by contact with the Irish national character. The real evil in Anglo-Irish relations, as Owenson presents it, is absenteeism and the concomitant lack of familiarity with Ireland. Until the present earl inherited, no member of the M— family had visited the estate since its acquisition 150 years earlier.⁴⁰ Horatio describes M— House as "cold, comfortless, and desolate—with a few wretched looking peasants working languidly about the grounds. In short, every thing breathed the deserted mansion of an *absentee*."⁴¹ The estate is managed in the earl's absence by Mr. Clendinning, his English steward, who regales Horatio

with tales of the “ferocity, cruelty, and uncivilized state” of the local residents and insists “a slave-driver was the only man fit to deal with them: they were all rebellious, idle, cruel and treacherous.”⁴² Clendinning’s violent and unjust treatment of the tenants inspires Horatio’s claim that “it is certain, that the diminutive body of our worthy steward, is the abode of the transmigrated soul of some *West Indian* planer.”⁴³ Such comparisons would have been familiar to many of Owenson’s readers. Another 1806 text, Sir John Carr’s *Stranger in Ireland*, makes explicit what *The Wild Irish Girl* implies: “The poor Irish differ from the West Indian slave in little more than that they suffer by the hand *which they have not seen*: it is their fate to languish under the oppression of the agents of absentee lords, and to be wasted to the bone by *middle-men*.”⁴⁴ Absentee landownership was of course nothing new in a colonial context, and it was particularly common in locales perceived as undesirable, such as Ireland or the West Indies, owing to their climate, population, or peripheral location.⁴⁵ Absenteeism in Ireland could and did result in additional maltreatment and oppression of the native population, just as it was known to do to enslaved Africans in the West Indies

The rhetorical connection between Ireland and the West Indies drew on specific parallels—the laborers’ poverty and mistreatment by cruel overseers, abetted by rampant absentee landlordism. However, Owenson (and to a certain degree, Edgeworth) also make implicit reference to a commonly accepted correlation between Irish peasants and West Indian slaves in the late eighteenth century: an association with violent rebellion against an empowered minority.⁴⁶ English readers whose attention was drawn to Ireland would certainly have recollected the bloody Rebellion of 1798, in which the United Irishmen attempted to regain Irish independence with the aid of the French but were stopped by Orange militia. Trumpener notes that national tales “return repeatedly” to the Rebellion as “both an exemplification and a culmination of many decades of civil unrest.”⁴⁷ The uprising and its swift consequences—the execution of the rebels, a heightened English military presence in Ireland, and ultimately the Act of Union—all hover at the margins of Owenson’s novel. Those same English readers, when reminded of West Indian slavery, might have reflected on the chronic fear of slave rebellions and the numerous slave insurrections, most notoriously those that took place in Saint Domingue in the 1790s and led to the Haitian Revolution. Horatio sees in Clendinning’s cruelty a “defence for the imputed turbulence of the Irish peasantry.”⁴⁸ Abuse of power, encapsulated in the label “West Indian planter,” leads inevitably, and even understandably, to rebellion, “for if power is a dangerous gift even in the regulated mind of elevated rank, what does it become in the delegated authority of ignorance, meanness, and illiberality” such as that of an unscrupulous agent or brutal overseer?⁴⁹ *The Wild Irish Girl*, calling to mind the failed promises of Anglo-Irish union, particularly Catholic emancipation, was published just as Britain moved to abolish the slave trade. Horatio’s

explicit connection between the West Indies and Ireland makes concrete a host of implied parallels.

The comparison of Ireland to the West Indies is invoked only by or in relation to the characters who have failed to form a sympathetic relationship with Ireland. Clendinning, despite having lived in Ireland for five years, has formed no attachment to the country and continues to describe its people as bestial, lazy, and dangerous.⁵⁰ By contrast, Horatio, who acknowledges that his "confirmed prejudice" against the Irish has been nursed since his childhood, finds his anti-Irish stereotypes shaken immediately upon his arrival on the island, such that Ireland soon "ranks in my estimation next to my own [country]."⁵¹ He makes the comparison between Clendinning's behavior and the brutality associated with West Indian slavery, but in doing so, he distances himself from it. He does not continue to share Clendinning's assumptions about the Irish people and rejects his claims that extracting labor from the Irish requires "an halter" or "a slave-driver."⁵² Even as Owenson uses the idea of the West Indian planter to characterize Clendinning's cruelty, she calls attention to the flaw in the metaphor: that is, the long-standing assumption that the institution of slavery (combined with location) turned otherwise civilized English people into West Indian planters; instead, Owenson suggests, people with the character of "West Indian planters" try to turn their subordinates into slaves, regardless of location. The Irish tenants have been enslaved—both dehumanized and racialized—by Clendinning's prejudiced mismanagement of the estate, a direct result of the earl's absenteeism. This process of linguistic and, in some cases, almost literal enslavement inevitably ran counter to patriot efforts to emphasize the strengths and virtues of the Irish national character and simultaneously disrupted attempts to forge a union between Britain and Ireland. As long as Ireland retained its colonial status—marked by association with West Indian plantation slavery—it could never form an egalitarian relationship with Great Britain.

As Horatio's Irish education begins to dominate the narrative, the references and comparisons to the West Indies disappear from the text—not surprisingly, since the thrust of the plot is Horatio's (and the reader's) increasing understanding and love of Ireland. When the earl reappears in the final pages, however, he reintroduces the rhetoric of slavery and its association with absenteeism. He urges his son, "Remember that you are not placed by despotism over a band of slaves, creatures of the soil, and as such to be considered; but by Providence, over a certain portion of men, who, in common with the rest of their nation, are the descendants of a brave, a free, and an enlightened people."⁵³ Unlike Clendinning, who regards the Irish tenants as slaves, the earl prefers to focus instead on his (and his son's) "providential" inheritance of an Irish estate, populated by people who are not slaves, but who have been reduced to a state of slavery and who must be raised up by the sound practices of a resident landlord. He resists associations

that might result in his being called a “West Indian planter,” preferring instead the label of “*English landholder*,” nonetheless a godlike figure set apart from, and above, the general populace.⁵⁴ Proper management will reinvigorate the best qualities of the Irish national character, he claims, but this reemergence seems at odds with his desire that the union of Ireland/Glorvina and England/Horatio would produce, in effect, an erasure of separate national identities. His determinedly English ownership and authority, associated with West Indian plantation slavery, can be contrasted to Horatio’s wish that he “had been born the Lord of these beautiful ruins, the Prince of this isolated little territory, the adored Chieftain of these affectionate and natural people.”⁵⁵ Horatio’s is certainly also a proprietary gesture, but one made in Irish, not English, terms. The earl’s return to the rhetoric of slavery may be understood, finally, as another attempt to discredit his voice and the pro-Union partisans for whom he speaks. Like Clendinning, he has failed to develop a sufficient attachment to “the purely natural, national character” of Ireland.⁵⁶ Ireland was repeatedly tied linguistically to other Atlantic World colonies through the rhetoric of slavery, but Owenson works to challenge and ultimately reject this association, to create a separate, independent identity for Ireland.

West Indian Planters and Anglo-Irish Identity in The Absentee

In an essay on Edgeworth’s *Belinda*, Katherine Kirkpatrick notes the similarities between absentee landlordism in Ireland and the West Indies, with their comparable goals of “increased economic and social status, preferably in English society.” But colonists who returned “home” paid “the price of significant and perpetual displacement,” she notes, never sure about their national identity, never fully colonizer, because always associated with the colonized.⁵⁷ A similar anxiety about colonial identity activates much of Maria Edgeworth’s Irish fiction. From the first scene in *The Absentee*, the reader is made aware of the disdain with which the London fashionable set regards Irish absentees, particularly those like Lady Clonbrony, who makes every attempt “to pass for English” and fails miserably, despite “prodigious expence” and effort.⁵⁸ While she works to gain admission to the “frozen circles” of English society, her husband, Lord Clonbrony, “who was a great person in Dublin, found himself nobody in England, a mere cipher in London,” and has turned for companionship to a social set “beneath him . . . in rank and education.”⁵⁹ Their only son, Lord Colambre, just returned from Cambridge, is dismayed by his parents’ condition. Long residence in England and an English education have moderated his “Irish enthusiasm” with “English prudence,” but “a sense of duty and patriotism attached him to Ireland,” and now he must confront his future—will he, like his parents, be an Irish absentee?⁶⁰ He determines to travel to Ireland incognito and see the country for himself. There he observes firsthand the horrors of absenteeism and the importance of an honest agent. When he returns to London, he finds the family trapped under a ruinous

debt and successfully persuades them that they are needed on their Irish estates, where they can live economically and happily. To affirm his intention to settle in Ireland, Colambre proposes marriage to his cousin, Grace Nugent, whose very name, echoing the ballad by Carolan, associates her with Ireland. The novel ends with a stirring call to repatriation: "It's growing the fashion not to be an Absentee."⁶¹

The adverse effects of absenteeism are demonstrated in detailed depictions of the misuse of human and physical resources. Although Lord Clonbrony is fond of saying that people should "stay in their own country, live on their own estates, and kill their own mutton," he has given in to his wife's desire to live the fashionable life in London, at great cost.⁶² Upon his return Colambre gives a striking example of his family's profligacy: "A great part of your timber, the growth of a century—swallowed in the entertainment of one winter in London"; for a few months' dubious pleasure, "our hills [are] to be bare for another half century to come!"⁶³ Because of the family's absence, the tenants lack domestic comfort; Colambre finds "squalid children, with scarcely rags to cover them" living in "miserable huts."⁶⁴ Even Clonbrony Castle has "an air of desertion and melancholy," not unlike *The Wild Irish Girl's* M— House.⁶⁵ The moderating influence of Protestantism is not felt because "the parson was away always, since the lord was at home [in England]—that is, was not at home [in Ireland]."⁶⁶ Tenants are wrongfully dispossessed by dishonest middlemen and reluctantly consider immigrating to America.⁶⁷ Although Colambre has boldly declared himself a "friend to Ireland," his travels teach him that absentees are, in fact, "enemies to Ireland," having failed in their duty both to the people and to the country.⁶⁸

It is in this context that Lord Clonbrony's agent labels him a "West India planter," so far removed from the sight of the squalor and misery in which his tenants live that they "might as well . . . be negroes" and he "in Jamaica, or the other world."⁶⁹ The comparison is made by Mr. Burke, the model of a good agent, and so we might imagine that the sting is particularly painful for the absentee's son to hear. Significantly the force of the parallel does not rely (at least, solely) on the comparison of Irish peasants to "negroes" and the presumed objection to slavery. One tenant, now forced to travel to England to do itinerant labor, his family reduced to begging, is described as having been "a good and willing *slave*" when Lord Clonbrony "was in it to give 'em *employ*."⁷⁰ Rather the parallel is drawn based on the proprietor's lack of familiarity with the day-to-day operations of his estate: "He is at a distance, and cannot find out the truth."⁷¹ Even the agent to whom Lord Clonbrony has entrusted his estate's management, "Old Nick" Garraghty, lives in Dublin and appears only on rent-collecting days, with no time "to see or hear us [the tenants], or mind our improvements, any more than listen to our complaints!"⁷² He employs his brother as an under-agent, but although Dennis Garraghty is resident on the estate, he too does not "mind [the tenants'] concerns."⁷³ Unlike *The Wild Irish Girl*, wherein the landed proprietor

is largely excused and the blame falls squarely on his dishonest and cruel agent, in *The Absentee*, the landlords are shown to have a “duty and interest . . . to reside in Ireland, to uphold justice by example and authority”; when they “[neglect] this duty, [they] commit power to bad hands and bad hearts—abandon their tenantry to oppression and their property to ruin.”⁷⁴ Such neglect, Edgeworth shows, invites comparison to plantation slaveholding.

Edgeworth’s short story, “The Grateful Negro,” establishes her familiarity with the characteristics associated with West Indian planters. The story contrasts two men, Mr. Jefferies and Mr. Edwards, who represent the extreme ends of the spectrum of behaviors associated with plantation slavery:

Mr. Jefferies considered the negroes as an inferior species, incapable of gratitude, disposed to treachery, and to be roused from their natural indolence only by force. He treated his slaves,—or rather suffered his overseer to treat them,—with the greatest severity.

Jefferies was not a man of a cruel temper, but he was thoughtless and extravagant. . . . He required from his overseer, as he said, produce and not excuses.

Durant, the overseer, did not scruple to use the most cruel and barbarous methods of forcing the slaves to exertions beyond their strength.⁷⁵

Mr. Jefferies’s improvidence, we are told, frequently results in the seizure of his slaves and the produce of their provision grounds to pay their master’s debt, the separation of families, and other antidomestic consequences, circumstances not unlike those faced by Lord Clonbrony’s tenants, who face starvation, loss of property, and familial separation because of their landlord’s apparent indifference and extravagance. Like Durant, Clonbrony’s agents are continually pressed by their employer to extract more from the people and the land than either can responsibly give.⁷⁶ The most significant difference between Clonbrony and Jefferies is that Jefferies is resident in Jamaica; however, Jefferies is an absentee in spirit and makes every effort to separate himself from the work of the plantation.

All this is contrasted to Mr. Edwards, a “benevolent” planter who “wished that there was no such thing as slavery in the world” and thus “treated his slaves with all possible humanity and kindness” and “adopted those plans for the amelioration of the state of the slaves which appeared to him the most likely to succeed without producing any violent agitation or revolution.”⁷⁷ His engagement with the work of the plantation, his concern for his slaves’ well-being, ultimately limits the damage caused by a slave revolt on the island; however, Durant, Jefferies’s overseer, is tortured and killed, and Jefferies’s house and sugar cane are burned, a loss from which the planter cannot recover financially.⁷⁸ Anxiety over the continual threat of slave revolts, like those that occurred in Saint Domingue in the 1790s, would likely have resonated with Edgeworth and brought to mind her personal experience in the Irish uprising of 1798, in which her father was

nearly hanged for a French spy.⁷⁹ Richard Edgeworth was an object of his peers’ suspicion, in part because of his support for Catholic emancipation and politically “soft” management of his estate.⁸⁰ In September 1798, Catholic rebels spared the house at Edgeworthstown when many other manors were ransacked or destroyed, an event Maria might have taken as a sign of the justness of her father’s decision to reside in Ireland and manage his own estate.

If Edgeworth’s message in the novel (and elsewhere) about the evils of absenteeism is unambiguous, however, her position on colonial identity is not. The characters in *The Absentee* express their anxiety about a loss of identity outside the metropolitan center (“one gets . . . a notion, one’s nobody out of Lon’on”), and Lady Clonbrony, we are told, could never “pass” for English.⁸¹ Who or what, then, were the Anglo-Irish? Were they subject to the same discriminatory attitudes faced by other colonists who returned to England? The qualities associated with English colonists in the West Indies in the eighteenth century—Edward Long described them in 1774 as “indolen[t],” “bad oeconomists [*sic*],” “liable to sudden transports of anger,” “too much addicted to expensive living, costly entertainments, dress, and equipage”—suggestively overlap with those characteristics thought to be stereotypically Irish: laziness, intemperance, rashness, violence, imprudence (particularly with respect to hospitality).⁸² Several Irish characters in *The Absentee*, including Clonbrony and Colambre, exhibit certain of these behaviors.⁸³ Although *The Absentee* contains only one explicit reference to the West Indies, the novel is peppered with turns of phrase that evoke a colonial context, and particularly an association with slavery in the West Indies. Lord Clonbrony is urged to return to Ireland to resume his “benevolent” actions, much like Mr. Edwards in “The Grateful Negro,” perhaps, or the title characters in Thomas Bellamy’s well-known antiemancipation play, *The Benevolent Planters* (1789). Clonbrony will be met by a “grateful” people, his son promises, a word that cannot help but call to mind Edgeworth’s slave story and its endorsement of gratitude as a fit response to slavery under a “benevolent” master.⁸⁴ Like any planter’s only son, Colambre has been raised to take his place among the colonial elite: everyone “from the lowest servant to the well-dressed dependent of the family . . . had conspired to wait upon, to fondle, to flatter, to worship, this darling of their lord.” This “unqualified submission [and] . . . visions of his future grandeur had touched his infant thought, yet, fortunately, before he acquired any fixed habits of insolence or tyranny, he was carried far away from all that were bound or willing to submit to his commands.”⁸⁵ He is sent away to school in England, undoubtedly with the children of others who had made their fortunes in the colonies; Willie Sypher notes that “by 1770 over three-fourths of the children of West-Indian planters were being educated in England.”⁸⁶ When Colambre later travels to Ireland, a traveling companion attempts “to make the Irish and Ireland ridiculous and contemptible” in hopes of demonstrating to him the impossibility of living among the Irish and thus “confirm him as an absentee.”⁸⁷ Edgeworth

knew firsthand the temptations and frustrations faced by Anglo-Irish landowners and absentees and clearly understood the parallels to the circumstances of other displaced colonists.

Rather than reaffirming the fitness of the West Indian metaphor, however, Edgeworth presents an alternative to its Atlantic World colonial framework. Colambre may be similar in many respects to the children of West Indian planters, but his Irish birth and English education have made him not Creole, but “all that a *British* nobleman ought to be.”⁸⁸ The Act of Union creates a new identity not possible in other colonial contexts. Whereas the climate and culture of the West Indies were popularly perceived as deleterious to English settlers, the opposite is true of Ireland, according to *The Absentee*. Furthermore, exposure to things English can “set the fashion of something better” in Ireland and elevate the Irish national character.⁸⁹ The “West Indian planter” comparison fails, Edgeworth shows, because it erroneously links Ireland, the “sister country,” to distant and alien colonies that, unlike Ireland, could never be joined to Great Britain, could never be “British.”⁹⁰

Conclusion

In *The English in the West Indies* (1888), James Anthony Froude recounts his experience of reading English newspapers in Jamaica, papers full of the agitation over home rule for Ireland.⁹¹ The reports inspire a lengthy reflection on the successes and failures of colonialism, in which he explicitly equates “a race like the Irish” with “the negroes whom you have forced into an unwilling subjection”; it is Britain’s “right and our duty . . . to govern such races and govern them well,” he concludes.⁹² Froude’s comments are a late example of the long history of stereotyping of the Irish—and particularly, in the nineteenth century, racial stereotyping—to justify their continued oppression.⁹³ The comments gesture also toward an assumed long-standing connection between Ireland and the West Indies. It seems hardly coincidental that, in thinking of Ireland, Froude’s mind turns to West Indian slavery, which had been abolished some fifty years earlier. Rather, Froude’s remarks open the door to considering the ways in which the 1800 Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland—which Irish nationalists sought to repeal from its earliest moments, and with particular energy from the 1880s on—was bound up in the anxiety over colonial slavery and abolition, a debate contemporaneous with the Union’s troubled inception.

Vera Kreilkamp has argued that “national tales explicitly present themselves as political interventions rather than simply as representations of Irish society.”⁹⁴ Despite their different political perspectives, both Owenson and Edgeworth used the medium of the national tale to enter the debate about Ireland’s position in the British Empire, to advocate for an end to absenteeism, and to create a new identity for their people and their nation. In the process both women used the West Indian metaphor but pulled back from its implications because it linked Ireland

to an Atlantic World identity that was culturally and politically limiting, tied as it was to slavery and colonialism. These seemingly small Atlantic World moments in each novel are indicative of larger cultural processes, segments of an intertextual discussion about colonial identity, and significant steps in the development of the national tale as a genre that could be used to shape Ireland’s national identity from both pro- and anti-Union perspectives.

NOTES

1. Alvin Jackson, “Ireland, the Union and the Empire, 1800–1960,” in *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. Kevin Kenny (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 123–53; quotation appears on 123.

2. Quoted in Lady Morgan [Sydney Owenson], *Absenteeism* (London: Henry Colburn, 1825), 1. For more on Ireland’s complicated position in the British Empire, readers should consult the essays in Kevin Kenny, ed., *Ireland and the British Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Nicholas P. Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560–1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988). On British attitudes toward Ireland and the Irish, see Andrew Hadfield and John McVeagh, eds., “*Strangers to that Land*”: *British Perceptions of Ireland from the Reformation to the Famine* (Gerrard’s Cross: Colin Smythe, 1994); on Irish experiences in the diaspora during the long eighteenth century, see Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce D. Boling, and David N. Doyle, eds., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

3. Donald Harmon Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630–1730* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 174.

4. Kevin Kenny, “Ireland and the British Empire: An Introduction,” in Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire*, 1–25; reference is on 7.

5. On “the prospect of an alliance between the Irish poor and African slaves,” see Kevin Kenny, “The Irish in the Empire,” in Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire*, 90–122; reference is on 96. On Irish participation in slave ownership and mistreatment, see Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World*, esp. 173–75.

6. For more information, see Marilyn Butler’s excellent biography, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

7. Details about Owenson’s life are somewhat sketchier than those available for Edgeworth, but the interested reader can consult Mary Campbell, *Lady Morgan: The Life and Times of Sydney Owenson* (London: Pandora, 1988); and James Newcomer, *Lady Morgan the Novelist* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1990).

8. Edgeworth’s private thoughts on Owenson are quoted in Butler, *Maria Edgeworth*, 448; Owenson’s more public response to the comparisons of her work to Edgeworth’s may be found in the “Prefatory Address” to the 1846 edition of *The Wild Irish Girl*, reprinted in *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale*, ed. Claire Connolly and Stephen Copley (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), 245–63.

9. Butler, *Maria Edgeworth*, 181–82.

10. Sydney Owenson [Lady Morgan], *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Maria Edgeworth, *The Absentee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

11. Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 34, 250.
12. Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 130, 147.
13. Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670–1834* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 22.
14. *Ibid.*, 3.
15. Jane Austen, *Emma* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 300.
16. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 80–97. In Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Sir Thomas must make a rare visit to his plantation in Antigua owing to unspecified difficulties, possibly a slave insurrection. Upon his return Fanny Price, the protagonist, asks her uncle about the slave trade. Her question is followed by a "dead silence" from the family, who, one might presume, would prefer not to think about the source of their wealth (Austen, *Mansfield Park* [New York: Penguin, 1985], 213). Said's reading of Austen's novel became the most well known example of his larger argument about the relationship between imperialism and aesthetic and cultural artifacts (such as literature) that would seem on the surface to have no relationship to empire. Said's initial formula, "Without empire . . . there is no European novel as we know it" (*Culture and Imperialism*, 69), becomes, with reference to Austen, something akin to "without the novel, and the normalizing effect of its seemingly offhand references to imperial and colonial practices and attitudes, there is no empire." In chapter 2, "Jane Austen and Empire," Said claims that "the novel [*Mansfield Park*] steadily, if unobtrusively, opens up a broad expanse of domestic imperialist culture without which Britain's subsequent acquisition of territory would not have been possible" (95). For a trenchant critique of Said's use of Austen, see Susan Fraiman, "Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry* 21 (Summer 1995): 805–21.
17. Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 175.
18. George Cooper, *Letters on the Irish Nation: Written During a Visit to that Kingdom, in the Autumn of the Year 1799* (London: J. Davis, 1800), 72–73.
19. Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (Charleston, S.C.: Moford, Willington, 1810, Early American Imprints, 2nd ser., No. 20625), 4:349.
20. Suwendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 23.
21. Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 48.
22. Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 142, 132.
23. On this point, see Ferris, *Romantic National Tale*, 46–47.
24. *Ibid.*, 48.
25. Perera, *Reaches of Empire*, 23.
26. Edgeworth to Miss Sophy Ruxton, March 9, 1792, in Augustus J. C. Hare, ed., *The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1895), 1:23.
27. Edgeworth to Miss Sophy Ruxton, October 17, 1792, in Hare, *Life and Letters* 1:28. One can only speculate to what degree her attitude toward slavery may have been influenced by her brother, a self-described "planter" and resident of North and South Carolina. Although Maria loved and admired her brother, they spent relatively little time

together as children; three years her senior, Richard ran away to sea in 1779, when Maria was roughly eleven, and by 1783 their father had “washed his hands of his eldest son” (Butler, *Maria Edgeworth*, 100). Richard returned from the United States for two brief visits with the family in the 1790s; in 1792 his father gave him one thousand Irish pounds “so that he could establish himself as a farmer” (106). He died in North Carolina in 1796 at the age of thirty-two. His will, registered in South Carolina in 1792, describes him as a “planter,” and in it he bequeaths to his son “my plantation in Anson co., North Carolina containing two hundred acres more or less.” A farm of that size in that location at that time probably would not have supported a significant slave labor force, and the will makes no mention that he owned slaves. (For the text of his will, see John McGerr, Edgeworth web site, July 27, 2006, <http://homepage.eircom.net/~jmac/index.htm/> (path: enter; Other Writing; Richard Edgeworth’s Will). Certainly his residence in North and South Carolina would have familiarized him with the institution of slavery, however, and Maria’s letter offers no explanation of their reason for visiting the slave ship.

28. On this point see George E. Boulukos, “Maria Edgeworth’s ‘Grateful Negro’ and the Sentimental Argument for Slavery,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 23 (February 1999): 12–29. See especially 12–14, 17–19.

29. In *Belinda*, the heroine contemplates marriage with Mr. Vincent, a Creole who bears the mark of his colonial origins in his darkened complexion and his degeneracy (specifically, his love of gambling). In the 1801 edition his black servant marries an English farm girl. (On the contemporary objections to and subsequent revisions of this plot point, see Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick, “‘Gentlemen Have Horrors Upon This Subject’: West Indian Suitors in Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 5 [July 1993]: 331–48.) The novel has more recently been read as Edgeworth’s exploration of miscegenation as a figure for colonial anxiety. See Kirkpatrick, “‘Gentlemen Have Horrors’”; Perera, *Reaches of Empire*; and Susan C. Greenfield, “‘Abroad and at Home’: Sexual Ambiguity, Miscegenation, and Colonial Boundaries in Edgeworth’s *Belinda*,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 112 (March 1997): 214–28.

30. Ferguson, *Subject to Others*, 233.

31. Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 165.

32. Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 13.

33. *Ibid.*, 55.

34. *Ibid.*, 250.

35. Among the scholars who have analyzed the marriage trope in these novels are Mary Jean Corbett, *Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790–1870: Politics, History, and the Family from Edgeworth to Arnold* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Julia Anne Miller, “Acts of Union: Family Violence and National Courtship in Maria Edgeworth’s *The Absentee* and Sydney Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl*,” in *Border Crossings: Irish Women Writers and National Identities*, ed. Kathryn Kirkpatrick (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 13–37; Willa Murphy, “A Queen of Hearts or an Old Maid? Maria Edgeworth’s Fictions of Union,” in *Acts of Union: The Causes, Contexts and Consequences of the Act of Union*, ed. Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), 187–201; Iain Topliss, “Maria Edgeworth: The Novelist and the Union,” in *Ireland and Irish-Australia: Studies in Cultural and Political History*, ed. Oliver MacDonagh and W. F. Mandle (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 270–84; and Robert Tracy,

“Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan: Legality versus Legitimacy,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 40 (June 1985): 1–22.

36. Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 250.

37. *Ibid.*, 69.

38. For an expanded discussion on the problematic marriage trope in these two national tales, see Susan M. Kroeg, “‘So near to us as a SISTER’: Incestuous Unions in Sydney Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl* and Maria Edgeworth’s *The Absentee*,” in *Anglo-Irish Identities, 1571–1845*, ed. David A. Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 2008), 220–37.

39. Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 250.

40. *Ibid.*, 32.

41. *Ibid.*, 163.

42. *Ibid.*, 31.

43. *Ibid.*, 34.

44. John Carr, *The Stranger in Ireland; or a Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country in 1805* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1970), 519.

45. On this point, B. W. Higman writes, “It had always been the ultimate aim of the British sugar planter to return home once he had amassed his fortune and to put his estates in the hands of attorneys and overseers. Many achieved this goal, though it often took several generations. By the beginning of the nineteenth century a very significant proportion of the slave population was owned by absentee proprietors who rarely had any form of direct contact with their slaves.” Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 112. See Kirkpatrick, “Gentlemen Have Horrors,” 333–34, for an Irish application of this principle.

46. Kenny, “Irish in the Empire,” 96.

47. Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 132.

48. Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 31.

49. *Ibid.*, 32.

50. *Ibid.*, 31.

51. *Ibid.*, 13, 114.

52. *Ibid.*, 31.

53. *Ibid.*, 250–51.

54. *Ibid.*, 250. Interestingly, both phrases, “West Indian planter” and “English landholder,” are italicized in the novel, which draws attention to the labels, sets them apart from the various Irish identities explored in the text, and visually links them to one another.

55. *Ibid.*, 52.

56. *Ibid.*, 65.

57. Kirkpatrick, “Gentlemen Have Horrors,” 334.

58. Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 1–2.

59. *Ibid.*, 200, 22.

60. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

61. *Ibid.*, 266.

62. *Ibid.*, 20–21.

63. *Ibid.*, 200.

64. *Ibid.*, 146.

65. *Ibid.*, 167; Owenson, *Wild Irish Girl*, 163.

66. Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 158.

67. *Ibid.*, 156. This scene also calls our attention to the class dynamic at work in Edgeworth's novel. The character in question, Brian O'Neil, resists immigrating to America, but clearly he imagines the Atlantic world as a place of opportunity for displaced and impoverished Irishmen. Contrast his position with that of the novel's upper-class characters, who steadily resist the predominantly negative associations with the Atlantic world typified by the West Indies.

68. *Ibid.*, 21, 122.

69. *Ibid.*, 130.

70. *Ibid.*, 147.

71. *Ibid.*, 136.

72. *Ibid.*, 154.

73. *Ibid.*, 154.

74. *Ibid.*, 162.

75. Maria Edgeworth, "The Grateful Negro," in *Tales and Novels*, vol. 2, *Popular Tales*, by Maria Edgeworth (London: Henry Bohn, 1870), 399–417.

76. See, for example, Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 134–35.

77. Edgeworth, "Grateful Negro," 399–400.

78. *Ibid.*, 417.

79. Trumpener argues that Edgeworth's "affirmative account of paternalistic slavery in 'The Grateful Negro' and her negative depiction of slaves' agitation for their emancipation result partly from the way she has superimposed the economic and political situation of the Irish estate onto the more extreme conditions of the Jamaican slave plantation." *Bardic Nationalism*, 165.

80. Butler, *Maria Edgeworth*, 137.

81. Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 202, 2, 35.

82. Long quoted in Wylie Sypher, "The West-Indian as a 'Character' in the Eighteenth Century," *Studies in Philology* 36 (1939): 503–20; quotation is from 506. Irish hospitality, which strained the means of the host and the patience of the guests, was notorious among eighteenth-century travelers, as were certain other stereotyped behaviors. For example, in *Letters on the Irish Nation*, George Cooper describes the Irish as "hasty and impetuous, rash and choleric, and subject to the most violent attacks of anger and passion" (19).

83. Consider Lady Clonbrony's excessive entertainments, Colambre's "impetuous temper" and sentimental attachment to Ireland, and Lord Clonbrony's companion, Sir Terence O'Fay, characterized as "warm-hearted, generous" and "jovial" but also as given to prevarication and "swindling." Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 6, 21, 62–65.

84. *Ibid.*, 201.

85. *Ibid.*, 6.

86. Sypher, "West Indian as a 'Character,'" 504.

87. Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 105.

88. *Ibid.*, 21 (emphasis added). Edgeworth's use of *British* as an inclusive descriptor of the peoples of the United Kingdom is atypical.

89. *Ibid.*, 202.

90. References to Ireland as a “sister” to England appear in Edgeworth, *Absentee*, 6, 92.

91. James Anthony Froude, *The English in the West Indies; Or, The Bow of Ulysses* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 205.

92. *Ibid.*, 208.

93. For more on this point, see Richard Ned Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland: The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976). The best study of racially oriented anti-Irish prejudice in the nineteenth century remains L. P. Curtis, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anglo-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (New York: New York University Press and Conference on British Studies, 1968).

94. Vera Kreilkamp, “Fiction and Empire: The Irish Novel,” in Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire*, 154–81; quotation appears on 160.

Slavery, Irish Nationalism, and Irish American Identity in the South, 1840–1845

Angela F. Murphy

In 1840 Daniel O’Connell launched the first mass nationalist movement in Ireland when he formed the Loyal National Repeal Association (LNRA) to agitate for the end of the Irish parliamentary union with Great Britain. The movement focused on repealing the British Act of Union of 1800, an act conservative Protestants in England and Ireland had conceived in order to maintain British and Protestant dominance in Irish affairs. O’Connell believed that this union was responsible for both the neglect of Irish reforms in favor of policies that benefited Great Britain and the continuation of social and economic policies that perpetuated the inferior status of the Catholic majority in Ireland. Many other Irish men and women held the same beliefs, and the agitation for repeal spread throughout Ireland. It reached a climax in 1843 as O’Connell held “monster meetings” throughout the island that attracted hundreds of thousands of participants who gathered to assert their Irish identity. Although supporters of O’Connell’s repeal movement asserted general loyalty to the British Crown and accepted Ireland’s position within the British Empire, they believed that Irish domestic affairs would be best served by an Irish parliament elected by Irishmen.

The repeal movement quickly became a transatlantic one as, between 1840 and 1843, Irish Americans and their friends formed repeal organizations throughout the United States. The American crusade for Irish parliamentary independence began in the cities of the Northeast in late 1840 and moved through the Deep South and into the nation’s western territories by 1843. From the beginning of the movement in America, however, another issue intruded upon the efforts of the repealers. O’Connell, whose reform impulse was not limited to Irish freedom, long had been an outspoken antislavery advocate, but American repealers, to varying degrees, took an antiabolitionist stance. Between 1840, when the first

American societies sprung up, until the mid-decade decline of the movement, the American repeal associations repeatedly rebuffed the Irish leader's transatlantic appeals to join with the antislavery effort in the United States.¹

Predictably, nowhere was O'Connell's antislavery stand more controversial than in the slave-owning American South. Each time the Irish leader spoke out against their region's peculiar institution, members of the southern Irish repeal associations questioned the appropriateness of their participation in O'Connell's movement. Conflicting loyalties to Ireland, to the American Republic, and to the slaveholding South were played out among the southern repeal associations as they discussed O'Connell's antislavery appeals. Much was at stake in these discussions—the very nature of their identity. Were Irish American repealers in the southern states predominantly Irish, American, or southern? Could they maintain a hybrid identity, or would the existence of slavery in the South and O'Connell's attack on the institution force them to choose from among their loyalties?

Despite the importance of these questions, historians have produced no in-depth investigation of the impact of O'Connell's sentiments on repealers in the southern states. Scholarly work on the abolition/repeal controversy has tended to focus on the more populated northern repeal associations.² Although historians have made mention of the special challenges that O'Connell's antislavery appeals presented to Irish American repealers living in slave-owning regions of the United States, there has been no real analysis of the way in which southern repealers negotiated the controversy caused by O'Connell's entreaties.

This account seeks to fill that gap, investigating the nature of the slavery and abolition controversy among the southern repeal associations and the concerns expressed by their membership in response to O'Connell's call for them to join with the abolitionists. Highlighted in particular are the debates among repealers in the South over how to respond to one of O'Connell's more controversial speeches, made at a repeal meeting in Dublin in May 1843. "Come out of such a land, you Irishmen," O'Connell proclaimed, "or if you remain and dare countenance the system of slavery that is supported there, we will recognize you as Irishmen no longer." O'Connell addressed the American Irish repeal effort specifically in this speech, announcing that the LNRA stood against slavery and that he and his fellow Irish repealers would cling to this antislavery position, even at the cost of financial support from the United States. "We do not want blood-stained money," he announced. "If they make it the condition of our sympathy, or if there be implied any submission to the doctrine of slavery on our part, in receiving their admittances, let them cease sending it at once."³ This address marked an important crossroads in the American repeal movement, as it challenged Irish American members of the repeal movement to choose between upholding their adopted land's tolerance of American slavery and antislavery calls from their ancestral home. Could they support Irish repeal without supporting abolition? Could they align themselves with O'Connell on the question of

Irish freedom and, at the same time, support the institutions of their adopted home? These were the questions Irish American repealers asked themselves following O'Connell's speech.

Scholars who have given attention to the controversy caused by the speech generally have used it to illustrate the sectional divide between American repealers, highlighting the fact that several southern associations disbanded in reaction to O'Connell's words while the repeal associations in the North continued to support O'Connell's movement.⁴ These accounts, however, tend to overemphasize the sectional rift by focusing on the southern associations that dissolved. In truth only a small minority of southern repealers permanently abandoned repeal in reaction to the speech, and little attention has been given to the majority of the southern repeal associations who pressed on in their support of Ireland in the aftermath of the address. It is this majority, however, that best represents the Irish American response as O'Connell's abolitionism challenged the repeal movement in the slave-owning states. Most Irish American repealers in the South attempted to maintain their commitment to O'Connell and Irish freedom while asserting loyalty to American institutions by refusing to align themselves with the abolition movement.

A systematic look at the reactions to O'Connell's appeal among southern repealers shows that the movement in the South more than weathered the controversy of the speech; it flourished in many areas in the months afterward. Although southern Irish American repealers were indeed influenced in their reactions to O'Connell's antislavery appeal by their tenuous position as newcomers in a slave-owning society, their support for Ireland and their admiration of O'Connell, for a time, was stronger than their need to disassociate themselves from a vocal abolitionist. O'Connell's antislavery sentiment challenged, but did not kill, repeal in the American South.

The ultimate purpose of this chapter is to reveal the ways in which Irish American supporters of O'Connell's movement negotiated conflicting transatlantic loyalties. O'Connell's antislavery entreaties appealed to the repealers' Irish roots and encouraged them to do justice to their homeland by supporting antislavery. The majority of Irish Americans in the United States, however, were more concerned with asserting their identity as Americans in the early 1840s. They encouraged native Americans to join their repeal organization and included prominent native Americans among their leadership. The rhetoric of the repeal meetings emphasized that the movement was an American, not an Irish, outreach to spread political liberty. When the controversy over O'Connell's views arose within the movement, repealers most constant refrain in rejecting his abolitionist sentiment was the assertion that they made decisions based on their identity as American citizens and did not wish to be influenced by foreign appeals. Even so the response of Irish American repealers in the South shows that most of them still felt significant ties to their homeland. While a minority thought that it

was their duty as Americans, and as southerners, to reject O'Connell's movement wholesale after his antislavery appeal, most members of the movement were viscerally opposed to any attack on the Irish leader and strove to find ways to continue to promote Irish liberty despite negative views of the repeal leader in the American South. Ultimately, then, the debate over how southern repealers should reply to O'Connell was a debate about the way members of the predominantly Irish American movement would choose to align themselves amid conflicting demands from two nations, Ireland and the United States, and two transatlantic movements, abolition and repeal.

O'Connell's May speech was not the first time Irish Americans had been confronted with the question of American slavery. The first challenge to American repealers on the subject came in early 1842. The year before Irish and American abolitionists had circulated a petition around Ireland that called on Irish Americans to "do honor to the name of Ireland" and to "unite with the abolitionists" against slavery.⁵ Aware of O'Connell's antislavery sentiment and eager to use it as a lever on Irish American opinion, they encouraged O'Connell to sign the petition. In January 1842, American abolitionists publicized the "Irish Address" in the United States, with O'Connell's name leading approximately sixty thousand Irish signatures. Irish Americans, however, resisted the abolitionist appeal. Irish American leaders, including those in repeal organizations, criticized the antislavery address as "foreign interference" in American affairs and expressed indignation at being singled out as a "distinct class" within the United States.⁶

Because of the address American repealers were forced to confront the issue of American slavery at their first national convention in February 1842. At the meeting delegates debated on how to deal with the call to join the abolitionists. In general the repealers responded sectionally, with southern representatives pushing to censure and northern delegates preferring to ignore the Irish Address. The debate continued into the second day of the proceedings, when delegates finally agreed to issue a resolution pledging not to consider "any matter of religion, politics, or abolition," but to confine themselves solely to repeal.⁷ Like the religious denominations and political parties in the United States whose viability American slavery compromised, American repealers initially elected to ignore the explosive issue. And just as for these other institutions, the issue would not go away.

Several repeal associations issued resolutions and sent letters to the LNRA in an attempt to justify their rejection of the Irish Address. These communications shed light on the situation the American repeal societies faced in the United States. Repealers from both the slave and free states expressed many of the same concerns regarding appeals for their support of the antislavery movement. First and foremost, they communicated their sentiments that the Irish Address was an example of inappropriate foreign interference in American affairs and complained of being

singled out as a specific group, as *Irish Americans*, to join with the abolitionists. Despite this complaint repealers also offered arguments specific to their Irish sensibilities. First, they were fond of pointing out that slavery in the United States was an inheritance from Great Britain and that that nation, hypocritical in its criticisms of the United States, should bear the blame for its existence in the republic. Second, American repealers often asserted that the slave's situation in the United States was preferable to that of the Irish peasant at home, who suffered much greater deprivation under British oppression than slaves in the American South. The communications also included a criticism of the American abolition movement that read like a position paper of general American antiabolitionist arguments: the abolitionists were a threat to the union, they promoted violence, and they acted unconstitutionally. The repealers claimed, as most Americans of the 1840s did, that although the existence of slavery was regrettable, it could not be ended immediately without destroying the fabric of American society. Irish Americans, who desperately wanted to show loyalty to that society, therefore would never support a movement that posed such a threat.⁸

In response to the repealers' rejection of the Irish Address, American abolitionists sent their own address to O'Connell justifying their cause. The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society (PASS) wrote to Dublin in 1843 answering each of the antiabolitionist arguments that American repealers had put forth. The association's missive defended the character of abolitionists in America, refuted the idea that slavery could not be attacked because it was constitutionally sanctioned, and described the hardships of slavery. It asserted the abolitionists' commitment to peaceful means, and it mocked the charge that the Irish Address was inappropriate foreign interference, pointing out that the main purpose of the American repeal movement was to agitate against the policies of a foreign nation. This communication, along with the letters he had received from American repeal associations criticizing the antislavery movement, led O'Connell to call a special meeting of the LNRA in May 1843 in order to reaffirm his position on American slavery and abolition.⁹ The Irish Address had elicited criticism from many American supporters of repeal a year before, but O'Connell's speech at that May repeal meeting, in which he specifically addressed American repealers concerning their antiabolitionist position, threatened the very existence of the repeal movement in the United States, especially in the South.

In the speech O'Connell spoke out forcefully against American slavery, reiterating the arguments put forth by the PASS and rejecting the many antiabolitionist arguments that American repealers had made in communications with the LNRA. He announced that the LNRA would continue to promote antislavery, even at the risk of losing American support. Those who sanctioned slavery, he said, "were the enemies of Ireland," and he proclaimed that no true Irishman would take such a position. He then went on to declare "every man a *faithless miscreant* who does not take a part for the abolition of Slavery."¹⁰

In response to O'Connell's appeal, most of the northern associations simply issued resolutions reaffirming that their sole purpose was repeal and that they would therefore refrain from discussing the divisive issue of abolition at their meetings. Personal opinions on O'Connell's antislavery speech varied, and in order to promote the unity of both the repeal movement and the United States in general, the repeal associations of the free states—like most other northern organizations of the 1840s—remained quiet on their position concerning slavery and abolition. When associations did speak out against the speech, they blamed not O'Connell, but American abolitionists for misleading and inflaming him upon the subject.¹¹

In the South O'Connell's speech presented an even larger challenge to repealers. Several associations, in fact, voted to disband in reaction to it. The speech did not, however, crush repeal in the region. Encouraged by the repealers to the north and led by repealers in several southern port cities with large Irish American populations, the southern repeal movement survived the speech. Even so, as citizens of slave states they had less room to ignore the issue of slavery as most of their brethren of the North chose to do, and the surviving repeal associations issued strong repudiations of O'Connell's sentiments. The responses of southern repeal associations to O'Connell's speech therefore reflect both the pressure to conform to regional opinion on the slavery issue and the strength of Irish American support for the homeland, despite the unpopular opinions of the Irish leader in the United States.

The Charleston Repeal Association was the first to disband in reaction to O'Connell's speech. From the state of South Carolina—whose government had, in the nullification controversy of 1828–1834, asserted the primacy of state over federal loyalties—the repealers showed where their own allegiances rested.¹² “As the alternative has been presented to us by Mr. O'Connell,” a member of the Charleston association proclaimed, “as we must choose between Ireland and South Carolina, we say *South Carolina forever!*”¹³ Upon hearing of O'Connell's speech, the association, which had held an enthusiastic meeting just a week and a half before, called the assembly to terminate their organization.¹⁴ Though its members maintained their commitment to “the great principles of representative and self government,” the repeal society censured O'Connell and announced that “they could hold no communication with an association which countenanced his late course toward the slave states.”¹⁵ In their dissolution resolutions the Charleston repealers explained their position. They proclaimed that respect for both themselves and “the community in which we live” propelled them to “repel the aspersions” cast on the South by O'Connell. “Yielding to none in sincere devotion to the interests and institutions of the slave-holding States,” they said, “we pronounce the speech of Mr. O'Connell a base and malignant libel upon the people of the South.”¹⁶

Prominent lowcountry planter and politician H. L. Pinckney, who was active in the Charleston Repeal Association, reported the dissolution resolutions.¹⁷ Though no evidence shows how much of a hand he had in penning them, he was a forceful presence in the society, and its stance conforms seamlessly with his own worldview. Pinckney, who had served in both his state and the federal legislatures, as mayor of Charleston, and as editor of a prominent Charleston newspaper, had long been active on behalf of states' rights, and he played a leading role in promoting nullification in South Carolina. He also was instrumental in barring the discussion of abolition in the national House of Representatives where, as chairman of the congressional committee that received antislavery petitions, he was the person behind the idea of accepting and then "tabling" them when they were submitted so the committee did not have to act upon them.¹⁸ These states' rights and antiabolitionist views were clearly evident in the Charleston repealers' reaction to O'Connell's speech. Though Pinckney may have guided their response, however, the members of the organization—both native and Irish American—followed willingly, at least for a time.

Others in Charleston also supported the dissolution of the city's repeal society. The *Charleston Patriot* praised the prompt dissolution of the Charleston association, and it forecast that the Charleston repealers' actions would be praised universally. Even as it announced that southerners would remain sympathetic to the Irish cause, the paper noted that "while the movement in which they are engaged is under the counsel and direction of the arch agitator and incendiary, who has fully unveiled his atrocious character, there can be no answering voice—no echo in southern—shall we not say American bosoms?—to their appeal."¹⁹

The repeal association in Natchez, Mississippi, also dissolved after hearing of O'Connell's speech. Calling the Irish leader a "base and hypocritical demagogue," the Natchez repealers voted to disband with only one dissenting vote. In their resolutions members of the association complained of "the venality of O'Connell" and that "the Repealers in Ireland talk more about abolishing slavery here, than about repealing the union there." They also blasted O'Connell for his criticism of the friends of "a favored institution" and his proclamation that the South sent "bloodstained money" when they contributed to repeal. Like the Charleston association, the Natchez repealers claimed that loyalty to both nation and state prevented them from continuing in their support of O'Connell, and the association pronounced that they "cannot but treat with contempt the invocations he makes to southern Irishmen—as they are personally aware of the advantages they enjoy as men, and will shed their last drop of blood in defense of the country which has received, protects and fosters us."²⁰

Although it was not as well publicized as the other dissolutions, repealers in Milledgeville, Georgia, also disbanded. Early in 1843 that city's association had written to former president, Martin Van Buren, to elicit his sympathy and invite him to a repeal meeting that was planned on July 4. Though Van Buren replied

to the Milledgeville repealers, declining their invitation and issuing a tepid affirmation of support for their cause, the society already had dissolved by the time his reply arrived, and it fell to the northern press to publicize Van Buren's sentiments.²¹

Thus after O'Connell rebuffed their arguments against abolitionism, several southern associations felt it necessary to end their support of the LNRA, and they characterized their dissolutions as proof of loyalty to both nation and state. In addition, as evidenced in the Charleston and Natchez resolutions, infused in their dissolution pronouncements was the rhetoric of honor—they argued that the southern repealers must terminate support for the LNRA in the face of the insult promulgated on their fellow southerners by the leader of that association. Repealers of Charleston, Natchez, and Milledgeville, however, were exceptions to the general response to the speech throughout the South. Most of the repeal associations in the United States, in states both slave and free, survived the controversy and continued to support O'Connell's movement.

Although associations in Charleston, Natchez, and Milledgeville appeared confident that dissolution was the correct response to O'Connell's words, they were roundly criticized by the Irish American press for their course.²² The two largest Irish American newspapers of the era, the *Boston Pilot* and the *New York Freeman's Journal*, were the major mouthpieces for the American repeal movement, and both lashed out against the dissolutions.

The *Boston Pilot* led the charge. When it received the news of the dissolving associations, the *Pilot* questioned, "Was an anti-slavery speech from O'Connell a thing so unexpected that it could dash [the association] to pieces?" Noting that O'Connell "had talked pretty loudly of their institutions on more than one occasion," the *Pilot* called the reaction "a miserable farce." The paper assured its readers that it did not support the abolitionists and it did not wish to enter into a dispute "with any of our fellow-citizens for their jealous guardianship of what they consider their rights of property." At the same time, it declared that the members of the dissolved associations "performed a most disgraceful action."²³

The *New York Freeman's Journal* echoed the *Pilot's* arguments, but in a more indirect manner. The paper reprinted an article from the *Albany Evening Journal*, which, after reporting the Charleston repealers' resolutions, concluded about the society "not that they love REPEAL less, but that they love SLAVERY more."²⁴ Later it reprinted another article from a Virginia paper, the *Richmond Enquirer*, which commented on O'Connell's speech. In it the Richmond paper criticized O'Connell for his "indiscretion and madness" but said that his foibles "cannot extinguish the rights of the whole people." It therefore urged that Americans continue to support Irish repeal "however unjustly, rudely, unwisely, Daniel O'Connell may treat the southern States of our own country." While the *New York Freeman's*

Journal disagreed with the Richmond paper's harsh words on O'Connell, it said of it that "its tone contrasts quite favourably with the rabidness of some, if not all, of the Charleston sheets." Concerning the Charleston repealers' reactions to O'Connell in general, the paper proclaimed that they "made themselves excessively ridiculous" in their rejection of repeal.²⁵

Following their critiques, both the *Boston Pilot* and the *New York Freeman's Journal* made the same recommendation to southern repealers. They should follow the example of the repealers in the northern states and separate O'Connell's abolitionism from the cause of repeal. "Let a line be drawn by our southern friends, between O'Connell the Irish Liberator and O'Connell the Negro Abolitionist," the *Pilot* proclaimed. "Justice demands this demarcation."²⁶ The *New York Freeman's Journal* echoed this call, asserting that repealers should "know enough to separate O'Connell from the cause of Ireland—to see that his course on an entirely different subject has nothing to do with repeal."²⁷

Some Irish Americans in Charleston expressed their agreement with this argument. In August the *Freeman's Journal* printed a letter from Charleston from a former repealer who expressed regret at the "premature dissolution" of the repeal association in that city. "The materials of which we were composed were in themselves ignitable," the correspondent said, asserting that they "wanted a single spark, a single political puff to fan them into an explosion." He wrote that, regardless of the dissolution, sympathy for Ireland remained strong among Irish Americans in the city.²⁸ Significantly this sentiment helped lead to a reconstitution of the Charleston Repeal Association by the end of the year.²⁹ Repeal in the city was by no means dead.

Despite the attention given to the southern dissolutions in the press, most of the southern repeal associations held strong in the aftermath of O'Connell's speech, following the model set by the majority of northern repealers of separating the cause of repeal from that of antislavery. Because they lived in slave societies, repealers in the South, however, could not as easily vow to keep silent on O'Connell's antislavery views at their repeal meetings, and they set out to "correct" them.

In the face of the dissolutions in other areas of the South, a new organization actually sprung up in Savannah, Georgia, a port city with a large Irish American population, and it would take the lead in encouraging the continuation of the repeal movement in the region.³⁰ In a letter to the editor of the *New York Freeman's Journal* from a writer who dubbed himself "J," Savannah repealers began a regular correspondence in the summer of 1843. In his first letter "J" explained that "a melancholy damp was thrown over this glorious cause through the entire South, by the unfortunate expressions said to have been uttered by Mr. O'Connell." He blamed this climate not on O'Connell, however, but on "enemies" of the repeal movement who made sure that the Irish leader's antislavery appeal was

“widely circulated.” Though Irish sympathizers in Savannah were themselves “deeply afflicted with this state of affairs,” he announced that many nonetheless were committed to the cause of repeal.³¹

Shortly after “J” sent his letter, Henry Harper, the corresponding secretary of the Savannah Repealers wrote to the *New York Freeman’s Journal*, announcing the formation of the Irish Repeal Association of Savannah and sending copies of the organization’s proceedings from the *Savannah Georgian*.³² On August 19 the *New York Freeman’s Journal* revealed that the Savannah repealers had collected six hundred dollars for repeal in its first two meetings, and it praised the association whose “example is at once a beacon to the zealous, and a reproach to the cold or cowardly who fled the post the moment a cloud lowered.”³³

In a later issue the New York paper printed an excerpt from the Savannah organizing meeting. Among resolutions that thanked both Irish and native Americans in Savannah for their aid and praised O’Connell for his efforts for Ireland, the Irish Repeal Association of Savannah reacted to the Irish leader’s speech on American slavery, expressing regret that “O’Connell has learned the lessons of southern institutions from northern abolitionists, the dire enemies of real liberty, and the notorious enemies of Ireland’s religion.”³⁴

The Savannah repealers thus responded to O’Connell’s May speech in a very similar way to the repealers of the North, saving their venom for the abolitionists and preserving respect for O’Connell, whom they felt the American abolitionists misled. Despite their discomfiture over the recent speech, members of the Savannah association resolved to continue in their efforts on behalf of repeal, and they issued an invitation to those friendly to the movement not just in their own city but throughout the South to continue to support Irish parliamentary independence. In addition the association echoed the resolutions of the many northern associations when it insisted that their society would eschew discussion of any subject besides repeal, as such subjects are “calculated to prevent that harmonious action which is essential to our success.”³⁵

When Henry Harper wrote to O’Connell and the LNRA to announce the formation of the new association, he noted the “discouraging” circumstances under which the Savannah repealers formed their association, as O’Connell’s speech had just appeared in papers throughout the South. He insinuated that the speech drove many native Americans from the movement, explaining that most of the repealers in Savannah were of Irish extraction. He expressed hope, however, that native Americans in the city would eventually join in support of the movement. “We trust that their prejudices will soon disappear,” he said. “No people on the face of the earth are more generous than those of the sunny South, and more ready to sympathize with a people struggling for their political rights.”³⁶ O’Connell accepted the contributions of the Savannah repealers, proclaiming that he was “thankful to those repealers who sacrificed their principles

and interests to this extent at least, that they were ready to cooperate, on the part of Ireland, with men whom they so essentially differed.”³⁷

Like Savannah, New Orleans was a port city with a large percentage of Irish American inhabitants, and like the repealers of Savannah, those in New Orleans proved among the most resistant in their efforts to promote repeal in the South. Even so, the Louisiana repealers also felt compelled to issue a strong statement against the speech.³⁸ An editorial in the *New Orleans Picayune*, a newspaper traditionally sympathetic to Irish repeal, illustrates the hostility O’Connell’s speech inspired in the city. “We indignantly reprobate and contemptuously condemn his open and undisguised fraternization with a band of fanatical incendiaries in this country,” the paper announced, asserting that the abolitionists promoted “the fell spirit of anarchy through this happy land.” The piece declared that it would not bother to try to defend the institution of slavery to O’Connell as he was “utterly ignorant of its practical operation” and unaware of the dangers abolition posed “for their security of their lives and preservation of honor of their wives and daughters.” It ended expressing confidence, however, that Irish Americans, especially those in the South, “will notice Mr. O’Connell’s language in such a way as the interests of their adopted country demand.”³⁹

The repealers in New Orleans held a meeting on July 4 to discuss the controversy inspired by the speech. At it, they issued their own resolutions of objection, sending them directly to the LNRA, and adjourning until a reply from Dublin should be received. Though some members of the American press considered this tactic to be “tantamount to dissolution,” this was not the case.⁴⁰ The New Orleans repealers sent funds collected in support of repeal along with the resolutions, showing their continuing commitment to the cause.⁴¹ Upon receiving those funds, O’Connell thanked the repealers from New Orleans, as he had those from Savannah. Emphasizing that he continued to hate slavery, he said that he “was delighted, however, to find that there were good men in America whose hearts had not been estranged from the cause of Ireland because of his denunciations of this odious iniquity.”⁴² When the Louisiana repealers received this reply from O’Connell, they resolved to continue their exertions for repeal. Thus the New Orleans repealers, like those in Savannah, felt obliged to register their objections to O’Connell’s position on slavery, but they then separated that position from repeal in order that they might continue to support their homeland.

In St. Louis, the “frontier citadel of repeal,” members of the repeal association faced a comparable situation.⁴³ After the publication of O’Connell’s speech in the American press, the *St. Louis Bulletin* “cautioned the slave interest of Missouri to crush repeal,” asserting that “it is a kindred movement of the abolitionists.”⁴⁴ The St. Louis repealers, however, stood strong, even as they repudiated O’Connell’s speech and denied any connection with it. Complaining that O’Connell’s words were “wantonly ungenerous, gratuitously insulting and . . .

unwarrantably malignant,” they nevertheless sent a generous contribution into the LNRA, enclosing with the remittance a series of resolutions censuring the speech along with an indignant private letter from one of the repeal society members to O’Connell’s repeal colleague Thomas Steele. The LNRA accepted the remittance from St. Louis, but Steele returned both the letter and the resolutions, explaining that he would not be a medium for such kinds of communication. At their next meeting the St. Louis repealers determined that further discussion of the speech was undesirable, as “it was committing the association upon a subject with which it had nothing to do, and was opening the door for discussions upon slavery and abolitionism.” They therefore pledged continued support for repeal and announced that “the friends of Erin in the West” would not abandon the cause “on account of the fanaticism of one man.”⁴⁵

In the nation’s capital, repealers experienced a bit more tension in dealing with the situation. After receiving the news of O’Connell’s speech, a correspondent from Washington, D.C., wrote to the *Baltimore Sun* announcing that O’Connell’s speech was a topic of “the liveliest interest” in the city. The Washington repealers, therefore, called a special meeting to respond to the speech. After some disagreement on whether or not their purpose was to censure O’Connell, the association’s chairman, James Hoban, called for a “calm meeting” that would give proper respect to both O’Connell and “to America and her institutions.”⁴⁶

The deliberations of the repealers in Washington produced a set of resolutions that declared that O’Connell’s speech deserved “universal reproof” from the Irish repealers and absolved themselves from any connection with the abolitionists in Ireland or the United States. The Washington repealers also expressed regret, as citizens of the United States, for O’Connell’s “unjust and unjustifiable attack” on the American “people and its institutions” and explained that the main source of this remorse was for the deleterious impact it would have on the cause of repeal, though their own association would continue in its work.⁴⁷ Recognizing that the local climate produced differing degrees of reaction against O’Connell’s speech, the Washington repealers acknowledged each repeal association’s right to its own reply and rebuked others who had presumed to respond to O’Connell in the name of all southern, or even all American, repealers.⁴⁸

Although the Washington repealers passed their resolutions unanimously, at the next meeting of the association A. F. Cunningham, the corresponding secretary of the association, tendered his resignation, citing O’Connell’s speech as his reason. The organization accepted his resignation and ordered his accompanying letter, which had “assaulted most violently” O’Connell, returned to him. Next, they passed a new resolution to keep further discussion of the speech, and of anti-slavery, out of future repeal meetings.⁴⁹

Other repeal associations in the South followed a similar path. In Alabama repealers in both Mobile and Tuscaloosa continued to meet after news of the speech.⁵⁰ Repealers in Lynchburg, Virginia, also persisted in their efforts but

reproved O'Connell for his "words as read in the public prints, false and libelous against the institutions of the south," and asserted their indignation "at the coarse and scurrilous attacks of Mr. O'Connell on the generous and chivalrous people of the slave-holding states." Like other repealers, North and South, however, the association placed most of the blame for O'Connell's remarks at the feet of the abolitionists.⁵¹

Repealers in Baltimore also chose to continue on behalf of repeal despite the controversy surrounding O'Connell's antislavery speech in May 1843. The deliberations of the Baltimore Repeal Association deserve special attention as its members entered into a lengthy debate over the proper response to O'Connell's words. The association also issued some of the most denunciatory resolutions regarding the speech. The debate among the Baltimore repealers, and the public's response to this debate, reveals much about the pressures Irish American members of the repeal movement faced as repeal and abolition became coupled in the minds of many Americans.

In late June the Baltimore repealers held a meeting specifically to consider the Irish leader's antislavery appeal. After reading O'Connell's words aloud, the association expressed concern that the speech would damage the repeal movement not only in the South but throughout the American nation. Furthermore they feared the speech would "reflect discredit and odium upon the Irish portion of the American population, by unjustly subjecting to suspicion their attachment to this, the land of their adoption." They therefore, with only one dissenting vote, passed a number of resolutions condemning the speech. Stating that they must respond to the affront to the United States for the sake of their own position in the republic and for the sake of the cause of Irish liberation, they portrayed O'Connell's speech as a "bold and daring insult offered to a country to which he owed the debt of gratitude and not the insolence of language." The Baltimore repealers argued that neither O'Connell nor the Irish people understood the real state of southern slavery, under which, they said, slaves were treated better than British workers. They thus characterized the descriptions of slave treatment communicated by American abolitionists and repeated by O'Connell as misleading and "insulting to the character of the American people."⁵²

Like other repeal associations North and South, the heart of the Baltimore resolutions was their rejection not of O'Connell but of the abolitionists. The association attacked abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic as a danger to republicanism. American abolitionists, they said, were a danger to "the welfare and perpetuity of our Republican institutions," and the Baltimore repealers avoided involvement with the group in order to "maintain its proud attitude as the uncompromising friend of the Union." The Baltimore repealers also attacked British abolitionists, whom they believed to be "presided over by Royalty" and who, they asserted, were "seeking, under the pretense of advocating freedom, to

destroy the only constitution in which human rights and human equality is at all recognized and secured.” The association emphatically proclaimed that they held no sympathy for any abolitionist from any country, and they pledged to uphold the existing laws of their adopted country and most especially their adopted state of Maryland. In a final reiteration of their reasons for their position, the Baltimore repealers issued a resolution, often quoted in the Irish repeal press as emblematic of the general Irish American position. In it they asserted that “America is the land of our adoption and the country of our children.” Irish Americans had “found an asylum in this land of liberty and protection beneath the flag that Mr. O’Connell has wantonly assailed.” Members of the association thus rejected O’Connell’s critique of their adopted country and pledged that they would “never forsake” the United States. They, in fact, swore “to defend it, its laws, institutions, and the integrity of its union,” and, they said, “we will do it with the last drop of our blood.”⁵³

A number of speeches followed the resolutions, restating the position of the Baltimore Repeal Association. Irish American member M. R. McNally, who authored the resolutions, spoke first, continuing the attack on the abolitionists as “men who were laboring to dissever this Union, and to perpetuate tyranny, anarchy and confusion through the world.” He argued that O’Connell’s connection with such men damaged the position of the Irishman in the United States.⁵⁴

A native politician in attendance at the meeting, U.S. District Attorney Z. C. Lee, reinforced McNally’s position, and Lee’s speech, by far the most venomous of the proceedings, helps to illustrate how much of the vehemence in the reaction to O’Connell’s speech came from non-Irish participants in repeal.⁵⁵ The self-described “southern man and friend of Ireland” proclaimed that “the crisis had arrived, and Irishmen in America must now stand by the banner of their adopted country or abandon it forever.” He criticized O’Connell, who, he said, “in the frenzy of a false philanthropy, and in the madness of his zeal for liberty, has undertaken, at this moment of anxious suspense in Ireland to light the torch of domestic strife in America, and arm the Irish against the institutions of their adopted country.” If the American repeal associations heeded O’Connell’s call, Lee said, “then farewell, forever, to them and their cause; for one, he would abandon them to their fate.” He was therefore gratified to hear Irish American denunciations of O’Connell’s “monstrous and abominable doctrines,” proving that the Irish of the United States “will be true to her *unstained* and glorious banner.”⁵⁶

After Lee spoke, E. J. Robinson, a prominent lecturer on Irish history in the United States, attempted to temper the spirit of the meeting, expressing “feelings of mortification” at the insult given to O’Connell in the Baltimore repealers’ statements. He reminded the association of O’Connell’s services to Ireland, and he asked, “Shall we take the half hour of sin and put it against the half century of noble deeds?” He was reluctant to oppose the society’s resolutions, as he felt that “something like them was necessary,” but he wished that they had been phrased

less harshly. Though Robinson agreed that “the flag of the country must not be insulted” he argued that, in their indignation, they were playing into the hands of the abolitionists whose “very design . . . is to destroy American sympathy for Ireland.” He therefore pressed that the repealers of America, despite their condemnation of O’Connell’s speech, continue on behalf of the cause. Members of the Baltimore association agreed to do just this, and they adjourned “in utmost harmony and good-feeling.”⁵⁷

Following this meeting the resolutions of the Baltimore repealers gained the attention of the American press. The *New York Courier and Enquirer* praised them and called for other American repeal associations to take notice of the Baltimore repealers’ position. Although the Baltimore Irish repealers characterized themselves as “adopted citizens of this country,” the paper proclaimed, their position “shows them to be really and in truth American citizens.” The *Baltimore Sun*, which quoted the New York paper, agreed with its sentiments, stating that the repealers’ position was “to us not at all surprising, though to others here and elsewhere it seems to have been matter of special wonder, as if evidence of their attachment to the land of their adoption and its institutions were a novelty.”⁵⁸ The *Cincinnati Examiner* reported on the Baltimore meeting and, quoting the resolution that proclaimed their loyalty and appreciation for the United States, praised it, saying it was the “embodiment of sentiment. . . which should expand in the breast of every American, and especially every Irishman, who has adopted the stars and stripes for his shield.”⁵⁹ The *New Orleans Picayune* also singled out the Baltimore repealers for special praise for their denunciations of O’Connell’s speech.⁶⁰

The Irish American press had more qualified praise. The *Boston Pilot* said of the Baltimore resolutions that “the sentiments are strongly worded” and asserted that “it must be borne in mind that they speak under the influence of their institutions.” Quoting only the resolution that asserted love and loyalty for the United States, the paper averred that it represented the “spirit of the whole” of the proceedings.⁶¹

Although they were praised by much of the press for their resolutions, at the next meeting of the Baltimore repeal association, McNally expressed regret for the strong language against O’Connell that he had written into them. He was especially sorry, he said, because Lee had built upon them “to vilify O’Connell’s character,” which had not been McNally’s intent.⁶² Although they had initially come out with stronger language against O’Connell than the other associations, McNally wished to assert that the Baltimore repealers agreed with the general sentiment of their fellow American repealers—that it was with the abolitionists, not O’Connell, that they held their main dispute.

The Baltimore repealers found themselves further tested, however, in the aftermath of their resolutions. When news of their indignation meeting reached Dublin, Irish repealer Thomas Steele characterized their sentiments as “noisome,

thrice-blasted, soul-sickening, and revolting,” and he dubbed the Baltimore repealers as “rascally slave-holders and breeders” who “in rich joke called America the land of liberty.” After hearing of Steele’s statements, O’Connell rebuked him and advised him to withhold further commentary, but Steele’s words were soon copied into the *Dublin Freeman’s Journal*, and an issue of the paper was forwarded to the Baltimore Repeal Association. After heated debate upon how to respond to Steele, the association read the letter into the meeting, issuing “frequent demonstrations of contempt” and then burned the copy of the speech to “the loudest and most enthusiastic cheering.”⁶³

The *New York Freeman’s Journal* responded to the Baltimore repealers following this meeting, saying that when the association passed their original resolutions “we held our peace upon them, for we were willing to believe that they were adopted more in sorrow than in anger—rather from the necessity and the pressure of a public opinion, fanatical upon a certain point, than of their own liking.” The journal criticized the latest meeting, however, as “childish beyond expression.” Though critical of the general tenor of the meeting the New York paper also noted the introduction of a new resolution proclaiming that the Baltimore Repealers will “discountenance for the future, the discussion of every subject foreign to repeal” and expressed hope that they would abide by this resolution in order to uphold “hereafter their own dignity so deeply compromised in the eyes of their fellow Repealers throughout the Union.”⁶⁴

Noel Ignatiev has described the Baltimore repealers’ reaction to O’Connell’s speech—condemnatory but not to such an extent as to cause dissolution—as a response befitting residents of a “border state.”⁶⁵ In truth, however, only a few southern associations permanently dissolved, and most of the Deep South reacted in a manner similar to Baltimore, issuing a condemnation of O’Connell’s words but not his character and delivering strong denunciations against the abolitionists for their influence on O’Connell’s opinions. Most of the repeal associations of the South, in fact, shared a common progression in their response to O’Connell’s antislavery appeal. After their denunciations they eventually retreated to the position of the repealers to their North—that repeal and abolition be kept separate. Even so it is interesting that among the repealers in the South who made comment on O’Connell’s speech, those in the “border” city of Baltimore made far stronger statements against it than those in the port cities of Savannah and New Orleans in the lower South. Repeal, in fact, remained strongest in the aftermath of the speech in Savannah and New Orleans, cities where particularly large populations of Irish immigrants resided. In addition, in Charleston and Baltimore, where the most vigorous statements against the speech were made, those who criticized O’Connell most fervidly were not Irish Americans but native politicians, such as Pinckney and Lee, who supported the associations’ activities.

Although the northern repeal press criticized the strength of southern denunciations of O'Connell's speech, the southern repealers had achieved their goal of satisfying southern opinion in their responses. The *New Orleans Picayune* praised the southern repealers' censure of O'Connell's speech and hinted at the reception that Irish American repealers would have met had they expressed agreement with O'Connell's position on slavery. Those who had a problem with their criticisms of O'Connell's antislavery views, it announced, "had better obey Mr. O'Connell's injunction and 'go out from amongst us.'"⁶⁶

In October 1843 O'Connell gave an even more condemnatory address on American slavery at a meeting of the LNRA in Dublin. Like his earlier speech, this one was also in response to American repealers' attempts to justify antiabolitionist sentiment. The Cincinnati Repeal Association, one of the few northern associations that was critical of O'Connell for his May speech, had sent an address to the LNRA that reiterated the reasons why they would not join with the abolitionists. In addition to earlier arguments about the preservation of the union and respect for the Constitution, this address claimed the superiority of the white over the black race. O'Connell was incensed at this communication—he was especially outraged that the racial argument had come from a free rather than a slave region of the United States—and he announced his intention to write a full and deliberate reply to the Cincinnati repealers.⁶⁷ His reply to Cincinnati was O'Connell's most detailed condemnation of American race relations, slavery, and Irish American apologies for the institution; and it was publicized widely by American abolitionists when it reached American shores.⁶⁸

This address to Cincinnati nurtured a renewal of the discussion of abolition in the American repeal movement, but the controversy was softened by American sympathy for O'Connell, whom the British government arrested in late 1843 for inflaming Irish opinion against Great Britain. American repealers followed the news of O'Connell's trial and imprisonment throughout early 1844 and organized enthusiastically to send monetary aid to help pay for O'Connell's legal fees. While doing this, the American repeal organizations self-consciously continued to separate O'Connell's opinions on slavery from their support for the man and his movement. Even in the southern states, O'Connell's second antislavery address did not elicit a reaction anywhere near the vehemence that his May speech had.

At a repeal meeting in Washington, D.C., Robert Tyler, a slave-owning son of President John Tyler and a leader in the American repeal movement, announced that, despite what he characterized as an abolitionist attack on the movement, he would continue to support repeal. He spoke against the American abolitionists who, he asserted, were pawns of the British government, which was "deadly opposed to the free republican institutions of this country." Tyler also expressed fears that O'Connell's comments would damage repeal in the South. "The high

blood of our chivalrous Southerner is aroused,” he said “and they look with alarm at the infatuation . . . of Mr. O’Connell on the slave question.” Despite Tyler’s fear, however, the repealers in Washington, D.C., avowed that they would continue on behalf of O’Connell’s cause.⁶⁹

Other southern repeal associations did the same. In January 1844 the *New York Freeman’s Journal* affirmed that, regardless of contradictory reports from antirepeal papers, “repeal is *not* dead, even in the southern states,” and it noted the substantial contributions that the LNRA continued to receive from Savannah and surrounding areas in Georgia; Tuscaloosa, Alabama; and Baltimore.⁷⁰ New Orleans repealers also remained active in their efforts on behalf of repeal, and in early 1844 the Charleston Repeal Association began meeting for the first time since its dissolution the summer before.⁷¹

A member of the Savannah Repeal Association wrote to the *New York Freeman’s Journal* to report on the reaction to O’Connell’s Cincinnati address in his city. He stated that though there was initially “a perfect whirlwind of excitement” upon learning of O’Connell’s latest appeal, by the time the Savannah Repeal Association met in order to consider it, “the natural prejudice of many of our friends disappeared.” Thus, even as they rejected O’Connell’s sentiments, the Savannah repealers avoided harsh criticism of the Irish leader. The correspondent from Savannah said that he and his fellow repealers believed that O’Connell’s opinions on slavery “spring from an extravagant love of liberty,” and that his pronouncements were “*false consequences* deduced from *correct first principles*.” He expounded: “Were they merely abstract consequences no one would deny him the right of entertaining them; when, however, they become practical and involve the jeopardy of order and rule, then must they be regarded as pernicious and condemned. But whilst we repudiate the theory—we venerate the man.” The writer asserted that the Savannah association desired not only to continue in support of repeal but also hoped that repeal would expand in the southern states, and he suggested that the New York association send an orator to the South in order to encourage the movement.⁷²

American repealers could not, however, avoid controversy for long. As Americans continued to support repeal into 1844 and 1845, the question of the American annexation of Texas caught the attention of the Irish repealers. Great Britain opposed the annexation, partially because the country received duty-free cotton from the Texas republic and partially because they did not wish to see the expansion of American influence in the world. Many Irish repealers therefore supported Texas annexation, reasoning that a stronger United States meant a weaker Great Britain, which would ultimately benefit Ireland.⁷³ Daniel O’Connell, however, had long spoken out against the expansion of southern slavery into Texas and had criticized previous attempts of the United States to annex the territory, as he did not wish to see the power of the slave states strengthened. Moreover his

time in jail for previous agitations against the British government had convinced him that the best path to Irish independence was to persuade the British Parliament to grant it.

In March 1845, therefore, six months after his release from British custody, Daniel O'Connell gave a speech condemning Texas annexation and the expansion of slavery that would result. This speech included his harshest critique of American society yet, and in it he pledged Irish support for Great Britain should a war break out with the United States. If the British government would grant the Irish legislative independence on domestic affairs, he said, they would remain loyal to the throne and British foreign policy. With Irish support, he proclaimed, "the American eagle in its highest point of flight, [could] be brought down."⁷⁴

O'Connell gave this speech at a time when diplomatic tensions between the United States and Great Britain were strained. Both the Texas issue and a dispute between the two nations concerning who held sovereignty over the Oregon territory had citizens on both sides of the Atlantic preparing for possible war. O'Connell's offer of aid to Great Britain was therefore taken very seriously in the United States. American repealers reacted immediately, for O'Connell had crossed a line in the speech, moving beyond an attack on American slavery to a perceived attack on the country itself. General American reaction to the speech was outrage, and American repealers made a public show of their rejection of O'Connell's sentiments.⁷⁵

The northern associations suffered a huge loss of momentum after O'Connell's "American Eagle" speech. Repeal leaders urged Americans to continue to support repeal, making great efforts to separate the cause of Irish nationalism from the opinions of its leader, but his latest pronouncements, which had contained such a strong statement against the United States, kept most of the former members of associations away from the movement. Despite efforts of northern repeal leaders, support for repeal in the free states entered into a steady decline.

If O'Connell's speech provoked a reaction among repealers in the North, it destroyed the repeal movement in the American South. Associations in Virginia and Louisiana disbanded permanently. Other groups never officially dissolved, but they ceased their activities after the speech. The Baltimore association held a very public dissolution meeting. They posted notices to the native American community in the city's newspapers, inviting it to come and witness the degree of patriotism among the Irish American population of the city. As they dissolved, they advertised that they chose America over O'Connell.⁷⁶

Tellingly, the southern associations made no reference to O'Connell's attacks on slavery as a reason for dissolution, focusing instead on his assertion that he would support Great Britain in a conflict with the United States and on their desire to prove themselves loyal Americans. Members of the Baltimore Repeal Association commented that O'Connell's speech, "if unrebuked by the friends of Ireland in America," would "subject them to the unmerited suspicion of their

fellow countrymen as men more alive to the welfare of Ireland than wedded in attachment to the honor, the fame, and the support of their country.”⁷⁷ The New Orleans repealers announced that O’Connell’s position against the United States in the speech “render[s] it incompatible with . . . our obligations as American citizens, to give any further aid to the cause” and that “to continue our exertions under such humiliating circumstances would be an outrage upon the feelings of the American people.”⁷⁸ The Norfolk repealers in Virginia explained that they dissolved in order to “place our patriotic devotion above suspicion.”⁷⁹

Southern rebukes of the “American Eagle” speech, in fact, mirrored those of the northern repeal associations. Repealers throughout the United States criticized the speech as one that was belligerent toward their adopted home and pledged that, should they be forced to choose where their loyalty rested, they would choose the United States.⁸⁰ The only sectional difference in the response to the inflammatory speech among repealers was that most of the southern associations immediately dissolved, while the northern associations continued to meet—albeit without much enthusiasm or support—into the next year.

Despite this, some repeal leaders in the North once again were critical of the southern associations that dissolved, and they blamed the dissolutions on the main source of difference between the North and the South—slavery.⁸¹ The truth is that slavery did indeed play a role in the ultimate decline of repeal in the South, although not a direct one. O’Connell’s earlier pronouncements against southern slavery had led to a heightened suspicion of Irish American supporters of his movement, and critics had questioned their loyalty to both nation and state of residence with each of his speeches. Consequently, when O’Connell seemed to declare his support for a possible war against the United States, they were even more vulnerable to nativist attack than repealers in the northern states. Southern repealers realized this and sought to allay southern suspicions that they concurred with O’Connell in his expressions of hostility against the American nation.

Thus Irish repealers in the South clearly faced unique pressures as they attempted to deal with O’Connell’s antislavery pronouncements. Even so, southern Irish nationalists, for the most part, did not let the Irish leader’s position on slavery prohibit them from supporting his movement for Irish legislative independence. Although Irish Americans throughout the South worried that fellow southerners would conflate O’Connell’s abolitionism with their own position on slavery, they continued to work on behalf of Ireland. By separating O’Connell’s views on one subject from the other—dissociating his opinions on slavery from his movement for repeal—they attempted to uphold their loyalties to both their ancestral and their adopted homes. It was, in fact, only when O’Connell moved from criticisms of slavery to what most American citizens took to be a declaration of hostility against the American nation that the southern repeal movement

collapsed. With his pledge to join Great Britain should Anglo-American hostilities erupt, Irish American repealers believed that O'Connell had finally forced them to choose between their allegiance to Ireland and to the United States. In the dissolutions of their associations, Irish American repealers in the South announced that they chose the United States.

NOTES

1. On O'Connell's involvement in the American antislavery movement, see Douglas C. Riach, "Daniel O'Connell and American Anti-Slavery," *Irish Historical Studies* 20, no. 77 (1976); Bruce Nelson, "'Come out of Such a Land, You Irishmen': Daniel O'Connell, American Slavery, and the Making of The 'Irish Race,'" *Éire-Ireland* 42, nos. 1 and 2 (2007); Maurice J. Bric, "Daniel O'Connell and the Debate on Anti-Slavery 1820–1850," in *History and the Public Sphere: Essays in Honour of John A. Murphy*, ed. Tom Dunne and Laurence M. Geary (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2005). For a sampling of O'Connell's speeches on American slavery, see Daniel O'Connell, *The Irish Patriot: Daniel O'Connell's Legacy to Irish Americans* (Philadelphia, 1863); Daniel O'Connell, *Daniel O'Connell Upon American Slavery: With Other Irish Testimonies* (New York, 1860).

2. For discussion of the slavery controversy within the American repeal movement, see Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, vol. 1, *Racial Oppression and Social Control* (New York: Verso, 1994), 173–79; David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815–1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 129–31; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 30–31; Gilbert Osofsky, "Abolitionists, Irish Immigrants, and the Dilemmas of Romantic Nationalism," *American Historical Review* 80, no. 4 (1975): 905–6; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (1999; reprint, New York: Verso, 2000), 136; John F. Quinn, "The Rise and Fall of Repeal: Slavery and Irish Nationalism in Antebellum Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 130, no. 1 (2006). For overviews of and commentaries on this literature, see Steve Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience* (Sterling, Va.: Pluto Press, 2004), 91–113; Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (New York, 2000), 79–87; Kevin Kenny, ed., *New Directions in Irish-American History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 5–8, 102–3; Colm Kerrigan, "Irish Temperance and U.S. Antislavery: Father Mathew and the Abolitionists," *History Workshop* 31 (1991): 109; Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89, no. 1 (2002): 164–65; John McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 51–52.

3. *Loyal National Repeal Association, Daniel O'Connell, and American Slavery*, (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, 1843), 8. This pamphlet is available at the Library Company of Philadelphia.

4. Some contemporary accounts give this impression. See, for example, *Boston Pilot*, July 29, 1843. For historical accounts of the southern dissolutions, see Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 28; Edward Matthew Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens: The Irish Immigrant Community of Savannah, 1837–1861." (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1990), 79; Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 121; Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), 43.

5. *National Antislavery Standard*, January 6, 1842. The Irish address was published in most antislavery journals when it came out and was republished in later years as issues concerning Irish Americans and abolition came up.

6. *Boston Pilot*, March 19, 1842. These sentiments came from a speech of Bishop John Hughes of New York in response to the address. They were echoed throughout the Irish press in the United States and in the American repeal meetings. Irish abolitionists continued to send additional signatures supporting the Irish Address into the next year, eventually reaching a total of about seventy thousand signatures.

7. *Public Ledger*, February 2, 1842.

8. See analysis of the replies of American repealers to the Irish Address in Angela Murphy, "Abolition, Irish Freedom, and Immigrant Citizenship: American Slavery and the Rise and Fall of the American Associations for Irish Repeal" (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 2006), 121–39.

9. *Loyal National Repeal Association, Daniel O'Connell, and American Slavery*, 6–7. The abolitionist letter, as well as O'Connell's pro-abolition speech in response, appear in this pamphlet.

10. *Ibid.*, 8.

11. Notable exceptions to this were the repeal association of Cincinnati, which issued a harsh rebuttal to the speech, and the repeal association in Philadelphia, which split over whether or not to ignore O'Connell's appeal or reply to it. See Cincinnati Repeal Association to O'Connell, July 27, 1843, *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, August 31, 1843; Quinn, "Rise and Fall of Repeal"; Murphy, "Abolition, Irish Freedom, and Immigrant Citizenship," 213–26.

12. On the nullification controversy. see William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816–1836* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 213–71.

13. *Public Ledger*; July 6, 1843. Also quoted from *Charleston Miscellany* in Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 131.

14. *Charleston Mercury*, June 22, July 1, 1843; *Public Ledger*, July 23, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal* July 22, 1843. For a brief overview of the life of the Charleston Repeal Association, see Harvey Strum, "South Carolina and Irish Famine Relief, 1846–7," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 103, no. 2 (2002), 137.

15. *Boston Pilot*, July 8, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 15, 1843.

16. *Charleston Mercury*, July 1, 1843; *Liberator*, July 14, 1843; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, July 20, 1843.

17. From the *Albany Argus* in *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 22, 1843. See *Public Ledger*, June 27, 1843, for his earlier participation in the movement.

18. "H. L. Pinckney," in *Concise Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 2, 5th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1997), 994; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 182, 201, 55–58, 351–55.

19. From *Charleston Patriot* in *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 22, 1843.

20. *Boston Pilot*, July 20, 1843; *Baltimore Sun*, July 25, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 5, 1843; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, August 31, 1843.

21. *New York Freeman's Journal*, September 30, 1843; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, October 5, 1843; *Cincinnati Examiner*, October 18, 1843.

22. The *Boston Pilot* and the *New York Freeman's Journal* were two of the most influential Irish American papers in the United States, both with a circulation that spanned the nation and both of which regularly covered news of repeal in America and Ireland and actively promoted the cause. There was no southern counterpart to these papers in the repeal movement.

23. *Boston Pilot*, July 8, 20, 1843.

24. *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 15, 1843.

25. *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 22, August 12, 1843.

26. *Boston Pilot*, July 8, 1843.

27. *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 12, 1843.

28. *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 8, 1843.

29. *New York Freeman's Journal*, January 20, 1844; *Boston Pilot*, January 20, 1844.

30. In 1850 Irish Americans made up 10.2 percent of the total population and 18.5 percent of the white population in Savannah. See Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 36.

31. *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 12, 1843.

32. See proceedings of the meeting, held July 24, 1843, in *Savannah Daily Georgian*, August 3, 1843. The account states that "the utmost enthusiasm and good feeling in the patriotic cause pervaded the meeting."

33. *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 19, 1843.

34. *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 26, 1843.

35. *Public Ledger*, July 21, 1843; *New York Journal of Commerce in National Anti-Slavery Standard*, July 27, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 26, 1843.

36. *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, September 28, 1843.

37. *Dublin Freeman's Journal*; Shoemaker, "Strangers and Citizens," 80.

38. In 1850 Irish Americans made up 15.1 percent of the total and 19.6 percent of the white population in New Orleans. See Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 36. On New Orleans repeal, see also Earl F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800–1860* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 149.

39. *New Orleans Picayune*, June 30, 1843.

40. *Savannah Daily Georgian*, July 21, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 5, 1843. It is likely that the New York journal, whose editors maintained a correspondence with Savannah repealers, was repeating the Savannah interpretation.

41. The dissolved repeal associations distributed the contents of their treasuries to local charities.

42. *New York Freeman's Journal*, September 30, 1843.

43. *New York Freeman's Journal*, October 28, 1843.

44. *Boston Pilot*, October 13, 1843.

45. *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, September 28, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, October 28, 1843; Douglas C. Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign against American Slavery, 1830–1860" (Ph.D. diss., 1975), 198.

46. *Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1843.

47. *Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1843; *Boston Pilot*, July 15, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 15, 1843.

48. *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 15, 1843.

49. *Baltimore Sun*, July 12, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 5, 1843.

50. *Baltimore Sun*, July 8, 1843; *Nation* (Dublin), September 2, 1843.

51. *Baltimore Sun*, July 17, 1843.

52. *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1843. This final resolution was all that was reported in the *Boston Pilot*, July 1, 1843. See also report of meeting from *Baltimore Visitor* in *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, July 13, 1843.

53. *Boston Pilot*, July 1, 1843.

54. *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1843; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, July 13, 1843.

55. Lee was affiliated with the Whig party. See *New York Times*, October 25, 1853. In addition he was a member of the American Colonization Society. See Rayford W. Logan, "Some New Interpretations of the Colonization Movement," *Phylon* 4, no. 4 (1943): 329.

56. *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1843.

57. *Baltimore Sun*, June 27, 1843.

58. *Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1843.

59. *Cincinnati Examiner*, July 3, 1843.

60. *Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1843.

61. *Boston Pilot*, July 1, 1843.

62. *Boston Pilot*, July 15, 1843.

63. *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, July 28, 1843; *New York Freeman's Journal*, September 16, 1843; *Public Ledger*, September 21, 1843; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, September 21, 1843.

64. *New York Freeman's Journal*, September 16, 1843.

65. Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 28.

66. *New Orleans Picayune*, July 6, 1843.

67. *Public Ledger*, September 30, 1843.

68. O'Connell's reply was printed in pamphlet form by a number of publishers. See, for example, *Letter from the Loyal National Repeal Association of Ireland in Dublin to the Cincinnati Irish Repeal Association* (Boston: New England Anti-Slavery Tract Association, 1843); "Daniel O'Connell and the Committee of the Irish Repeal Association of Cincinnati," *Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph*, 1863. Various newspapers also printed extracts from his address. See *Nation*, October 14, 1843; *Baltimore Sun*, November 9, 1843; *Liberator*, November 10, 1843; *Public Ledger*, November 10, 1843; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, November 16, 1843; *Cincinnati Examiner*, November 16, 1843; *Pennsylvania Freeman*, November 27, 1843. On abolitionist publicity, see Murphy, "Abolition, Irish Freedom, and Immigrant Citizenship," 246–52.

69. *Public Ledger*, December 30, 1843.

70. *New York Freeman's Journal*, January 6, 1844.

71. *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 6, 13, 1844; *Dublin Freeman's Journal*, August 20, 1844; *Nation* (Dublin), February 24, 1844.

72. *New York Freeman's Journal*, December 2, 1843. Noel Ignatiev and Douglas Riach mistakenly assert that the Savannah association dissolved and then reconstituted after receiving news of the Cincinnati address. Riach, "Ireland and the Campaign against American Slavery," 212.; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 29. Ignatiev cites Riach on the subject. Riach cites the *Albany Democratic Reformer*, January 8, 1844, which makes no mention of a Savannah dissolution but does reference the continuing commitment of the Savannah repealers in its discussion of the dissolution and reconstitution of the Charleston Repeal Association. This issue of the *Albany Democratic Reporter* was printed as a special

edition on repeal as “Wrongs and Rights of Ireland, Depicted by Distinguished Americans” (Albany, N.Y., 1844).

73. Many of the repealers with this point of view were members of the “Young Ireland” faction of the movement, which eventually split from repeal. See discussion of this in Maurice R. O’Connell, “O’Connell, Young Ireland, and Negro Slavery: An Exercise in Romantic Nationalism,” *Thought* 64, no. 253 (1989): 130–36; Murphy, “Abolition, Irish Freedom, and Immigrant Citizenship,” 322–30. For more on Young Ireland and the split from repeal, see Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (London: Penguin, 2000), 228–31, 34–35.

74. *Boston Pilot*, May 3, 1845.

75. For a detailed analysis of the American repealers’ response to O’Connell’s 1845 speech, see Angela F. Murphy, “Daniel O’Connell and the ‘American Eagle’ in 1845: Slavery, Diplomacy, Nativism, and the Collapse of America’s First Irish Nationalist Movement,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 26, no. 2 (2007). See also Murphy, “Abolition, Irish Freedom, and Immigrant Citizenship,” 297–337.

76. *Boston Pilot*, June 14, 1845. A new Baltimore Association sprung up in the weeks after dissolution, but the impetus for the new society came from native American members of the previous association. This new association, like its northern counterparts, floundered in the months after it was formed.

77. *Baltimore Sun*, May 9, 1845.

78. *New York Freeman’s Journal*, May 24, 1845; *Liberator*, June 6, 1845.

79. *Baltimore Sun*, May 28, 1845.

80. *Baltimore Sun*, June 11, 1846; *Boston Pilot*, May 31, 1845; *Dublin Freeman’s Journal*, June 30, 1845

81. *Boston Pilot*, June 14, July 5, 1845; *New York Freeman’s Journal*, August 23, 1845.

“From the Cabins of Connemara to the Kraals of Kaffirland”

Irish Nationalists, the British Empire,
and the “Boer Fight for Freedom”

Bruce Nelson

From the China towers of Peking to the round towers of Ireland, from the cabins of Connemara to the kraals of Kaffirland, from the wattled homes of the isles of Polynesia to the wigwams of North America the cry is: “Down with the invaders! Down with the tyrants!” Every man to have his own land—every man to have his own home.

Tenants’ rights meeting, Mayo, April 1879

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, white settler regimes from Canada to Australasia to southern Africa aggressively demanded the right of self-determination for themselves and gradually achieved dominion status within the framework of an emerging British Empire / Commonwealth. This process of change was accompanied by a new imperial discourse that celebrated the British as an “imperial race,” embraced the white populations of the dominions as “Britons overseas,” and proclaimed that “the whole British people throughout the world constitute a great democracy.”¹ But most architects of the New Imperialism had no intention of including Indians, Africans, or any other “colored race” within the parameters of the “British people throughout the world.” At best the dark-skinned peoples who inhabited the empire were regarded as members of primitive and backward races that could, perhaps, evolve toward the privilege of limited self-government over a period of decades, or even centuries.

These developments confronted Irish nationalists with a familiar question: What was their relationship to other peoples who were seeking liberation? Were the inalienable rights they demanded for themselves based on their claim to be white and European? Or were they, as Daniel O’Connell had insisted,

"aborigines," an indigenous people victimized by a settler regime who could—on that basis—unite with the "colored races" of the empire as allies in a broader anti-colonial struggle?² Insofar as Irish nationalists envisioned the world in terms of a mosaic of races and saw themselves as a colonized people whose land and liberty had been stolen by a voracious alien intruder, it was possible for them to develop a sense of solidarity with nationalists in India, Egypt, and southern Africa in a common struggle against colonialism in general and the British Empire in particular. But once they claimed the mantle of whiteness for themselves, once they based their sense of entitlement on the belief that they were a "white nation," their capacity to build broad anticolonial solidarity was radically compromised.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, these issues played out with compelling force in South Africa, where the "heroic Boers"—white people of European descent—took up arms to defend the liberty and autonomy they had fought for centuries to achieve, where imperial Britain cloaked its quest for global supremacy in the language of democracy and progress, and where a bewildering array of "Native" and "Coloured" peoples sought to stave off the devastation and dispossession that the march of "civilization" had entailed. Inevitably, perhaps, the Boers became a vivid symbol of the festering grievances and heady aspirations that were at the very heart of Irish nationalism. Undeniably the war between Boer and Briton, which engaged the world's attention from October 1899 to May 1902, played a vital role in the regeneration of Irish nationalism as a mass movement focused squarely on the question of sovereignty in the context of empire. But the South African War also served to recast the fight for Irish freedom as part of a global struggle for the rights of "white men."³ In doing so, it blinded even the most progressive Irish nationalists to the rights and grievances of black Africans. As in the era of slavery and abolition, moreover, it raised the specter of Britain and blacks as a malevolent combination standing in the way of white people's quest for self-determination.

Irish nationalists, at home and in the diaspora, responded in diverse ways to Britain's quest for global hegemony. Many leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party emphasized their commitment to preserving "the unity and integrity of the Empire." Others were keen to develop ties of solidarity with other victims of British colonialism, first and foremost with the people of India.⁴ No matter what their differences, virtually all home rulers shared a deep resentment of "the Hottentot system of governing Ireland," a system rooted in the belief that the Irish, like the indigenous peoples of Africa, lacked the capacity to govern themselves. As late as 1886 a leading British politician dismissed the Irish demand for home rule by comparing the people of Ireland to the "Hottentots" of South Africa, who were thought to inhabit the bottom rung of the Darwinian evolutionary ladder. Even the *Dublin Evening Mail* (a Unionist newspaper, to be sure) fretted that too many Irish men and women were "in the moral and intellectual condition of Dahomey." For many nationalists it became strategically wise and psychologically

necessary to insist that, like Canadians and Australians, the Irish people were a white and European race and were entitled to home rule for precisely that reason. Thus John Dillon told an audience in New Zealand that the Irish deserved self-government “because we are white men,” and John Redmond asked an English audience why Ireland should be the “only . . . white race in the Empire that is to be denied the right to govern herself.”⁵

Because they wanted, above all, to sever the hated British connection, radical nationalists generally expressed more hostility to the empire than their home rule rivals did. Many of them were willing to contemplate an alliance with virtually any adversary of Britain. This could include European nations such as France, Russia, and Germany, or “colored” peoples such as Afghans, Indians, and Sudanese. Such a stance did not necessarily imply a commitment to racial equality or hostility to imperialism as such. With the notable exception of James Connolly, Irish nationalism did not produce a critic of empire in the mold of Vladimir Lenin or J. A. Hobson. But if economic and structural critiques were notably lacking, moral outrage at the empire’s crimes and a strong—if not universal—sense of solidarity with other victims of British colonialism were often an important component of radical nationalism. Patrick Ford and Michael Davitt embodied this broader sense of solidarity in their own lives and articulated it with particular eloquence.⁶ Ford was born in county Galway, but he lived most of his life in the United States, where he edited the *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*.⁷ Davitt was the son of peasants from county Mayo who were evicted from their home during the Great Famine. Soon thereafter his family immigrated to the east Lancashire textile town of Haslingden, where Michael went to work in a textile mill at the age of nine and lost his right arm in a factory accident two years later. As a teenager he joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood and was sentenced to fifteen years’ penal servitude for gun running. After his release from Dartmoor Prison in December 1877, he returned to county Mayo, where he was “greeted as a returning hero with torch-light parades and cheering crowds.” His goal, he concluded, must be to lead “a war against landlordism for a root settlement of the land question.” He became the “father” of the Irish National Land League, which fought to restore ownership of the soil to those who worked it. Characteristically, he also looked outward and helped to build an American Land League that established more than nine hundred branches and raised more than half a million dollars to support the struggle in Ireland. During his third tour of the United States, in 1882, he reminded the American Irish that the Land War was not only a battle for the “rights of your kindred, but for those of industrial humanity throughout the world.”⁸

Taking the long view, Davitt was, undeniably, one of the giants of Irish nationalism. Like O’Connell before him, he combined nationalism and internationalism in striking and unusual ways. Like his ally Patrick Ford, he added labor radicalism—and a strong commitment to land nationalization—to the mix.

He remained a republican—and a physical force nationalist—at heart, but he became an important leader of peaceful mass protest and was elected to Parliament in 1892.⁹ He sympathized with India's struggle for freedom and became a relentless opponent of British imperial policy in Africa. He defended the rights of Aborigines against the predation of white Australians, some of whom were Irish immigrants or Australians of Irish descent. He spoke out forcefully against the vicious anti-Semitic pogroms in early-twentieth-century Russia and supported the right of the Jewish people to a homeland in Palestine.¹⁰ When he died in 1906, the British socialist Keir Hardie memorialized this "one-armed friend of humanity" as "the founder and chief of the Irish Land League . . . [who] brought into Irish politics the new spirit of internationalism and of labour and social emancipation."¹¹

But a closer look at Davitt in the context of the conflict between Boer and Briton at the end of the nineteenth century can shed further light on the pitfalls of constructing national identity on a foundation of binary opposition and can illuminate the magnetic pull of a rights discourse grounded in a sense of white entitlement.¹² During and after the South African War, Davitt venerated the Boers and vilified the British; indeed he created a near-perfect set of polarities—one representing the good, the other embodying evil. He declared that the Boers were "absolutely in the right in heroically defending with their lives the independence of their country," while Britain was committing "murder and robbery . . . for the basest of motives."¹³ In constructing this binary, he allowed himself to stereotype and demonize "Native" peoples who were seeking to use the chaos that war created to reclaim their land and restore a measure of their dignity.¹⁴ But Davitt was hardly alone in this regard; his idealization of the Boers and his blindness to the just aspirations of black Africans reflected a perspective that was shared by a broad spectrum of world opinion.¹⁵

The Boers were the quintessential white settlers.¹⁶ Their Dutch ancestors had arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in the 1650s and had been augmented thereafter by an influx of French and German immigrants who gradually blended into the larger Dutch community. They spoke Dutch or, increasingly, Afrikaans, a creolized form of speech that blended various Dutch dialects with the spoken languages of a number of the European, Asian, and indigenous groups that inhabited South Africa.¹⁷ Although many Dutch settlers lived in Cape Town and its agricultural hinterland, as a people the Boers became famous for their treks to the interior in search of better land and greater freedom. In 1891 the South African novelist Olive Schreiner celebrated the "long 'trek' of the Boer peoples . . . which in its ultimate essence is a search, not for riches, not for a land where mere political equality may be found, but for a world of absolute and untrammelled individual liberty; for a land where each white man shall reign . . . over a territory absolutely his own."¹⁸ For all of her romantic racialism, Schreiner succeeded in capturing the contradiction at the heart of the Boers' collective persona: they were

at once supreme individualists (or fiercely independent family units) and a people bound together by a strong sense of common destiny.¹⁹ In an increasingly secular world, the Boers were devoutly religious.²⁰ They came to regard themselves as God's chosen people who were predestined to build an African City on a Hill but who then asked to be left alone to worship their God, and control their African and "colored" subalterns, in their own way.²¹

In 1795 and again in 1806, the British seized the Cape peninsula from the Dutch and, over the course of the next century, gradually established sovereignty over all of South Africa. The fact that many Boers resisted Britain's imperial agenda, and succeeded in constructing two independent republics (the Transvaal and the Orange Free State), made them all the more irresistible to Irish nationalists as a symbol of courage and resolve. When the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand caused Britain to reassert its sovereignty over the Transvaal, it created a compelling David and Goliath narrative, pitting the spiritual quest of self-reliant Dutch farmers against the materialism and militarism of a bloated empire.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Irish nationalists supported the Boers and saw them as allies in their own struggle for self-government. But the Boer world view and narrative of history was not only avowedly Christian and implicitly anti-imperialist but also deeply and reflexively white supremacist. Actually, until the nineteenth century the color line in South Africa remained somewhat permeable. (Historians disagree, sharply, about how permeable.)²² From the moment of their arrival on the subcontinent in 1652, the Dutch had been outnumbered by the "colored" peoples they encountered: the brown-skinned Khoikhoi and San, or (in the language of white settlers) "Hottentots" and "Bushmen," who barely survived the Europeans' diseases, superior weaponry, and draconian labor discipline; the many black African peoples, or "Kaffirs," who were concentrated in the vast interior regions that Dutch farmers coveted; and the slaves, imported from East Africa and Asia.²³ Since whites continued to be a small minority of the population, sexual interaction across racial lines was inevitable. It created a new race of "Coloureds," who symbolized the instability of the evolving racial hierarchy. Some Coloureds, especially light-skinned young women, were able to pass into the white community through marriage. But for the most part the Boers remained convinced that the survival of their religion, culture, and racial identity depended on the maintenance of a clear and sharp distinction between whites and the "heathens" who surrounded—and threatened to overwhelm—them.

British authorities sought to anglicize the Dutch settler population through the imposition of British law and the promotion of the English language, and to protect colored peoples from the harsh forms of servitude the settlers had imposed on them. The keenest defenders of dark-skinned servants and slaves were British missionaries, some of whom were closely associated with the transatlantic abolitionist movement. The Reverend John Philip, who arrived in the

Cape Colony in 1819 to supervise the work of the London Missionary Society, infuriated the settlers by insisting that Khoisan, Coloureds, and Africans "must have equal rights with the Whites."²⁴ According to Afrikaner mythology, the final straw came when the British Parliament ended slavery throughout the empire in the 1830s. It now seemed that there was "no longer any justice for the burghers, but only for the blacks." Thus thousands of Boers set out from the coastal settlements of the Cape Colony and began an epic journey toward the interior, where they ruthlessly suppressed the "savages" who sought to obstruct the advance of Christianity and civilization. Anna Steenkamp, the niece of one of the leaders of the "Great Trek," recalled in 1843 that it was not so much the abolition of slavery that "drove us to such lengths" as the realization that Africans and Coloureds were being "placed on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion. . . . It was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke," she concluded, "wherefore we rather withdrew in order thus to preserve our doctrines in purity."²⁵

In some respects Anna Steenkamp's observation is highly misleading. Even though thousands of Boers "withdrew," in part because of a long list of grievances against the British government, many of them continued to pledge allegiance to that government; and members of the British settler elite in the eastern Cape enthusiastically supported the trekking movement, "cheer[ing] it on at every step."²⁶ Indeed the evolving history of South Africa was never reducible to Boer versus Briton (or, for that matter, to white versus black). British settlers in the eastern Cape resented John Philip and the work of the London Missionary Society as much as their Boer counterparts did, and they were every bit as determined to conquer and displace Africans who contested their control of land and other valuable resources.²⁷ Although British authorities often spoke of the need to safeguard the rights of the "Native" population, in the end they usually allowed the settlers to have their way. In fact, by launching brutal scorched-earth campaigns against a succession of African polities, the British army served as the ultimate guarantor of the settlers' agenda.²⁸

The roots of the war of 1899–1902 can be traced most directly to the 1870s and the British government's effort to extend and rationalize its authority by creating a federal union of the four separate white regimes (the Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, formally known as the South African Republic). In pursuit of this objective, Britain annexed the independent Transvaal in 1877, thereby provoking a surge of grassroots resistance that culminated in an armed uprising and the defeat of British forces at Majuba Hill, on the Transvaal-Natal border, in February 1881. The South African Republic thus regained its independence, with the reluctant acquiescence of a British government that was not only deeply preoccupied with the "Irish Question" at the time but was also determined to avoid the emergence of another Ireland on the South

African subcontinent. However, the discovery of huge gold deposits on the Witwatersrand transformed a “ramshackle” republic into a vital economic asset for Britain and the empire. The gold rush on the Rand led to the influx of large numbers of foreigners, or *Uitlanders*, many of them British citizens. Soon a “deep cultural gulf” separated the rural, God-fearing, and insular Boers from the urban, secular, and aggressively self-serving *Uitlanders*. When the government of President Paul Kruger sought to limit the power of the newcomers and resisted demands to liberalize the franchise to accommodate them, a crisis ensued. Speaking the language of “justice, liberty, and humanity,” leading British politicians and imperial administrators such as Joseph Chamberlain and Alfred Milner seized the opportunity to demonstrate that “we, not the Dutch, are Boss.”²⁹

The war began in October 1899.³⁰ In its early stages the “plucky Boer farmers” caught the British off guard and won a succession of spectacular victories that made them folk heroes throughout much of the world.³¹ But after sending massive reinforcements to South Africa, Britain regained the upper hand, and the conflict became a stalemate between two determined but unequal adversaries.³² The Boers responded to Britain’s numerical superiority with a brilliant campaign of guerrilla warfare in which “bands of Boers who seemed to spring from the earth” harassed and obstructed their ponderous adversaries with great skill.³³ The British in turn pursued a scorched-earth policy, reminiscent of Sherman’s famous March to the Sea, that included the burning of Boer farms, the confiscation or killing of livestock, and, eventually, the imprisonment of Boer women and children in concentration camps, where twenty-eight thousand of them died of malnutrition and disease. “Any one knows that in war, cruelties more horrible than murder can take place,” the Boer general Christiaan de Wet acknowledged, but he professed amazement, even disbelief, that such atrocities had been “committed against defenceless women and children . . . by the civilized English nation.”³⁴

Davitt resigned his seat in Parliament on October 25, 1899, to protest Britain’s war against the South African republics. In late March 1900 he arrived in Pretoria and served for nearly three months as a correspondent for William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal American* and the *Dublin Freeman’s Journal*. He visited the sites of major battles, interviewed a number of leading Boer generals and politicians, and was present at the last meeting of the legislature of the South African Republic before the British forces entered Pretoria.³⁵ In his articles he not only exalted the “superior” physical and moral qualities of the Boers but also allowed himself to become their mouthpiece to the wider world on the “native question.” From a physical standpoint, he wrote, he had never seen “a finer type of manhood” anywhere. The Boer combatants were “strong, healthy, sinewy men, with bodies that seemed built to defy fatigue, and with faces which you would never associate with fear.” He found their character and moral qualities even more impressive. He described them as “quiet, sober-looking, and earnest

men" among whom "there was no rowdyism of any kind, no disorder, no intoxication." Most of them were "sons of the soil," and, he told his Irish audience, they owned the land they worked. There was "no landlordism" in the Boer republics, he reported, and there were "no evictions."³⁶ In fact there had been significant levels of social and economic inequality among Dutch South Africans since the emergence of a rural elite in the eighteenth century, and this inequality was magnified by the impact of the mineral revolution. Many white farmers *were* landless, and thus conspicuously lacking a "status commensurate with their colour." Some were forced into unskilled labor and were observed working "side by side with Zulus and Fingoes." Significant numbers of *bywoners*, as landless farmers and laborers were known in Afrikaans, refused to fight to defend the Transvaal, and they were prominently represented in the ranks of the erstwhile rebels who surrendered to the British and even joined the imperial armed forces.³⁷ Davitt nonetheless insisted on seeing the Boers as a unified race and making sweeping generalizations about their character. "Taking the Boer nation as I have found them," he concluded, "I would unhesitatingly say that they are a braver, a better, and a more civilised people than the British."³⁸

His experience in South Africa led Davitt to write *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, a massive tome with 589 pages of text and numerous photographs that was published in 1902.³⁹ In it he fell prey to a kind of settler Zionism, premised on the exaltation of heroic white races that brought democracy (for themselves) and a "civilizing" mission to lands that appeared to have no history, no culture, no purpose other than to be transformed into appendages of European civilization. In the Zionist narrative the people who inhabited these lands were either rendered invisible or demonized as "savages."⁴⁰ To a remarkable degree Davitt swallowed the Boer narrative of history whole. He not only believed the Boers were "making the noblest stand ever made in human history for their independence" but also wholeheartedly embraced Afrikaner nationalism's creation myth, rooted in the Great Trek of the 1830s in which thousands of *Voortrekkers* "ventured forth, trusting in God, to rid themselves of all human despotism, in search of a free land for their children and their children's children."⁴¹

In his reports from South Africa, Davitt routinely referred to the black Africans who resisted the Boer encroachment on their lands as "Kaffirs," meaning "pagans" or "infidels," who were beyond the pale of civilization and Christianity.⁴² (In fact many black Africans were Christians, and some of the *kholwa*, or "believers," living on Protestant mission stations were quasi-independent landed proprietors whose standard of living was higher than that of many *bywoners*.)⁴³ In charging that blacks were hanging around "the borders of European possessions" and threatening white settlers with bloodshed, he ignored the fact that it was the Kaffirs who had been robbed of their land at a staggeringly asymmetrical cost in human life.⁴⁴ For black Africans the loss of their land, and their independence, was followed by entrapment in various forms of indentured

labor—first in agriculture and then, after the discovery of gold, in the mines of the Rand. As a longtime partisan of the British and Irish labor movements, Davitt naturally took the side of the white miners in their class struggle against the mine owners (the “Randlords”). However, his class perspective excluded black mineworkers, whose numbers had reached a hundred thousand by 1899. They were relegated to a caste status well below that of the whites and were subjected to a regime of super exploitation that took a horrendous toll in lives, not only from silicosis (the miners’ disease) but also from pneumonia and tuberculosis. But Davitt refused to treat the massive black presence in the mines as anything but an issue of social control. In *The Boer Fight for Freedom*, he never referred to black miners as workers; rather they remained Kaffirs, even “savages,” and he congratulated the Boer police and magistrates who “kept [them] under orderly control without undue severity.”⁴⁵

Davitt and other pro-Boers also failed to comprehend another development of major importance that was taking place in the relations between blacks and whites. In many rural areas Africans took advantage of the war to pursue an agenda that came to include the restoration of land and livestock the Boers had stolen from them. The key to this development was the arming of blacks, which went very much against the grain of whites’ understanding of the norm in race relations and of the nature of the war. One of the most persistent charges against the British was that they provided weapons to “all the Native tribes in and around the South African Republic” and that the armed tribesmen then committed “horrible atrocities.”⁴⁶ This was common knowledge, the Boer political and military leader Jan Christian Smuts charged, and in fact historians have estimated that more than one hundred thousand black Africans served with the British forces and that perhaps as many as thirty thousand of them were armed.⁴⁷

The arming of blacks and their participation in British military campaigns set the stage for an extraordinary “rebellion from below.” Throughout much of the war zone, blacks were active and aggressive participants in the looting of Boer farmhouses, the confiscation of Boer livestock, and even the occupation of Boer farms—on a massive scale. In the northern Cape and the western Transvaal, large areas of land were coming under black control. In the regions where Jan Smuts served on commando, he encountered not only deserted Boer farms and the occasional taunts of “impudent Natives.” Indeed, in the last two years of the war, the Kgatla people “retook land that had been taken from them in the previous forty years” and, according to Shula Marks, “came to control the entire western Transvaal.”⁴⁸ When Louis Botha, the commandant general of the armed forces of the South Africa Republic, returned to his farm after the war, he reported, “My Kaffirs told me I had no business there, and I had better leave.”⁴⁹

Davitt failed to recognize, much less accept, the full dimensions of the black rebellion from below. Instead he dismissed the Kgatla and other African partisans as mere pawns of the British and routinely denounced them as “cowardly

savages."⁵⁰ But it had not always been so. In 1879 he had seen the interests of Irish tenant farmers and black Africans as identical and had joined his countrymen in arguing that the cause was the same "from the cabins of Connemara to the kraals of Kaffirland, from the wattled homes of the isles of Polynesia to the wigwams of North America." Mass meetings at Westport, county Mayo, and Milltown, county Galway, in June of that year had featured green banners proclaiming, "The Land for the People!" along with cheers for the French Revolution, the Irish Republic, and the embattled Zulu people, who at that very moment were courageously resisting a British invasion of Zululand. (According to historian Paul Townend, "Pro-Zulu cheering became a trademark of Land League meetings.")⁵¹ During his visit to Australasia in 1895, moreover, Davitt was scathingly critical of white settlers' abuse of the Aborigines of Western Australia. "With the game they lived upon gone and their hunting grounds fenced in [by white farmers and ranchers]," he wrote, "[the native people] are forbidden to look for food where it was once found in freedom and abundance." When in desperation one of them stole a sheep from a settler, he was likely to be shot. "The white man's law justifies him in stealing the black man's country, his wife and daughters whenever he wants them," Davitt concluded, "but to take a sheep from this moral professor of the ten commandments is to earn the penalty of a bullet!" Clearly, in this instance, Davitt's sympathies were entirely with the "black man," but he was nonetheless convinced that the Aborigines were doomed to extinction. "The white man's presence means death to the black man of Australia," he concluded, "and nothing will avert his doom."⁵²

Davitt's observations on the appalling condition of the "black man" in Australia were published only two years before his journalistic dispatches from South Africa appeared in American and Irish newspapers. And yet the difference in tone could hardly have been greater. In Australia he saw the Aborigines as victims of aggression and theft on the part of white settlers; and this applied not only to their land but also to their wives and daughters, who were defiled, even "stolen," by white men. In South Africa, however, Davitt condemned blacks as "hordes of Kaffirs" who were seeking to dispossess the white settlers! And the Kaffir women were also a threat; he reported that their very presence at the edge of Boer military encampments confronted white men with the prospect of "disgrace."⁵³

How does one explain the dramatic change in tone in only two years' time? In the case of the Aborigines of Western Australia, Davitt believed they were doomed to "extermination" and hence were the objects of pity. In this case, moreover, most white settlers were British or of British descent (although Davitt was keenly aware that there were large numbers of Irish immigrants in Australia as well).⁵⁴ But in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the "white settlers" were Boers whose *enemies* were British. Moreover the Kaffirs were not a doomed race; on the contrary they constituted more than two-thirds of South Africa's

population, and their numbers were growing rapidly.⁵⁵ Could it be that for Michael Davitt, and for other pioneers of the emerging movement that prefigured the major human rights campaigns of the twentieth century, indigenous peoples were worthy of sympathy only when they appeared as helpless, childlike victims of brutal exploitation by European imperialists?

In idealizing the “Dutch race” of their imagination and demonizing the British, Irish nationalists were, in effect, creating and re-creating themselves. Their monolithic portrait of the Boers as a rural, agricultural, and deeply religious people was a carbon copy of their equally one-dimensional portrayal of their own society. This pastoralism became a major motif of Irish cultural nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Declan Kiberd argues that this phenomenon was a “wholly urban creation” by means of which the “urbanized descendants of country people”—many of whom had close ties with London and Paris as well as Dublin—“helped to create the myth of a rural nation.”⁵⁶ Likewise, in South Africa the creators of the mythology of the Great Trek and inventors of the Boer as quintessentially rural and spiritual were disproportionately drawn from the more urban and cosmopolitan areas of the Cape Colony. Indeed some of the most influential of these Afrikaner nationalists were European immigrants who had been trained in the universities and theological seminaries of Holland and Germany. The very fact that both Ireland and the Transvaal were rapidly becoming integrated into a modern capitalist economy, and that even the most remote communities in these two nations were by now enmeshed in a social order defined by commerce and consumption, made it all the more important to imagine the Boer and the Irish peasant as chaste, undefiled, spiritual—as living beyond the pale of modernity and its corrosive influences.⁵⁷

In this regard both the Irish and the Afrikaners defined themselves over against the English, who had forsaken spiritual pursuits for the allure of material gain and imperial conquest. Maud Gonne portrayed the differences vividly in her famously controversial article “The Famine Queen.” “England is in decadence,” she exclaimed in April 1900. “She has sacrificed all to getting money. . . . The men who formerly made her greatness, the men from the country districts[,] have disappeared; they have been swallowed up by the great black manufacturing cities; they have been flung into the crucible where gold is made” and reduced there to a “struggling mass of pale, exhausted slaves.”⁵⁸

Alice Stopford Green’s romantic portrayal of the Boers reflected the same tendency to idealize the rural, agrarian social order of her imagination and to portray it as a necessary antidote to the new urban world of manufacturing and unfettered commerce.⁵⁹ “It is enough to see the Boer as he passes,” she exulted about something she had in fact never seen, “and watch his free independent bearing to recognise in him a sort of country aristocrat. Those vast stretches of veldt over which he rides as owner, the wide freedom of the farmer’s life, the big

solitudes, . . . the patriarchal home, the fact of belonging to the superior and dominant race, these things give the Boer something of self-reliance and native dignity which in these crowded lands we have nearly lost."⁶⁰

Green was creating identities that, for the most part, fit neatly within a set of binary opposites. The Boers' dignity and resolve derived from their roots in agriculture; "independence is [the farmer's] very existence," she was told, and it was the farmer's independence that made the Boer such a formidable adversary. Meanwhile, Irish nationalists argued, English soldiers had "no blood in their veins, no strength in their arms." Some nationalists went even further and claimed that the rank-and-file soldier the British celebrated as "Tommy Atkins" was actually the wretched refuse of urban society—a stunted, mean creature who was physically and morally unfit for the demands of warfare. Thus it was the robust and courageous Irishmen—"our misguided countrymen"—who were sent to the front lines and sacrificed there, in order that "the scum of England's cities may live."⁶¹

The danger that Britain represented came not just from the corrosive effects of urbanization and industrialization, but from the pervasive influence of "English culture." Concerned that Ireland was becoming a "mongrel country built up after the image of England," the Irish-language lexicographer and Gaelic League enthusiast Father Patrick Dinneen insisted that the Irish people "should be something better than mere imitators of English life, of English fashions . . . manners . . . and morals."⁶² Secular nationalists sounded a similar note. In the inaugural issue of the *United Irishman*, Arthur Griffith exhorted the "mothers of the nation to see that their homes shall be kept sacred from the contaminations of the British Press and the gag of the music hall." Above all "they should look to the preservation of their children's national faith" lest they become "mere mongrels." The women's organization *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* (Daughters of Erin) declared that one of its main goals was "to discourage the reading and circulation of low English literature, the singing of English songs, the attending of vulgar English entertainments at the theatres and music halls." Remarkably, James Connolly, the revolutionary socialist, placed an even more explicit emphasis on the theme of anglicization as a fount of immorality. Keenly aware of the British military presence in Ireland, he charged that the army was "a veritable moral cesspool, corrupting all within its bounds, and exuding . . . a miasma of pestilence." Its presence—anywhere—was so devastating, he argued, that the "desolation of war would inflict . . . less injury than a peaceful occupation by the 'Soldiers of the Queen.'"⁶³

In South Africa there were similar complaints. Facing the increasingly painful consequences of industrialization, the Boers and their domestic allies lashed out at the city, above all at Johannesburg, as the antithesis of everything they valued.⁶⁴ "This great fiendish hell of a city," Olive Schreiner called it, "a city which for glitter and gold, and wickedness . . . beats creation." Gone was the

social cohesion and sense of common purpose that had characterized the Boer republics as she remembered them. Instead there were “carriages, and palaces and brothels, and gambling halls” and “every man living for himself, every man fighting for gold, gold, gold, and tramping down everything that stands in his way.”⁶⁵ But it was not just a matter of precious metal on the Witwatersrand or brothels in Johannesburg. As in Ireland, the reach of “English culture” was even more pervasive and insidious. Echoing Father Dinneen’s fear that Ireland was becoming a “mongrel country,” the Afrikaner newspaper *Die Huisgenoot* warned that “our biggest daily papers, the cinemas, the school system, the language of our courts, the shops with their fashions and merchandise, the furniture in our houses are all bastions and agents of a foreign culture which claims for itself the right to overrun and conquer the world.”⁶⁶

Ireland’s task, many cultural nationalists argued, was to be faithful to her past in constructing her future and to remember Archbishop John MacHale’s proud boast that “we are the children of saints, . . . a holy nation, a people set apart.”⁶⁷ Ireland’s goal was to build a civilization that was Catholic, Gaelic, rural, and agricultural. Ireland’s hope lay in the undeniable fact that in spite of conquest and the cultural genocide that anglicization portended, her people had always maintained “an enthusiastic fidelity to their National Faith and passionate attachment to the soil.”⁶⁸

Here again comparisons to the “Dutch race” were irresistible. Michael Davitt, who was repelled by prostitution among the lower orders of British society and sexual infidelity among the fashionable “upper tenth,” was deeply moved by the religious faith and morality—above all, the sexual morality—of the Boers.⁶⁹ He was equally impressed by their simplicity and complete lack of pretense, and yet this advocate of radically egalitarian land reform in Ireland praised the Boers in quasi-feudal terms as noble and chivalrous, as a natural aristocracy. Gen. Louis Botha was a farmer but also a “gentleman in manner, and a born soldier.” (His wife was an “enthusiastic ‘Irish Boer,’” the daughter of an Irish immigrant to South Africa who “boasts, with much pride, that the blood of Robert Emmet runs in her veins.”) Gen. Koos de la Rey “dressed like an artisan”; his Bible was his “inseparable companion.” De la Rey thrilled Davitt with his declaration that “England . . . may, for a time, appear to subdue us by her overwhelming strength; but God Almighty is on our side, and in the end we must win.” Davitt seemed to be suggesting that if only the Irish could emulate the absolute certainty and quiet heroism of the Boers, they too could achieve their liberation.⁷⁰

There was, however, one major factor that might have driven a wedge between the two peoples. The Irish honored the religious commitment and spiritual intensity of the Boers, in which they saw a mirror image of their own national character. But the Boers were Calvinists—extreme Protestants—by reputation, and Irish Catholics had been victimized for centuries by Protestant

settlers, Protestant landlords, and the lingering weight of an oppressive Protestant Ascendancy. The Boer republics had their own penal laws that prohibited Catholic worship—actually any form of worship except that of the Dutch Reformed Church, and some Catholics regarded the Boers as a “bigoted and proselytizing group of Protestants.” How then could the Catholic Irish and Afrikaner Protestants come together across this familiar sectarian barrier? In practice, it proved to be relatively easy, for several reasons. First, for the most part the Boers were *not* proselytizers in the sense in which the Irish Catholic community had experienced this phenomenon. Unlike their Irish (and British) counterparts, the Boers did not seek to convert Catholics to the “true” religion; instead they were famous for their desire to turn inward rather than outward, to be left alone. Second, as early as the 1850s the struggling Roman Catholic Church in South Africa joined Dutch and British settlers in opposing the policies and outlook of John Philip and the London Missionary Society and in advocating racial segregation and subordination as the only solution to the deadly antagonism that characterized the relations between European settlers and black Africans. Ultimately, it appears, race trumped religion: the penal laws of the Boer republics were loosely enforced, if at all, and the need for white solidarity took precedence over doctrinal and ecclesiastical disagreement. After all, South Africa was a place where blacks outnumbered whites by a substantial—often overwhelming—margin. Many Boers lived in isolated rural communities, surrounded by black servants, tenant farmers, and agricultural laborers. In these circumstances they were more than willing to offer hospitality to other white men and women, whatever their religious persuasion, so long as their guests did not pass judgment on the Boers’ way of life—above all on their relations with their “Native” and “Coloured” subalterns. Thus Father James O’Haire, an Irish Catholic priest and outspoken pro-Boer who lived in the Transvaal for twelve years, reported, “I spent half my time traveling about, ministering to my scattered flock, and had to depend upon the hospitality of the Boers—who were all Protestants. That hospitality was never denied me. I found the Boers simple, honest, moral, religious and kind people.”⁷¹

In the final analysis David did not triumph over Goliath in the South African War. The leaders of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal surrendered to their British adversaries in May 1902. But while the Boers lost the war, they won the peace. The Union of South Africa became a bastion of Afrikaner power and a major stepping stone on the long road to complete independence. Even in defeat, moreover, the Boers continued to offer inspiration and instruction to their Irish counterparts. “Whenever England goes on her mission of empire, we meet and we strike at her,” Patrick Pearse declared in 1914. “Yesterday it was on the South African veldt, tomorrow it may be on the streets of Dublin.” During the Easter Rising the paramilitary forces Pearse led wore “Boer-style hats known as

‘de Wet caps,’” named after the legendary general Christiaan de Wet. In 1921 Michael Collins, the “Irish de Wet,” told his Boer counterpart, “Your great fight against the same foe was the earliest inspiration of the men who have been fighting here for the past two years against foreign aggression. Everyone—man and woman—in Ireland will be delighted to know you are on our side.” When Collins was martyred during the Irish Civil War, one of his admirers lamented, “We have lost our young Louis Botha.” But it was not just a matter of a single Irish counterpart of de Wet or Botha. The Dublin-based journalist, poet, mystic, and practical philosopher George Russell referred to the entire cohort of “Sinn Feiners” who laid claim to the legacy of Easter 1916 as “our Irish Boers.”⁷²

Clearly, then, the South African War played a major role in regenerating Irish nationalism as a genuine mass movement, in centering that movement, once again, on questions of sovereignty, and in creating a long-term sense of affinity between Afrikaner and Irish nationalists. Historian P. J. Mathews points out that the war “served to bring forth a new type of separatist nationalism, not secretive like the Fenian movement, but overt in its articulation of an independent foreign policy for the Irish nation.” But the agitation that flowed from the South African crucible channeled the discourse of race and nation toward the theme of white entitlement and thus narrowed the parameters of anticolonial solidarity. Indeed Michael Davitt’s refusal to see black Africans as fully formed human beings with their own legitimate grievances and aspirations made them a “people without history” who could have no “agency,” no right to act on behalf of their own interests, a people whose choice, as Davitt conceived it, was to serve either as obedient subalterns of the Boers or as malevolent instruments of British imperialism. Davitt, no less than Arthur Griffith, argued that the “Boer fight for freedom” was a “white man’s war” about white men’s rights—or, as the British labor leader and parliamentary firebrand John Burns put it, about “equal rights for all white men the world over.”⁷³

NOTES

My thanks to David Gleeson, Ben Carton, Paul Townend, Kevin Whelan, and Elizabeth Teague, for invaluable assistance, advice, and criticism. The epigraph is from “The West Awake!!!” (placard announcing the “Great Tenant Right Meeting in Irishtown,” County Mayo, April 1879), in T. W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846–1882* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 289.

1. Andrew S. Thompson, “The Language of Imperialism and the Meaning of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895–1914,” *Journal of British Studies* 36 (April 1997): 147–77; esp. 174, 172.

2. Daniel O’Connell, “Speech at a Meeting of the Aborigines Protection Society,” *Liberator*, August 7, 1840.

3. During the war, and for generations thereafter, it was common to refer to the Anglo-Boer War—or, simply, the Boer War. But historian Peter Warwick argues that “in a real sense it was a ‘South African war,’ a conflict that directly touched the lives of

hundreds of thousands of black people in whose midst the familiar dramas of the war unfolded. The war was fought in a region where whites made up only a fifth of the total population." Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4; and see his chapter, "Myth of a White Man's War," in *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, U.K.: Longman, 1980), 6–27.

4. See H. V. Brasted, "Irish Nationalism and the British Empire in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Irish Culture and Nationalism, 1750–1950*, ed. Oliver MacDonagh, W. F. Mandle, and Pauric Travers (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), 83–103, esp. 89; and Howard Brasted, "Indian Nationalist Development and the Influence of Irish Home Rule, 1870–1886," *Modern Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1980): 37–63.

5. Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 181–82; Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 114–29, esp. 115, 125; F. S. L. Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 105; Joseph P. Finnan, *John Redmond and Irish Unity, 1912–1918* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 162.

6. See Bruce Nelson, "Irish Nationalism, Irish Americans, and the 'Social' Question, 1916–1923," *boundary 2* 31 (Spring 2004): 147–78, esp. 153–56.

7. On Ford, see James Paul Rodechko, *Patrick Ford and His Search for America: A Case Study of Irish-American Journalism, 1870–1913* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), esp. 187; and Eric Foner, "Class, Ethnicity, and Radicalism in the Gilded Age: The Land League and Irish-America," in *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 150–200.

8. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, passim and 290; Carla King, *Michael Davitt* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1999); Donald E. Jordan Jr., *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 199–229, esp. 214; Edward T. O'Donnell, "'Though Not an Irishman': Henry George and the American Irish," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 56 (October 1997): 407–19, esp. 416.

9. T. W. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882–1906," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 3 (1953): 53–76; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, 534–58; Carla King, introduction to Michael Davitt, *Collected Writings, 1868–1906*, ed. Carla King (London: Thoemmes Press, 2001; Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2001), l:xxviii.

10. King, *Michael Davitt*, 45–47, 60–62, 70–72; Carla King, "Michael Davitt, Irish Nationalism and the British Empire in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Victoria's Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837–1901*, ed. Peter Gray (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 116–30.

11. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement," 76.

12. Anne Kane, "Narratives of Nationalism: Constructing Irish National Identity during the Land War, 1879–82," *National Identities* 2 (November 2000): 258; Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 9–15.

13. Michael Davitt, "Davitt's Speech of Resignation from the House of Commons, 25 October 1899," in *Collected Writings, 1868–1906*, ed. Carla King (London: Thoemmes Press, 2001; Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2001), 2:8; *Irish World*, November 4, 1899.

14. See Bernard K. Mbenga, "Forced Labour in the Pilanesberg: The Flogging of Chief Kgamanyane by Commandant Paul Kruger, Saulspoot, April 1870," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23 (March 1997): 127–40.

15. Preben Kaarsholm, "Pro-Boers," in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), 1:110–26.

16. I have resisted the temptation to use the terms "Boer" and Afrikaner interchangeably because historically their emphasis was sometimes quite different. Both words implied Dutch ancestry, and Boers and Afrikaners were routinely referred to simply as the "Dutch" or the "Dutch race" in South Africa. But Boer (which means "farmer" in the Dutch language) came to signify rural, agricultural, and insular, while Afrikaner often implied urban, educated, and—at times—assimilated (as in the "Queen's Afrikaners"). After the middle of the nineteenth century, the "Dutch" residents of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal were referred to as Boers, while people of Dutch ancestry who lived in the Cape Colony (especially the western Cape) were called Afrikaners. For the most part the nationalism of the Boers was turned inward; it focused mainly on their respective republics. It was in response to the rapid pace of Anglicization among the "Dutch" residents of the western Cape, and in reaction to Britain's increasingly heavy-handed attempts to assert control over all of South Africa, that a wider Afrikaner nationalism developed and was articulated with increasing force and coherence.

17. See Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 55–60; Isabel Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902–1924," in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, ed. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Longman, 1987), 95–123, esp. 96; and Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 52–53, 215–19. Speakers of "pure" Dutch regarded Afrikaans as the language of "the most uncivilised Hottentot and the meanest Negro." Thus the task of Afrikaner nationalists, and of the language movement in particular, was to "whiten" Afrikaans, to rescue it from the colored "lower orders." Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, 59.

18. Olive Schreiner, "The Wanderings of the Boer," in *Thoughts on South Africa* (1923; Parklands, S.A.: A. D. Donker, 1992), 132–33. Schreiner wrote "The Wanderings of the Boer" in 1891.

19. Leonard Guelke, "Freehold Farmers and Frontier Settlers, 1652–1780," in *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, ed. Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, rev. ed. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 93–94; John Laband, *The Transvaal Rebellion: The First Boer War, 1880–1881* (Harlow, U.K.: Longman/Pearson, 2005), 13–14, 24, 37.

20. Not that other Christians were necessarily willing to take Boer claims to a uniquely intense piety at face value. German missionaries, in particular, "despaired at what they saw as a lack of true piety and Christian virtue among the Boers." Irving Hexham and Karla Poewe, "The Spread of Christianity among Whites and Blacks in Transorangia," in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, ed. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 131.

21. For a formidable challenge to the widely held notion that, from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, the Afrikaners subscribed to a primitive Calvinism, and to an essentially Calvinist belief in their own status as a chosen people who were destined to own the land and rule over the indigenous peoples of South Africa, see Andre Du Toit, "No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology," *American Historical Review* 88 (October 1983): 920–52; and Du Toit, "Puritans in Africa? Afrikaner 'Calvinism' and Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism in Late Nineteenth Century South Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (April 1985): 209–40. But see Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 178–79, for a brief, if qualified, reaffirmation of a more traditional view.

22. George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 108–24, 162–77; W. M. Freund, "Race in the Social Structure of South Africa, 1652–1836," *Race and Class* 18, no. 1 (1976): 53–67; Guelke, "Freehold Farmers and Frontier Settlers, 1652–1780," 93–102; Richard Elphick and Robert Shell, "Intergroup Relations: Khoikhoi, Settlers, Slaves and Free Blacks, 1652–1795," in *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, rev. ed., ed. Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 194–204.

23. See Susan Newton-King, "The Enemy Within," in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and Its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony*, ed. Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 225–70; and the pathbreaking collection of essays in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds., *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, rev. ed. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988).

24. The quoted words are actually those of John Philip's friend and supporter Thomas Fowell Buxton, the president of the Anti-Slavery Society and leader of the evangelical bloc in the British Parliament. Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 246. On Philip, see Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, esp. 230–58; and Andrew Ross, *John Philip (1775–1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986).

25. Clifton Crais, "Slavery and Emancipation in the Eastern Cape," in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and Its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony*, ed. Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 278; Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 88; Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 151–52.

26. Timothy Keegan offers a clear and persuasive overview of the Boers' grievances and aspirations in *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 186–96; Norman Etherington, *The Great Trek: The Transformation of Southern Africa, 1815–1854* (Harlow, U.K.: Longman/Pearson, 2001), xxi–xxiv (esp. xxiii), 243–60.

27. According to Keegan, British settlers "were arguably far more involved than the Boers in 'native dispossession and subjugation,' not only in the eastern Cape but on frontiers of settlement in Natal and north of the Orange [River]." Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, 10.

28. Andrew Bank, "The Great Debate and the Origins of South African Historiography," *Journal of African History* 38 (July 1997): 261–81, esp. 274–79; Clifton C. Crais, "The Vacant Land: The Mythology of British Expansion in the Eastern Cape, South Africa," *Journal of Social History* 25 (Winter 1991): 255–75; and Clifton C. Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Robert Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 38.

29. Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 228–49; Thompson, *History of South Africa*, 134–41, quoted on 136; "Davitt's Speech of Resignation," 6; Christopher Saunders and Iain R. Smith, "Southern Africa, 1795–1910," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3, *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 597–623, esp. 617.

30. For many years the standard account of the war was Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (New York: Random House, 1979). Bill Nasson provides a valuable and much more up-to-date overview in *The South African War, 1899–1902* (London: Arnold, 1999). In addition three edited collections of essays offer easy, and rewarding, access to the tremendous outpouring of scholarship occasioned, in part, by the war's centennial. See Donal Lowry, ed., *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Greg Cuthbertson, Albert Grundlingh, and Mary-Lynn Suttie, *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899–1902* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002); David Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson, eds., *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave, 2002).

31. Limerick Borough Council resolution quoted in Donal P. McCracken, *The Irish Pro-Boers, 1877–1902* (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1989), 47.

32. Hermann Giliomee estimates that the Boers had no more than 50,000 men under arms at any one time (Davitt claimed the number did not exceed 30,000), while the British forces peaked at 250,000. Leonard Thompson estimates a total British mobilization of 450,000 by the end of the war and a republican total of 88,000. Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 250; Thompson, *History of South Africa*, 141–42; Michael Davitt, "Letter from South Africa," April 16, 1900, *Freeman's Journal*, June 11, 1900. Davitt's letters from South Africa that appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* are collected in MS 9500 (Letters to *Freeman's Journal* from South Africa, 1900), Michael Davitt Papers, Manuscripts Department, Trinity College Library, Dublin.

33. "The War and Its Lessons," *Quarterly Review* 195 (January 1902): 297.

34. W. K. Hancock and Jean van der Poel, eds., *Selections from the Smuts Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 1:467–68; Emily Hobhouse, *The Brunt of the War and Where It Fell* (London: Methuen, 1902); Christiaan Rudolf de Wet, *Three Years War (October 1899–June 1902)* (London: Archibald Constable, 1903), 242–43.

35. F[rancis] Sheehy-Skeffington, *Michael Davitt: Revolutionary, Agitator and Labour Leader* (Boston: Dana Estes, 1909), 205–10; King, *Michael Davitt*, 66–67.

36. Michael Davitt, "Letter from South Africa," March 28, 1900, *Freeman's Journal*, June 19, 1900; Michael Davitt, "Letter from South Africa," April 14, 1900, *Freeman's Journal*, June 8, 1900; Michael Davitt, "Letter from South Africa," April 28, 1900, *Freeman's Journal*, June 30, 1900; Michael Davitt, "Commandant General Botha," *Freeman's Journal*, July 10, 1900.

37. Colin Bundy, "Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism," in *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850–1930*, ed. William Beinart, Peter Delius, and Stanley Trapido (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 101–27, esp. 113; Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899–1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 9; Albert Grundlingh, "Collaborators in Boer Society," in *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, U.K.: Longman, 1980), 258–78, esp. 272–73; Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words," 99–101; Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 316–22, 251.

38. Davitt, "Commandant General Botha."

39. Michael Davitt, *The Boer Fight for Freedom* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1902).

40. Edward Said, "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," in *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 114–68, esp. 123–27. "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims" originally appeared in Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Times Books, 1979). See also Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

41. Sheehy-Skeffington, *Michael Davitt*, 165; Davitt, *Boer Fight for Freedom*, 3; Thompson, *History of South Africa*, 87–90.

42. V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Humankind: Black Man, Yellow Man, and White Man in an Age of Empire* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), 220–21; James Bryce, *Impressions of South Africa*, 3rd ed. (New York: Century, 1900), 64. Bryce pointed out that "Kaffir" was adapted from the Arabic word *kāfir*, which means "infidel" or, literally, "one who denies."

43. See Norman Etherington, "Economic and Educational Progress of the 'Kholwa,'" in *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835–1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 115–34.

44. *Irish World*, October 21, 1899.

45. Saunders and Smith, "Southern Africa, 1795–1910," 609; Fredrickson, *White Supremacy*, 201–2, 210–11, 217–20; Ross, *Concise History of South Africa*, 66; Davitt, *Boer Fight for Freedom*, 12.

46. Hancock and van der Poel, *Selections from the Smuts Papers* 1:482.

47. Shula Marks, "White Masculinity: Jan Smuts, Race and the South African War," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 111 (2001): 219. Smuts failed to acknowledge that the Boers conscripted thousands of Africans and "Coloureds" to serve their commando units; at least some of them—usually the most loyal servants of individual Boer fighters—bore arms and participated in combat. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, 94–95; Fransjohan Pretorius, "Boer Attitudes toward Africans in Wartime," in Lowry, *South African War Reappraised*, 104–20.

48. Marks, "White Masculinity," 219–20, esp. 220. See also Jeremy Krikler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below: The Agrarian Transvaal at the Turn of the Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 14–23; Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, esp. 38–51; R. F. Morton, "Linchwe I and the Kgatla Campaign in the South African War, 1899–1902," *Journal of African History* 26 (1985): 169–91; Bernard Mbenga, "The Role of the Bakgatla of the Pilanesberg in the South African War," in Cuthbertson, Grundlingh, and Suttie, *Writing a Wider War*, 84–114; Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*; Bill Nasson, "Black

Communities in Natal and the Cape,” in Omissi and Thompson, *Impact of the South African War*, 38–55.

49. Botha quoted in Stanley Trapido, “Landlord and Tenant in a Colonial Economy: The Transvaal, 1880–1910,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 5 (October 1978): 45. See also Pretorius, “Boer Attitudes to Africans in Wartime,” 111.

50. Davitt, *Boer Fight for Freedom*, 72, 171–76, 501–2.

51. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, 289; Robert Kee, *The Laurel and the Ivy: The Story of Charles Stewart Parnell and Irish Nationalism* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993), 187–88, 192; Paul Townend, “Between Two Worlds: Irish Nationalists and Imperial Crisis, 1878–1880,” *Past and Present* 194 (February 2007): 161.

52. Michael Davitt, *Life and Progress in Australasia* (1898), in *Collected Writings, 1868–1906*, vol. 5, pt. 1, chap. 8, pp. 34, 35, 36.

53. Davitt, “Letter from South Africa,” April 14, 1900.

54. David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Emigration to Australia* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1994), 6–7.

55. In 1904 “Europeans” constituted 21.58 percent of South Africa’s population; “Natives,” 67.45 percent; “Coloureds,” 8.60 percent; and “Asiatics,” 2.37 percent. In 1902 Jan Smuts gave vivid testimony to the apprehension this state of affairs evoked when he noted that “the peculiar position of the small white community in the midst of the very large and rapidly increasing coloured races and the danger which in consequence threatens this small white community and with it civilisation itself in South Africa.” Population statistics in W. K. Hancock, *Smuts: The Sanguine Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 219; Smuts quoted in Warwick, *Black People and the South African War*, 17.

56. Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 481.

57. See Bourke, *Burning of Bridget Cleary*, especially 8–18, 44–61; Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 171–88, 480–96; Du Toit, “Puritans in Africa?” 216–17.

58. Maud Gonne, “The Famine Queen,” *United Irishman*, April 7, 1900, reprinted in *Maud Gonne’s Irish Nationalist Writings, 1895–1946*, ed. Karen Steele (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), 55–56.

59. Years later, in contemplating the peasantry of Connemara, Green would acknowledge that they were “terribly poor” but argue that they were nonetheless “unspoiled by the hardships of their lives” and were “far superior in qualities of mind and body to the slum dwellers of our great cities.” R. B. McDowell, *Alice Stopford Green: A Passionate Historian* (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1967), 95.

60. Alice Stopford Green, “The Boer Character: A Personal Impression,” Northern Press Syndicate, April 1901, clipping in Folder 2, Ms. 10,465, Alice Stopford Green Papers, National Library of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter cited as NLI).

61. Alice Stopford Green, “Our Boer Prisoners—a Suggested Object-Lesson,” *Nineteenth Century* 49 (May 1901): 757; Terence Denman, “‘The Red Livery of Shame’: The Campaign against Army Recruitment in Ireland, 1899–1914,” *Irish Historical Studies* 29 (November 1994): 217; *United Irishman*, February 17, 1900.

62. Kevin Collins, *Catholic Churchmen and the Celtic Revival in Ireland, 1848–1916* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 37, 74–77, and esp. 152; Noel O’Connell, “Father

Dinneen[,] His Dictionary, and the Gaelic Revival,” lecture in the Irish Club, London, September 29, 1984, <http://www.irishtextsociety.org/dinneen.htm/> (accessed September 25, 2007).

63. *United Irishman*, March 4, 1899; Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 51; *Workers’ Republic*, July 15, 1899.

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Kathleen O'Brennan and American Identity in the Transatlantic Irish Republican Movement

Catherine M. Burns

Historians of the factious relationship between American Irish nationalists and Irish politicians in the era of World War I attribute the differences between them to distinct national outlooks. The transatlantic struggle for Irish independence was contentious, historians of the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) argue, because American concerns were incompatible with Irish ones.¹ Studies of the FOIF point to that organization's self-proclaimed American character in explicating both its decision to seek Irish self-determination rather than U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic and its attempts to undermine Irish politicians' efforts to take control of the American Irish nationalist movement. Yet absent from discussions of the FOIF's Americanism is any acknowledgment that American Irish republicans, such as those in the American Women Pickets for the Enforcement of America's War Aims (AWP) or the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (AARIR), also asserted American identities to further their politics. Compounding matters, in helping Ireland realize the freedom that Irish Americans knew in the United States, historians generally agree that Irish Americans progressively lost their Irish identity and "became American."²

In both these veins of inquiry, the meaning of "American" goes unexamined or is assigned a static definition, and nationalists with access to the mainstream channels of political power are understood to represent all American Irish nationalists, if not all Americans of Irish descent. Historians of the FOIF equate American identity solely with prowar American patriotism while also treating the FOIF's support for Irish self-determination as the only form of American Irish nationalism. They have overlooked or ignored other Irish nationalists, whether from the United States or Ireland, who combined far different American identities with Irish republicanism. In a period of extreme American patriotism, no Irish or American Irish nationalist organization seeking U.S. support for

the Irish Republic could afford to court un-Americanism. To understand transatlantic Irish nationalism in the years surrounding World War I, it is necessary not only to look beyond the FOIF and its relationship with Irish politicians but also to recognize that various Irish and American Irish nationalists imbued “American” or “Irish” with whatever meaning suited their political objectives.

Kathleen O'Brennan's deliberate construction of an American identity for both herself and the AWP exemplifies how assertions of an American character served multiple short-term political purposes in the realm of transatlantic Irish nationalism. O'Brennan crafted an “American” persona that was explicitly feminist and indebted to popular conceptions of the enduring significance of the American Revolution. It recast radical Irish republican politics in terms that undermined both American nativists opposed to the U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic and members of the FOIF fearful that the U.S. government would not take “Irish freedom” seriously if it was associated with the far left. Just as important, it helped shield from public view the role that O'Brennan, a foreigner and a radical under federal surveillance, played in the Irish activism of U.S. citizens. Yet once Irish politicians shaped their own American persona with the establishment of the AARIR, they made it impossible for Kathleen O'Brennan to act as a self-styled American and thus as an Irish nationalist in the United States.

In an attempt to regain control of her work for the Irish Republic, O'Brennan helped to form American auxiliaries to the Irish White Cross, an organization in which her Irish republican sister, Áine Ceannt, played a key role. In so doing O'Brennan defied official Irish republican policy enforced by Irish Americans who acted in the name of Irish politicians under the all-American banner of the AARIR. Its members, along with Irish politicians such as Harry Boland, branded O'Brennan a threat to what they deemed an American organization. They drove O'Brennan out of transatlantic Irish republican politics by publicly rendering her un-American and thus un-Irish. O'Brennan's successes and failures in donning an American identity to fight for the Irish Republic on her own terms reveal that in the transatlantic struggle for Irish independence various Irish nationalists used “American” identities for their own ends.

From Irish Woman to Radical Woman

Despite growing interest in female Irish republicans, much of Kathleen O'Brennan's life and Irish activism has remained a mystery to historians.³ Far more is known of her sisters. Áine Ceannt (1880–1954) was born Francis “Fanny” O'Brennan and Gaelicized her name after becoming involved in the Gaelic League. To some she is best remembered as the wife of Éamonn Ceannt, one of the executed leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising. Yet after his death Áine became even more involved in the republican movement. She joined the Cumann na mBan, served as a district judge in the republican courts in 1920 and 1921, and, during the Irish War for Independence, became a founding member of the Irish

White Cross and later assumed the roles of secretary and deputy vice chairman of the organization. Kathleen and Áine's sister, Lily O'Brennan (1878–1948), was imprisoned at Kilmainham Jail for her role in the 1916 Easter Rising and became an executive member of Cumann na mBan after her release. She later served as secretary to the delegation that signed the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. Like her sister Áine, Lily O'Brennan took part in the Irish White Cross and came to oppose the treaty; the Irish Free State government imprisoned her and other dissident female republicans in 1922.⁴ Had Kathleen O'Brennan (1886–1943) championed the Irish Republic on Irish instead of American soil, perhaps her work would be as well known today.⁵

Attention to O'Brennan's life in the United States has centered not on her Irish activism but on the period she spent in the Pacific Northwest with Marie Equi, a radical physician convicted of violating the Espionage Act. O'Brennan's Irish republican activism in the United States has received limited attention.⁶ These works recognize that O'Brennan was involved in American Irish nationalism, but they leave a wide berth for further analysis of the nature of her political pursuits. An article on Equi citing federal agents' belief that she and O'Brennan had a romantic relationship in Portland, Oregon, has gained new life on Web sites devoted to the gay and lesbian history of the region.⁷ More recently Adam J. Hodges examined O'Brennan's struggle with the Portland attorney general and the Bureau of Investigation in 1918 and 1919.⁸

That Kathleen O'Brennan had much in common with her sisters is evident from her efforts to establish herself in the United States. O'Brennan arrived at the port of New York in October 1914 for a brief visit made longer by the dangers of oceanic travel during World War I. Unable to return to Ireland in the immediate future, O'Brennan tried to secure newspaper or personal secretary employment. Like Lily O'Brennan, she was a writer by profession and had worked at various newspapers, including the *Irish Times*. Her letters of introduction indicate that she shared her sister Áine Ceannt's enthusiasm for the Gaelic revival. Of O'Brennan's two known testimonials to potential American acquaintances, one came from Douglas Hyde, the first president of the Gaelic League. Hyde's support suggests that O'Brennan was active in the Gaelic movement in Dublin. She continued to foster that interest in the United States. Having failed to attain work with an American newspaper, O'Brennan went to California, where high-society women welcomed her into their clubs and gardens to speak on Gaelic customs and Irish arts.⁹

O'Brennan's experiences in Dublin and her relationship with her sisters helped to make her an authority on Irish matters in the eyes of her American audiences until the United States entered World War I. In addition to her Gaelic-themed lectures, O'Brennan relied on communication with her sisters for speaking engagements on Éamonn Ceannt's assassination. Lily O'Brennan, for instance, sent to her sister in the United States biographical information and photographs

of Éamonn, Áine, and their son, Rónán Ceannt, to be incorporated in her talks.¹⁰ Áine apparently played a role in this transatlantic publicity campaign as well. She presumably wrote in the margin of a letter from Rónán Ceannt to Kathleen O'Brennan, "Any information about the martyrs should be highly interesting. We shall send you articles from time to time—which you can embellish if you wish!"¹¹ The United States' joining forces with the Allies, however, dramatically altered the context of O'Brennan's message from a family tragedy to a threat to the United States' relationship with Great Britain. During a 1917 lecture tour, O'Brennan found that some Irish American associations rescinded her invitations to speak. One woman from Minneapolis lamented that members of her organization "were afraid you might say something unpatriotic."¹²

By late 1918 O'Brennan had become truly radical. Throughout the latter portion of 1918, when O'Brennan was living in Portland, Oregon, she experienced increasing surveillance from the Bureau of Investigation, Military Intelligence, and the city's attorney general. O'Brennan had grown progressively more comfortable speaking before labor audiences, and her relationship with Equi, a supporter of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), drew considerable attention from authorities. In November 1918 Bureau of Investigation agents deemed O'Brennan "likely to become a public charge" and issued an arrest and deportation warrant for her. In January 1919 Military Intelligence officers arrested her on suspicion that she belonged to the IWW.¹³

Difficulties that O'Brennan's faced as a radical hunted by the U.S. government in 1918 and 1919 influenced her decision to fight almost exclusively for Irish issues and leave overt American radical politics to U.S. citizens. In March 1919, for instance, she shied away from anti-British tones when discussing the Irish Republic and culled her comments to reinforce American republican values. In Oakland, California, she discussed "Sinn Fein and the Irish Republic" at a meeting sponsored by the Sons and Daughters of Washington, and in Nevada she told a reporter: "I do not wish to mix up in American politics, of which I know little."¹⁴ She had heeded Marie Equi's advice. "Please do not go outside the Irish Question," Equi implored her. "Just depend on the deep seated justice of your cause—attacking [Woodrow] Wilson will get you now where [*sic*], but out of the country and you are needed here."¹⁵

O'Brennan led Equi's appeal campaigns after she was found guilty of violating the Espionage Act,¹⁶ but the Irish activist also committed herself more explicitly (if not exclusively) to a vision of respectable Irish republicanism when she helped organize the Women's Irish Educational League, founded in San Francisco in May 1919.¹⁷ The league prided itself on the prominent San Franciscans and professional women among its members, and, as a self-described educational organization, it flattered itself with claims that recipients of its ostensibly unbiased literature did not know that they received Irish republican propaganda. The Women's Irish Educational League's chief goal was to persuade Americans to

back the Irish Republic with basic facts on Ireland.¹⁸ It thus appealed to Americans as an objective information society.

Whether the league fooled anyone as to its stance on Ireland, the group's leftist leanings were very apparent in its naming Anita Whitney as president. Whitney had been involved with the Communist Labor Party in California and had faced trial on charges of criminal syndicalism. Members' distributing literature while dressed in ancient Gaelic costume may have also provided silent testimony to the group's Irish republican leanings.¹⁹ Irish republican Mary MacSwiney later noted that there were two Women's Irish Educational Leagues in San Francisco, "the nice mild Catholic group, and the Socialist group."²⁰ Whether there were, indeed, two groups or one divided organization is not known. The true nature of the Women's Irish Educational League deserves greater scrutiny. Nevertheless, at the very least it represented Kathleen O'Brennan's first attempt to make Irish republicanism appealing to mainstream American tastes.

From Radical Woman to "American Woman"

After O'Brennan left California for the East Coast, she further demonstrated that she grasped the necessity of Americanizing the Irish republican message. Before fully accomplishing that, however, she had to first overcome her reputation as an educated elitist and a troublemaker. The Women's Irish Educational League marked her transition to organizing women, but fellow female republican activists from the Irish Progressive League in New York City did not concede the change. O'Brennan's move east in early 1920 prompted the Irish Progressive League's Margaret E. Hickey to tersely report to Irish republican Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, "Miss O'Brennan has returned from the West."²¹ A month earlier a relieved Hickey wrote, "K.O'B rather subdued of late."²² O'Brennan's run-ins with the law and her radical associates did not impress Hickey, and she kept her comments brief knowing that Sheehy Skeffington and O'Brennan shared the same West Coast friends. The Irish Progressive League's Margaret Ryan gave Sheehy Skeffington her far more frank assessment: "I mailed a letter last night enclosing one from Kathleen O'Brennan. Hope you received it not because she asked me to do so but because Dr. K. [Gertrude B. Kelly] evidently wanted it done. You know I don't like Kathleen. Although she appears to be associating with the right sort of people now I heard an idea that she was a vain snob."²³

Fortunately for O'Brennan, Gertrude B. Kelly, a veteran radical respected for her leadership of female Irish nationalists in New York City, embraced her. Like O'Brennan, Kelly was cultured and connected to socially important women; she was also intrigued by Irish theater and Gaelic customs and used these interests to create republican propaganda.²⁴ In addition to belonging to the Irish Progressive League, Kelly headed the Irish Women's Council, the most left-leaning female Irish nationalist group in New York City. In cooperation with Irish journalist Sydney Gifford and Mary Colum of the Cumann na mBan, in 1914 Kelly

founded the Cumann na mBan's first American auxiliary, better known as the Irish Women's Council. Kelly's Cumann na mBan, however, differed from the parent group in Ireland in that it did not see itself as a female aid society to a men's organization (the Irish Volunteers). The Irish Women's Council followed Kelly's sense of professional purpose as a female physician; it kept separate from male authority and maintained Kelly's position that women must take advantage of their unique powers to protect the "race."²⁵ Kelly and members joined the Woman's Peace Party, backed women's suffrage, and, later, defended the rights of political prisoners in both the United States and Ireland.²⁶

O'Brennan, Kelly, and a journalist named Gertrude Corless became the leaders of the American Women Pickets for the Enforcement of America's War Aims. That organization formed in the aftermath of a series of women's protests on behalf of the Irish Republic that took place in April 1920 in Washington, D.C., at the behest of William J. Maloney. Corless, an American journalist of Irish descent with no prior experience in republican activism, was one of two women who led the April picketing. An employee of the Hearst newspapers, Maloney likely enlisted her aid after the news outfit assured Harry Boland that it would report favorably on the Irish Republic.²⁷ O'Brennan and Corless, and possibly Kelly, participated in the April picketing,²⁸ but in order to understand O'Brennan's uses of American identity, it is crucial to recognize that Maloney's pickets were not the same as the American Women Pickets for the Enforcement of America's War Aims. Although historians have referred to the picketing under Maloney's watch as the American Women Pickets for the Enforcement of America's War Aims, not a single protest in April 1920 used that name. Indeed the name seems not to have appeared in print in connection with a picketing until May 1920, when Kathleen O'Brennan and Gertrude Corless protested the Loyal Coalition, an Anglo-Saxon nativist group opposed to U.S. intervention in Ireland.²⁹ The April pickets and the AWP had some very slight membership overlap, but they differed in their relationships with Irish politicians and their male Irish American backers.

Maloney conceptualized the April picketing venture as a brief publicity stunt and deliberately selected young, attractive women who would easily get their photographs in newspapers. He envisioned that the pickets would spend a few days in Washington protesting outside the British Embassy, calling on the English to use their money to pay the war loans they owed to the United States rather than to fund warfare in Ireland. To Maloney's surprise and chagrin, police arrested pickets and ten of them faced a grand jury trial. He apparently wanted the women to draw media attention to the Irish republican cause by imitating militant women suffragists' stunts, but he did not want them to embarrass the republican movement with arrests.³⁰ Women dissatisfied with Maloney's leadership but impressed with the publicity possibilities inherent in picketing founded a distinct organization in New York on April 21, 1920.³¹ The women behind this

endeavor took the name the American Women Pickets for the Enforcement of America's War Aims.

The AWP's political outlook, not to mention its name, reflected its place in the genealogy of the women's international movement. Kelly belonged to the New York City branch of the Woman's Peace Party and the Women's International League; she aligned this type of activism with Irish nationalism in her work to thwart the League of Nations Covenant.³² While O'Brennan was on the West Coast, female advocates for the Irish Republic, largely from New York City, organized as the American Women Opposed to the League of Nations. They disagreed with the League Covenant, particularly Article X and its implication that the United States would be forced to defend British rule in Ireland. The Irish American women came together under the direction of Helen Todd. She was a leading light in the American Women's Emergency Committee, a group that protested the Allies' Russian blockade for the suffering it caused civilians.³³ Both groups—the Emergency Committee directly and the American Women Opposed to the League of Nations—grew out of the International Congress of Women held in Zurich at the same time the Four Powers discussed the peace terms at Versailles in May 1919. The Zurich representatives denounced the treaty as nothing more than a spark for future war. Unlike the men at Versailles, they called for self-determination for small nations and an end to the Allied blockades of both belligerent and nonbelligerent nations. The American Women's Emergency Committee continued the delegates' determination to further protest the blockade in their home countries. In so doing they also raised relief monies for starving Russian children.³⁴

Helen Todd took part in the American Women's Emergency Committee's picketing in 1919, and in 1920 she led its efforts to assist the families of "Reds" deported to Russia by the United States. Todd's animus for the blockade informed her hostility toward the League of Nations. She shared her antipathy with many American Irish nationalists and joined forces with the FOIF to organize Irish Americans as the American Women Opposed to the League of Nations. Gertrude B. Kelly and Gertrude Corless likely first met in the antileague organization.³⁵

To what degree Todd personally influenced the AWP is not known, but the Irish republican organization, the American Women's Emergency Committee, and the American Women Opposed to the League of Nations shared very similar goals. The antileague group immediately preceded the Irish American women's shifting gears from Irish self-determination to U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic; both the AWP and the Emergency Committee believed that the United States had a duty to support fellow republics rather than side with imperialist nations in the League of Nations. Just as members of the American Women's Emergency Committee criticized the United States' nonintervention policy with Russia in 1919, the AWP called on the United States to intervene in

the Irish War for Independence.³⁶ The Emergency Committee and the AWP also had to overcome the perception that their commitments to Russia and Ireland were radical and un-American. Furthermore both of those groups emphasized that they acted as women in defiance of male politicians and political activists and that with their maternal instincts and voting rights they would protect life and create peace worldwide. This at least partially explains why the women who organized the AWP resisted Maloney's authority. Corless and O'Brennan, not to mention Gertrude B. Kelly, backed the Irish Republic just as Maloney's pickets did, but they differed from them in envisioning their commitment as one free of any male leadership. Like others in the women's international movement, the AWP made explicit its resistance to male leaders while advocating women's unique abilities to effect peace. By referring to themselves as "American women," the AWP hoped to convince Americans that their causes were unquestionably American, as they, unlike Woodrow Wilson, upheld the United States' republican legacy.³⁷

Both the American Women's Emergency Committee and the AWP defined "American" and "American women" in terms of the American Revolution. Arguably the commitment of the American Women Opposed to the League of Nations to American isolationism also spoke, if not as explicitly, to George Washington's legacy. If President Woodrow Wilson was not willing to walk in Washington's shoes, "American woman" felt duty bound to stand up for the nation's founding father. Women in both the AWP and the American Women's Emergency Committee publicly reinforced their status as "American women" by emphasizing family origins in North America that dated back to the American Revolution or earlier. The socialist newspaper the *Call*, for example, noted that Josephine Bennett of the American Women's Emergency Committee came from "Revolutionary stock."³⁸

Kathleen O'Brennan, whom William J. Maloney tried to exclude from the picketing he organized because she was not a U.S. citizen,³⁹ was responsible for similar but looser descriptions of the Irish pickets in April 1920. The *Irish World* reported that O'Brennan stressed that arrested pickets belonged to ethnic or racial groups present in colonial America and, if necessary, other patriotic ancestries. For example, a picket named Miss Ramsay was of Scottish, French, and English descent and shared her family tree with an early Massachusetts governor.⁴⁰

O'Brennan sought to counter claims made by Anglo-Saxon nativists within the Loyal Coalition that it was un-American to even discuss the question of U.S. intervention in Ireland. She contrasted the nativists' vision of American identity with one rooted not in Britain but in a rebellion against it.⁴¹ As O'Brennan's personal papers make clear, her chief role in the April picketing was to stress to reporters that many of the pickets were both Protestant and "old stock," that is, descended from the peoples or races who settled the British American colonies. For example, O'Brennan pointed out to reporters those pickets who belonged to

the Daughters of the American Revolution, a patriotic heritage society that limited membership and true American identity to direct descendants of the Revolutionary soldiers. She thus emphasized that Irish independence was not merely a Catholic concern and that Irish rebels struck a chord with “old stock” Americans whose antecedents instigated the colonies’ rebellion against Britain.⁴²

After April, the AWP, O’ Brennan, and her allies placed even greater emphasis on the American Revolution. During their protests against the Loyal Coalition in May 1920, one of the picket’s placards declared, “Women of Boston the traitors of 1776 are still in our midst.”⁴³ When the pickets dared, in June, to burn the British flag in front of the Treasury Building, picket Mary Keena of New York reportedly stated that this was “just another little Boston tea party to remind the assassins not to go too far!”⁴⁴ Over the July Independence Day holiday, the AWP conducted a protest at the home of George Washington to emphasize the United States’ duty to refrain from “entangling alliances” that might threaten its republican values.⁴⁵ Given the strength of Anglo-Saxon nativism, the pickets’ message that they sought to de-anglicize both Ireland and the United States got them and the Irish Republic considerable newspaper coverage with surprisingly little criticism.

O’ Brennan also emphasized old-stock American lineages and the legacy of the American Revolution to disguise her own identity. After all, if O’ Brennan made herself the center of attention, she would undo all of her own efforts to create the “American woman” persona. O’ Brennan’s name and Irish origins all but disappeared from newspaper accounts after April 1920. When she appeared in press reports at all it was more often than not under such names as Kathleen O’ Bremien, Kathleen Glennon, Maurya O’ Brannan, or Kathleen Butler (her mother’s maiden name).⁴⁶ Given her role as the pickets’ press contact, these names represented O’ Brennan’s deliberate efforts to shield her identity. By keeping her Dublin roots and her name out of the newspapers as much as possible, O’ Brennan helped the pickets to maintain that they acted as “American women” guided by truly American principles, not in cooperation with a foreign radical. In that she concealed her controversial identity with the pickets’ claims that they were all U.S. citizens making an appeal for Ireland out of deeply held American ideals, O’ Brennan was an “American woman.”

While stories of the pickets appeared in newspapers across the United States, the independent feminist-republicans were far from the favorites of American Irish republicans trying to help Éamon de Valera take hold of the American Irish nationalist movement. Margaret Ryan, one of the April pickets, noted in August 1920, “It seems that since K. O’ B + the Corless woman have got charge of the Pickets they are not doing much worth-while—just spectacular, erratic things, that seem like the two women at the head.”⁴⁷ Apparently Ryan understood the AWP’s penchant for theatrics, including a staged burning of the Union Jack before cameras, as possibly detrimental to respectable republican activism.

Although New York City police arrested Ryan for her republican activities in 1917, the experience taught her that it was best not to goad police attention. She thus dubbed Corless a “lime-lighter” and a “four-flusher” for courting the notice of authorities and reporters.⁴⁸ Firm republican convictions and ancestral ties to Ireland’s 1798 uprising informed Ryan’s Irish activism, while the AWP’s invading the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and flag burning spoke to their more modern view that to gain American support for the Irish Republic they had to tap into the public’s fascination with newsreels and stunts much like those that had helped the women’s suffrage cause.⁴⁹

Although by July 1920 O’Brennan no longer faced deportation from the United States, largely because of her dissociation from the IWW and increasing federal concerns with Communists,⁵⁰ she still had to face the scorn of members of the Irish Progressive League who viewed her Irish identity and radical politics as a liability to their goal of having Éamon de Valera assume the leadership of the FOIF. The expulsion of the league from associate membership in the FOIF in July 1920 aggravated the situation.⁵¹ The winning faction, led by Daniel F. Cohalan and John Devoy, supported the ambiguous goal of Irish “self-determination” rather than the league’s desire for U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic. By expelling the league, the FOIF formally excluded Irish republican voices from the “official” voice of American Irish nationalism. In the struggle Cohalan and Devoy attempted to undermine the republicans by claiming that William J. Maloney paid the pickets. The assertion was absolutely true concerning the April pickets,⁵² but Maloney had nothing to do with the female pickets now in operation. In a diatribe against “Maloney’s pickets” in the *Gaelic American*, Devoy focused on the AWP, who, under Gertrude Corless’s leadership in June, heckled members of the House and Senate for their cowardice on Ireland.⁵³ Whether Devoy knew that he attacked the wrong pickets mattered little; he cared only to discredit de Valera supporters such as Maloney. The Irish Progressive League and Maloney recognized that in the confusion over the various pickets the FOIF had a convenient tool to undermine de Valera’s backers.⁵⁴ In this caustic atmosphere select members of the Irish Progressive League came to the conclusion that both the Cohalan-Devoy clique and the AWP had to be stopped for de Valera’s sake.

In the summer of 1920 Helen Golden, a former April picket now serving as the Irish Progressive League’s acting secretary, took steps to undo the FOIF’s stronghold over American Irish nationalism by ensuring that all republican activists in the United States received their cues from de Valera. She explained to J. E. C. Hickey, a longtime member of the league, that it was time to give Daniel Cohalan the “knock-out-blow” so that de Valera could assume the FOIF’s authority in the United States. She reasoned that this would be possible as long as it “appear[ed] to the world that the action comes from the people themselves, not from the Chief [de Valera], nor from the particular group that surrounds him.”⁵⁵

In other words Golden had to find a way to make it appear as though Americans, of their own volition, backed de Valera and that the Irish politician did not dictate to U.S. citizens while seeking U.S. recognition.

As part of her plan Golden tried, in Margaret E. Hickey's words, "to wrench the picketing from K. O'Brennan."⁵⁶ Rival bands of female pickets for Ireland had clashed previously, but this appears to be the first time one faction hid its grievances with others by trying to make it appear as if they were all of the same organization.⁵⁷ Helen Golden went so far as to print "American Women Pickets" stationery in order to dress herself in the AWP's populist image.⁵⁸

By taking on the AWP's identity, Golden could make it appear as though "American women" sought de Valera's leadership while simultaneously undercutting independent republican activists. Golden not only inserted herself in an August 23, 1920, picket at the British consulate led by Gertrude B. Kelly but also tried to assume leadership of the protest and organize the women in a picket to take place at Manhattan's Chelsea Piers on August 27, 1920. Kelly challenged Golden, and their confrontation became heated, with Golden "physically confronting" Kelly.⁵⁹ The next day Gertrude Corless informed Helen Golden that the AWP did not wish to be dictated to by the Irish Progressive League. Furthermore, Corless wrote, "as American women they do not wish to connect themselves with any officials of the Irish Republic, neither to take orders from them."⁶⁰ Helen Golden, surely with much cheek, given her correspondence with J. E. C. Hickey, assured Corless that she had every intention of keeping the picketing distinct from de Valera and Boland. For that matter, the Irish politicians would not do something so risky, Golden insisted, as take control of an American organization.⁶¹ Of course Helen Golden intended for de Valera to do just that.

If Golden assumed the mantle of the AWP, not only would the feminists be at the mercy of male politicians, Kathleen O'Brennan could also lose the freedom that the "American women" cover afforded her. Even if de Valera gained control over the "American women" at their alleged request, O'Brennan's republican activities in the United States would depend upon his approval if Golden had her way. For that matter O'Brennan's radical past and her resistance to authority did not square with Golden's conception of "American" as a cover for deference to de Valera. With one word from Harry Boland or Éamon de Valera, Kathleen O'Brennan could be packing her bags and heading back to Ireland.

The AWP failed to stop Helen Golden. She outdid her rivals by orchestrating a fantastic and historic strike on British ships at Chelsea Piers. She enlisted the Universal Negro Improvement Association and united African American and Irish American longshoremen despite their longtime animosities along the docks.⁶² To counter Golden, Gertrude Corless publicly denied that the AWP had anything to do with the longshoremen's strike. She also implied that Helen Golden was a British plant by claiming that Prime Minister Lloyd George was behind the longshoremen's strike at Chelsea Piers.⁶³ Helen Golden then declared that "Mrs.

Gertrude Corless and Miss Kathleen O'Brennan have no authority to speak for the American women picketing the British Consulate and the docks."⁶⁴

In the end Helen Golden's halting of British ships overshadowed the fight with Corless; even historians assumed that Golden and Corless cooperated.⁶⁵ Helen Golden exposed the role that Kathleen O'Brennan played in the AWP and thus both threatened O'Brennan's role in this "American" organization and opened up the AWP to de Valera's leadership by trying to assume its name as she backed his takeover of the American Irish nationalist movement under populist pretenses. Members of the AWP conducted independent longshoremen strikes in Brooklyn and Hoboken,⁶⁶ but the appearance of a new "American" organization led by de Valera soon left the unmasked Kathleen O'Brennan and her radical band of pickets at the mercy of Helen Golden and others who also realized the utility of asserting an American identity.

Golden's blow to the "American women" cover compounded by the creation of the new "American" organization made it impossible for the AWP to exist. In November 1920 Éamon de Valera established the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic as an explicitly American organization begun, or so it claimed, at the instigation of American citizens. Just as Helen Golden envisioned that de Valera could lead the American Irish nationalist movement if the impetus for it came from "the people," the AARIR succeeded because it appeared to be created at the behest of Americans. This new organization deferred to de Valera and he selected its leaders, but it also emphasized that it acted for Ireland in the name of American ideals dating back to the Revolution. Its propaganda office, for example, was called the Benjamin Franklin Bureau. De Valera thought that the word "American" in the group's name would make the organization and its mission more attractive to the American citizens he had to appeal to in order to achieve U.S. recognition of the Irish Republic.⁶⁷ With its establishment, the Irish Republic directed Irish American activism, albeit under an American name.

Rather than yield, Kathleen O'Brennan decided to capitalize on her sister Áine Ceannt's role in a recently formed relief agency, the Irish White Cross. In January 1921 Gertrude B. Kelly and O'Brennan organized nurses as an American branch of the new Irish organization. In order to do that they had to get de Valera's approval or work around his authority, because the AARIR had authorized the American Committee for Relief in Ireland, in which William J. Maloney played a leading role, to cooperate with the Irish White Cross in Ireland.⁶⁸ It appears that the women went the route of subterfuge. On January 13, 1921, Kelly allegedly sent to Arthur Griffith, vice president of the Irish Republic and a prisoner at Mountjoy, a telegram stating that American nurses were organizing as a relief body for Ireland and awaited further instructions. A copy (if not the original) of the message, typed on Park Avenue Hotel stationery and located in O'Brennan's papers, is nearly identical to the text that appeared publicly:

“American nurses are forming a unit to give medical aid in Ireland or organized relief here. Wire instruction.”⁶⁹ Among O’Brennan’s papers, on the same hotel stationery, is a telegram response from “Eamonn Devalera” to Kelly’s message to Griffith informing her that “American Branch of Irish White Cross could come here to superintend distribution[.]”⁷⁰

The length and detail of the message, the incorrect spelling of Éamon de Valera’s name, and its invitation to Ireland are very suspicious, indicating that de Valera did not compose the message. Indeed the Irish envoy Harry Boland soon called the telegram a “hoax,” insisting that arrangements had already been made for Americans to act through the American Committee for Relief in Ireland.⁷¹ Perhaps Kelly and O’Brennan were mocking de Valera’s authority by making it look as though they acted in accordance with his wishes even as they defied them. On the other hand, had Boland not challenged the telegram, it might have convinced members of the AARIR that de Valera sanctioned the women from the American auxiliaries to go to Ireland to oversee relief distribution. Either way, the women hoped it would legitimize their efforts to link themselves with O’Brennan’s sister and the Irish White Cross.

Despite Boland’s statement, Kelly and O’Brennan continued to organize women. On January 25, 1921, a reported three hundred nurses left the Red Cross in protest of its refusal to provide Irish relief and joined the American Auxiliary of the Irish White Cross led by Kelly as president and O’Brennan as secretary.⁷² Irish White Cross groups from Boston and New York sent funds to Ireland; the Boston auxiliary even kept nurses on hand just in case they might be called to duty in Ireland.⁷³ Their money and devotion, however, were not enough. Stephen O’Mara, a representative of the minister of finance whose duty as an Irish envoy bound him to carry out Harry Boland’s mission, refused to accept a fifteen-hundred-dollar check from an active member of the Irish White Cross from Dorchester, Massachusetts, until she could tell him that the money did not originate from sources outside of de Valera’s control.⁷⁴

Both sides held their ground, but the “American” legitimacy of the AARIR gave that organization and Harry Boland the upper hand. According to Margaret Ryan, Boland and the AARIR’s Mary McWhorter “knifed Dr. G.’s [Dr. Gertrude B. Kelly’s] society from the start.”⁷⁵ Ryan, a nurse who belonged to the Irish White Cross despite her dislike of Kathleen O’Brennan, refused to work for McWhorter’s group, the AARIR-sanctioned Celtic Cross. By Ryan’s account, Harry Boland made no effort to stop McWhorter’s smear campaign against the Irish White Cross and Gertrude B. Kelly; they fixated on Kelly’s radicalism and her refusal to take orders from Catholic clergy.⁷⁶ In other words they rendered her an un-American radical who threatened work for the Irish Republic conducted by patriotic American citizens.

O’Brennan received the brunt of the abuse. Members of the AARIR branded her a foreign renegade trying to cause disunity in an American organization.

They issued memos warning its members of the dangers she posed to their mission.⁷⁷ O'Brennan appealed to James L. Fawsitt, consul general of the (unrecognized) Irish Republic, as he represented "Irish citizens" in the United States. O'Brennan claimed that she had thus far withstood the slanders against her, but now James O'Mara, another Irish republican representative, was determined to drive her out of the country. Although, in writing to Fawsitt, O'Brennan abided by "official" republican authority, she was determined to "deny the right of any representative of the Irish Government to decide whether I shall work for my country or not."⁷⁸ Her effort apparently failed. She was un-American, unofficial, and unwanted. By July 1921 O'Brennan was set to begin a Canadian lecture tour. As of March 1922 she again resided in Dublin and, therefore, was in Ireland by the start of the Irish Civil War in June.⁷⁹

Conclusion

In the transatlantic struggle for Irish independence, "American" meant far more than national origin, nationality, or political outlook. Both American Irish and Irish nationalists created American identities to exclude their opponents and shore up their power on the back of the period's extreme American patriotism. Histories of the tensions between Irish and American Irish nationalists in the era of World War I explain their differences in terms of the incompatibilities of American and Irish interests. O'Brennan's experience, however, forces us to consider the labels "American" and "Irish" not just as designators of citizenship or national viewpoint but also as malleable tools used by American Irish and Irish nationalists to serve political ends.

Kathleen O'Brennan's experience as an Irish nationalist in the United States was truly ironic. In order to operate as an effective Irish republican she had to assume a patriotic American persona. Yet once Irish republican officials assumed their own American cover through the AARIR, O'Brennan lost the ability to define herself as American. Unable to be American, she could no longer be Irish. By addressing O'Brennan's, the AWP's, and Irish politicians' professions of American identity, this chapter reveals that prominent American Irish nationalists were not alone in employing Americanist rhetoric in their transatlantic dealings with Irish politicians. Irish republicans and Irish American supporters of the Irish Republic also used American identities to serve their own goals.

The time O'Brennan spent as an "American woman" also sheds new light on the degree to which participation in American Irish nationalism prompted Irish Americans to turn away from Ireland and "become American." The "American women" identity of O'Brennan's pickets fostered their continued transatlantic cooperation with Irish republicans after the establishment of the Irish Free State and the commencement of the Irish Civil War. In 1923 the "American Women" came to the aid of the Women's Prisoners' Defense Association, an ostensibly republican organization formed in August 1922 to call attention to the Irish Free

State's abuses of republican prisoners.⁸⁰ Kathleen O'Brennan belonged to the group and represented it at the 1922 Peace Conference of Lausanne.⁸¹ By the start of 1923, the number of female republicans imprisoned in Free State jails dramatically increased under new laws targeted to undermine their roles as messengers for the Irish Republican Army. When the Irish Free State government banned the Women's Prisoners' Defense Association in January 1923, Charlotte Despard implored the "American women" to ask President Warren G. Harding to intervene. She specifically called on Gertrude Corless to deliver the message to Harding.⁸² Women including Corless, Gertrude B. Kelly, and Rosalie Moynahan of the AWP sent Harding a telegram asking him to prevent further executions of republican prisoners, especially women.⁸³ Although many American Irish nationalists had already turned away from Ireland now that they believed that it had achieved independence with the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, a transatlantic political relationship between Irish republican women and "American women" continued in the name of American ideals.

NOTES

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5. The dates are approximations. See <http://www.gonebutnotforgotten.ie/independence/three-revolutionary-sisters.htm> (accessed 18 August 2008).

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11. Marginalia in letter from Rónán [Ceannt] to Aunt Kitty [Kathleen O'Brennan], January 14, 1917, Ms. 41509 (1), COBP.

12. Anna O'Toole to Miss [Kathleen] O'Brennan, November 12, 1917, Ms. 41509 (1), COBP.

13. Hodges, "At War," 474, 476, 485.

14. *Oakland Tribune*, March 15, 1919; *Nevada State Journal*, June 27, 1919.

15. Marie [Equi] to Miss Cathleen [sic] M. O'Brennan, postmarked March 20, 1919, Ms. 41509 (1), COBP.

16. Hodges, "At War," 475

17. Eichacker, *Irish Republican Women*, 35–36; Minnie McCarthy to Mary MacSwiney, January 30, 1924, Ms. P48a/134 (25), Mary MacSwiney Papers, University College Dublin Archives.

18. *Irish Press* (Philadelphia), August 2, 1919, Joseph McGarrity Collection, Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/>.

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27. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Manuscript Population Census Returns, Cook County, Illinois, Enumeration District 24, Sheet 132, line 3; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Manuscript Population Census Returns, Lucas County, Ohio, Enumeration District 86, Sheet 123A, line 2; Moses Koenigsberg, *King News: An Autobiography* (New York: Ayer, 1941; reprint, Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972) 430–31; David Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2003), 137–38.

28. Newspaper lists of the Washington pickets (very likely submitted by O'Brennan) included Kelly, but Margaret Ryan's account of the picketing indicates that Kelly was not present in Washington. See Ryan to Nora [Connolly], April 9, 1920, Ms. 22691 (i), SSP.

29. Doyle, "Striking for Ireland," 360; McCarthy, "True Women," 276–77, 285; *Boston Globe*, May 12, 1920, May 14, 1920.

30. Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution*, 189; Ryan to Friend [HSS], n.d. [1920], Ms. 22697 (i), SSP; [Margaret E. Hickey] to Friend [HSS], August 10, 1920, Ms. 22693 (ii), SSP; *New York Times*, April 13, 1920.

31. Ryan to Friend [HSS], n.d. [1920], Ms. 22697 (i), SSP; *Call* (New York), April 21, 1920.

32. *New York Times*, February 23, 1919.

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38. *Call*, April 26, 1920.

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40. *Irish World* (New York), April 17, 1920.
41. In March 1920 the Friends of Irish Freedom and the Boston-based Loyal Coalition publicly disputed U.S. intervention in Ireland. See *Boston Globe*, March 26, 1920.
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44. *Newport (R.I.) Mercury News*, June 12, 1920.
45. *Call*, July 6, 1920.
46. *Call*, July 6, 1920; "Women Pickets Threaten Boycott if MacSwiney Dies," September 1, 1920, newspaper clipping, Ms. 13141 (7), Peter Golden Papers, National Library of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter cited as PGP); *Boston Globe*, July 10, 1920; *New York Times*, August 24, 1920; McCoolle, *No Ordinary Women*, 189.
47. Ryan to Cousin Mary, August 16, 1920, Ms. 22693 (i), SSP.
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58. For example, Helen Golden to Miss Cleary, September 21, 1920, Ms. 13141 (6), PGP.
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60. Gertrude Corless to Mrs. Peter Golden, August 24, 1920, Ms. 13141 (6), PGP.
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79. M. Durant to Miss Kathleen O'Brennan, July 5, 1921, Ms. 41509 (2), COBP; D. M. Church to Kathleen O'Brennan, March 21, 1922, Ms. 41509 (2), COBP.

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“Blues Coming down Royal Avenue”

Van Morrison’s Belfast Blues

Lauren Onkey

See, Belfast is not like England, even though it’s a part of Great Britain. It’s got its own trip going. The American influences are stronger than the English influences because of all the Irish who have emigrated to the United States in the last few generations.

Van Morrison, 1972

The Maritime Hotel became a place that people made pilgrimages to. It became the fount of blues learning in Ireland.

Billy Harrison, Them guitarist

In 1964 nineteen-year-old Van Morrison was at a loose end in Belfast. He was a hardened veteran of the Irish showband scene, having played in the Monarchs since 1960, playing shows in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Germany, and England. Showbands were lucrative, but the limitations of the form frustrated Morrison. He was looking for an outlet to play more blues and rhythm and blues music, the music he learned from his father’s record collection and fell in love with as a young boy. The rest of Britain’s burgeoning rock music world had finally caught up with him; blues, as served up by bands such as the Rolling Stones and the Yardbirds, was popular. In a recent interview Morrison recalled his response to the British blues boom: “When the blues started getting noticed, I could hardly believe it. It was like all my Christmases come at once. Because this stuff wasn’t new to me at all. I’d been listening to it most of my life. By the time that stuff started to be popular, it was in my bones. It was like breathing by then. Blues was my calling card. People tend to forget that I was discovered as a blues singer. It was nothing to do with rock music. To start with, Them was a blues thing.”¹

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the United Kingdom witnessed what was often called a “blues boom.” American blues music became extremely popular among young people, in some cases to a fanatical degree. African American musicians toured more successfully in Britain than they did at home. Blues societies formed. Many fans categorized the blues as an authentic form of African American expression, especially when played on acoustic instruments. This investment in authenticity could sometimes reach absurd levels. Big Bill Broonzy, for example, who had moved from Mississippi to Chicago in the 1940s and revelled in the style and sophistication of big city life, felt compelled to don overalls for his first U.K. tours to live up to the image of the suffering Mississippi Delta bluesman. When Muddy Waters first toured Britain in 1958 with Otis Spann, he was criticized for playing electric blues, since the audience had expected only acoustic music.² The first wave of blues fans were not especially interested in the hybridity of black Atlantic culture, its movement, adaptability and sense of displacement.

Ireland did not experience the blues boom to the degree that England did, in part because of the showband tradition, which eclipsed rock and roll. Blues hit in Ireland in the mid-1960s in response to the popularity of English bands and especially because of the impact of Them, from Northern Ireland. Belfast was the most vibrant place for blues in Ireland and produced Ireland’s most important blues and rhythm and blues performer, Van Morrison, the lead singer and saxophone player in Them. In this chapter I map Morrison’s roots in the blues revival and examine the site of Belfast itself as a fertile transatlantic crossroads where the blues took root. I argue that we can read the blues in Belfast as an example of transatlantic racial exchange that opened up the possibility for new identities to emerge; in particular Van Morrison and Them created a transatlantic relationship that avoided the rhetoric of well-intended but destructive black and Irish authenticity, thereby creating a positive, productive, transracial alliance that represented an optimistic albeit brief challenge to sectarianism. I read Them as a precursor to attempts by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) to build a nonsectarian movement for social change through the creative transatlantic racial exchange of adopting symbols and tactics from the American civil rights movement.³ Them’s blues, like the NICRA’s use of the song “We Shall Overcome,” is a moment of modern cultural hybridity rather than nostalgic recreation, a distinction that has important implications for the racial politics of transatlantic cultural exchange.

Van Morrison’s father George, a shipyard worker, had a vast collection of blues, jazz, and gospel records. He was one of the biggest record collectors in Belfast, buying most of his albums at Solly Lipsitz’s Atlantic Records on High Street. Young Van, born in 1945, heard Leadbelly, Mahalia Jackson, and Ray Charles in his home as a normal everyday experience, not as part of a hip, esoteric, or forbidden youth culture. There is no evidence as to what inspired George

Morrison to get interested in black music—he did not do interviews, and Morrison never speculated in public as to what inspired his record collecting. But Belfast would have given George Morrison exposure to plenty of black music. Blacks had moved through its busy port for centuries. World War II, especially, brought thousands of African American GIs to Northern Ireland; in fact the first clashes between white and black American soldiers in the United Kingdom (usually sparked by black soldiers dating white women), which were common, occurred in Northern Ireland in 1942.⁴ The soldiers left behind what poet Gerald Dawe describes as an “an afterglow,” especially regarding their music: “Having brought with them not only bubble-gum and cigarettes but their own styles of music and dance, they took over the floor of ballrooms such as the Plaza (built in 1942) with, for Belfast, an uncharacteristic flamboyance and glamour.”⁵ Belfast was also on the touring circuit for African American blues and gospel musicians who came to the United Kingdom during the 1950s as interest in the blues grew. Chris Barber, a trombone player in the trad jazz movement in London, organized tours that included Big Bill Broonzy, Brother John Sellers, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Muddy Waters, and Champion Jack Dupree.⁶ The elder Morrison also had spent some time in the United States and had even considered moving his family to Detroit, so he was certainly exposed to black music on that trip as well. Morrison describes hearing black music alongside Irish music, such as songs by the McPeake family or songs like “Star of the County Down,” which he heard at regular family sings in a seamless, organic way. Because of the peculiarities of Van Morrison’s upbringing, his connection to the blues was unlike that of many English revivalists who fueled the blues boom. He thought of blues as the music of his home, even though it was the music of a faraway, exotic place and people. For Morrison it was both; the blues were never purely American for him. The blues embodied multiple Atlantic crossings, both personal and cultural—American GIs to Belfast and Germany, his own father, the actual records crossing the Atlantic to be sold.

Britain’s fascination with blues music grew out of the “trad” (short for “traditional”) jazz movement, which began in the late 1940s. New Orleans-style jazz music, what Americans now call “Dixieland,” grew in popularity, led by revivalists Ken Colyer and Chris Barber in the late 1940s. As George McKay points out, the popularity of trad was part of a long history of British and European interest in “declining” forms of black popular music.⁷ Nelson George notes that white audiences are the main audience for older forms of African American music: “The most fanatical students of blues history have all been white. Blacks create and then move on. . . . Whites document and then recycle.”⁸ Trad fans wanted no part of the innovative African American jazz of the 1940s, bebop, which was more aggressive and which coded as more black than trad and therefore more unfriendly to white listeners.⁹ Bebop, which LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) describes as “anti-assimilationist,”¹⁰ was a reaction against mainstream

jazz music's artistic deficiencies: "The autonomy, even anarchy, of the small band . . . must certainly have been a conscious attempt by these young musicians to secure some measure of isolation from what they had come to realize by now was merely cultural vapidty."¹¹ English trad jazzers also loved country or acoustic blues by artists such as Leadbelly, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, and Josh White. Acoustic blues also signified authenticity and, perhaps even more than trad jazz, a culture that was untainted by commercialism. Trad was primarily a conservative desire and pursuit for those on the Left; its anticommmercialism and its simultaneous embrace and rejection of America are complex.¹² While the British passion for trad and acoustic blues reflected genuine interest in and admiration for African American culture, it was too rooted in ideas of authentic or pure culture to challenge powerful stereotypes of African Americans. Trad musicians tried to recreate the sound of the original records as closely as possible. Charlie Gillett reports that this meant "even going so far at one recording session as to put a biscuit tin over the microphone in order to get the echoing effect of a club which the listener could imagine was in New Orleans."¹³ Such a rhetoric of purity temporally halts African American culture, so that it becomes static, incapable of changing or renewing itself; it freezes African Americans into a time of suffering and endurance rather than resistance and agency. In this dynamic, African American artists become perennial sufferers, unchallenging to white imitators (and therefore easily copied).

Therefore it is important not to overstate the positive or transformative transracial possibilities of such transatlantic crossings. Paul Oliver notes the paradox of the euphoric response American blues singers received in England: "The singers were lionized perhaps, and returned wonderingly saying 'man, they treated us like we were artists.' In the rhythm and blues clubs, many of the young dancers hardly knew who they were dancing to; they liked the music, and a generation in revolt found that the music of a segregated minority was the symbol of gulf between themselves and the values and attitudes of their parents."¹⁴ Young British blues fans' identification with African Americans as fellow outsiders certainly obscured the fact that African American artists never received the financial rewards that their English imitators did.

It is more productive and illuminating to see the blues as a music of modernity rather than authenticity. It was always distributed through commercial channels, of course, and its presence in the United Kingdom is part of a wider transatlantic commercial culture. As Leighton Grist argues, "It was . . . its commodification and dissemination through records that eminently enlarged its audience, and made the blues a popular music regionally, nationally, and internationally. Most of those involved in the British blues boom first engaged substantively with the music via records."¹⁵ The movement of blues across the Atlantic echoes Paul Gilroy's definition of modernity embodied in the slave ship crossing

the middle passage: "The ship provides a chance to explore the articulations between discontinuous histories of England's ports, its interfaces with the wider world . . . getting on board promises a means to reconceptualise the orthodox relationship between modernity and what passes for its prehistory. It provides a different sense of where modernity might itself be thought to begin."¹⁶ Blues was potentially an expression of modernity, of dislocation, of the complexities and contradictions of identity rather than simply the authentic expression of pure blackness. Blues records, and copies of them by British bands, are part of the discontinuous history of blacks in British ports and their effects on local populations.

Some critics argue that the English passion for blues was a response to the supposed affluence of Britain in the 1950s brought about by the safety net of the welfare state and an increased ability to buy consumer goods. Grist asserts that although the 1950s was a period of "expanding possibility," there was also "increasing bureaucratization and rationalization. There were also the uncertainties generated by change, and the residual limitations of a class-dominated society. It was, in short, a period redolent of the contradictions of modernity: hence, perhaps, the appeal of a music that expressed and mediated the same."¹⁷ In this instance the British passion for the blues can be read as a (problematic) method of responding to the alienation of modernity. So although they escaped most of the "noble savage" approach of the trad jazz fans, the blues boom artists still often represented blackness as a way to fix whiteness. What is at stake here is not only who profited from the literal copying of black music and style but also the implications of *how* African Americans were imitated. Even if copied reverently, too often white artists saw blackness primarily as a way to redefine or fix their over-civilized selves. The most absurd and problematic version of this trope is Norman Mailer's 1957 essay "The White Negro." Mailer argues that the white hipster is drawn to blacks as a response to the upheaval and alienation of the atomic age. What Mailer creates is an essentially primitive black identity:

The Negro had stayed alive and begun to grow by following the need of his body where he could. Knowing the cells of his existence that life was war, nothing but war, the Negro (all exceptions admitted) could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization, and so he kept for his survival the art of the primitive, he lived in the enormous present, he subsisted for his Saturday night kicks, relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasure of the body, and in his music he gave voice to the character and quality of his existence, to his rage and the infinite variations of joy, lust, languor, growl, cramp, pinch, scream and despair of his orgasm.¹⁸

Mailer's Negro and his music is highly sexualized in a way that is apparently antithetical to the intellect, to ideas: "Being unable to read or write, he could hardly

be interested in ideas nearly as much as lifemanship.”¹⁹ Such glorification of the primitive is both racist and condescending; whites remain in control of ideas while their admiration for black knowledge of the body exempts them from confronting white supremacy. So while the English passion for the blues certainly offered the possibility of greater racial understanding, it also maintained whites’ power to define black experience.

Irish showbands complicate the story of the blues in Ireland, although the blues were part of Van Morrison’s showband experience. (The Monarchs played sets that featured blues and R&B for American soldiers stationed in Germany, and Morrison had the opportunity to meet African American blues fans while traveling there.) Showbands are an important and unique part of the history of Irish popular music. They were a curious mix of rock and roll, country, pop, and Irish music performed by large bands that wore matching suits and performed a set act, including dance steps and comedy routines. Showbands have often been seen as a hindrance to the development of rock and roll in Ireland.²⁰ In recent years, however, observers have begun to reassess the significance of the showbands; in *Noisy Island*, for example, Gerry Smyth argues that showbands in part reflected modernizing impulses of 1950s Ireland:

In the later part of the 1950s the showbands were, if not exactly hip, then certainly in the vanguard of those who were agitating for a new Ireland, one less in thrall to the past and more open to the values of the wider world. In this respect, the showbands might be considered *the* typical cultural expression of the Lemass era in Ireland; like his administration, the showbands still ostensibly serviced the local community, but both were determined to re-introduce into that community the values and possibilities of a modern world which had been shunned by the prevailing powers . . . since the earlier part of the century.²¹

But showbands were not seen as part of a growing new youth culture, as Smyth points out; they continued a sort of showbiz tradition that would not threaten parents: “Rock music . . . invited its adherents to invest in discourses of *expressive originality* and *authenticity* that were fundamentally opposed to the showband values of *accuracy* and *entertainment*.”²² The youth of Ireland who were interested in new forms of music were not looking to return to the past or salve the modernist problem of being overcivilized, as some critics have described the times. Instead they were looking to break out of hidebound traditions. While their interest in rock and roll was certainly part of a desire for authenticity over showbiz, one could argue that Irish youth were surrounded by an excess of authenticity, whether it was the conservative Catholicism of the Republic of Ireland or the sectarianism of Northern Ireland. The attraction of black music, then, can be read as a desire to go forward rather than back to the culturally pure past.

In 1964, as Van Morrison was looking to break out of the showband mold and find a venue for blues music in Belfast, the country was in transition. Prime Minister Terence O’Neill was pushing “modernization.” As Bob Purdie describes it,

It was widely believed that decisive changes were taking place and that Northern Ireland was being “modernised.” By this term, technocratic politicians, media commentators and middle-class intellectuals meant that, in their opinion, Northern Ireland was ceasing to be obsessed by sectarian symbols and was beginning to share the pre-occupations of the Western world with economic growth and consumer satisfaction. Challenges to this outlook, especially those which were motivated by sectarian suspicions and old political antagonisms, were seen as a final atavistic spasm.²³

Although there were of course tenacious Unionist and nationalist traditions in Northern Irish society at the time, there was an emerging sense that nationalism and unionism did not have the energy or creativity to respond to social problems and that Northern Ireland would be left out of a growing prosperity across the United Kingdom as a result. A small left-wing student population at Queens University also suggested the possibility of new modes of thinking, although without the government’s emphasis on consumerism. Many observers, including musicians, describe the period as offering opportunities to create new identities for young people in Belfast. In her autobiography Bernadette Devlin describes this new mode of thinking with regard to how to combat poverty in Northern Ireland:

In spite of their “civil-rights” label, the politicians had demanded *Catholic* equality and majority rule for *Catholic* areas. People like myself had not come to support such demands. We had come because we wanted to be involved—we were not quite sure in what. We knew something was wrong with a society where the rate of unemployment rarely fell below 10 percent, where half the houses lacked at least one basic amenity. The politicians tried to tell us it was a nonpolitical demonstration; but though our politics were crude in those days, we were more politically aware than “the leaders” in that we refused to accept their logic that the problem could be seen in terms of Catholic versus Protestant.²⁴

Sectarian politics, or any kind of politics for that matter, were not a concern of Van Morrison in 1964. In fact he has avoided talking about Northern Ireland’s sectarian violence throughout his entire career. When he is asked to reflect on the role of sectarianism in his life as a young person, he is most likely to say that it was not a factor. These 2003 comments to Geoffrey Stokes in Dublin’s *Hot Press* are typical of his memories of growing up in Belfast: “This was before all that bigotry got really big. Everybody was just too busy getting on with what they

liked to do and what they're interested in, there was no time for that. The people that I grew up with, my peer group of that time, wasn't into that stuff. They were into sharing ideas, you know they had energy and they were like interested, they saw a bright future. All that changed later on."²⁵ Morrison did not grow up in an integrated environment; he lived in a Protestant neighborhood and attended the Orangefield school, a school for Protestant boys. As Belfast musician Eric Bell told Morrison biographer Johnny Rogan, "You need only look at the name. The words Orange and Catholic do not mix. I never saw a Catholic there."²⁶ However, Steve Turner described it "a progressive comprehensive school that was notable for employing both Catholics and Protestants on its staff."²⁷ All of the members of Them's original lineup were Protestant; John McAuley, a Catholic, joined late in 1964. It may be that Morrison simply cannot recognize his own community as sectarian or bigoted, of course.

Yet it is important to note how often the musicians insist on the mid-1960s as a period of increasing freedom from a narrowly defined sense of community. Billy Harrison, Them's original guitar player, remembers that in this period "the bigotry was dying. . . . There were still strongholds and there always would be but the youth was coming together and not thinking about religion. Sectarianism was definitely on the wane. The youth of the early Sixties wasn't interested. Having already played all over Belfast, I knew people from all walks of life. They were all out mixing together and enjoying themselves—it was probably the best chance we ever had."²⁸ Tom Nairn argues that the mid-1960s was a time "when youngsters on both sides of Ulster's religious divide discovered a musical liberation culture which could take them away from . . . the old parochial grouses of their respective extended families."²⁹ Of course the mid-1960s also witnessed the controversy over flying the tricolor in Belfast, the rise of Ian Paisley, the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force, and tension over celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising. Harrison acknowledges that musicians could defuse tensions between Protestants and Catholics, but only temporarily: "When you get into music and you're playing, the guy's a musician. There's no mention of what religion he is. He's only what he is, as regards the music. [But] there was always the Catholic area and the Protestant area, which you couldn't always walk through safely if you were of the wrong persuasion."³⁰ Harrison himself reacted negatively in 1965, when an English interviewer from the *New Musical Express* referred to him as Irish, asserting that he wanted to be called an Ulsterman; an *NME* reader from county Monaghan responded, "Billy Harrison is only showing his ignorance when he says he is not an Irishman but an Ulsterman. . . . Perhaps if he ever did geography at school he would recall that Ulster is a province of Ireland and that makes him an Irishman whether he likes it or not."³¹ To understand the significance of the blues in Belfast, then, it is important to note the upheaval and possibilities of the times. In Belfast black music was seen as a way to modernize what was within; for Morrison specifically, because of his personal

history, black music also represented his home and his past. In that sense to claim black music for Belfast is to define Belfast not as Irish or British, Catholic or Protestant, but as a place with deep transatlantic roots that need to be remembered.

Early in 1964, Morrison left the Monarchs and was working with another showband called the Manhattan. While playing in London the band saw a performance by the Downliners Sect, a hard-driving English R&B band, at Ken Colyer's Studio 51 club; Morrison loved the show. For the first time, he realized the extent to which blues and R&B were being embraced in England. The experience inspired him to form a similar band in Belfast. In April 1964 he answered an ad placed by three Belfast men, Gerry McKervy, Jerry McKenna, and Jimmy Conlan, who were trying to start a blues club in the city; Morrison tried unsuccessfully to persuade his fellow showband members to form a blues band with him. But the Gamblers, Billy Harrison's band from East Belfast, answered the ad. Although the Gamblers had been playing early rock and roll and rockabilly for some time, the blues and R&B boom opened up a new market for the band. Van Morrison and the Gamblers joined forces to form Them, which would be the featured band at the new blues club, the Maritime Hotel on College Square North, convenient to Queens University. The Maritime, which served as a mission for visiting sailors, included a two-hundred-person capacity hall, which became the blues club; Them debuted there in April 1964.³²

Gerald Dawe remembers that the initial Maritime crowd was not solely made up of university students but also included "confident," "outward-looking" working-class and lower-middle-class young people. He argues that the mix helped to fuel the sense that new identities were possible:

As they meet up with working-class kids in their late teens or early twenties, a brief cross-over took place which was to last during the mid-years of the 1960s in Belfast. In passing, it's true to say that as things were to develop, with the eruption of the Troubles in the late 60s and early 70s, the Maritime, alongside other "clubs" such as Sammy Houston's in Great Victoria Street, provided a chance for kids of every religion and none to get together. Such thoughts would have been far from the minds of those at the time, however; all that mattered was the music. For many working-class kids, seeing students look like "beatniks" would have had a greater effect on them than wondering about what church they went to. They experience must have been something of a liberation from the conventions of previous generations when "going out" meant dressing "proper."³³

The Maritime was an alternative to the "showbiz" style of going out on the town; it substituted the community of audience and band for respectable adulthood: "The Maritime became synonymous with r'n'b, the music symbolized a breaking away from, and loosening of, custom. . . . [Bands] looked like their audiences and did whatever they fancied on stage; smoking and drinking. The Maritime was

breaking down the expected notion of musical entertainment as something which is ‘provided by’ an ensemble of musicians into something created between themselves *and* the audience.”³⁴ While this sense of youthful democracy was not explicitly identified as antisectarian, it was associated with those impulses. For example, Belfast guitarist Arty McGlynn, who would work with Morrison in the 1980s, described the Maritime as generating “a totally different energy than you had in a parochial hall or an Orange hall or a civic centre. It was a social revolution—a different mentality—people that wanted out of the system.”³⁵

Them’s version of rhythm and blues was raucous. The 1964 Maritime shows were famous for the band’s physical abandon, especially on the part of Morrison, who played saxophone lying on his back and constantly moved and jumped around the stage. Fans of the band as well as band members describe the early months at the Maritime, before they recorded, as the highlight of Them’s career. As one Catholic female fan told biographer Johnny Rogan: “I knew those days were special and everybody there knew those days were special. There was such an aura about that time in Belfast—and it was never to be repeated. Ever.”³⁶ Fans and musicians remember Them as both a deeply rooted local band as well as a hip and outward-looking force in their lives. John Trew, the editor of Belfast’s *City Week*, wrote in January 1965, “They may not exactly represent the ‘New Image of Ulster’ that Premier O’Neill talks about, but they are succeeding in what is, after all, one of the most competitive fields in Big Business. All the signs suggest that the local brand of music could really knock the Mersey sound off its pedestal. This is not just of interest to teenagers, it would make a big contribution to the prosperity of the whole province.”³⁷ Obviously Trew was not talking about transatlantic antisectarian identities, but his comparison between Them and a new sense of prosperity indicates that they were perceived as something new. In this context Them’s blues were a modern, and modernizing, force.

Them covered blues and rhythm and blues songs recorded by some of the most vital artists of the time rather than replicating an earlier era of black music; for example, they recorded Sonny Boy Williamson’s “Help Me” (1964), Muddy Waters’s “Got My Mojo Working” (1954), John Lee Hooker’s “Don’t Look Back” (1963), Slim Harpo’s “Don’t Start Crying Now” (1961), Jimmy Reed’s “Bright Lights, Big City” (1961) and “Baby What You Want Me to Do” (1960), Screamin’ Jay Hawkins’s “I Put a Spell on You” (1956), Ray Charles’s “I Got a Woman” (1955), T-Bone Walker’s “Stormy Monday” (recorded in 1947, but Bobby “Blue” Bland had a hit with it in 1962), Chris Kenner’s “Something You Got” (1961), and Jimmy Witherspoon’s “Times Gettin’ Tougher than Tough” (1959).³⁸ What Morrison and the Gamblers shared was a passion for contemporary African American music; the musicians whom they admired were modern, urban men. This was uptown, contemporary music, not the blues relics of Folkways Records or the trad jazz acoustic blues.

I turn now to two of Them's signature covers to explore their Atlantic connections. Bobby "Blue" Bland's "Turn on Your Lovelight" was the highlight of their Maritime shows, a fan and band favorite. Morrison, who was a huge fan of Bland's singing, was unique on the blues scene because he was known primarily as a vocalist. Most British blues bands of his generation were focused primarily on playing the electric guitar.³⁹ His love for Bland embodies multiple Atlantic crossings. Morrison became familiar with Bland's work not only because of his father's record collection but also because of his time playing in Germany as part of the Monarchs. There he met African American soldiers who were big fans of Bland and introduced Morrison to records that he hadn't heard before. Bland grew up in Memphis and began his recording career there in the 1950s. His work is a mix of blues, R&B, and gospel. His 1962 recording of "Turn on Your Lovelight" was upbeat, driven by a full horn section and the shouting, growling, call-and-response vocals between Bland and the horns. Morrison was also unique among the blues boom artists because of his interest in gospel music, an interest that came directly from listening to his father's records. Gospel's power resides in the response of a community to a singer or preacher's call, and in that sense "Turn on Your Lovelight" contributed to the sense of community created in the Maritime. The song can be slowed down, broken down into all kinds of audience response parts (the singer can get the crowd in a frenzy by repeating, "Turn on your lovelight," "A little bit higher," and "Let it shine on me," for example). Them's version replaces the horn section with an Animals-style organ, and Morrison trades lines with the other members of the band. This song celebrates singer, band, and audience working together. In that sense "Lovelight" is a gospel response to Bland's call, a way to create a new kind of music community in Belfast.

After their first single, Slim Harpo's "Don't Start Crying Now," Them released a version of "Baby Please Don't Go." The song became their most well-known cover; its history contains the history of African American migration in the United States as well as Them's complex relationship with their Irishness in England. The song was written Papa Harvey Hull and Long Cleeve Reid in the 1920s, and it was covered by (and often credited to) Big Joe Williams, a Mississippi Delta blues guitarist in 1935, and then later, in the version that Morrison probably heard, by John Lee Hooker in 1949. Hooker was also born in the Mississippi Delta but moved north and recorded in Detroit and Chicago. Hooker also played the song solo, but on electric guitar. Another influence was Muddy Waters's 1953 electric version, recorded with a full band at Chess Records in Chicago. Waters and Hooker electrified the song, recontextualizing its images of slavery (wearing shackles) into a gritty, urban setting. Them kept the lyrics but sped it up to a frenetic pace led by guitar and organ. After its release in 1964, the song was adopted by the British television show *Ready Steady Go!* as its theme; the show was the most important and hip outlet for the growing British rock and

R&B scene. Them's "Baby Please Don't Go" signifies this vibrant new youth culture, with no traces of either the provincialism that Irishness signified at the time or the polite authenticity of the early Rolling Stones or Yardbirds.

But such credentials could not break through Irish stereotypes in England. Them was assertively Irish—the image of them as the "Angry Young Them" certainly played on the notion of fighting and aggressive Irishmen. In England they were never seen as hip in the same way that British rock bands were. Irish signified a lack of cool in the United Kingdom. In a 1993 interview, Morrison said, "I can remember in the '60s, to be from Ireland was a disadvantage. . . . I was in London in the '60s and it was like, Fuck you, we don't want to know. We were ostracised. Even if you were a rock star! You were just Paddy."⁴⁰ Their Northern Irish accents and surly personalities didn't help make the band members more accessible. In England Irishness limited the meaning of their embrace of the blues back in Belfast.

At the same time that Them was tearing up the Maritime and generating enough interest to land a recording contract, the movement that became the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association began to emerge. The first group to use the term "civil rights" was the Working Committee on Civil Rights in Northern Ireland, formed at Queens University in 1964.⁴¹ Northern Ireland universities were not a hotbed of protest; Bernadette Devlin, decrying the lack of serious political activity at Queens (she began in the fall of 1965), has written that the Folk Music Society at Queens had the most forward-looking politics of any group, in part because of its interest in African American music: "They sang black civil-rights songs in the Folk Music Society before anybody else in Queen's was interested in the race problem, and they were singing songs about unemployment in Belfast long before the civil-rights movement took it up. That was a good society. It had a strong American influence in it, but because of this there was another section that was determined to keep Irish influence, so you had the best of both American protest songs and traditional Irish folk music."⁴² Some members of Sinn Fein were inspired by the African American civil rights movement; they saw it as an opportunity to rethink their political strategy. Tomas MacGiolla, the president of Sinn Fein at the time, remembered that "the black people were having their marches and doing political agitations for their rights, so we began to think of this civil rights, and that was about the first time we talked of civil rights which would have been about 1964/1965."⁴³ One of the founders of the civil rights movement, Fionnbarra O Dochartaigh, learned about the American civil rights movement through the socialist Connolly Association in London; the organization's newspaper, the *Irish Democrat*, covered happenings in the United States and argued that discrimination in Northern Ireland was parallel to the situation for African Americans. Comparisons with the United States were a way to reframe the struggle over power in Northern Ireland and suggested the powerful impact

of images of American culture in Ireland. O Dochartaigh remembers, "We compared ourselves to the poor blacks of the US ghettos and those suffering under the cruel system of apartheid in racist South Africa. Indeed we viewed ourselves as Ulster's white Negroes—a repressed and forgotten dispossessed tribe captured within a bigoted partitionist statelet that no Irish elector had cast a vote to create."⁴⁴

"We Shall Overcome," which O Dochartaigh had learned from the song page of the *Irish Democrat*, was first used at a protest rally against unfair housing conditions in Derry in June 1968. It was not an easy sell as a protest song. Devlin describes a march in Coalisland in August 1968 in which Betty Sinclair, the secretary of the Belfast Trades Council, tried to get the crowd to sing "We Shall Overcome," and they responded with "A Nation Once Again" instead.⁴⁵ For these young activists the connection to the United States was an alternative to narrow nationalism and a conduit to a more radical and international way to understand the struggle in Northern Ireland.⁴⁶ In embracing the African American civil rights movement, the NICRA was defining Irish identity partly in racial terms, embracing the idea that the Irish were not quite white. Despite O'Dochartaigh's "white negroes" descriptor here, the NICRA was not Mailerism. Both Them and the NICRA were opening out to the world in an important way, embracing a transatlantic Irish identity that could draw as much from African Americans as it could from "traditional" Irish culture, whether political or musical. It tells us a great deal about the Atlantic circulation of Irish culture and African American culture that a predominantly Protestant blues band, which was not interested in defining itself as black as a mark of oppression, embraces African American culture at the same time a primarily Catholic movement does the same thing. Both tap into a sense that there's a "natural" affinity between the groups, but neither does so in a way condescending toward African Americans. African Americans are inspiring not because they are suffering rural sharecroppers but because they have achieved so much culturally and politically *in the present*.

Ironically it may be the fact that the members of Them were Protestant that explains why they did not indulge in any of the essentialist rhetoric about African Americans (which Morrison has avoided throughout his career): it was not an available or appealing trope for them to depict themselves as oppressed in the way that Eric Burdon of the Animals did when he said, "If I heard John Lee Hooker singing things like 'I been working in a steel mill trucking steel like a slave all day,' I related to that directly because that was happening to grown men on my block."⁴⁷ Them was plagued by personnel and business problems and broke up for good in 1966. Morrison went on to a long, successful solo career and never strayed musically from his blues and R&B roots. Them sparked great interest in the blues in Belfast, as Johnny Rogan argues: "The legacy that Morrison had left Belfast was reflected in the formation of the Blues Foundation, a co-op of groups that included the Luvin Kind, Styx, the Other Ones, the Suspects, the Blue Angels and Memphis Blues. They even found their own version of the Maritime at the

Boat House on Balfour Avenue.”⁴⁸ While there are no explicit links between the Maritime blues scene and the civil rights movement, they were working from the same imaginative impulses; they both viewed the Irish as part of a transatlantic world that could be accessed as a source of inspiration and power. Perhaps Them, a direct product of the presence of African Americans in Ireland and the Irish in America, created a sonic space for the political creativity that was the NICRA.

NOTES

Epigraphs from John Grissim Jr., “Van Morrison: Blue Money & Tupelo Honey,” *Rolling Stone*, June 22, 1972, 37; and Brian Hinton, *Celtic Crossroads: The Art of Van Morrison* (London: Sanctuary, 1997), 39.

1. John Wilde, “Van Morrison: The Legend Speaks,” *Uncut*, July 2005, <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/~hayward/van/van.html/> (accessed December 16, 2007).

2. Bob Groom, *The Blues Revival* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), 14.

3. For further discussion of the influence of the American civil rights movement on Northern Ireland, see Bernadette Devlin, *The Price of My Soul* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969); Brian Dooley, *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America* (London: Pluto, 1998); Fionnbarra O’Dochartaigh, *Ulster’s White Negroes* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1994).

4. Graham Smith, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull: Black American Soldiers in World War II Britain* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1987), 140.

5. Gerald Dawe, *The Rest Is History* (Newry, Ireland: Abbey Press, 1998), 34.

6. Dougie Knight, who ran a bicycle shop in Belfast, was also key in bringing blues to the city. He imported American blues records beginning in the early 1950s and sold them at the bicycle store. He brought the above-mentioned performers to Belfast in 1960. He also organized record-listening sessions that Van Morrison attended. Steve Turner, *Van Morrison: Too Late to Stop Now* (New York: Viking, 1993), 44.

7. George McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 257.

8. Nelson George, *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 108.

9. The poet and jazz critic Philip Larkin famously derided modern jazz in his music reviews. For example, in his introduction to *All What Jazz*, he writes, “With Miles Davis and John Coltrane a new inhumanity emerged. . . . It was with Coltrane, too, that jazz started to be *ugly on purpose*: his nasty tone would become more and more exacerbated until he was fairly screeching at you like a pair of demonically-possessed bagpipes. After Coltrane, of course, all was chaos, hatred and absurdity, and one was almost relieved that severance with jazz had become so complete and obvious.” *All What Jazz: A Record Diary 1961–1971* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1957), 21.

10. Leroi Jones, *Blues People* (New York: William Morrow, 1963), 181.

11. *Ibid.*, 184.

12. Paul Oliver explains, “To the communists the ensemble improvisation of the traditional band symbolized the sharing of responsibility and skills of collective creativity without individualism; to the anarchists the traditional line-up meant freedom of expression and the loose, unshackled federalism of ‘head’ arrangements; to liberals the music spoke of responsibility and selflessness; to conservatives, the strength and continuity of

traditions ensured the basis for the individual enterprise of front-line soloists.” Quoted in McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 55.

13. Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City* (London: Souvenir Press, 1983), 259.

14. Paul Oliver, *The Story of the Blues* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 193.

15. Leighton Grist, “‘The Blues Is the Truth’: The Blues, Modernity, and the British Blues Boom,” in *Cross the Water Blues: African American Music in Europe*, ed. Neil Wynn (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2007), 209.

16. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 17.

17. Grist, “‘Blues Is the Truth,’” 209.

18. Norman Mailer, *The White Negro* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1957), 4.

19. *Ibid.*, 11.

20. See Mark Prendergast, *The Isle of Noises: Rock and Roll’s Roots in Ireland* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1987) for an example of that point of view.

21. Gerry Smyth, *Noisy Island: A Short History of Irish Popular Music* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2005), 12.

22. *Ibid.*, 16.

23. Bob Purdie, *Politics in the Streets: The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1990), 9–10.

24. Devlin, *Price of My Soul*, 96.

25. Geoffrey Stokes, “Interview,” *Hot Press*, October 28, 2003, <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/~hayward/van/van.html> (accessed December 16, 2007).

26. Johnny Rogan, *Van Morrison: No Surrender* (London: Secker & Warburg, 2005), 35.

27. Turner, *Too Late to Stop Now*, 20.

28. Rogan, *Van Morrison*, 71.

29. Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997), 158.

30. Clinton Heylin, *Can You Feel the Silence? Van Morrison* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2003), 77–78.

31. Rogan, *Van Morrison*, 121.

32. *Ibid.*, 76.

33. Dawe, *Rest Is History*, 44.

34. *Ibid.*, 46.

35. Heylin, *Can You Feel the Silence?* 70–71.

36. Rogan, *Van Morrison*, 85.

37. Quoted in Rogan, *Van Morrison*, 109–10.

38. Them’s recordings of these songs can be found on *The Story of Them Featuring Van Morrison*, CD, Deram 42284 4833-2, 1997.

39. They recorded Morrison’s “Tupelo Honey” together on *The Best of Van Morrison, Volume 3* (2007).

40. Victoria Clarke, “The Hardest Thinking Man in Showbiz,” *Q*, August 1993, <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/~hayward/van/van.html> (accessed December 16, 2007).

41. Purdie, *Politics in the Streets*, 199.

42. Devlin, *Price of My Soul*, 76.

43. Dooley, *Black and Green*, 42.

44. O'Dochartaigh, *Ulster's White Negroes*, 14.

45. Devlin, *Price of My Soul*, 95.

46. This racializing and alliance with African Americans did not sit well with many Irish Americans, who rejected Bernadette Devlin's calls for Irish American–African American alliances.

47. Craig Werner, *A Change Is Gonna Come: Music, Race and the Soul of America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 81.

48. Rogan, *Van Morrison*, 136.

The “Quadripartite Concern” of St. Croix

An Irish Catholic Experiment in the
Danish West Indies

Orla Power

St. Croix lies forty miles to the southeast of Puerto Rico and some ninety miles to the northwest of the British Leeward Islands.¹ However, the island’s isolated appearance on the map belies its strategic position at the crossroads of Caribbean commerce, particularly during the mid–eighteenth century. Owing to favorable trade winds, the island was a mere day’s sail from Montserrat, and as such it was relatively adjacent to the Leeward Islands. Describing this, one settler declared, “We have continually vessels running to and from among all these islands as if they were all under one Governance.”² Numerous individuals from the British Leeward Islands settled at St. Croix in the early 1750s. One of them was Nicholas Tuite, who by 1754 considered himself to be the “principal Catholic” on the island.³ Originally from Montserrat, he was of Irish descent and was the chief orchestrator of the first large-scale Irish sugar plantation at the Danish colony.

Tuite and three other members of the Irish Catholic trading interest at Montserrat initiated an experiment at St. Croix with a view to expanding their trading interests and those of their community. The four invested their capital and expertise in a venture that they referred to as their “Quadripartite Concern.” Its phenomenal success allowed the group to reinvest in other plantations on the island and signified the beginning of a golden era for the Irish Atlantic sugar and commodities trade. By settling at St. Croix, the Irish Catholics were to become naturalized citizens of neutral Denmark.⁴ This citizenship of convenience was to serve them well and in many respects allowed them to conduct their business as they pleased. As Akenson has shown, when it came to empire building, the Irish West Indian community was just as efficient as the British.⁵

In examining the mid-eighteenth-century Irish Catholic West Indian community at the British Leeward islands, this chapter attempts to examine the factors that encouraged the initial migration of several key individuals to the Danish West Indies. The success of the Quadripartite Concern will be assessed in terms of how it facilitated the subsequent migration of hundreds of Irish Catholic settlers to the island. As the first of such undertakings, it was to serve as a model for future sugar plantations at St. Croix. Accordingly this suggests that the Irish Catholic community of the period was not only independently involved in the sugar trade and its associated trade in African slaves but also that it was an active colonizer. Exerting a tremendous social and environmental impact on St. Croix, the Irish exploited the nascent Danish sugar industry. As naturalized citizens of neutral Denmark, the Irish Catholic community also took advantage of the tantalizing commercial opportunities that presented themselves at the margins of the British, Spanish, Dutch, and French empires. In consideration of the wealth generated at St. Croix, together with the funds that were repatriated to Ireland in the form of inheritances, remittances, and bills of exchange, the plantations of the Quadripartite Concern were exceptional in that they served to promote the capabilities, and the interests, of the Irish Catholic community in the West Indies.

Tuite's initial relocation to St. Croix in 1749 followed his acrimonious departure from the British Leeward Islands. Perceived as a threat to British sugar-planting interests at Montserrat, targeting Tuite's Catholicism was one of the few ways his commercial activities could be restricted. At Montserrat, Irish Catholics were tolerated, but as we will see, their brazen and lucrative trade with the enemy was not. Several years later, in 1754, the success of Tuite's plantations gave him grounds to petition King Frederick V of Denmark for toleration of the Catholic religion.⁶ When won, Tuite sought to encourage other Irish Catholics to the island in order to establish a peaceful community, founded on commerce and free trade. Throughout the Seven Years' War, this Irish community at St. Croix was represented by individuals of all ranks. International merchants, artisans, laborers, planters, and local traders, many with connections to Montserrat, Ireland, and continental Europe, came to base their activities at the island. By exploiting the political disharmony that existed in the region during this period, the Irish Catholic community was poised to take advantage of the commercial opportunities that existed in the region. Driven as much by greed and the urge to improve as any other group, the Irish were not passive victims of the Atlantic economy.

A large island in comparison to Montserrat, St. Croix offered what the British island could not—vast tracts of affordable, fertile soil. The island was purchased from the French in 1733 by the Danish West Indies and Guinea Company and it was hoped that Denmark, a late starter in the West Indian sugar industry, would eventually vie for a larger position within the trade. So eager was the company to

settle the island, widely renowned for its unhealthy climate, that it offered incentives to all comers, irrespective of suitability or experience. As one commentator remarked, “This allured all the ragamuffins, Insolvents and people of desperate fortunes.”⁷ Although managed proficiently by the company, the future of the island’s sugar industry remained uncertain. The absence of a definitive business strategy, combined with a lack of expertise in planting and marketing of sugar, continued to hamper the island’s development. Despite the abundance of rich, virgin soil that supported dense forests, the island simply failed to thrive. As a result land prices were a fraction of those of the Leeward Islands and the Danes became increasingly keen to attract knowledgeable planters and merchants, together with their families, in order to create a viable and prosperous island community.⁸ As rumors of the Danish crown’s plan to takeover the island began to circulate in the Leeward Islands in the late 1740s, negotiations relating to St. Croix’s future as a free port also came to light. It was predicted that such measures would create a stable sugar industry, which would provide for the needs of the metropole while simultaneously allowing neutral Denmark to reap the benefits offered by free trade in such a politically unstable region as the Caribbean. While many British planters in the Leeward Islands remained skeptical of St. Croix’s potential, several members of the Irish trading community were captivated, describing it as “a strange accident, a prodigious stroke of good fortune and such an opportunity as does not present, perhaps, in 2 or 3 ages.”⁹

Throughout the seventeenth century, the Irish Catholic community at the British Leeward Islands was composed of two distinct groups. On the one hand, there were the Catholic settlers, particularly at Montserrat, who were descended from the numerous indentured servants and convicts who populated the island from the mid-seventeenth century onward.¹⁰ This group immigrated to the islands in a predominantly servile capacity and has been described elsewhere as “riotous and unruly.”¹¹ The other Catholic group was represented by families such as the Blakes of Galway, who left Ireland to pursue the kinds of mercantile opportunities that presented themselves on the expanding frontier of the British Empire.¹² Most of the members of this mercantile community were also members of the fourteen tribes of Galway.¹³ As Galway’s city fathers, they were renowned for their political and commercial prowess and traded extensively with the West Indies and continental Europe.¹⁴ Although initially separate entities, by the mid-eighteenth century many of the families who had begun their West Indian experience as poor whites, convicts, or servants were on a social and economic par with Irish families of landed or mercantile backgrounds. As a result, by the late 1740s the Irish Catholic trading interest at Montserrat was a significant one and combined the talents of international merchants with those of local traders.

International commerce between Ireland, continental Europe, and the West Indies was an extensive and highly lucrative pursuit, which often encompassed multiple branches of several of the Galway tribes. However, the keystone to the

success of the Irish poor whites rested on their development of the interisland sloop trade as a cottage industry. A resourceful group, their small-scale sugar, indigo, and tobacco plantations had allowed most to eke out a subsistence living. However, additional funds were readily available to those who had a working knowledge of the sea and the wherewithal to construct even the most rudimentary of sailing vessels. The island-to-island sale and exchange of commodities, such as salted provisions, the occasional luxury item, or mackerel to feed slaves, allowed many to accumulate the capital required to expand their businesses or to extend their freeholds.¹⁵

The culture of interisland trade in general commodities is a phenomenon associated with many coastal communities, both in Ireland and elsewhere. In the west of Ireland the trade in seaweed, fish, turf, and miscellaneous goods encouraged the development of communities in apparently isolated coastal areas well in advance of the development of the road networks of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Keenly aware of changes in supply and demand, the local trader was characterized by the flexibility to adapt to seasonal and economic fluctuations in the market. As a cultural phenomenon it allowed coastal communities a source of income independent of the land and thus independent of the Anglican establishment. Accordingly the patterns of local seafaring, characteristic of coastal communities in the west of Ireland, may well have directly translated to the West Indies situation. This would explain the upward social mobility of the poor, white Catholics of Montserrat. Irrespective of the origins of the tradition, what had initially served as a survival tactic in the seventeenth century soon became a highly lucrative way of life, sustaining the Irish planting and commercial interests in the West Indies throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁷

Tuite and his associates thrived in this environment, and by 1748 it was thought that Catholics far outnumbered Protestants at Montserrat.¹⁸ Given that the penal laws were not enforced as rigidly as in Ireland, the Irish were entitled to own property, their religion was tolerated, and they were allowed to vote for assembly members. What was not permitted was that they take part in any formal civic duties that excluded them, namely, the legal profession and the militia.¹⁹ While not completely considered as equals, the sheer number of Catholics on the island, together with their economic and social mobility, allowed their official status as second-class citizens to remain largely inconsequential. However, this sense of security among the Irish community was to change in early 1749, when an act purporting to regulate the assembly on Montserrat attempted to deny Catholic suffrage. While Akenson suggests that this sudden enforcement of the penal laws on Montserrat was a reaction to the increasingly overt practice of the Catholic religion, it can be argued that the motivation was less related to ecclesiastical matters and had more to do with economics. Because 1749 was a bumper year for sugar production in the West Indies, British sugar planters found themselves under increasing pressure as prices waned and French competition mounted.

The smuggling of foreign sugars into the British market was rampant and was said to have a negative effect on the prices of British sugars on the London exchange. So obsessed were the planters with protecting the monopoly, frequently their sole source of income, that they regularly issued pamphlets warning against the evils of foreign sugars, which were traded "by the most flagitious race of men."²⁰ This flagitious race included the Irish mercantile community, who conducted this semilegal trade via the West Indian free ports.

When the Act of 1749 was eventually appealed in 1751, its proponents were accused of succumbing to the petty politics arising from a dispute between the landed and trading interests.²¹ Needless to say, this was strenuously denied, and it was claimed that, given that the Catholic community had outstripped the Protestant, the act was merely necessary to "restrain" the Catholics. One of the merchants particularly affected by such restraints was Nicholas Tuite, who was no stranger to the illicit sugar trade. In fact an injunction was issued against his activities in the Leeward Islands in the late 1740s. When he attempted to have it quashed, an associate residing at St. Kitts told him that his activities in foreign dominions made him "but few friends here."²²

Driven by the urge to improve, characteristic of marginal merchants of the eighteenth century, Tuite and his associates had acquired all the trappings of gentlemen.²³ Despite this, as Catholics, their status was never truly secure. In this light such discriminatory legislation against the predominantly Catholic community was, for the most part, due to their commercial expertise and their perceived threat to British sugar interests. The individuals involved in Tuite's Quadrupartite Concern were experts in their respective fields, with strong planting backgrounds, as well as keen knowledge of local and international trading interests. Initiated in late 1750, Tuite's enterprise brought together the talents of John Baker, Lawrence Bodkin, and Henry Ryan.

John Baker, whose letterbook supplies the quotidian details of the Quadrupartite Concern, was an English-born Protestant married to Mary Ryan. A member of the formidable Irish Catholic Montserrat mafia, Mary was a sister to Henry Ryan, who was also involved in the concern. Described by Charley Carroll of Carrollton as "vain empty woman," Mary was a devout Catholic.²⁴ Overall, John Baker appeared to have been indifferent to the fact that his family and business associates were Catholic. Referring to Tuite, Baker remarked that "he is a Roman Catholick but I have no concern with his religion."²⁵ While mixed marriages were not common in the Irish community, the Baker-Ryan union was a mutually beneficial one. Baker, who was attorney general to the Leeward Islands, found that his involvement with the Ryan family gained him access to the region's thriving Irish business community. Similarly, given that Catholics were denied participation in the legal profession, the Ryans were happy to embrace Baker as a member of the family and their primary legal advisor.²⁶ Over the course of the six-year venture, Baker mentioned his brother-in-law, Henry Ryan, very seldom.

In stark contrast to his sister, Henry was described as a “modest, discreet man . . . by no means of a too sanguine disposition” who was also “an exceedingly skillful planter.”²⁷

Another member of the concern was Lawrence Bodkin, whose family, one of the Galway tribes, had connections stretching from Galway to London to France to the West Indies. Few descriptions of him exist other than the fact that he was “bred a merchant.”²⁸ An aspiring gentleman, Bodkin was to take excellent care of the associates’ commercial interests at St. Croix. His visit to Copenhagen some years after his initial move to the island shows that he was well versed in both spoken and written French and had both the ability and the confidence to negotiate with members of the Danish court.²⁹ Bodkin was to become one of the principal importers of African slaves to St. Croix during the Seven Years’ War, and he managed his business from Richmond, a plantation near Christiansted, the island’s capital.³⁰

Of the four associates, Nicholas Tuite appears to have had the most experience in international ventures. In a letter to the king of Denmark, he described himself as having been inducted into agriculture, plantation management, and the art of commerce from a very young age.³¹ Born on Montserrat in 1705, Tuite was the second son of Richard Tuite from Tuitestown in county Westmeath.³² While Nicholas’s brother Robert was engaged in importing provisions directly from Cork, Nicholas was involved in a variety of enterprises, including an interisland trade in slaves and provisions. In later years he represented the interests of planters and merchants on the Leeward Islands, and his counting house was considered to be one of the top twenty-five leading commission firms in London.³³ In the early 1730s Tuite married Anne Skerrett, whose family were successful planters at Antigua and businesspeople in London.³⁴ Skerrett is another of the Galway tribes, who were well connected on the Continent and in the West Indies.³⁵ Such marriages among the Catholic plantocracy were common and served to reinforce the kinship ties that characterized the Irish Atlantic World. While marrying into a ready-made kinship network was likely to have been beneficial, Tuite appears to have possessed tremendous business acumen, approaching each of his ventures with a zeal and enthusiasm of which others were envious: “Tuite is a great master of Trade and has a clear and penetrating foresight into schemes and proposals relating to it. . . . He is indefatigable.”³⁶

Although Tuite was already an established international merchant of note, he could not have conducted his experiment at St. Croix alone. Each partner represented a particular area of expertise to ensure that the entire operation could be conducted in house. Tuite acted as the agent in London, and Baker saw to legal matters at the islands. Bodkin was responsible for both local trade and international commerce at St. Croix. Meanwhile Ryan served as the planter-overseer. Strategic positioning within the British Empire and the Danish allowed the four to take advantage of situations as they arose.

The initial investment was met with excitement by Baker, who exclaimed to his brother in London, "You will hardly believe the terms of the purchase when I tell you how easy and advantageous they are, it looks like a dream."³⁷ Planning to purchase a cluster of cheap plantations as a syndicate, the associates were aware of the potential for property to rapidly increase in value given the prevailing rumors circulating about the Crown's imminent takeover. Baker's "dream" consisted of five plantations. The first, Concordia, was located five miles from Christiansted and consisted of 750 acres. Previous owners had already cleared 100 acres; the other 650 were still "in woods." The second plantation was also called Concordia, set on 100 acres, and was located close to the town. Richmond was the third plantation; also close to town, it comprised 280 acres. Land intended for storehouses had also been purchased in Christiansted. In addition to this there were "1200 acres, or thereabouts all in woods in a place they call the north side."³⁸

Within a relatively short period of time, as predicted, their property rapidly increased in value. "Since our purchase here is a circumstance which vastly enhances the value of land at St. Croix . . . it will within a year or two be made a Free Port," Baker wrote. Indeed, there existed a certain gold-rush mentality. Baker continued: "A rich Dane who went from St. Thomas' . . . to Copenhagen where he is a great power, has just writ out to some relations at St. Eustatius . . . to make what purchases they can at St. Croix, for that such is the way and this is the time, to make their Fortunes."³⁹

As much of St. Croix was virgin territory, its soil was excellent for the cultivation of healthy sugarcane, requiring no additional nutrients or manure to maintain a vigorous crop. Writing in 1767, the Moravian missionary Christian G. A. Oldendorp described contemporary sugar production: "Fertilization of the fields was hardly necessary here until recently because the earth was fertile enough without this expedient." An "old inhabitant" assured him that "the sugarcane was no longer growing as vigorously as he had seen it over twenty years before. At that time [in the late 1740s], it might have grown to the height of three and a half times a man's height, and to nearly the thickness of a man's arm."⁴⁰ At the outset the plantations on St. Croix did not require any additional fertilization. Moreover, the planters were familiar with the practice of "ratooning," which was commonplace in areas of virgin soil: on cutting the sugarcane, the remaining stump (the ratoon) was left in the ground to resprout, producing a second cane.⁴¹ In new soil, ratooning continued to produce high-quality canes for up to ten years and was considerably less labor intensive than planting anew every year.⁴² On the Leeward Islands of this period, the use of ratooning was a thing of the past and the resulting dependence on fertilizer made planting there significantly more costly. The Quadripartite Concern, whose canes were "all in ratoons," clearly had an advantage over any of the established plantations on the Leeward Islands.⁴³

The fertility of the soil made the St. Croix plantations less labor intensive than their counterparts elsewhere. Yet the Quadripartite Concern was heavily dependent on African slaves. In order to function efficiently, a plantation required, on average, one slave per two acres of land.⁴⁴ Baker's initial plans were described to his brother early in 1751: "We intend to make the whole number of Negroes 6 or 700 and everything proportionable."⁴⁵ By August of that year, however, it was clear that demand in the region had outstripped supply: "I must purchase 15 or 20 negroes, they complain so grievously of want of strength at St. Croix."⁴⁶ Owing in part to the concern's extensive clearing operations on the island, Bodkin and Ryan were perpetually requesting that Baker supply more labor. In January 1752 Baker wrote of his purchase of several Africans for St. Croix: "I put 10 new and four season'd Negroes on the Estate about nine months ago. The New ones were Mundingoes⁴⁷ and all young from 15 to twenty or thereabouts. They were 20 guineas round and Mr. Bodkin and Harry Ryan liked them very much."⁴⁸

However, as the months wore on, it became clear that a shortage of labor was compromising sugar production. In April 1753 Baker lamented that Harry Ryan's attempt to expand would be hindered unless more labor was acquired: "He means next year to start a new work there and depends greatly on Mr. Tuite's procuring a Guinea Ship."⁴⁹ The acquisition of an entire "Guinea Ship" of slaves became Baker's goal, as he wrote to Tuite, "I see no prospect of stocking the plantations out of Guinea Ships or any other probable way in the world than sending out a vessel to Guinea."⁵⁰ Attempts to purchase slaves at slave auctions on the island were futile because British slave ships stopped at the islands very infrequently: "But two Guinea Ships here lately."⁵¹ He lamented that "the people are perfectly mad for them. . . . We want a sweep of 60 or 70 fine ones at once."⁵² In August 1755, accordingly, Tuite procured slaves at "a full fourth part less than they were to be got by any other means." This was achieved by "buying a cargo at once and distributing them among our several concerns." Having obtained such a large number of what was at that point a scarce commodity on St. Croix, Baker remarked of Tuite, "In short, I don't believe that thee is such another man for business in the world, either for doing much or doing it profitably."⁵³

Evidence suggests that conditions at St. Croix encouraged many artisans and laborers to abandon the Leeward Islands for better opportunities there. In July 1754 Governor Thomas of the Leeward Islands complained to the Board of Trade that "several English artificers" had been "landed under indenture" at St. Croix against their will by a man by the name of "Skerrit."⁵⁴ However, Governor Clausen of St. Croix promptly assured him that they had gone of their own free will and volition.⁵⁵ Irrespective of whether the artisans were of Irish descent or otherwise, it was clear that the quickly improving island of St. Croix was becoming something of a threat to English interests in the Caribbean. In a letter to his brother in October 1751, John Baker described the rapid increase of population that had taken place on St. Croix over the previous months: "The island is now

as full again of people as it was last year, for they have gone from all parts in vast flocks.”⁵⁶

St. Croix plantations also competed with the British islands in terms of the quality of the sugar they produced. The island’s muscovado sugars (unrefined sugars) were of a high standard and competed with the best in the West Indies. Although not of an objective description, the quality of Cruzan sugars was, according to Baker, “as good as 1st St. Kitts sugars.”⁵⁷ Given that Wilson Watson, who wrote a book in 1752 on sugar production, considered St. Kitts produce to be “canes of an extraordinary quality . . . which keeps well and bears carriage and refining,”⁵⁸ St. Croix was well on its way to competing on the world market. A Mr. Coham of St. Kitts conceded to Baker that “they make very good sugars at this island [St. Croix].” In relating this to Tuite, Baker assured him that “neither is it he only [Coham] that says this but everyone that comes from thence.”⁵⁹

With Ryan and Bodkin in a position to conduct the business on site, Baker disclosed his reliance on interisland and transatlantic communications when he stated that “Mr. Tuite and I are to serve the concern as we can wherever we are.”⁶⁰ Baker’s legal knowledge, contacts, and access to pertinent information regarding the British Islands matched Tuite’s knowledge of the London market and his access to high-level information regarding the Danish Islands. This arrangement allowed Baker to remain at the British Leeward Islands, and to “watch the matter here and do all that is to be done in this place, Mr. Tuite is to procure advantageous things in England, and the other two manage on the spot.”⁶¹ An awareness of the importance of each partner’s role is evident. However, having two representatives on the island was seen as essential to the functioning of the whole operation: “Tis so precarious and so merely depending on two particular people, viz Mr. Bodkin and my brother-in-law Mr. Henry Ryan, that were they dead or to quit it, I would at once renounce it and sell out.”⁶²

Tuite’s maneuverings ensured that the Quadrupartite Concern maintained the upper hand in the international sugar market. Using his friend and associate on St. Kitts as his inside man and confidante, Tuite could glean information regarding the British Leeward Island sugar market. Similarly Tuite’s information regarding the Danish sugar market allowed Baker, Ryan, and Bodkin to consider their options with regard to where their produce would be shipped: “But if what we hear to be true . . . that sugars rise prodigiously well at Copenhagen, and are like to keep on the up at 35 or 36 sterling . . . I may very truly say my Fortune is made.”⁶³

It seems that, depending on the strength of the market, the concern shipped Danish sugars to England, via first St. Thomas and then the Leeward Islands. As St. Thomas was a neutral port, this was technically not in breach of any law. However, considering the strong mercantilist tendencies that prevailed, any extra sugar on the market was viewed by British planters and merchants as a serious threat to “healthy” prices in London: “Our English merchants may not speak very

favourably of it. . . . The less sugar that is made . . . the better for them.”⁶⁴ But where there was a will, there was always a way. Baker, in response to a letter from his brother Joseph, argued, “W. talks of smuggling being prevented, he talks in the dark and without knowledge. There are many things we import by law from St. Thomas’s at 7s.8d.2 duty only. Should that law be repealed or rather, that practice be prevented by a new law, we have another [scheme] in reserve, and, at worst, we can always get many home as English sugars.”⁶⁵

Indeed any unorthodox trade conducted with foreigners was not likely to win an individual many friends. Baker wrote to his brother about his venture in St. Croix, asking him to refrain from discussing the matter with anyone in England: “It were proper to caution you with Mr. Phipps or indeed most of our gentlemen, not to talk about St. Croix. Tis a tender subject, they are pleylnly [*sic*] jealous of it. . . . They imagine that so many St. Croix sugars are shipt to England privately as lowers the price of the English Islands Sugars and I believe there has been something in it. Always decline the subject.”⁶⁶

Public knowledge of Baker’s involvement on St. Croix may have compromised his social and political standing on the British Leeward Islands. Mentioning the pernicious “enemies of St. Croix” on several occasions, Baker’s concerns were realized when he noted in a letter to Tuite that “there are many spies on us. I could wish all your letters were diverted by some strange, unknown hand.”⁶⁷ Much of the trade at St. Croix, in fact, was of a clandestine nature, and although the Danish crown officially outlawed trade to North America, port officials tended to turn a blind eye to the practice.⁶⁸ Trade with the North American ports was an important source of revenue for the associates. Traditionally providers of provisions and hardware, ports such as Charleston, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, supplied St. Croix with commodities such as lumber in return for sugar, rum and molasses.⁶⁹

The very fact that the associates became naturalized Danish citizens meant that they were poised to take advantage of the commercial opportunities, both legal and illegal, that existed on the fringes of the Danish, British, Spanish, Dutch, and French empires. Reflexive and adaptable to changes in the market, the associates used their sugar to participate in the highly lucrative local, inter-island trade in slaves, linens, and hardware that was particularly persistent during times of conflict. The Quadripartite Concern was to be wound up in January 1756. With the proceeds of the enterprise, the associates invested in further ventures, which ensured that their transnational exchanges would be sustained by the production of high-quality sugar.

What is clear is that working in concert, the partners managed the concern with expertise and the “frugality” encouraged by contemporary experts such as Samuel Martin.⁷⁰ Baker remarked that the Danes who initially settled the island were not skilled planters and that “their crops are poor planted.”⁷¹ He similarly believed that “four out of five people” ran their affairs the “old lethargic way.”⁷²

Within a few years Baker was of the opinion that the Quadripartite Concern conducted their affairs “in a manner and to a perfection beyond anybody there.”⁷³

Having been freed from the petty politics of the Leeward Islands, Tuite thrived in his new position as burgher at St. Croix. By the mid-eighteenth century the division between the Danish court and those involved in commercial activities was not as it was in Britain. Courtiers were frequently involved in business ventures, and merchants were highly influential at the Danish court.⁷⁴ As Tuite’s fortunes increased, it soon became clear that both his business and planting acumen were second to none. His friendships with individuals in power, such as the Danish minister for foreign affairs, Count Bernstorff, ensured that he was kept well informed of the king’s imminent takeover.⁷⁵ By 1754, therefore, Tuite was in a position to approach the king with a further business proposition.

At first Tuite petitioned the Propaganda Fide, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, in Rome for the foundation of a mission on the island. As the “principal Catholic on St. Croix,” he wished for the “patronage of the mission to be given to himself and to his male heirs.”⁷⁶ By the time permission had been granted by the Propaganda, Tuite had made substantial inroads into the settling and cultivating of St. Croix. In July 1754, merely two days before the Danish crown’s takeover of the island, he petitioned the crown for liberty of conscience at St. Croix. Tuite used the success of the Quadripartite Concern to prove to the Danish authorities that he and his associates were far from the “Ruffians and Insolvents of desperate fortunes” who initially populated St. Croix. While the petition was primarily concerned with religious matters, it is clear that Tuite was thoroughly impressed by the Danes’ aspirations to “tolerate difference and maintain peace,” which in his opinion was essential to make “trade and commerce flourish, enrich the nation and sustain the glory of His Majesty.” Asserting his loyalty to the king, Tuite outlined his previous investments and future plans for the island, where he planned to settle a further thousand individuals, both black and white. He stressed that the white settlers were predominantly Catholic families who, as a ready-made community, would serve as an important foundation for the island’s society. He claimed that, with the increase in the value of their property, together with their access to trade, these Irish Catholics would serve the Danish colony well. Given the fact that he planned to transport the families all at once to the island, Tuite reasserted his commitment to the project and to the island.⁷⁷

Having set out his proposed contributions of capital, expertise, and manpower, Tuite’s agenda was to secure for his settlers the conditions that were not available to them elsewhere, whether in Ireland or at the Leeward Islands. In consideration of his contribution, the requests seem relatively minor. At first he humbly asked that Roman Catholics be permitted to practice their religion freely, to build churches for the celebration of the divine service, and to be served by as

many priests as were considered necessary. In return for this Tuite pledged that these Catholics would “comport themselves as zealous and loyal subjects of His Majesty.” Tuite’s next request was that Catholics be allowed the privilege of serving the king in the civil or military service, depending, of course, “on their talents.” This last desire was to ensure that Catholic settlers would be fully integrated into island life and, most important, that they would have access to positions of power and influence.⁷⁸ His aspiration was to establish a Catholic community, “without war or exhausted soils,” in which commerce and trade could be conducted freely and without interference from the authorities.⁷⁹

The Irish West Indian community had come of age and was no longer satisfied with the insecurities of hard-won social and commercial victories on the British Islands. By relocating to St. Croix, Tuite circumvented the British Empire on his road to success and fortune. In doing so, he provided a truly safe haven for Catholics who were prepared to relocate, either from other locations in the Caribbean or directly from Ireland. However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that Tuite was entirely altruistic in his activities on St. Croix. He saw a niche market and seized the opportunity to buy large tracts of affordable land, which he then sold at a marginal profit to his fellow Catholics, in some cases organizing long-term finance to facilitate their purchase. In leaner times such credit arrangements were to financially cripple all but the most able planter.⁸⁰

The Quadripartite Concern was the first of many Irish operations of this kind whose mark on the Cruzan landscape is still visible today. Estates such as Enfield Green, Bog of Allen, Castle Bourke, and Butler’s Bay, to name but a few, testify to the Irish exploitation of land and African labor during this period. Interestingly the revenue from such plantations often found its way back to Ireland. It has been shown elsewhere how the Irish chandlery services, together with the Irish provisioning industry, was heavily dependent on the slave trade.⁸¹ Similarly, in examining the customs ledgers from St. Croix, it becomes clear that in spite of the British Navigation Acts, the island was a market for Irish-made commodities. Moreover the wills of many Irish planters, traders, and merchants attest to the ways in which Ireland gained from the enterprise at St. Croix. Tuite’s own will reflects his personal connections in London, St. Croix, Montserrat, and Ireland. Leaving a significant fortune to his wife Ann and son Robert, both of London, he also bequeathed “£100 to the poor of Montserrat” and “40 pieces of 8 to the Danish Church of St. Croix likewise for the Catherine Church there.” To Mary Cahill of Cork, his kinswoman, he left thirty pounds a year, and to “Biddy O’ Reilly living near Grannard Co. Longford,” ten pounds a year. John Nugent of Johnstown near Mullingar was instructed to pay the annual ten pounds and was to be reimbursed by his correspondent, Francis French of Dublin.⁸²

By combining their expertise in local and international spheres of trade and commerce, together with their knowledge of planting and the sugar trade, the

associates set the standard for the development of the St. Croix sugar industry. They also paved the way for subsequent Irish Catholic migration to the island. Yet the Irish Dominican priests who eventually attended this community at St. Croix lamented, “They who were good Christians in Europe are reprobates here.”⁸² This presents a question: for the Irish in the West Indies, did Catholicism represent any more than a badge of shared identity? The group’s Catholicism did not seem to hamper their involvement in the African slave trade. In fact it was a reliance on African labor that facilitated their production of high-grade, highly marketable sugar. This use of slaves in turn enabled their participation in local and international markets on both sides of the Atlantic. The participation of Irish individuals as overseers, ship captains, and outfitters on the front lines of the British and French slave trade has documented elsewhere.⁸³ However, it is clear that this particular Irish Catholic group financed, organized, and profited extensively from their own slave trade in the Danish West Indies.

NOTES

1. St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas are the three Danish West Indian Islands. Purchased by the United States in 1917, they are now the U.S. Virgin Islands. The British Leeward Islands are Montserrat, Antigua, St. Kitts, and Nevis.

2. John Baker at St. Kitts to his brother, January 23, 1751, “The Letterbook of John Baker,” MS Eng Lett.b.37, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Oxford, England (hereafter cited as “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL).

3. Hugh Fenning, ed., “The mission to St Croix in the West Indies, 1750–69,” documents from the archives of San Clemente, Rome, *Archivium Hibernicum* 25 (1962): 75–122, 78.

4. The terms “Denmark” and “Danish” herein signify the Danish state in its entirety. In the eighteenth century this encompassed the composite kingdom of Denmark-Norway, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, Iceland, Greenland, the North Atlantic isles, the Danish West Indies, and all Danish colonial possessions in Africa and India.

5. Donald Harman Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630–1730* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997).

6. Frederick V (1723–1766) was king of the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway from 1746 to 1766.

7. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

8. *Ibid.*

9. John Baker to his Brother, June 22, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

10. For an in-depth discussion of the complexities of the Irish community residing at Montserrat during the seventeenth century, see Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World*.

11. Hilary McD Beckles, “A ‘riotous and unruly lot’: Irish Indentured Servants and Freeman in the English West Indies, 1644–1713,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (October 1990): 503–52 .

12. Aubrey Gwynn, “Documents relating to the Irish in the West Indies,” *Analecta Hibernica* 4 (1932): 136–286, 274.

13. The fourteen tribes of Galway are Athy, Blake, Bodkin, Browne, D'Arcy, Deane, Ffont, Ffrench, Joyce, Kirwan, Lynch, Martin, Morris, and Skerrett. See James Hardiman, *The History of Galway from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Dublin: W. Folds and Son, 1820), 7–20.

14. L. M. Cullen, “Galway Merchants in the Outside World, 1650–1800,” in *Galway: Town and Gown 1484–1984*, ed. D. Ó Cearbhaill (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1984), 63–89.

15. Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 1994), 445.

16. Kathleen Villiers-Tuthill, *Alexander Nimmo and the Western District*. (Clifden, Ireland: Connemara Girl Publications, 2006), 10–11.

17. Thomas M. Truxes, *Irish-American Trade, 1660–1783* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 89–105.

18. December 3, 1751, “Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations” (London: Public Record Office, 1932), 237.

19. *Ibid.*, 239.

20. Samuel Martin, *An essay upon plantership, humbly inscrib'd to all the planters of the British sugar-colonies in America* (Antigua: T. Smith, 1750), 3.

21. December 3, 1751, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations* (London: Public Record Office, 1932), 238.

22. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, October 13, 1753, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

23. David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 279.

24. Ronald Hoffman, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 182.

25. John Baker to Thomas Baker, June 22, 1752, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

26. Philip C. Yorke, *The Diary of John Baker, Barrister of the Middle Temple, Solicitor General of the Leeward Islands* (London: Hutchinson, 1931), 10.

27. John Baker to Thomas Baker, August 12, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

28. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

29. L. Bodkin to Wasserschleben, [c. 1761], NKS 2152 4, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen (hereafter cited as DKB).

30. John Baker to his brother, January 23, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

31. Nicholas Tuite’s Petition to King Frederick V Copenhagen, July 22, 1754, Danske Kancelli, Koncepter og indlæg til vestindiske sager, 1746–1760, Danish State Archives, Copenhagen (hereafter cited as DSA).

32. “Genealogy of the Tuites of Tuitestown, Co. Westmeath,” MS 175, National Library of Ireland, Dublin (hereafter cited as NLI).

33. Thomas M. Truxes, *Irish-American Trade, 1660–1783* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 101, 60; Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 299, 445.

34. “Genealogy of the Skerrett Family,” MS 175, NLI.

35. Cullen, “Galway Merchants,” 73.

36. John Baker to Thomas Baker, June 22, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

37. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, “Letterbook of John Baker,” BL.

38. *Ibid.*

39. John Baker to Thomas Baker, June 22, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

40. G. C. A. Oldendorp, *History of the Mission of the Evangelical Brethren on the Caribbean Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John*, trans. Arnold R. Highfield and Vladimir Barac, ed. Johann Jakob Bossard (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Karoma Press, 1985), 54.

41. Wilson Watson, *The art of making sugar: Under the heads of I. The natural history of the sugar-cane. II. The culture of the sugar-cane. . . . With an appendix containing The art of fermenting and distilling malaises, scums, &c. for rum* (London: R. Hillock, 1752), 5.

42. Richard Pares, "Merchants and Planters," *Economic History Review*, suppl. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 42.

43. John Baker to Thomas Baker, April 18, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

44. R. B. Sheridan, "The Rise of a Colonial Gentry: A Case Study of Antigua, 1730–1775," *Economic History Review*, 13, no. 3 (1961): 342–57, 345.

45. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

46. John Baker to Thomas Baker, August 12, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

47. Perhaps Mandinga, "a neighbouring tribe of the Fula nation, located on the Senegal." See Oldendorp, *History of the Mission*, 161.

48. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 27, 1752, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

49. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, April 18, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

50. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, October 13, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

51. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, Jun 22, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

52. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, November 8, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

53. John Baker to Thomas Baker, August 1, 1755, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

54. Thomas Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America* (London: Longmans, 1907), 2: 578.

55. *Ibid.*

56. John Baker to his brother, October 8, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

57. John Baker to his brother, [April, 1752?], "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

58. Watson, *Art of making sugar*, 4.

59. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, May 25, 1752, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

60. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

61. *Ibid.*

62. John Baker to Thomas Baker, Oct 8, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

63. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 2, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

64. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

65. John Baker to Joseph Baker, October 14, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

66. John Baker to Thomas Baker, November 28, 1752, "Letterbook of John Baker,"

BL.

67. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, November 8, 1753, "Letterbook of John Baker,"

BL.

68. Waldemar Westergaard, *The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule, 1671–1754, with a supplementary chapter, 1755–1917* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 235.

69. John Baker to Nicholas Tuite, August 12, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

70. Martin, *Essay upon plantership*, 3.

71. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 23, 1751, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

72. John Baker to Thomas Baker, August 1, 1755, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

73. John Baker to Thomas Baker, January 1, 1756, "Letterbook of John Baker," BL.

74. H. S. K. Kent, *War and Trade in Northern Seas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 155.

75. See Nicholas Tuite to Count Bernstorff, November 28, 1760, NBU 28/11/1760, DKB.

76. Fenning, "Mission to St Croix," 78.

77. Nicholas Tuite's Petition to King Frederick V, Copenhagen, July 22, 1754, Danske Kancelli, Koncepter og indlæg til vestindiske sager, 1746–1760, DSA.

78. See David Dickson on the significance of Catholic involvement in formal civic duties. David Dickson, "Catholics and Trade in Eighteenth-Century Ireland," in *Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. T. P. Power and Kevin Whelan (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1990), 91.

79. Nicholas Tuite's Petition to King Frederick V Copenhagen, July 22, 1754.

80. Jens Vibæk, *Dansk Vestindien 1755–1848*, vol. 2 of *Vore gamle tropekolonier*, ed. J. O. Brønsted, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Fremad, 1966), 147.

81. Nini Rogers, "Ireland and the Black Atlantic in the Eighteenth Century," *Irish Historical Studies* 32 (2000): 174–92.

82. Vere Langford Oliver, ed., *Caribbeana: Being Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the History, Genealogy, Topography, and Antiquities of the British West Indies*, vol. 6. (London: Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, 1919), 60.

83. Fenning, "Mission to St Croix," 75–122, 92.

84. Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-slavery: 1612–1865* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

The Irish and the Formation of British Communities in Early Massachusetts

Marsha L. Hamilton

One evening in May 1661, Philip Welsh and William Downing strode into their master's parlor just before prayers and delivered an astonishing challenge. The two men, indentured servants to Ipswich magistrate Samuel Symonds, declared, "We will worke with you, or for you, noe longer. . . . We have served you seven years, we thinke that is longe enough." Welsh and Downing did try to compromise with Symonds, offering "to plant your corne & mende your fences, &[c.] if you will pay us as other men [and give them their freedom], but we will not worke with you upon the same termes or conditions as before." Symonds tried to put the dispute off, saying, "Come let us goe to prayer." Attempting to maintain control of the situation, Welsh replied, "You may go to prayer; we will speak more in the morning." Symonds did not remain conciliatory and signed a complaint against the two men, who were arrested by the constables the next morning.¹

When Welsh and Downing came before the Essex County Quarterly Court in June 1661, they told an interesting story in their defense. They had been kidnapped out of Ireland in late 1653 or early 1654 and sold to Symonds by George Dell, the master of the ship *Goodfellow*, owned by Boston merchant David Selleck. The indenture contract had been negotiated between Dell and Symonds without consulting Welsh and Downing about the terms. Their services were sold for nine years; a proviso added to the contract a week later increased Welsh's time by two years. Fellow servants John King and John Downing supported the story of abduction, testifying that they, along with many others, had been taken "in the night out of their beds" and hurried aboard the *Goodfellow*. King and John Downing did not know Welsh and William Downing prior to their kidnapping, but they had all been captured and placed on board the *Goodfellow*, to be taken to England's North American colonies. King and John Downing also

testified that Dell had sailed hurriedly, “leav[ing] his water and much of his provisions behind for fear the country would have taken them [the captives] from him.”²

After hearing testimony from Samuel Symonds and several other servants in the household, the jury temporized, leaving the final decision in the case to the magistrates. Jurors concluded that if the contract between Symonds and Dell was legal, the Irishmen would have to serve the full nine years, but if the contract was not valid, the men should be freed. The magistrates, not surprisingly, ruled in favor of Samuel Symonds, although Welsh and Downing immediately appealed the decision to the Court of Assistants in Boston.³

This case reveals many aspects about the lives of non-Puritan residents in seventeenth-century Massachusetts.⁴ Although the Irish constituted only a small segment of this population, they played an important role in developing British and Atlantic communities in Massachusetts. The Puritan founders of the colony expected to incorporate Reformed Protestants from many parts of Europe into their society, but the communities formed by Irish and Scottish captives and lower-status English residents developed from social and economic conditions rather than a shared religious ideology. The social integration of diverse peoples from Britain, Ireland, and Europe, however, provided stability for Massachusetts through the tumultuous events of the later seventeenth century.

The desire of Puritan leaders to keep “disruptive” settlers out of their colony is well known, but it is equally true that as early as the 1640s these same men recognized that the colony could not long survive without the labor provided by “strangers.”⁵ The economic problems that started with the precipitous decline in immigration as war began between king and Parliament in England in 1642 meant that Massachusetts settlers had to find new sources of income and labor. The Massachusetts General Court began to encourage the development of industries, in particular, iron manufacturing, shipping, and shipbuilding. The court awarded monopolies to investors to develop manufacturing and other industries and supported merchants in their efforts to find new markets for Massachusetts’s agricultural products. The need for skilled laborers in these industries brought hundreds of non-Puritan workers to coastal Massachusetts. The iron industry in Essex County employed English and Welsh ironworkers in the 1640s and stimulated the importation of several hundred Scottish prisoners of war in the 1650s, for example, while shipping and shipbuilding encouraged the immigration to the colony of mariners and marine carpenters from the Channel Island of Jersey and other places throughout the Atlantic World.

Although scholars of early New England have long recognized the presence of non-Puritan and non-English settlers in the region, the general interpretation is that these people simply disappeared into the dominant Puritan and English population. Stephen Innes, for instance, contends that unruly ironworkers at the Saugus Iron Works in the 1640s and 1650s were soon “tamed” by Puritan

discipline. David Thomas König argues, “The Scots and the Irish occasionally clashed with the English population, but they migrated there in such small numbers that their adjustment was relatively easy.”⁶ In his study of the Huguenot immigration to North America, Jon Butler asserts, “Boston’s relative homogeneity in religion and nationality may have smothered the small refugee population’s cohesion and sustained resistance to conformity.”⁷ Closer examination of these residents, however, shows that even though the number of non-Puritan settlers was small and few of them directly challenged the institutional structures set up by Puritans, they did not simply disappear into the dominant society, mixing with and becoming “English” or “Puritan.” The “relatively easy” adjustment was accomplished through the development of communities that allowed these residents to fit into society while retaining elements of their traditional cultures and identities.

These communities resemble those studied by Nicholas Canny, which he calls “British communities” in his work on mixed-ethnicity plantations in Ulster. Although there is no direct link between the Ulster communities and those in Massachusetts, they arose in response to similar problems. Scottish and English landlords needed tenants for their estates in Ulster and so gave leases to Irish families even though James I stipulated that preference should be given to English and Scottish farmers. In Massachusetts landowners needed labor and became willing to accept servants from many parts of Europe in order to build their farms. Thus, in Ulster and Massachusetts, the need for labor was a catalyst for the development of mixed-ethnicity communities and the formation of new identities.⁸

Composed of people from various national backgrounds, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions, members of these communities worked together, shared tools and labor, and formed families and social networks. These communities existed generally on the outskirts of larger villages and towns, yet non-Puritans worked with and for members of old families and church members, lived near them, and served with them on juries and in militia units. They were not marginalized from the larger community but did constitute a distinct subset of peoples within a town. Such communities also allowed non-English and non-Puritan residents to maintain their ethnic identities while developing new ones. The settlers did not disappear into the English Puritan population, losing their identities in the dominant culture, but continued to think of themselves as Irish (or Scots or Jersey Islanders) while also becoming Massachusetts men and women.⁹ This “social web” fostered the growth of “Britishness” that helped transform the early, fairly homogeneous character of the colony into a more diverse, commercial society in the last half of the century—one that began to resemble societies in other regions of the emerging British Atlantic World.¹⁰

Thus the presence of Irish agricultural laborers in Essex County should not be a surprise. These men and women were part of a whirl of migration and

movement—voluntary and forced—that occurred throughout the Atlantic World in the seventeenth century. Massachusetts was not isolated from this activity. Yet given the deep-seated animosity between the English and the Irish, and in particular the Puritan fear of Catholicism, the acceptance of Irish servants is rather unexpected. Nevertheless the English government sent thousands of young Irish men and women to the colonies after the reconquest of Ireland by Oliver Cromwell in the late 1640s, and although most went to the West Indies and Chesapeake, an unknown number arrived in Massachusetts.

Aside from the prejudice the English felt for the Irish, Massachusetts leaders had practical concerns about settlers from Ireland. As long as potential immigrants were Protestants from Scottish-dominated Ulster or from Anglo-Irish families (particularly the New English), they were welcome, as evidenced by John Winthrop's correspondence with John Livingstone in 1634/35. Livingstone, a Scottish minister in Ulster, had inquired about bringing his congregation to Massachusetts, a move that Winthrop encouraged. The group left Ireland but encountered a hurricane, which they interpreted as a sign that they should remain in Ireland.¹¹ But Gaelic Irish were suspect. Not only were they likely to be Catholic, the English also believed them to be barbaric and uncivilized, and thus a physical, as well as religious, danger to English Protestants. Such fears in England and Massachusetts had been heightened by the events of the 1640s.¹²

In 1633 Charles I appointed Thomas Wentworth lord deputy of Ireland. Wentworth aggressively protected the interests of the king in Ireland, which had been badly managed by the previous royal favorite, George Villiers, the duke of Buckingham. Through his diligent attention to Charles's affairs, Wentworth managed to alienate all factions in Irish society. When Wentworth became a pawn in the disputes between the English Parliament and Charles (and lost his head after being convicted of treason in 1641), many Irish saw an opportunity to gain more control over domestic affairs, if not outright independence, and rebelled. Catholics and Protestants alike committed atrocities against the other, but in England, Protestant victims of Irish Catholics received great sympathy. Their tales of horror were given wide publicity, which hardened English Protestant anger against, and fear of, Catholics. Charles was unable to stem the rebellion because of the developing civil war in England, and thus after 1642, Irish lords ruled Ireland, virtually independent of the English.¹³

The parliamentary victory in England in 1649 and the beheading of Charles I opened a new chapter in Anglo-Irish fighting. Parliament decided to use Catholic atrocities during the 1641–42 rebellion as an excuse to reward its supporters with land and began a wholesale confiscation of Irish property. Oliver Cromwell and the New Model Army invaded Ireland in the summer of 1649, attacking soldiers and civilians alike and committing horrors unheard of in earlier conflicts. The English, confronted with an angry and newly dispossessed

population, began to deport young men and women to the colonies, using Elizabethan statutes against “rogues and vagabonds.”¹⁴

Little information about those deported to Massachusetts has survived. No record of their arrival has been found, no ship passenger lists exist, and aside from the men who appear in the Symonds-Welsh case, no indication of why or when these servants were allowed to settle in the colony exists. Although the Massachusetts government discouraged the settlement of Irish in the colony in general, they did not officially prohibit it and thus left no record why, in the mid-1650s, clusters of Irish servants and laborers begin to appear in the records in Boston and Essex County.¹⁵

Irish servants did arrive in the Bay Colony, however, and despite the sketchy record of their lives, elements of the development of mixed-ethnicity communities in early Massachusetts can be outlined by looking at these settlers. To return to Philip Welsh and William Downing, the 1661 court case provides some clues, and many unanswered questions, about the experiences of Irish servants in the region and their roles in the larger community.

Although we do not know for certain where Welsh, Downing, and their compatriots were from in Ireland, many kidnapped servants may have come from the south, around Kinsale in county Cork, where a trade in servants to the West Indies and Chesapeake had existed since the 1620s. If so, many servants could also have been Catholic and Gaelic, the predominant religion and ethnicity in southern Ireland.¹⁶ In the original bill of sale between Dell and Symonds, Philip Welsh was called “Edward”; the proviso added a week later states that “upon his arrival in Ipswich such as do well understand his language doe say he owneth his name to be Philip.” In the 1661 case another servant testified that he asked Downing what Welsh’s name was and Downing told him it was Philip. The implication, of course, is that Welsh did not speak English and so may have been from a Gaelic-speaking region of Ireland.¹⁷

In addition John King stated that he and others were taken “by some of the English soldiers,” while John Downing claimed that he was taken “by the ship master or some one whom he hired.”¹⁸ The men, in other words, had been taken under the Elizabethan statute against “rogues and vagabonds” (39 Eliz., c.4.) and with the knowledge and authority of the English government. Indeed, merchant David Selleck had obtained an order in council to transport four hundred Irish children to New England and Virginia in the winter of 1653–54. Although this does not prove that these servants were Catholic or Gaelic, it does mean that they were not from influential families that could have protected them. Since Dell left hurriedly to avoid having his cargo of servants freed “by the country,” we may also assume that the general populace did not condone the actions of the English government or its agents.¹⁹

Other Gaelic or Catholic Irish may also have lived in coastal Massachusetts in the seventeenth century. As early as 1639 Irishman Dorman Mahoney came to

Boston as a servant. Although he apparently spoke English, when his son Tege was indentured to Joseph Armitage in Essex County in 1643, part of the agreement was that Armitage would teach the boy “to read the English tongue.”²⁰ Later, in 1681, Joane Suiflan (Sullivan?) petitioned the Essex County Court to remove her from her indenture with Quaker Thomas Maule. She charged Maule and his wife with physical and emotional abuse and had the support of many neighbors, Quakers included, who confirmed her story. Maule denied the charges and claimed that Sullivan “could not speck one word of Inglesh . . . and [was] of bad caredge in langedg soe far as I understood her in Irish.” Another deponent charged Sullivan with saying that Massachusetts “was a devilish place for thay did not goe to mast [mass].” Sullivan reportedly added that she would “stay out her time . . . and then goe whome to her one contry againe wher shee mit goe to mast.”²¹ The authorities made no response to this charge of Catholicism. Whether the accusation was true or not, clearly some Massachusetts residents believed that their Irish neighbors were Catholic.

Although New England had been designated as a destination for the servants requested by David Selleck in his petition to the English Council of State, it is not clear why Massachusetts leaders decided to allow the settlement of potentially Catholic and Gaelic Irish captives. In October 1652, eighteen months before the sale of Philip Welsh and William Downing, the Massachusetts General Court reprimanded Selleck for “bringing some of the Irish men on shoare,” presumably because they were ill, and insisted he send them away as soon as possible.²² A week later the court approved the petition of Martha Brenton to employ two Irish children as servants, but only if “the parties are proved before two magistrates to be borne of English parents.”²³ Why then were at least four (and probably many more) Irish servants living near Ipswich in 1654? As noted above, the reasons for this change are not stated, but Massachusetts badly needed labor and colony leaders had recently started to accept Scottish prisoners from the Cromwellian wars of the early 1650s. Perhaps the lack of overt problems with the Scots made Puritan magistrates less fearful of the Irish, especially when they were under the control of high-ranking, trustworthy men such as Samuel Symonds.²⁴

Long terms of service may have been another method by which Puritan leaders hoped to control potentially unruly Irish servants. Welsh and Downing, though young at ages fourteen and sixteen, respectively, were sold for an unusually long time for the colonies, nine years initially, with an extra two added for Welsh. As the Irishmen noted in their defense, even in the plantation colonies few indentures were longer than seven years. Scottish prisoners of war in Massachusetts, by contrast, were sold for four to six years, and judging by the dates of their marriages, most were free within five years.²⁵ As though acknowledging the uncustomary length of the indentures, George Dell defended the extra time imposed on Philip Welsh, writing that “divers English are put out apprentices who at the end of their terme are older than he wilbe.” He argued that the longer

indenture would give Symonds the time “to teach him what he conceive may doe him good,” perhaps meaning the English language as well as a trade, or even Protestant doctrine. Welsh may have quickly shown himself to be unwilling to capitulate to Symonds’s rule, which may account, in part, for his extra two years. Symonds insisted on the additional time before he would “accept of both the said youthes as having good assurance” for their behavior. By 1660 Welsh had been taken to court by Symonds for “stubbornness and other offenses.” In this case Symonds asked to have the sentence suspended until “he again has cause to complain” about Welsh’s behavior.²⁶ In addition Welsh led the 1661 confrontation with Symonds over the length of his indenture.

Nevertheless, when Welsh and Downing complained about their terms of service in 1661, their grievances were heard by the magistrates and townspeople. The constables who came to serve the arrest warrant upon them tried to mediate the dispute, asking Symonds to compromise, since the Irishmen had offered to work for him if he freed them and paid them wages. Symonds refused. When the case came to trial the jury seemed quite willing to give Welsh and Downing the benefit of the doubt by questioning the legality of the contract. The magistrates decided this point of law in favor of Symonds, but the jury had voted to free the men if the contract was not valid. In addition, when the Irishmen decided to appeal the case to the Massachusetts Court of Assistants, they were allowed to do so. They agreed to serve Symonds until the next sitting of the court, while Symonds promised to allow them to attend that meeting. Not only were they allowed to appeal, then, but the men themselves believed that they would get a fair hearing in a higher court.²⁷

Whatever the fears might have been about Irish residents, these servants were accepted by the community. In 1654, when the indenture was first made, Dell defended the extra time for Welsh by stating that “it wilbe tyme soon enough to goe out of service & betake himself to manage a family,” implying that he expected the young man to stay in the area after his indenture. During the 1661 case, Welsh and Downing’s fellow servants testified sympathetically and even the Symonds appeared to give them a reasonable hearing. Mrs. Symonds shushed her sister-in-law when she reproached the men for threatening to leave, saying, “Let them alone; now they are speaking let them speak their owne mindes.”²⁸ And although Symonds signed a complaint against them, Welsh and Downing were not treated harshly (whipping was a common punishment for disobedience), nor were they forced to leave the town for challenging their master and mistress. Fairly quickly, then, Irish residents became recognized members of the community, with rights and responsibilities equal to those of other Europeans of their status.

Once free, the Irish joined with former servants and laborers of English, Scottish, and Channel Islands origin to form communities that provided structure and support for men and women with no kinship networks in the region. In the

early modern world, kinship was one of the primary social networks through which people identified themselves, advanced their interests, and resolved problems. Many degrees of blood and fictive kinship were recognized and each entailed responsibilities toward those who could claim these ties. Since Puritans came to Massachusetts primarily in family groups, kin networks reestablished themselves very quickly and gave stability to the new colony. Irish and Scottish captives obviously had few, if any, family connections in the colony, and so they began to build their own social networks based on marriage, ethnicity and shared experiences of captivity. These networks initially served the same functions as kin networks, and over time became family ties, as former servants married.²⁹

Irish and Scottish servants completed their indentures by the late 1650s and joined with English servants and laborers in networks of lower-status peoples trying to establish themselves in Massachusetts. Inter-marriage occurred frequently among peoples of various nationalities in these networks in part because of a lack of women from Ireland and Scotland. Although many historians see exogamous marriage as evidence of weak ethnic ties, such marriages were unavoidable in British communities and tended to expand community networks.³⁰ These new families settled near each other, working as tenant farmers or general laborers, and through the late 1650s and 1660s began to establish and extend the “social web” that bound early modern society together. Macam Downing and Margaret Sullivan, a Scottish and Irish family in Lynn, for example, sent their daughter Hannah into service with Henry and Mary Leonard, former co-workers from the iron works at Saugus. Families of poor laborers, such as Philip and Hannah Welsh, moved throughout Essex County yet always settled within British communities. These extraregional ties within Massachusetts foreshadowed the better-known development of an Atlantic mercantile community in the last quarter of the century.³¹

The experiences of Philip Welsh once again provides access to these mixed communities in Massachusetts. Welsh probably worked for Samuel Symonds until 1663 and three years later married Hannah Hagget, the daughter of a poor family of English descent in Wenham. The Welshes oscillated between Ipswich, Wenham, and Topsfield for the rest of the 1660s and early 1670s, working for Puritan landowners and artisans. Yet they never strayed far from the mixed community containing Hannah’s parents, her sister Deliverance, and Deliverance’s husband, Alexander Thomson, a Scot who had been captured in the battle of Dunbar (Scotland) in 1651 and sent to Massachusetts to work at the Saugus Iron Works, or from other Irish residents.³²

In 1675 Welsh was drafted into service in Capt. Joseph Gardiner’s company, which attacked the Narragansett Indians during King Philip’s War. Shortly after his service, the Welshes moved to Marblehead, in southern Essex County, where they became tenants of Moses Maverick, a selectman and prosperous landowner.

Though warned out of Marblehead in 1676 because of poverty, the family continued to live there for the next several years, and became incorporated into a British community composed of former Saugus ironworkers, living near and working with John Blaney, an Englishman who had done piecework at Saugus through the 1650s and 1660s, and George Darling, a Scottish captive from Dunbar sent to the iron works. Marblehead was itself a marginal community, composed largely of fishing families because of its good harbor and poor agricultural land, and so was one of several places in Essex County where mixed-ethnicity communities flourished. By 1681 the family had moved back to Ipswich, where they were once again warned out of town yet continued to reside in the area, living near the Thomsons and working with and for local landowners. Through marriage and work, the Welshes remained tied to mixed-ethnicity communities in different parts of the county.³³

Philip Welsh also had connections to a countywide Irish community. Although the circumstances of their removal to Massachusetts were not documented, many of these men appear to have arrived around the same time Welsh did, in the mid-1650s. In 1678 Welsh and three other Irish men, John Ring, Edward Deere, and William Danford, petitioned the Essex County Court to distribute among them the estate of another Irishman, Robert Dorton, who had left the colony, perhaps on a fishing or merchant vessel, and was presumed dead. No record of Dorton exists before this petition. He left Essex County in 1672, giving twenty-five pounds in specie to John Ring with the instructions “that if he came not here within the space of three years, then he willed the said sum with the use thereof to four of his countrymen,” the men who filed the petition. The court approved the distribution of money, allotting ten pounds to Edward Deere and five pounds to the other three men. Ring, Deere, and Danford worked out their indentures in the Ipswich area and settled in the region among their countrymen and other non-Puritan residents.³⁴

John Ring became a farmer near Topsfield, where he worked closely with other Irish residents in the area. He hired Richard (no last name given), also from Ireland, who ran away when charged with fornication with a neighbor’s servant, and allowed William Downing, who arrived on the *Goodfellow* with Philip Welsh, to keep a sow in his barn. Ring lived on the geographical outskirts of Topsfield and Ipswich as part of a smaller grouping of non-Puritan settlers. This neighborhood was near the inn of John Fuller, whose Irish servant Katherine Brummigen later married Luke Wakeline, another newcomer with no known relatives in Essex County, and settled in the area. This small grouping of families resembles the clachans of rural Ireland, wherein small groups of families lived near each other and farmed in common. As with most communal enterprises, whether undertaken by families or unrelated people, members of these communities bore responsibilities to each other. Although the extent of shared

responsibilities in the Topsfield neighborhood is not clear, many non-Puritan communities in coastal Massachusetts exhibited similar characteristics. Also reminiscent of the “farmtouns” in rural Scotland, such communities may indicate a preference among Irish and Scottish residents for smaller, more intimate groupings of people than was common in traditional English-style villages established in Massachusetts.³⁵

Edward Deere became a tenant farmer in Ipswich, living near and associated with his countrymen William Danford and Edward Nealand, which also places him close to the mixed community in Ipswich centered around Philip Welsh’s brother-in-law Alexander Thomson. He also had ties to the larger community, serving as bondsman for Holick Country in 1667, on two juries of inquest in 1669 and 1676, and testifying in other court cases involving his neighbors. Deere can be connected to Daniel Black as well, who, in 1660, used his house to woo Faith Bridges of Topsfield, daughter of Edmond Bridges, a prosperous but cantankerous blacksmith, against her father’s wishes. William Danford helped Black lure Faith to the house.³⁶ Ring and Deere surface in the court records infrequently and apparently lived quiet lives. Both men married, had children, owned land, and probably acquired modest competencies since neither appeared in court for debt, yet they did not leave wills or estate inventories, making it difficult to assess their economic status in the region.

Edward Nealand and William Danford appear in the court records more frequently and, like Welsh, illustrate the connections among non-Puritan residents. Nealand was embedded in the mixed-ethnicity communities of former servants and captives as well as in his neighborhood community. He arrived in Ipswich in the 1650s, apparently indentured to Joseph Medcalfe, from whom he purchased land in the early 1660s. This purchase brought him into a number of land disputes over the years with his neighbors John Kimball and Philip Fowler. The men sued and countersued each other several times between 1668 and 1682 over property boundaries, which was not an unusual occurrence, but Nealand frequently initiated the suits, indicating that he was familiar with the court system and believed that he would get a fair hearing. He won many of his suits, justifying his faith in the courts. Clearly, being Irish did not convey a lesser status in the legal system of Essex County.³⁷

Nealand was also associated with the leading men and church members of the town, such as John Gould, John Warner, and John Whipple. Warner and Whipple also rented and possibly sold land to other non-Puritans around Ipswich, such as Scots Alexander Thomson and Daniel Davison. Nealand appeared as a witness in several cases involving other neighbor’s disputes, and so he was well integrated into traditional community life. He served in the train band and in the militia during King Philip’s War and, in 1684, was appointed a marshal’s deputy.³⁸

Yet as shown above, Nealand was also part of the mixed-ethnicity communities around Ipswich. He kept in close contact with other Irish residents as well as

his Scottish and English neighbors, being deposed along with Alexander Thomson about cattle earmarks in 1674, for example, and was not associated with a Congregational church. According to local legend Nealand purchased a house and land from his countryman Anthony Carroll that sat atop the Topsfield/Ipswich town line. He avoided paying the Topsfield minister's rate by being "in Ipswich" when the constable came to collect it.³⁹

William Danford was not nearly as settled or as well integrated into the neighborhood as Nealand, but he does provide yet another illustration of the extent of mixed-ethnicity communities in Essex County. Danford arrived in Massachusetts in the 1650s, first appearing in the records in 1660. He was a servant, first of William Pritchett, then of Sergeant Jacobs, both of Ipswich. He later rented land from John Whipple, near Scots Alexander Thomson and Daniel Davison, and acquired livestock, reflecting rural Irish patterns of livestock grazing on leased and common lands. In earlier periods in Ireland wealth was counted in cattle, rather than land, which may account in part for the prevalence of livestock grazing among the Irish in Massachusetts. Like his countrymen, then, Danford settled into Essex County through non-Puritan networks and communities.⁴⁰

Yet it was Danford's first appearance in court, in 1660, that shows the extent of mixed-ethnicity communities. In this case he was charged with helping another man, Daniel Black, court Faith Bridges of Topsfield against her father's wishes. Black probably came to Massachusetts as a servant in the middle to late 1650s. He worked as a poor laborer who cut wood and did piecework for the iron works at Rowley in the 1670s, working with former employees of the Saugus Iron Works.⁴¹ In 1660 Black used William Danford as a messenger to bring Bridges secretly to Edward Deere's house, where they spent half an hour alone together. Daniel Black and Faith Bridges later married, again without her father's permission, but did not live easily together. In 1664 they were both sentenced to sit in the stocks, he for abusing her and she for "gad[ding] abroad."⁴² This court case illustrates the mixed nature of non-Puritan communities and their connections to Puritan society.

The witnesses and deponents in the case between Daniel and Faith Black outline a mixed neighborhood of families in Topsfield, which included respectable church families and town leaders, such as the Hows, the Goulds, and the Perkinses, the rather more contentious and numerous Bridges clan, and apparent newcomers, such as Luke and Katherine (Brummigen) Wakeline. The depositions in the case do not break down along church or ethnic lines: The Bridges men (not church members) defended Faith, as did the Wakelines (no known church connection) and John How, a church member. Lining up in defense of Daniel Black were church members William Smith, Zacheus Curtis, and Thomas Dorman, as well as John Danfed (perhaps an incorrect recording of William Danford?).⁴³

The core issue in the case was Faith Black's behavior, stemming from disobedience first to her father and then to her husband rather than any deeper rift in the community. The image that emerges, however, is of a poor man, not a church member, with close ties to non-Puritan laborers and mixed-ethnicity communities yet who is defended by the respectable and churchgoing residents of Topsfield. While providing support and stability for the lower stratum of society, these mixed communities did not exist apart from the larger Puritan-dominated society.

Non-Puritan residents participated widely in their towns, although usually in minor service positions. Edward Nealand served as a marshal's deputy and Edward Deere sat on several juries of inquest into the deaths of his neighbors.⁴⁴ Many more Irish residents served in the local militias, particularly during King Philip's War. Philip Welsh, as noted above, was a member of Joseph Gardiner's company, which undertook the dangerous attack on the Narragansett Indians in the winter of 1675.⁴⁵ Other Irishmen, including Edward Nealand, William Danford, Daniel Musselway, and John Downing, served in the war as well.⁴⁶

Although many Irish residents remained tenant farmers after their terms of service, several became landowners, which may account, in part, for the persistence of the Irish in seventeenth-century Massachusetts. Tenant farming was common in England, Scotland, and Ireland. In New England, however, early settlers were given land in new towns, making this a region of family-run freehold farms. Yet according to historian Daniel Vickers, tenant farming in Massachusetts "flourished in those parts of Essex County where adequate land that was close to the sea made commercial agriculture possible."⁴⁷ He estimates that Ipswich, Newbury, and Rowley, which together accounted for 35 percent of the population of Essex County, held about 68 percent of the county's tenant farmers. Agricultural districts near Salem and Marblehead also held large numbers of tenant farmers. These are areas in Essex County where non-Puritan residents tended to congregate.⁴⁸ Tenancy filled a need to put land under cultivation at the least cost to the property holder and was a step to land ownership for some non-Puritan residents. Many others, however, remained tenant farmers.

Although comparatively few Irish servants and laborers moved into the ranks of landowners, farming good tracts of leased land may have been an improvement over their prospects at home. Irish residents in early Massachusetts most likely came from backgrounds of very small landholdings, tenant farming, or common-land livestock grazing, and landholding could be fluid. In Gaelic regions land was frequently controlled by groups of kin and could be redistributed frequently, depending on local custom. In Anglo-Norman areas tenancy was common, as was leasing smaller tracts of land to subtenants. Thus even a middling- or lower-status laborer or tenant farmer in Massachusetts may have had opportunities not available in the home country.⁴⁹

Typical lease arrangements in coastal areas of Massachusetts can be seen in the 1660 agreement between Richard Dummer and Irishman Daniel Grasier in

Ipswich, which gave Grasier credit for building a house and putting the land under cultivation. The lease agreement between Daniel Grasier and Richard Dummer required more than a simple lease payment, but this may reflect Grasier's poverty and that he rented undeveloped land. Grasier agreed to "build a house, break up land and hold it ten years," but was to be allowed "to hold the ground four years for the fencing and breaking up." Grasier also rented a cow and calf at a lower rate in exchange for his labor on the house. When the term of the lease ended, the livestock and house were to be appraised and if they were worth more than Grasier's payment, Dummer would pay him the difference. If they were worth less, Grasier would have to pay the difference. He later forfeited this agreement and was ordered by the court to pay Dummer for the loss.⁵⁰

Tenancy and land ownership intermingled within the Irish community. Philip and Hannah Welsh were tenants in each of the towns they lived in throughout the county. William Danford rented land close to his former master, Sergeant Jacobs, but apparently never acquired his own farm.⁵¹ Daniel Grasier also remained a tenant through his time in northern Essex County, as did John Morrill. Other men apparently obtained their landholdings directly from their former masters. Edward Nealand purchased seven acres of land in Ipswich from Joseph Medcalf for half a mare and an agreement to work for Medcalf for four pence less than the rate that laborers could usually command. Nealand later acquired an additional two acres of meadow for his livestock from Philip Fowler. Anthony Carrell owned land in Ipswich and Topsfield, part of which he sold to Edward Nealand.⁵² John Ring purchased land in Ipswich, as did Edward Deere, while Katherine (Brummigen) Wakeline and her husband Luke bought land near Topsfield, also from Anthony Carrell.⁵³

Through such networks we see the layers of associations among Massachusetts residents. Settlers of European descent identified themselves within the larger context of Christian and European, as seen by the service of non-Puritans in King Philip's War.⁵⁴ Non-Puritans also identified with "countrymen," whether English, Irish, Scottish, or Jersey Islander. This was a more broadly based identity than in Britain and Ireland, where regional or confessional loyalties predominated. In addition bonds of kinship and proximity gave many non-Puritans roots in Massachusetts. Alexander Thomson and Philip Welsh would have had little in common had they not married sisters. They did, and the peripatetic Philip and Hannah continually returned to the community surrounding the more settled Alexander and Deliverance. Through their participation in town affairs—and the colony's wars—non-Puritans also made statements about their loyalties. They built homes and lives for themselves in their towns and in Massachusetts, further identifying themselves with the colony. These layers of identity intersected and clashed with other identities, over time turning Massachusetts into a British space.

Tensions did exist within Massachusetts. As a part of larger communities, as well as their own subcommunities, non-Puritan residents came into conflict with their Puritan neighbors, and many times ethnic rancor was exposed. The lack of overt violence among peoples of different European nationalities before the overthrow of Governor Edmund Andros and the Dominion of New England in 1689 did not mean that complete harmony prevailed in the towns where non-Puritan settlers lived, although it does explain earlier historians' views that such residents assimilated easily into Puritan society. There were problems between Puritan and non-Puritan settlers, although these issues did not always divide communities clearly along national or religious lines.⁵⁵

In one case in 1669, for instance, Irishman Daniel Musselway was accused of "abusing Henry Short's maid and daughter." The depositions in the case, however, refer only to Musselway's threats against John Ewen, the father of Henry Short's maid. Sarah Short, the wife of Henry, testified that she warned the Ewens of Musselway's anger, since "his being of the Irish blood made me fearfull of some mischeivous intent." Musselway was sentenced "to be whipped, pay a fine, to be imprisoned until he pay it and satisfy his master forty days' work after his time was out." Although it is not known what Musselway did to the young women to deserve such a stiff sentence, apparently his threats against Ewen and his "Irish blood" exacerbated the offenses.⁵⁶

The poverty of many Irish residents also may have played a part in some of these tensions. Philip and Hannah Welsh were warned out of Marblehead and Ipswich, in 1676 and 1681, respectively, yet the family continued to live in both towns for several years afterward.⁵⁷ Warning out was frequently used as a legal tool, providing official notice that a town would not be held responsible for charity toward these indigent residents, although those warned out were not necessarily forced to leave. Irishmen John Morrill and Daniel Grasier were warned out of Ipswich in 1661 but continued to live in the area until Grasier entered into a dispute with large landowner Edward Colburne in 1667. In this case Grasier was accused of threatening Colburne, to do "some scurvy trick to pay him for what he had done about the lease" by burning Colburne's house or killing his cattle. Town leaders could not abide such serious threats to property and life and so finally forced Grasier to leave town.⁵⁸

In other instances English men tried to throw the blame for their crimes on their non-English partners. William Longfellow, for example, when arrested for killing a bullock owned by Joseph Plummer, made a properly pitiful submission to the court, asking forgiveness from God, the magistrates, and his neighbors. Although acknowledging his crime, he also claimed that he "was for a Considerable time frequently & earnestly solicited to join in doeing what I did; & after the fact prevailed with by the same ill meanes not to disclose it," thereby blaming Irishman William Danford, at whose house the butchering of the bullock had occurred. Danford left Ipswich and did not defend himself, but Longfellow was

allotted six pounds of Danford's forfeited bond to pay part of his share of the damages to Joseph Plummer.⁵⁹

Within any group of people disputes will arise. Even relatively homogeneous agricultural villages such as Dedham, which was formed explicitly around the concepts of harmony and Christian love, experienced difficulties maintaining that ideal.⁶⁰ It should not be surprising that in less idealistic towns, such as Salem, founded initially by the Dorchester Company in 1624 to house fishing families, and Ipswich, started as a defensive measure to guard against French incursions, dissension occurred frequently.⁶¹ What is interesting is that among the English, Scots and Irish so few incidents exposing ethnic anxiety came before the court. The structure of British communities mitigated some potential problems. Non-English residents built bonds—communities—among themselves and with non-Puritan English settlers for support while also participating in more traditional town communities with their Puritan neighbors.

The common conception of seventeenth-century Massachusetts, which is the stereotype for "Puritan New England," is one of homogeneity. The image is of English and Puritan cultural and religious xenophobes who tried to keep "strangers" from invading their colony and thus created a new society, the primary "cultural hearth" for the United States. But this image is based upon the jeremiads of second- and third-generation Puritan ministers and nineteenth-century historians' interpretation of the past. In particular the need to create a national identity after 1790 and the later progressive and consensus trends in historiography led to the idealization of the region as a touchstone—homogeneous, unified, and principled (whether one agrees with the principles or not).⁶² This interpretation of New England provided a solid mythical beginning for the United States. When we look at the region more closely, however, we see the same divisions, problems, and issues that beset the earliest settlements in the Chesapeake and the Caribbean. The overriding concern in all of these regions was to create societies where peoples from many parts of Britain and Ireland (as well as from North America, Africa, and continental Europe), of different confessional traditions and competing dynastic loyalties, could learn to live together. The experience of the Irish in Massachusetts illustrates one method of social integration in the early Atlantic World.

Appendix

The following tables of Irish residents in Suffolk and Essex counties were compiled from many records, including those of the Essex County Quarterly Courts, the published volumes of the Boston Town Records, the manuscript "Suffolk Files" at the Massachusetts Archives in Boston, the two published volumes of the Suffolk County Quarterly Courts (by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts), and various town records, vital statistics, and local histories. See my dissertation (note 25) and book (note 31) for a complete bibliography of these sources.

Although the Irish listed below represent less than 1 percent of the population of the towns they lived in, I believe this is only a portion of the actual number of Irish in early Massachusetts. In addition these tables do not include the Massachusetts-born children of Irish residents, who probably identified themselves by the nationality of their parents as well as their colony. The British communities within which these Irish residents were embedded were also larger than indicated by these tables. The Scottish population was considerably larger than the Irish, while the number of Jersey and French residents was slightly larger.

Approximate Population (Europeans only)

Massachusetts in 1654	16,000
Massachusetts in 1690	50,000
Suffolk County in 1690	10,700
Essex County in 1690	7,225
Boston in 1674	4,000
Boston in 1690	6,000
Salem in 1678	1,200
Salem in 1690	2,000
Ipswich in 1690	875
Marblehead in 1690	1,030
Topsfield in 1690	375

Sources: Everts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York, 1932; reprint, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966), 13–22; Richard P. Gildrie, “Salem Society and Politics in the 1680s,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 114, no. 4 (October 1978): 185–206; Edward M. Cook Jr., *The Fathers of the Towns: Leadership and Community Structure in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 194–95.

Essex County Irish Servants and Laborers

NAME	OCCUPATION	ARRIVAL	SPOUSE	RESIDENCE
Brummingen, Katherine	Servant	Before 1658	Luke Wakeline	Topsfield
Carrell, Anthony	Farmer	Before 1661	Unknown	Topsfield, Ipswich
Danford, William	Servant, farmer	Before 1660	Sarah	Ipswich, Newbury?
Daw, Brian	Servant	Before 1677	—	Salem
Deare, Edward	Farmer	Before 1660	Married before 1660	Ipswich
Dorton, Robert	—	Before 1672	—	Ipswich

NAME	OCCUPATION	ARRIVAL	SPOUSE	RESIDENCE
Downing, John	Farmer	Before 1669	Mehitable Braybrook	Ipswich, Chebacco Parish
Downing, William	Servant	1654	—	Ipswich
Grasier, Daniel	Farmer	Before 1661	Married before 1661	Ipswich
King, John	Servant	1654	—	Ipswich
Morrill, John	Farmer	Before 1661	—	Ipswich
Mussellway, Daniel	Servant	Before 1669	—	Newbury
Neiland, Edward	Farmer	Before 1659	Martha	Ipswich
Osbourne, Alexander	Farmer	Before 1670	Sarah Warren Prince	Salem Village
Ring, John	Farmer	Before 1657	Mary	Ipswich
Sullivan, Joane	Servant	Before 1680		Salem
Sullivan, Margaret		Before 1653	Macam Downing	Lynn/ Saugus
Welsh, Philip	Servant, laborer	1654	Hannah Hagget	Ipswich, Topsfield, Marblehead
Michael (no last name given)	Servant	Before 1675	—	—
Richard (no last name given)	Servant	Before 1673	—	Topsfield

Boston Irish Servants and Laborers

NAME	OCCUPATION	ARRIVAL	SPOUSE	RESIDENCE
Bird, Margaret	Servant	Before 1656	Edmond Coussins	Rumney Marsh
Bowhonno, Moer	—	Before 1658	John Bowhonno	Boston
Brasier, Mandeline	—	1681		New London (Boston)
Brene, Margaret	—	Before 1661	John Reylean	Boston
Hay, Mary	Servant	Before 1658	James Webster	Boston
Mahoney, Dorman	Servant, laborer	1639	Dinah, Margaret Norris	Salem, Boston
Morrell, John	—	Before 1659	Lysbell	Boston
Morrell, Lysbell	—	Before 1659	John Morrell	Boston

Boston Irish Servants and Laborers (*continued*)

NAME	OCCUPATION	ARRIVAL	SPOUSE	RESIDENCE
Murphey, Brian	—	Before 1661	Margaret Norris Mahoney	Boston
Norris, Margaret	Servant	1658	D. Mahoney, B. Murphey	Boston
O'Connell, Tege	—	Before 1662	Philipa King	Cambridge
Reylean, John	—	Before 1661	Margaret Brene	Boston
Reilly, James	—	Before 1682	—	Boston

NOTES

1. George F. Dow and Mary G. Thresher, eds., *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*, 9 vols. (Salem: Essex Institute, 1911–75) (hereafter cited as *ECR*), 2:294–97, quotations from 296–97.

2. *ECR* 2:294–97.

3. *Ibid.*, 2:294–97, 310–11.

4. Throughout this chapter the term “non-Puritan” is used to denote involuntary or economic migrants who came to Massachusetts with little connection to the religious ideals of the founding generation. “Puritan” is used to refer to members of the old families, those who settled early in the colony’s history. I do not use these terms explicitly to identify confessional loyalty. The distinction is more about family status than religious affiliation.

5. In the seventeenth century, “stranger” frequently denoted a person who was not known to the inhabitants of a region. The term carried no religious or ethnic significance. New settlers were “strangers” until they became known.

6. Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), esp. chap. 6; David Thomas Konig, *Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts: Essex County, 1629–1692* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 70.

7. Jon Butler, *Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 71.

8. Nicholas Canny, “The Origins of Empire: An Introduction,” in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny, Oxford History of the British Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1–33; Nicholas Canny, “Fashioning ‘British’ Worlds in the Seventeenth Century,” in *Empire, Society and Labor: Essays in Honor of Richard S. Dunn*, ed. Nicholas Canny, Gary B. Nash, Joe Illick, and William Pencak, supplement to *Pennsylvania History* no. 64 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 26–45; and Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. chap. 4. See also Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 20.

9. Neil Kamil, *Fortress of the Soul: Violence, Metaphysics, and Material Life in the Huguenots’ New World, 1517–1751* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). Kamil makes a similar argument for Protestants in France. They submerged themselves

within French society in order to maintain their religious traditions without detection. A specifically Irish ethnic identity did not form in early Massachusetts, but Irish immigrants and their mixed-ethnicity children did incorporate this heritage into an overall sense of themselves, as can be seen in their associations and language. See Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots-Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689–1764* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001) for a slightly later but similar process in Pennsylvania.

10. T. H. Breen, "Creative Adaptations: Peoples and Cultures," in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era*, ed. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 195–232; Darrett Rutman, "The Social Web: A Prospectus for the Study of Early American Community," in *Insights and Parallels: Problems and Issues of American Social History*, ed. William L. O'Neill (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1973), 57.

11. The New English settled in Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth or later and were mainly Protestant. "Old English" families had been in Ireland since the 1300s and had generally remained Catholic, developing alliances with the Gaelic Irish. Karl Bottigheimer, *Ireland and the Irish: A Short History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 99. John Livingstone was the father of Robert Livingstone, who moved to Boston in 1673 before settling in New York and beginning his spectacular mercantile and political career. Livingstone to Winthrop, January 5, 1634/5, *Winthrop Papers* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1943–47), 3:187–88; Cynthia A. Kierner, *Traders and Gentlefolk: The Livingstones of New York, 1675–1790* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 10–12.

12. See, for example, two petitions to the Massachusetts government about Irish servants in Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (Boston: William White, 1853; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1968), 3:291, 3:294. See also Bottigheimer, *Ireland and the Irish*, 102, 116, 120; and Francis J. Bremer, *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 262.

13. Bottigheimer, *Ireland and the Irish*, 123–28.

14. *Ibid.*, 129–31; John W. Blake, "Transportation from Ireland to America, 1653–1660," *Irish Historical Studies* 3 (1942–43): 267–281; Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947; reprint, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965), 162–74.

15. I have identified the men and women discussed in this paper as Irish, either through court and town records or self-identification. I did not use surname analysis or any other statistical method to determine national origin. See the appendix at the end of the paper for those I have identified in Essex and Suffolk counties. I believe that these men and women are only a small part of the actual population of Irish in early Massachusetts.

16. Blake, "Transportation from Ireland to America," 271–73; Smith, *Colonists in Bondage*, 165–67; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 139.

17. *ECR* 2:294–97.

18. *Ibid.*

19. My survey of the extant records shows that Irish residents of early Essex County do not appear as members in any of the local churches. Patrick J. Cornish, "The Cromwellian Regime, 1650–1660," in *A New History of Ireland*, vol. 3, *Early Modern Ireland*,

1534–1691, ed. T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 362–63; *ECR* 2:296.

20. Thomas Lechford, *Notebook Kept by Thomas Lechford, 1638–1641*, Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society (Cambridge: American Antiquarian Society, 1885), 251; John H. Edwards, “Dorman Mahoone Alias Mathews’: An Early Boston Irishman,” *Proceedings of the Bostonian Society* (January 1917): 44–71; *ECR* 1:57.

21. *ECR* 8:222–26.

22. Shurtleff, *Records* 3:291.

23. *Ibid.*, 294.

24. Samuel Symonds established himself in Ipswich in the early 1630s and became one of the leading magistrates and landowners in the region. Symonds’s second wife, Martha, was the sister of Elizabeth, the wife of John Winthrop Jr. Through his first wife, Symonds was also related to the Harlakendens of Essex, England, a powerful Puritan family. David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 279–84.

25. The indenture of Welsh and Downing is the only such document found in an exhaustive search of Massachusetts records. We do not know the terms served by other Irish captives, but many began to appear in the marriage records around the same time as Welsh and Downing. For terms of service and more information about Scottish prisoners, see Marsha L. Hamilton, “As Good Englishmen: ‘Strangers’ in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts” (Ph.D. diss., SUNY–Stony Brook, 2001), chap. 2.

26. *ECR* 2:295; *ECR* 2:197–98. Many youths were indentured until the age of twenty-five. After his term of service, Welsh worked as an agricultural laborer throughout Essex County and never appears in association with any Massachusetts church.

27. *ECR* 2:297; *ECR* 2:310–11. The appeal does not appear in the Court of Assistants records, so the final outcome of the case is not known. Most likely, Welsh and Downing did not have the money to carry on and so the appeal lapsed. They probably served out their remaining years with Symonds.

28. *ECR* 2:297.

29. For Irish networks in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world, see Craig Bailey, “Metropole and Colony: Irish Networks and Patronage in the Eighteenth-Century Empire,” in *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities since 1750*, ed. Enda Delaney and Donald M. MacRaild (London: Routledge, 2007), 18–38.

30. For discussions of exogamous marriage, see, for example, Joyce Goodfriend, *Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City, 1664–1730* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 95–99; and Butler, *Huguenots in America*, 80–82. Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683–1765* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 32–34, 159–60, also discusses exogamous marriage as a method of establishing extensive communities. After 1603 James VI and I had in fact tried to encourage marriages between English and Scots as one way to bind his two kingdoms together. Brian P. Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland and the Union, 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 186–87.

31. For a discussion of mercantile networks, see April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). My book, *Social and Economic Networks in Early Massachusetts: Atlantic*

Connections (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), discusses the networks formed by agricultural servants and laborers as well as merchants in seventeenth-century Massachusetts.

32. *ECR* 3:384; *ECR* 4:294; *ECR* 5:425.

33. *ECR* 6:192; *ECR* 7:360, 336; *ECR* 8:179, 286; *ECR* 9:581; George Madison Bodge, *Soldiers of King Philip's War* (Boston: George Madison Bodge, 1906; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1967), 167. For a discussion of the marginality of early Marblehead, see Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690–1750* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984).

34. *ECR* 2:310; *ECR* 3:384; *ECR* 4:86, 124, 125, 254, 441; *ECR* 3:430, 438; *ECR* 7:37–38.

35. *ECR* 2:22; *ECR* 3:278; *ECR* 4:135; *ECR* 5:158; *ECR* 7:22; *Vital Records of Ipswich, Massachusetts to 1849* (Salem: Essex Institute, 1910–19), 2:370, 659. John Ring and John King, the Irish servant who testified in the 1661 Symonds-Welsh case, may be the same man, although no definite correlation between the two has been found. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 27–28, 152.

36. *ECR* 2:242–43; *ECR* 3:448; *ECR* 4:5–7, 98; *ECR* 5:375; *ECR* 6:234; *ECR* 8:287, 314, 404–5.

37. *ECR* 2:180; *ECR* 3:325–26; *ECR* 8:151–52, 165–66, 404–5.

38. For examples of depositions in disputes not directly related to Nealand, see *ECR* 4:3–4; *ECR* 9:112, 211, 191; for service as marshal's deputy, *ECR* 9:426; for service in the militia, *ECR* 5:31–32; Bodge, *Soldiers of King Philip's War*, 155, 283, 370.

39. *ECR* 5:375; George Francis Dow, *History of Topsfield, Massachusetts* (Topsfield, Mass.: Topsfield Historical Society, 1940), 47.

40. *ECR* 2:242–43; *ECR* 7:89; *ECR* 4:222–23; R. A. Butlin, "Land and People, c. 1600," in Moody et al., *New History of Ireland* 3:148–149; R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London: Penguin, 1988), 19–20; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 12–13.

41. *ECR* 5:130, 227; *ECR* 3:430. Black had extensive ties to non-Puritan networks throughout Essex County and may have been Scottish. See, for example, *ECR* 5:130, 227, 351–55.

42. *ECR* 2:22, 242–43; *ECR* 3:192–94; *ECR* 5:133.

43. *ECR* 3:192–94.

44. *ECR* 9:426; *ECR* 4:98; *ECR* 6:234.

45. Historian Kyle Zelner has argued that Gardner's troop was composed of the "rabble of Essex"—poor men with little status in the county—noting, "One of the strongest indicators of commitment to the community in mid-seventeenth-century Massachusetts was church membership." Although the poverty and lack of social status of the men in this militia group cannot be denied, Zelner uses traditional definitions of community, as a place, and commitment to community, as a function of religious affiliation, which his description of the activities of the unit itself might seem to question. Conscripted or not, these men served in a dangerous campaign to protect their families and communities. Kyle Zelner, "Essex County's Two Militias: The Social Composition of Offensive and Defensive Units during King Philip's War, 1675–1676," *New England Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (December 1999): 577–593, quote on 584.

46. Bodge, *Soldiers*, 155, 167, 283, 370; *ECR* 6:445, 451, 453; Carole Doreski, *Massachusetts Officers and Soldiers in the Seventeenth-Century Conflicts* (Boston: New England

Historic Genealogical Society and the Society of Colonial Wars in Massachusetts, 1982), 67, 75, 174.

47. Daniel Vickers, "Working the Fields in a Developing Economy," in *Work and Labor in Early America*, ed. Stephen Innes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 64.

48. Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630–1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 77–82.

49. Butlin, "Land and People," 153–55; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 18–19.

50. *ECR* 2:274–75; *ECR* 3:430. The terms of Grasier's lease were common in coastal Massachusetts for undeveloped land. See Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen*, 79–81.

51. *Probate Records of Essex County* (Salem: Essex Institute, 1920), 1:368; *ECR* 4:223; *ECR* 7:89.

52. *ECR* 3:325–26; *ECR* 8:151–52; Dow, *History of Topsfield*, 47, 53.

53. Thomas Franklin Waters, *Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Ipswich, Mass.: Ipswich Historical Society, 1905), 385, 739; *ECR* 5:133–34.

54. Even Rhode Islanders, with their long-standing grievances against Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, took the "English" side in the war, much to the confusion of many Native Americans. See Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King: Indians, English and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 108–10.

55. In addition to the cases below, see Daniel and Faith Black above and *ECR* 3:192–94; and Samuel Lummas, *ECR* 9:580–81.

56. *ECR* 4:179–80.

57. *ECR* 6:192; *ECR* 8:186.

58. *ECR* 2:280; *ECR* 3:430–31.

59. *ECR* 8:95–96.

60. Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years*, expanded ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 4–16.

61. John Frederick Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 52–53, 137–38.

62. For critiques of this idealization, see, for example, Joseph Wood, *The New England Village* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Michael Batinski, *Pastkeepers in a Small Place: Five Centuries in Deerfield, Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).

From Ulster to the Carolinas

John Torrans, John Greg, John Poaug,
and Bounty Emigration, 1761–1768

Richard K. MacMaster

“**B**ut of all other countries, none has furnished the province with so many inhabitants as Ireland,” South Carolina’s first historian wrote in 1779. The Reverend Alexander Hewatt observed that the spirit of emigration from “the northern counties of that kingdom” to America was so strong in the 1760s and 1770s as to threaten “almost a total depopulation” of the Irish province of Ulster. “But the bounty allowed new settlers in Carolina proved a great encouragement, and induced numbers of these people . . . to resort to that province,” not least because merchants, for their own reasons, “persuaded the people to embark for Carolina.”¹ The Reverend Charles Woodmason also credited the bounty with stimulating emigration from Ireland. Woodmason, who saw everything as a plot against his own Church of England, complained in his diary that “above 30,000£ Sterling have lately been expended to bring over 5 or 6000 Ignorant, mean, worthless beggarly Irish Presbyterians, the Scum of the Earth, and Refuse of Mankind, and this, solely to balance the Emigrations of People from Virginia, who are all of the Established Church.”²

John Torrans, John Poaug, and John Greg lobbied energetically for a bounty that would encourage Protestant settlers to come to South Carolina, then petitioned successfully for land grants to accommodate them and, with business associates in Ulster, arranged shipping to bring them to Charleston. They were largely responsible for beginning emigration from Ulster to South Carolina and for directing the flow to specific settlements in the Carolina backcountry. Their experience is a clear example of the determining role that merchants on both sides of the Atlantic played in directing the flow of emigration. Far from being passive ticket brokers who accepted a freight in emigrants when it offered, they shaped the process of emigration from beginning to end. To fully understand Ulster emigration we need to understand these transatlantic mercantile networks.

According to his tombstone in the graveyard of the Circular Congregational Church in Charleston, John Torrans Esq. “was born in the County of Derry in the north of Ireland” in 1702 and “settled in this City in the year 1758.”³ He called his farm in St. Andrew’s Parish “Derry,” but nothing more is known of his birthplace or family background or, indeed, of his life before he arrived in America.⁴ Torrans came first to New York as a flax-seed buyer for Londonderry firms and was soon established as a prominent merchant there. His New York business associates included Waddell Cunningham of Greg and Cunningham. Torrans owned the snow *Prince of Wales* with George Folliot and Waddell Cunningham from 1754. The *Prince of Wales* carried wheat, flour, and flax seed to Belfast consigned to Cunningham’s partner Thomas Greg and returned from Belfast with servants, stopping at Madeira for wine on the way. His friendship with Greg and Cunningham survived Torrans’s move to Charleston in 1758 and proved important for both.⁵

With Cunningham and other New York merchants, Torrans owned privateers preying on enemy shipping. Their snow *Prince of Wales*, for instance, was equipped with guns and letters of marque as a privateer. The owners of the brig *Hauke* gave a power of attorney to “John Torrans one of the owners of said Brigg who is now Bound to Charlestown in South Carolina” to handle the ship’s affairs for them, including the potentially lucrative sale of prize ships and their cargoes.⁶ He owned the Charleston privateers *Oliver Cromwell* and *Elisabeth* in partnership with Cunningham as well.⁷

In March 1761 Torrans announced the formation of Torrans, Greg and Poaug.⁸ His new partners were John Greg Junior and John Poaug. John Greg was the older brother of Thomas Greg of Greg and Cunningham. He had been born in 1716, son of a Scottish merchant who settled in Belfast only the year before. John Greg did not stay long in South Carolina, returning home to manage their European business. He left the firm at the end of 1764, when he moved to the West Indian island of Dominica, with a government appointment as commissioner for the sale of land and became a sugar planter.⁹ John Poaug was also from Belfast, but possibly of Scottish birth. He was an active member of the St. Andrew’s Society of Charleston from 1760. His brother Charles Poaug married a Belfast merchant’s daughter and commanded ships in the flax-seed and emigrant trade. On New Year’s Day 1763 John Poaug married Charlotte Wragg, one of the daughters of a prominent South Carolina planter and officeholder. His wife was related to the Duboses and Manigaults and other prominent Charleston mercantile families. Peter Manigault had married one of her sisters and another was the second wife of Benjamin Smith, arguably Charleston’s wealthiest merchant and longtime Speaker of the South Carolina Assembly. Poaug himself served in the assembly in 1768–71 and held a number of other responsible posts.¹⁰

The new partnership imported flour from Philadelphia and kept a wide range of store goods in stock.¹¹ The firm freighted ships “For Liverpool, Bristol,

or Cowes and a Market,” for Philadelphia, for Havana, and for Jamaica.¹² Like other Charleston merchants, Torrans, Greg, and Poaug were also briefly involved in the slave trade.¹³ In other words they carried on the same business as their competitors, shipping rice, indigo, and deerskins, operating a general store, importing the goods they sold, and finding cargoes to fill their correspondents’ ships. Their Irish connections opened the way to a unique venture, bringing settlers from Ireland to South Carolina.

In 1761 the South Carolina Assembly offered to pay four pounds sterling for the passage of each poor Protestant brought to the colony.¹⁴ The bill, passed without opposition, was far from altruistic. Lowcountry planters, already nervous about slave insurrection in a colony where enslaved Africans were in the majority, wanted a barrier between themselves and the Creeks and Cherokee and accepted sweeping changes in South Carolina’s settlement policy without demur. Thus, notes Meriwether, “the Commons abandoned its traditional opposition to immigrants unable to pay their passage, and sought to guard against the dumping of undesirables by demanding certificates of good character.”¹⁵ This change of policy “dramatically altered the flow and composition of new arrivals to the interior,” since these settlers, most of them from Northern Ireland, “came with very little and were exceptionally vulnerable to drought and crop failure.” The law ran for three years and proved so successful, that, after a brief lapse, it was renewed for another three years in January 1765.¹⁶

Charleston merchants John Torrans and John Poaug were eager to take advantage of the bounty. Immediately after the act passed, Poaug applied for a certificate of the bounty that he might transmit to Ireland.¹⁷ The third partner, John Greg, returned to Ireland to set their plan in motion. He arranged to bring out settlers from Belfast, where they had a network of business associates, while the three partners petitioned for land, not for themselves, but for the settlers they would bring to South Carolina. In their petitions to the governor of South Carolina, Torrans, Greg, and Poaug were joined by the Reverend John Baxter, John and David Rea, and James Maghlin. Baxter came to the colony from Ulster in 1737 and served Presbyterian congregations in Charleston and later in the Scots-Irish settlement at Williamsburg Township on the Black River.¹⁸ John Rea of Rea’s Hall, near Savannah in neighboring Georgia, was an important man in the Indian trade, a partner of George Galphin and Lachlan McGillivray. He was later active in bringing emigrants from Ulster to Georgia.¹⁹ The petitioners declared that there were “many in Ireland who would, with proper encouragement, come to the province.”²⁰

In June 1762 the *South Carolina Gazette* reported, “We hear that application has been made to his Excellency our Governor, by petition, for two townships, of 20,000 acres each, to be surveyed and reserved for a number of poor Protestants the petitioners engaged to bring over.”²¹ The petitioners were even allowed to select the sites for the land grants. In December 1762 two townships were laid

out: Boonesborough on 20,500 acres at the head of Long Canes Creek and Londonderry of 22,000 acres on Hard Labor Creek. Their first settlers were already on the high seas by that time. In February 1763 about seventy people arrived from Belfast and settled in Boonesborough.²²

They came on the *Success*, Thomas Morrison commander. The *Success*, a brigantine of eighty-five tons built at Philadelphia in 1760, was registered there in 1761 by its owners, William Caldwell of Londonderry and Samuel Carsan of Philadelphia.²³ John Greg had returned to Belfast in 1762 and advertised for both passengers and servants to sail for Charleston on the *Success*. It was delayed by adverse winds on its anticipated sailing date, but the captain put to sea early in November.²⁴ The ship's troubles were not over. It arrived safely at Charleston in February 1763, after having been captured by a French privateer "and ransomed for 500 pounds Sterling."²⁵

Within less than a week of their arrival, "in order that no time might be lost in settling those persons in either of the two new Townships lately laid out for Foreign Protestants," the Governor's Council heard and granted the petitions for land and the bounty by forty-one adult passengers on the *Success*. They received between one hundred and three hundred acres each, located at Long Cane in Boonesborough Township.²⁶ The settlers from the *Success* moved out to their own lands, with farm implements and seed provided by South Carolina, and Torrains and Poaug collected the bounty. The newcomers were apparently well satisfied, at least until the following winter, when they realized they were on an exposed frontier amid rumors of an Indian war.

Settlements on Long Cane were devastated during the Cherokee War in 1760 with many killed.²⁷ Nearly four years later a party of Creek Indians fell on the Long Cane settlement, on December 24, 1763, killing fourteen settlers. Two days later a number of these settlers with four wagons arrived at Hard Labour, "where they resolved to remain till they heard what was to be done concerning the murders committed by the Creek Indians."²⁸ The *South Carolina Gazette* reported that the "Irish settlers, who arrived here last year, and are seated between Ninety-Six and Long-Canes, having complained, that they were in a most distressful situation, deserted by most of the neighbouring older settlers, and equally destitute of arms and ammunition to defend themselves in case they should be attacked, as of conveniences to remove their families to places of greater security, a supply of arms and ammunition has been sent them."²⁹

The rapid settlement of the Carolina frontier caused friction with the native inhabitants. In little more than ten years Pennsylvanians and Virginians, mainly Scots-Irish, had occupied the North Carolina Piedmont and upper South Carolina. In 1763 alone it was reported that "a great number of settlers from the northward, have come by land into the western parts of this province [South Carolina] during several months past."³⁰ In 1763 Benjamin Franklin estimated that forty

thousand people had gone from Pennsylvania to the Carolinas in the previous few years.³¹ The North Carolina settlements spilled over into South Carolina. In the 1750s settlers from the north took up lands along the Catawba River and upper reaches of the Wateree River between Waxhaw Creek and Cane Creek. Germans pushed on to the forks of the Broad and Saluda rivers, while families from Ulster chose lands farther west, around Fort Ninety Six.³² This movement from older settlements in the middle colonies to North and South Carolina continued and gradually peopled the backcountry. The coming of European emigrants through Charleston hastened the process. The Scots-Irish from Pennsylvania were generally the first on the ground and, with some experience of American soils and growing conditions, “were more favorably located than those who came afterwards, directly from the North of Ireland, through the Port of Charleston.”³³

Their first venture obviously profitable, Torrans, Greg, and Poaug moved on to new efforts. John Greg left Belfast for London, where he arranged for the transit of French Protestant refugees from the region of Bordeaux to South Carolina.³⁴ His brother Thomas Greg of Greg and Cunningham managed the Ulster end of their business. In the summer of 1763 Thomas Greg advertised for passengers and servants for South Carolina on the ship *Falls* of Belfast, normally a flax-seed ship, scheduled to sail in October. Passengers may have been slow to sign on, as late in October Greg added agents in Downpatrick and Dromore, county Down, and Lisburn and Antrim in county Antrim who were authorized to book passages on the *Falls*.³⁵ The ship *Prince of Wales*, owned by Mussenden, Bateson and Company of Belfast, was also advertised for Charleston that summer and consigned to Torrans, Greg, and Poaug. Their only agent was William Beatty of Belfast, making his debut in the emigration business.³⁶ By employing agents to travel to the market towns of Antrim and Down, these shipowners actively sought to divert at least some migrants to South Carolina and thus fill their own ships.

John Rea of Rea’s Hall was one of the petitioners for South Carolina lands for poor Protestants. In 1765 Rea launched his own scheme to bring Ulster settlers to the Georgia backcountry, a plan closely modeled on that of Torrans, Greg, and Poaug, but in 1763 he was looking for ways to profit from the South Carolina scheme. His brother Matthew Rea of Drumbo advertised for servants to go out to his brother on either the *Falls* or the *Prince of Wales*.³⁷ It may not be immediately clear why anyone would agree to go as a servant, when his passage to South Carolina would be free in any case. Emigrants without resources believed they could amass enough capital working for a few years under an indenture to be able to take advantage of the promise of free land in South Carolina. This had been the experience of some indentured servants in Pennsylvania. When the *Falls* arrived at Charleston on January 8, 1764, several passengers looked for this kind of employment, which would also be advantageous for planters:

Sunday last arrived here the ship *Falls*, Captain Henry, in eight weeks from Belfast, with about 90 passengers, natives of the north of Ireland, who are for the present lodged in the new barracks. Several of them are able young men, and ready to enter into the service of any gentlemen who are obliged by law to have one white person to every ten slaves on their plantations; the due observation of which law, we are told, is intended to be enforced, very soon, by upwards of fifty informations.³⁸

More than two-thirds of the eighty-six emigrants on the *Falls* paid their own passage, so they cannot have been as impoverished as some have suggested, but nearly a third had not paid their passage and their four pounds bounty payment went to Torrans, Greg and Poaug. Some, if not all, of them would have been indentured as servants. Since all but fourteen, seven in each category, shared just seven surnames, it is likely that the *Falls* passengers, including the young men servants, had come as extended families. Having a son or daughter in service was not uncommon at home and in America. The council agreed that the acting commissary “should endeavour to get Masters for as many of those people as should want them and do everything in his power to prevent their being cheated or imposed upon.” The others received land as promised.³⁹

The *Prince of Wales* also arrived safely in January 1764 with 170 passengers.⁴⁰ One hundred five passengers on the *Prince of Wales* paid their own passages and received both land warrants and bounty money. Another 47 passengers received land warrants, but their bounty was paid to James Egger, master of the *Prince of Wales*, presumably for the owners, Mussenden, Bateson and Company.⁴¹ Both the *Prince of Wales* and the *Falls* sailed in March for Cowes laden with rice for the Dutch market by Torrans, Greg and Poaug.⁴²

That spring Torrans and Poaug were busy with the French Protestants sent by John Greg. They collected the bounty from the South Carolina treasury, paid freight, and furnished provisions and accommodations until the newcomers were established in their new home. John Greg presented his account with Torrans and Poaug to the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations in London in July 1764.⁴³ Henry Laurens reported in October that the “French Refugees are highly pleased with their New settlement & the Irish are satisfied & I am in hopes of seeing in a few Years a fine Colony rising upon the Spots where they are fixed.”⁴⁴

Governor William Bull enthused about the new settlements in his address to the Governor’s Council in January 1765. The bounty system appeared to be working well for both South Carolina and the transatlantic partnerships involved in transporting foreign Protestants as settlers. Torrans, Greg, and Poaug had arranged for 410 newcomers from Ulster and 131 French Protestants to take up land in the South Carolina backcountry and, after a propitious start, continued their scheme to bring emigrants from Ulster to South Carolina.⁴⁵

Emigrants from Ulster to South Carolina had to formally petition the Governor's Council and present documentation that they were Protestants and of good reputation at home in order to qualify for the cash bounty and a grant of land. In the council chamber, newly arrived settlers sat, hat in hand, waiting for the clerk to record their names, but in most cases Torrains and Poaug would have drawn up the essential documents and presented them, leaving nothing to chance since they would usually collect the bounty themselves. The certificates, signed by the Presbyterian minister and his elders or the Church of Ireland rector and church wardens, were returned to the newcomers to be kept in the family Bible or a notebook and, in most cases, eventually lost. This process resulted nevertheless in official records with more information than we possess about other eighteenth-century Ulster emigrants. Except for those who came ashore at Philadelphia in 1768–72, there are no passenger lists, no record even of the number on board a particular ship. For the South Carolina bounty emigrants, we have enough data to generalize about this particular migration. The composition of emigration from Ulster changed in these years. A writer in the *Belfast News Letter* asserted that until 1767 or 1768 “it was chiefly the meanest of the People that went off, mostly in the Station of Indented Servants,” but in more recent years “the greatest Part of these Emigrants paid their Passage.” He claimed that “most of them [were] people employed in the Linen Manufacture, or Farmers, and of some Property which they turned into Money and carried with them.”⁴⁶

One of the lures of Carolina would seem to be a free passage, but not a few bounty emigrants chose to pay their own way and collect the four pounds on arrival at Charleston. This was true of a majority of the passengers on the *Falls* and on the *Prince of Wales*, for example. Most of the passengers on the *Countess of Donegal* produced “receipts for their Passages,” and only the small number who had not paid had their bounty paid to Torrains and Poaug as agents for the ship owners in Belfast. This began to change in 1767, when, for instance, Torrains and Poaug collected the bounty for all of the passengers on the *Earl of Hillsborough* “in consideration of their passages,” as well as for all those who came on the *Britannia* and the *Nancy*.

Although the South Carolina government paid their passage to America as “poor Protestants,” the emigrants by and large did not lack resources. The demography of the bounty emigration resembled that of emigrants from Ulster who paid their own passage to Philadelphia and of those to seventeenth-century New England. They were more likely to be parents, age thirty-five to forty-five, with several children. They traveled in family groups, sometimes extended families, and many of them were farmers and weavers at home.⁴⁷ This was in contrast to the emigrants from German-speaking lands in the 1760s, who were more commonly unmarried men and women in their upper teens or twenties with few resources beyond their ability to work.⁴⁸

For some ships we can only assume that lists of people with the same surname reflect family groups. Thus of 41 passengers who arrived on the *Success* in 1763, 28 belonged to 8 families and a dozen single men and 1 single woman evidently came on their own.⁴⁹ The Brownes, Campbells, Gambles, and Murdocks, who sailed on the *Falls*, were probably parents and children, but we cannot be certain as the names do not appear as family groupings. But other lists are much more specific. Passengers on the *Countess of Donegal* in 1765 included 48 people arranged in 9 family groups. Fathers' ages ranged from 32 to 49 years, and mothers' ages from 28 to 40 years. There were 14 single men on board from 16 to 24 years old and 3 single women aged 18 to 20 years. The average age for emigrant heads of households was 37 and for single emigrants 20.⁵⁰ The *Earl of Hillsborough* arrived at Charleston with 230 passengers in 1767. There were 43 families on this ship, 196 men, women, and children and just 30 single people. No ages of the men, married or single, survive, but the average age of mothers was 37.5, in a range from 30 to 60 years, and there were 36 children aged 15 years or more, which would suggest the average age of male heads of households was probably over 40.⁵¹ The *Britannia*, which sailed from Newry, brought 34 families, 176 people in all, and 24 single persons to Charleston in 1767. The average age of mothers on this ship was 38.9 years, and there were 42 children in these families who were more than 15 years old, so again these were not young families or recently married couples.⁵² There were 91 passengers on the *Admiral Hawke* in 1768. Since they sailed from Londonderry, they were most likely from the northwestern counties of the province of Ulster, Donegal, Fermanagh, west Tyrone, and Londonderry. Fifteen families were on board, 69 men, women, and children. These families were somewhat younger than on other ships. With the exception of Dougal and Elinor McDougal, aged 56 and 54, with children in their twenties, there were no children older than 14. The average age of male heads of households was 35 and that of married women just 29. The proportion of single people on the *Admiral Hawke*, 22 in all, was higher than on other ships. While most of the single passengers were age 19 to 21, a few were considerably older.⁵³

The picture that emerges from these and other examples is of a family migration. Two-thirds at least came with their families, although young single men and occasionally single women accounted for up to a third of those who qualified for the South Carolina bounty. In some cases the family groups were multigenerational; other times two brothers, their wives, and children traveled together.

To the general picture of emigrants from Ulster to South Carolina as middle-aged parents of large families, we can add that they came in the main from county Down, where there was a concentration of farmer-weavers. Until the last years of the bounty brought other ports into play, Belfast and Newry provided all the shipping for Charleston. In recruiting passengers for South Carolina, Belfast shipowners sent agents to the linen weaving district in county Down and nowhere else. It would be reasonable to assume that most emigrants came from the

linen triangle.⁵⁴ This pattern changed after 1770, when more emigrants came from north Antrim and the northwest counties.

What was the advantage to Torrains and Poaug and to the merchants and shipowners with whom they worked? The Reverend Alexander Hewatt observed that once merchants realized they would receive four pounds sterling for every passenger they brought to Charleston, “from avaricious motives” they “crammed such numbers of them into their ships that they were in danger of being stifled on the passage.”⁵⁵ This was true of the infamous *Nancy*, but is there evidence that merchants and shipowners routinely overloaded their ships bound to Carolina? There was often a discrepancy between the tonnage claimed in an advertisement for freight and passengers and that recorded in the customs house. As R. W. Dickson pointed out, there were good reasons for maximizing the one and minimizing the other. In some cases the difference was trifling, in others considerable. William Caldwell of Londonderry and Samuel Carsan of Philadelphia registered their ship *Admiral Hawke* at 100 tons in 1760 but claimed 250 tons in newspaper advertisements. Whatever the more accurate figure might be, the *Admiral Hawke* carried only 91 passengers so there was no question of overcrowding. Similarly, their brig *Success*, registered at 85 tons in 1761, brought just 70 passengers to Charleston. Other ships are more problematic, especially those sailing in 1767. The Newry ship *Britannia* was advertised at 300 tons, but the Naval Officer at Charleston listed it at 70 tons; since *Britannia* brought 180 passengers on one voyage and 200 on another, one hopes the latter figure was a clerk’s error. The Newry owners of the *Lord Dungannon* advertised its tonnage as 200 in 1767, but the same owners registered it at Philadelphia at just 100 tons. Since 140 passengers crossed on the *Lord Dungannon*, this ship should have been at least 150 tons to accommodate them.⁵⁶

The bounty certainly took the risk out of carrying servants and redemptioners across the ocean and securing buyers for their indentures, but in the first years of the bounty emigration, with fewer passengers, profits must have been small. John Poaug’s argument before the Governor’s Council that passengers had signed over all their bounty rights and consequently Torrains and Poaug were entitled to the twenty shillings appropriated for tools and seed for each settler is an indication that the profit margin was too narrow to permit them to be generous.⁵⁷ Their real profits presumably lay in freighting ships that their owners would not otherwise have sent to Charleston.

The *Belfast News Letter* advertised only one sailing for Charleston in 1764, a return voyage by the *Prince of Wales*.⁵⁸ But 1765 was different. Besides their close ties with Greg and Cunningham, Torrains and Poaug had by this time found new associates in the emigrant trade from Belfast. The firm of Daniel Mussenden and Thomas Bateson, long associated with the flax-seed trade, entered wholeheartedly into the bounty emigration scheme. And William Beatty, who had been their only agent for the *Prince of Wales* on its first voyage to South Carolina,

began promoting immigration to Charleston on ships owned by both firms. William Beatty was in fact agent for all Greg and Cunningham's ships advertised for Charleston.⁵⁹

Gregs and Cunningham sent their ship, the *Countess of Donegal*, to Charleston with passengers in September 1765, and it arrived safely in November. A letter signed by William Crossley in behalf of all on board testified to the captain's kindness to his passengers.⁶⁰ William Crossley headed the list of poor Protestants from "Belfast in Ireland" granted warrants for land "in Boonesborough or Belfast Township" at the meeting of the council in December, so the seventy-three men, women, and children who qualified for the bounty were evidently passengers on the *Countess of Donegal*. Six men and one woman had not paid their passages and Torrns and Poaug received their certificates for the owners of the ship.⁶¹

Mussenden, Bateson and Company also began advertising for passengers, redemptioners, and servants for the *Prince of Wales's* next voyage to Charleston in August 1765, but with repeated postponements of its sailing date, it did not actually put to sea until January 1766.⁶² Beatty advertised for servants to go out on this voyage. He intended for Charleston himself, he said, and promised to "clothe them in a genteel manner, pay their passage, and take care to have them happily settled in that country, where industry is amply rewarded and poverty a stranger."⁶³ In January, "being now ready to depart for South Carolina on board the ship Prince of Wales," he left his son in charge of his Belfast business.⁶⁴ The *Prince of Wales* brought fifty-one settlers who were granted land in Belfast Township by the South Carolina Governor's Council and at least twenty-one others who went into service with a hope of future land grants.⁶⁵ As soon as the ship docked at Charleston in March, Beatty made his way to Torrns and Poaug, where he made his headquarters:

Just arrived in the Ship Prince of Wales, James Egger, Master, William Beatty, Merchant and Linen-Draper, from Belfast, who has to dispose of the Times of 21 Servants, among whom are 9 Women, Sempstresses, Knitters, and two Cooks, some Young Men, among whom are Mechanics, who can write good Hands, and can be recommended to the Purchaser.

He has likewise to sell, a Parcel of Linen, well manufactured, and bleached in the best and safest Manner. Enquire for said Beatty, at Messrs. Torrns, Poaug, & Co. Store, or at his Lodgings at Captain Foskey's, in Church Street.⁶⁶

Torrns and Poaug freighted the *Prince of Wales* with rice for the Rotterdam and Hamburg markets, and it sailed for Cowes on April 19.⁶⁷

Londonderry merchants William Caldwell, Arthur Vance, and Richard Caldwell again sent their ship the *Falls* to Charleston with passengers. The *Falls* arrived from Derry on March 7, 1766, and cleared for Philadelphia the last day

of April.⁶⁸ It also brought “a few Servants from the North of Ireland, who have Certificates of their good Behaviour from their Infancy,” consigned to Torrans and Poaug.⁶⁹

The next ship to convey emigrants from the North of Ireland to South Carolina brought a new player on stage. William Beatty had earlier been associated with Robert Wills, a hardware and general merchant in Belfast, in promoting emigration from Ulster to Philadelphia, traveling to different market towns to sign up passengers.⁷⁰ Wills himself went to Philadelphia in 1764 and was established in a business partnership with Samuel Jackson as importers of linen and hardware.⁷¹ Wills and his partner owned a flax-seed ship of one hundred tons built at Philadelphia in 1765 called the *Belfast Packet*.⁷² Wills advertised it to sail in July for New Castle and Philadelphia.⁷³ Ten days later he invited passengers, redemptioners, and servants to sail for Charleston on the *Belfast Packet*. Matthew Rea of Drumbo was now one of the agents, traveling to the county Down market towns Lisburn, Ballynahinch, and Dromore to explain the South Carolina bounty.⁷⁴ Rea had a successful tour through these parts of county Down, where he and his family were known, and the *Belfast Packet* sailed in August with seventy-eight passengers.⁷⁵ Capt. Thomas Ash brought it safely from Belfast “with between eighty and ninety Irish settlers.”⁷⁶ They made the voyage in seven weeks and all were in good health.⁷⁷ It sailed for Philadelphia in November, in time to load a flax-seed freight.⁷⁸

William Beatty missed recruiting passengers for the *Packet*, as he was still in Charleston. As soon as he returned to Belfast, he set about organizing another shipload of passengers and servants for South Carolina. He announced that “William Beatty of Belfast, just returned from the Province of South Carolina (now the most flourishing Province in America)” would have a vessel ready to sail there and offered a free passage from Belfast to Charleston.⁷⁹ Beatty promised to visit Lurgan in county Armagh and Ballynahinch and Dromore in county Down each week “to treat and settle with such as intend to go to South Carolina in his ship.”⁸⁰ He arranged with Gregs and Cunningham to dispatch their ship the *Earl of Hillsborough* to Charleston. It sailed on Christmas Eve 1766.⁸¹ The *Earl of Hillsborough* reached Charleston on February 19, 1767, “with two hundred and thirty Protestant settlers, encouraged by the large bounty given by this province, and the success their countrymen have met with in their several settlements here.” It sailed for Cowes early in March with a cargo of rice.⁸²

Bounty emigration had not proven an unqualified success. As far as can be gleaned from newspaper reports and the council journal, only some four hundred men, women, and children from Ulster sailed directly to South Carolina in 1765 and 1766. The majority of the bounty emigrants came in family groups and were all directed to Boonesborough or Belfast Township. But a substantial number were indentured servants. If the original vision was for an orderly settlement by groups of foreign Protestants, it had been only partially achieved.

The winter of 1766 was a time of distress in Ireland because of the failure of that year's harvest. Wheat and oats were in short supply and prices were high throughout the kingdom. The partial failure of the next year's potato crop added to the problem, and the shortage of food was most acute in 1767. A letter written from Cork in July gave a grim picture: "We have a greater scarcity of provisions of all sorts this year in Ireland, than has been felt for thirty years past, inasmuch that unless we are supplied from America our poor will be in great danger of suffering dreadfully. Our last crop grately failed, whereas we find you had a very plentiful one; we have got a few cargoes of wheat and flour, but expect more."⁸³ A series of unfavorable seasons and spoiled harvests everywhere in the British Isles led to soaring grain prices, despite an order in council in September 1766 forbidding the export of grain. The rise in prices attracted heavy imports of grain in 1767–68 in England and Ireland.⁸⁴ It also gave a boost to emigration.

Two ships were scheduled to sail for Charleston early in 1767. William Beatty and Matthew Rea of Drumbo were both advertised as agents for the *Prince of Wales*. It returned to Charleston on May 14, when "about 250 Irish Protestants arrived here from Belfast, in order to settle in this province, encouraged by the large bounty granted by the legislature." They were all in good health.⁸⁵

The other ship, the *Nancy*, was to be at the center of a scandal because of gross overcrowding. Robert Wills of Belfast and William Ray of Ballyreany in the Parish of Dundonald, county Down, who owned the *Nancy* with Samuel Jackson of Philadelphia, promised a free passage on their ship.⁸⁶ The *Nancy*'s owners told of two crops in one year in South Carolina and that the authorities there would give a hundred acres free to the head of the family, and fifty more for each child or servant, all free of rent or taxes for ten years. Passengers were to bring a certificate from "the Church Minister and Wardens or the Dissenting Minister and Elders."⁸⁷ William Ray and Capt. Samuel Hannah of the *Nancy* ranged over Ulster, visiting Ballymena, Coleraine, Garvagh, Cookstown, Armagh, Portadown, and Lurgan in February and March to secure passengers.⁸⁸ They were too successful. The owners claimed their vessel was three hundred tons, but the *Nancy* was actually far smaller. It was a new ship, built at Philadelphia and registered there in 1766 by Jackson and Wills at just eighty tons.⁸⁹ By the rule of thumb used at that time, the *Nancy* should have carried eighty "full" (adult) passengers. They signed on nearly three hundred for the voyage. Comparison with another government-assisted scheme in 1764 is instructive. The committee stipulated "two ships of not less than two hundred tons each, to carry the Poor Palatines to South Carolina, and to carry no more than two hundred persons in each ship."⁹⁰

How many passengers were crowded into the ship? There is some discrepancy in contemporary reports. The *Nancy* arrived June 5, 1767, with "about 240 Protestants from the north of Ireland, intending to settle in this province, on the large bounty granted by the legislature."⁹¹ When the South Carolina Governor's

Council met June 22 to allocate land and pay the bounty for the *Nancy's* passengers, they were presented with a list of 237 names, with their ages, apparently arranged in family groups. This list can be broken down to 128 adult passengers age 21 years old or older, 38 youth from 13 to 20 years, and 71 children aged 12 or younger. Torrans and Poaug, on the other hand, claimed bounty on 291 passengers. They evidently included those who died on the high seas or after landing at Charleston to reach this figure.⁹² The final report of the legislative committee gave the figure as 193 adult passengers and 50 children age 12 or younger, a total of 243 altogether.⁹³ Wills and Ray admitted that *Nancy's* passengers numbered “three hundred or thereabouts” when they sailed from Belfast Lough and that “about thirty died” before the ship reached South Carolina.⁹⁴

Wills and Ray entered into a written agreement with the passengers for their diet on the voyage. Full passengers were each promised seven pounds of beef, seven pounds of bread, one pound of butter, and fourteen quarts of water weekly, while “half passengers,” those aged between two and twelve years, were to receive half these amounts.⁹⁵ This was a spartan diet compared to what the Germans on the *Dragon* had to eat on their voyage to South Carolina in 1764. In addition to a daily pound of bread, they each received beef, flour, fruit, pease, fish, butter, cheese, potatoes, pork, rice, and grits every week. Still beef, bread, and water were standard shipboard fare. The problem on the *Nancy* would not be inadequate food, but inadequate space.⁹⁶ Its passengers were in sad condition, suffering from ship fever (typhus). On investigation Governor Charles Greville Montagu concluded that “their Sickness was principally to be attributed to such great Numbers of them being Crowded together.” He had learned that in bunks specially constructed for this voyage “it had not been allowed to Grown Persons above eight Inches room in width, when by contract they should have had eighteen.”⁹⁷

The editor of the *South Carolina Gazette* visited them in their temporary quarters in the Barracks, where he found “many dying, some deprived of their senses, young children lying entirely naked whose parents had expired a few weeks ago.”⁹⁸ Charleston responded with generosity. Nathaniel Russell, a visitor in Charleston, reported that, in addition to money, “Blankets, Linen, Cloaths, & every necessary that the sick and naked stood in need of” was collected in two days.⁹⁹ The editor of the *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal* wrote, “The distressed Situation of the poor Irish Protestant Settlers lately arrived here, having excited the Compassion of several worthy Gentlemen, a Subscription, for their immediate Relief, was set on Foot, and in a very short Time, to the Honour of the Inhabitants of this Province, upwards of Two Hundred Pounds Sterling was raised, which will afford great Assistance to these unhappy People, who are much in Want of the Necessaries of Life. Subscriptions continue to be received by the Church Wardens of both Parishes.”¹⁰⁰ The governor learned that “altho’ every possible care was taken of them” in the vacant military barracks “upwards

of Sixty died.” The rest of the story is told in payments by the Treasurer “for medicine and attendance of Irish Protestants” and “for funeral charges of 76 Irish Protestants and coffins for them.”¹⁰¹

Public opinion rallied to the *Nancy* passengers when they petitioned in July that Captain Hannah “not only nipped them of the provisions allowed them but heaped them one upon the other, to such a degree in their births that it must be absolutely impossible they could survive as appears by the mortality which rages amongst them to this day.” They had been treated with inhumanity, pinched in provisions and water, and so crowded together that it was probably the cause of their sickness. When Torrans and Poaug applied to the treasurer for payment of the bounty as usual, they learned it was withheld by order of the governor. Since sixty of the passengers had already died, Governor Montagu, with consent of the council, stopped payment to Torrans and Poaug as agents for the owners. By grossly overcrowding their ship, the *Nancy*’s owners “endeavoured at the expense of Justice and humanity to convert to a private emolument, those Sums, which were given with the most liberal and laudable views to promote the Public good.” In January 1768 Governor Montagu asked the assembly to concur with his decision. A committee of investigation reported in March that the passengers’ complaints were well founded. The shipowners were “covetous and avaricious” and lacking in “Humanity and Principle of Justice,” and the bounty money was permanently withheld.¹⁰²

Despite this setback, the owners of the *Nancy* tried to use their business associates in Philadelphia to bring pressure on the South Carolina authorities to relent. William Fisher, who was in partnership with John and Hamilton Pringle of Newry in the flax-seed business, presented their case, as he understood it, to Henry Laurens, who knew it too well. “If you knew the whole affair,” Laurens replied, “it would make your humanity shudder.” As a former slave trader, he had witnessed enough horrors to make him quit the trade, “yet I never saw an instance of Cruelty in ten or twelve Years experience in that branch equal to the Cruelty exercised upon these poor Irish, who were the subject of Mr. Jackson’s former application.”¹⁰³ Trying another tack, Robert Wills and William Ray sent a petition to the colonial secretary, the Earl of Hillsborough, asking him to compel the South Carolinians to pay what they owed, but no action was taken on it.¹⁰⁴ When news of the death toll on the *Nancy* reached Ulster, it did little to stem the tide of emigration. But the plight of its passengers undoubtedly turned the South Carolina Assembly against renewing the bounty once it expired.

John Bynan and David Gaussan, merchants in Newry, advertised their ship the *Britannia* for Charleston, offering a free passage to South Carolina.¹⁰⁵ Passengers asked for a delay in sailing to give them “time to dispose of their effects,” but the owners insisted all be on board by May 4 “so the Ship, by the blessing of God, will then proceed on her intended Voyage for the Land of Promise.”¹⁰⁶ The *Britannia* came from Newry on August 23 “with about 180 Protestant settlers, all in

good health.”¹⁰⁷ When Greys and Cunningham announced their brig *Chichester* would sail for Charleston in late summer, they reminded readers of the *Belfast News Letter* that the South Carolina bounty would soon expire, information presumably sent them by Torrains and Poaug: “Greys and Cunningham received Advice Yesterday from Charles Town in South-Carolina, that the Bounty to Passengers ceases the first of January 1768. Those that have agreed to proceed in their Brig Chichester, William Reed, Master, are desired to be ready to go on board the 25th of September next, for she will sail the first Wind after . . . [and] after this Bounty ceases they will not have an Opportunity of a free Passage.”¹⁰⁸

With the bounty payments about to expire, shipowners in Ulster hastened to get their share before it was too late. Caldwell, Vance and Caldwell of Londonderry dispatched their ship *Admiral Hawke* to Charleston. They advertised that “Joseph Burnet, who long resided in South Carolina, and is now in this Neighbourhood [Londonderry], will return in said Vessel, and can give a full and satisfactory Account of that Country to all who please to apply to him.”¹⁰⁹ James McVickar of Larne had been advertising the snow *James and Mary* “for New-York in America,” but announced that it would sail for Charleston in September.¹¹⁰ In August 1767, Belfast merchants John Campbell and Hugh Donaldson, John Ewing, whose trading interests were primarily with Baltimore, and John Greg Sr. announced the sailing of the ship *Earl of Donegall* for Charleston. It was then on a voyage to Norway but arrived in Belfast Lough in time to sail in September.¹¹¹ Late in the season Greys and Cunningham advertised “A Free Passage to Charles-Town in South-Carolina by the Snow *Betty Greg*.” Another group of Belfast merchants, Campbell and Donaldson, James Henderson, and John Greg Sr., dispatched the brig *Lord Dungannon* to Charleston at the same time.¹¹² The two ships, normally part of the flax-seed fleet, sailed together for Charleston early in October.¹¹³

These ships brought a sudden influx of emigrants from Ulster. The *Earl of Donegall* arrived at Charleston on December 10 with “about 250 passengers” from Belfast.¹¹⁴ Torrains and Poaug were paid the bounty due on 266 passengers. The brigantine *Chichester* from Belfast and the ship *Admiral Hawke* from Londonderry both landed passengers in the last days of December.¹¹⁵ Torrains and Poaug collected the bounty payments for 146 passengers on the *Chichester* and 71 who came on the *Admiral Hawke*.¹¹⁶ The snow *James and Mary* from Larne arrived early in January 1768, bringing “about 150 more passengers from the North of Ireland to settle in this province.”¹¹⁷ Torrains and Poaug received bounty money for 186 passengers on this ship.

The *Lord Dungannon* and *Betty Greg* reached Charleston in February, the *Lord Dungannon* bringing 141 passengers and the *Betty Greg* 145.¹¹⁸ Torrains and Poaug claimed the bounty for both ships. The editor of one of the three Charleston papers observed: “About 300 settlers arrived here last from Ireland, encouraged by the large bounty given by this province. These it is thought, will

be the last that receive any benefit from the present act, which expires with the next session of assembly.”¹¹⁹ The two ships arrived while the South Carolina Assembly was concerned with the unfortunates who came on the *Nancy*. On February 23 the assembly ordered the treasurer to report on the state of the fund appropriated for new settlers coming into the Province. At the same time they repealed the General Duty Act, which had provided funding for the bounty paid the owners for transporting foreign Protestants.¹²⁰ The treasurer subsequently reported a shortfall, with insufficient funds to meet the needs of poor Protestants lately arrived on the *Lord Dungannon* and *Betty Greg* if the claims of *Nancy*’s owners were also paid. The next day they voted to pay Torrains and Poaug the bounty due them for the two recent arrivals and to deny all claims for the *Nancy*. This was the final payment under the bounty emigration scheme.¹²¹

Without the bounty to guarantee a profitable voyage, Ulster shipowners had little reason to dispatch ships to their friends in Charleston, Torrains and Poaug. And like all good things, the bounty came to an end: “By the Prorogation, this Day, of the General Assembly, the large Bounty, granted by the Province to Protestants coming to settle here, ceases and determines.”¹²²

Emigration from Ulster to South Carolina did not end, although the stream was temporarily diverted to Georgia, where George Galphin, John Rea, and other promoters had secured similar advantages for newcomers. Matthew Rea and William Beatty acted as their agents in Ulster.¹²³ The sloop *Two Arthurs* brought sixty passengers from Wexford in September and Capt. Conolly McCausland brought the ship *Walworth* from Londonderry to Charleston in October.¹²⁴ Since there was no bounty to be paid, the number of passengers is not recorded. Passengers on the *Walworth* petitioned for aid as “several dyed since their arrival here, and others continue sick and suffering.” Their petition was referred to a committee of the assembly, including John Poaug, who was now a member of the Commons House. But other momentous events took precedence. The South Carolina Assembly considered an invitation from the Massachusetts and Virginia legislatures to join them in opposition to the Townshend Revenue Acts. Poaug was appointed to another committee instructed to formulate a response. They endorsed the two letters and instructed the colony’s London agent to lobby for repeal of the acts. On learning this, Governor Montagu dissolved the assembly, but not before they voted two hundred pounds to provide the poor Protestants lately arrived “with Wagons and necessaries to transport them to their Settlements in the back part of this province.”¹²⁵ The *Walworth* sailed from Charleston at the end of November “for Cowes and a Market,” freighted with rice by Torrains and Poaug.¹²⁶

It was more than a year before other Ulster people landed in Charleston and they came by way of Savannah: “Yesterday 35 Passengers from the North of Ireland, arrived here from Georgia, to settle in this Province. They came out with that Intent in the ship Hopewell, Captain Ashe, arrived at Savannah.”¹²⁷ But this

was only a temporary decline. After 1770 the emigrant trade moved again into high gear, and South Carolina was the destination of many who left Ulster. “Before and after the American Revolution, the reply to questions, ‘Where are you going?’ addressed to movers on the road from Charleston, would be, ‘to Chester,’ or, ‘to Long Canes.’ Some passed through this province to the Up-Country of North Carolina.”¹²⁸ That this was so resulted in no small part from the vision of John Torrans and John Poaug, who saw a way to make a trade in emigrants profitable for Ulster shipowners and used their own networks in South Carolina, New York, Belfast, Londonderry, and London to make it happen. Their work with bounty emigration in 1761–68 set in motion a movement of people from Ireland to South Carolina that continued into the next century.

The firm of Torrans and Poaug was reorganized in 1771 to meet a cash-flow problem, doubtless the result of nonimportation agreements.¹²⁹ They continued to be active in the shipping business, with emigrant ships again consigned to them. In 1773 the *Belfast News Letter* published a testimonial by John Poaug, merchant of Charleston, to Conolly McCausland of the *Walworth* and James Ramage of the *Hellena* who landed passengers in good health and spirits.¹³⁰ Both John Torrans and John Poaug died in Charleston in 1780.

The South Carolina bounty emigration did not enjoy a good reputation, thanks in part to the *Nancy* outrage. The Reverend Alexander Hewatt noted that the “merchants finding this bounty equivalent to the expenses of the passage, from avaricious motives persuaded the people to embark for Carolina, and often crammed such numbers of them into their ships that they were in danger of being stifled during the passage, and sometimes were landed in such a starved and sickly condition, that many of them died before they left Charlestown.”¹³¹

When the South Carolina Assembly assessed the bounty scheme in 1768, they found many other abuses, notably the routine payment to ship owners for the passage of indentured servants. In this case they agreed that the “good intentions of the Act [were] frustrated, the Province imposed upon and abused, and the poor Stranger who ought to have been immediately released and set at Liberty on the terms of the Act deprived of the benefits intended him by the Law, and subjected to a Servitude which it was the purpose of the legislature to prevent.”¹³² Since indentured servants whose passage was paid under the bounty act were openly advertised and sold in Charleston, it is not clear why it took members of the assembly so long to uncover this particular abuse.

Historians have looked beyond these humanitarian concerns for the long-range impact of the bounty emigration. Max Edelson noted that, although “planters questioned whether a ‘Backwoods’ peopled by ‘Northern stragglers and Irish Emigrants’ would ever become a prosperous, stable society,” they recognized its potential by 1770 as “an adjunct to the Lowcountry’s expanding rice regime as it developed commercial farming.” Advertisements for backcountry lands surged. Charleston merchants helped organize the settlement of the backcountry and the

provisions market, “financed stores that sold tools and supplies, and helped establish the city of Camden as a hub for immigration and exchange.”¹³³ Other historians have recognized the rapid expansion of trade and market exchange in the backcountry.¹³⁴ To what extent did the Charleston merchants who directly and indirectly facilitated emigration from Ireland contribute to this process? Did their commercial networks that reached to Belfast, Dublin, and London link the South Carolina backcountry with the wider Atlantic World?

How did the waves of newcomers from Ulster fit into this vibrant development? They certainly contributed to the peopling of the backcountry. We know the number of those who landed at Charleston and qualified for the bounty, but we do not always know where they finally settled, so it is more difficult to assess their impact. Were they numerically insignificant compared to their cousins migrating from Pennsylvania and Virginia? Did they readily assimilate to the Scots-Irish communities taking shape on the frontiers? George Howe repeated the tradition that the “Pennsylvania Irish,” first on the ground and more familiar with American agriculture, acquired all the best land, so that “other families, direct from Ireland,” were handicapped despite “receiving their headright of one hundred acres, and supplied with the most indispensable implements of agriculture by the Colonial Government.”¹³⁵ Peter Moore has studied these questions in the context of the Waxhaws settlement, concluding that “unlike the first wave of arrivals from Pennsylvania and Virginia,” these new settlers “came with very little” and took up land remote from the heart of the settlement “with poorer soils, more limited water access, and a hillier terrain.” These new immigrants “could not hope to move beyond their meager subsistence or reach the levels of competency achieved by their neighbors.”¹³⁶ Did the bounty emigration create a rural underclass? We need more local studies of backcountry communities for a definitive answer.

Never an unqualified success, the bounty emigration of 1761–68 nonetheless forged a link between Ulster and South Carolina that began a movement of people from Ireland to the American South and helped shape both societies.

NOTES

I am indebted to Professor Anne Torrans of Louisiana State University at Shreveport and Professor Thomas M. Truxes of Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, who generously shared their research on John Torrans with me.

1. Alexander Hewatt, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia* (London, 1779) in *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, ed. Bartholomew Rivers Carroll (New York: Harper, 1836; reprint, New York: AMS Press 1973), 1:488.

2. Journal, September 3, 1768, in Richard J. Hooker, ed., *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 60.

3. In 1614, as part of the Plantation of Ulster, investors from London laid out a new town near the mouth of the River Foyle at Derry and called it Londonderry. They also renamed adjacent county Coleraine as county Londonderry. Both city and county have been commonly known ever since as Derry.

4. Charleston County Wills, 19:27, 20A:140, South Carolina Archives and History Center, Columbia (hereafter cited as SCAHC). While in New York, Torrans married into a family of New York lawyers, Presbyterian in religion and Whig in politics, allied with the powerful Livingston clan. His much younger wife, Elizabeth Blanche Smith, was the daughter of Judge William Smith Sr., attorney general and member of the Governor's Council and the sister of Chief Justice William Smith Jr. Maturin L. Delafield, "William Smith," *Magazine of American History* 6 (1881): 264–82.

5. *Belfast News Letter*, February 10, February 27, August 29, 1758. Philip L. White, ed., *The Beekman Mercantile Papers 1746–1799* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1956), 1:292–94, 298; Thomas M. Truxes, ed., *Letterbook of Greg and Cunningham 1756–1757, Merchants of New York and Belfast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 32–34, 115n., 125.

6. Charleston County, Miscellaneous Records, Book 86-8, 53–54, SCAHC.

7. *South Carolina Gazette*, December 15, 1758; R. Nicholas Olsberg, "Ship Registers in the South Carolina Archives 1734–1780," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 74 (October 1973): 219.

8. *Beekman Mercantile Papers* 1:371, 379.

9. *Burke's Landed Gentry*, 1972, 3:400.

10. *South Carolina Gazette*, January 8, 1763; Walter B. Edgar, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of the South Carolina House of Representatives* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 2:529–30; Henry A. M. Smith, "Wragg of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 19 (January 1918): 122–23; Edward Pearson, "Planters Full of Money," in *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society*, ed. Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 303.

11. *South Carolina Gazette*, April 18, April 25, 1761, January 15, 1763, December 3, 1764.

12. *South Carolina Gazette*, December 5, 1761, October 2, November 20, 1762, March 5, September 10, 1763.

13. *South Carolina Gazette*, August 25, October 29, 1764; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 138–39.

14. *South Carolina Gazette*, August 1, 1761.

15. Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1729–1765* (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 241–43.

16. Peter N. Moore, *World of Toil and Strife: Community Transformation in Backcountry South Carolina, 1750–1805* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 51–54.

17. Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 250.

18. George Howe, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: Duffie and Chapman, 1870), 1:204, 255. The South Carolina Governor's Council

allowed him five hundred acres and another six hundred acres “between Broad and Savannah Rivers” when the first bounty settlers received their land in 1763. Janie Revill, *A Compilation of the Original Lists of Protestant Immigrants to South Carolina, 1763–1773* (Columbia, S.C.: State Company, 1939; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1968), 6.

19. E. R. R. Green, “Queensborough Township: Scotch-Irish Emigration and the Expansion of Georgia, 1763–1776,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 17 (April 1960): 183–99; Michael P. Morris, “Profits and Philanthropy: The Ulster Immigration Schemes of George Galphin and John Rea,” *Journal of Scotch-Irish Studies* 1 (2002): 1–11.

20. Meriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina*, 250.

21. *South Carolina Gazette*, June 19, 1762.

22. Boonesborough, also known as Belfast Township, was named for Governor Thomas Boone. Both townships are in Abbeville and Greenwood counties, South Carolina. Meriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina*, 250–52; Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 6.

23. “Ship Registers of the Port of Philadelphia,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 27 (1903): 106.

24. *Belfast News Letter*, August 17, October 26, 1762.

25. *South Carolina Gazette*, February 19, 1763.

26. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 5–6.

27. William L. McDowell, ed., *Documents Relating to Indian Affairs 1754–1765* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives, 1970), 495.

28. *South Carolina Gazette*, January 14, 1764; *Pennsylvania Journal*, February 2, 1764; *Belfast News Letter*, March 20, 1764.

29. *South Carolina Gazette*, January 21, 1764.

30. [Edmund and William Burke], *Account of the European Settlements in America* (London, 1757), 209–10; *Pennsylvania Journal*, February 2, 1764.

31. Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 54.

32. Meriwether, *Expansion of South Carolina*, 136–39; Moore, *World of Toil and Strife*, 19, 21–23.

33. George Howe, *The Scotch-Irish and Their First Settlements on the Tyger River and Other Neighboring Precincts in South Carolina* (Columbia: Southern Guardian Press, 1861), 16.

34. *Belfast News Letter*, June 29, 1764; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 114.

35. The Londonderry firm of Caldwell, Vance and Caldwell owned the ship. *Belfast News Letter*, August 12, September 2, October 7, October 21, 1763.

36. *Belfast News Letter*, August 12, 1763.

37. *Belfast News Letter*, October 7, 1763. On Matthew Rea see R. J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America 1718–1775* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966; reprint, Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1996), 164–73.

38. *South Carolina Gazette*, January 14, 1764.

39. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 7–9.

40. *Belfast News Letter*, March 27, 1764.

41. The *Prince of Wales* is called the *Prince Henry* in the Governor's Council minutes. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 9–13.
42. *South Carolina Gazette*, March 10, March 17, 1764.
43. "On Thursday last arrived here from Plymouth, in the ship Friendship, 131 French Protestants, from the country about Bourdeaux and Montpelior." *South Carolina Gazette*, April 18, 1764. *Belfast News Letter*, June 29, 1764; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 114–17.
44. Philip M. Hamer, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968–80), 4:464.
45. A. S. Salley, ed., *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina January 8, 1765–August 9, 1765* (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1949), 4–6.
46. *Belfast News Letter*, April 6, 1773.
47. David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 66–67.
48. Marianne Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 47–49, 187.
49. The remaining twenty-nine passengers were children. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 5–6.
50. *Ibid.*, 46–48.
51. *Ibid.*, 67–70.
52. *Ibid.*, 81–84.
53. *Ibid.*, 97–99.
54. *Belfast News Letter*, October 21, 1763, June 27, July 8, October 14, 1766.
55. As Presbyterian pastor in Charleston 1763–1775, he was in a position to know the condition of newly arrived Irish settlers. Hewatt, *Historical Account* 1:488.
56. "Ship Registers," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 27 (1903): 101, 106, 491; Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 231–33.
57. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 49–50.
58. *Belfast News Letter*, March 27, 1764; *South Carolina Gazette*, January 7, 1765.
59. Interest in South Carolina was not as great as Greg and Cunningham expected. They advertised the *Pitt*, scheduled to sail from Larne in August, and the *Prosperity*, sailing in August from Belfast for Charleston. The *Pitt* normally sailed with passengers for New York or Philadelphia and carried flaxseed from New York. At the last minute the owners changed its destination to New York. The *Prosperity* continued to be advertised for South Carolina through September, when its sailing was postponed and the *Countess of Donegall* replaced it. *Belfast News Letter*, June 11, July 12, July 23, August 2, August 20, September 10, September 13, 1765.
60. When Thomas Greg's son, John Greg, joined the firm in 1765, it became Gregs and Cunningham. *Belfast News Letter*, September 27, 1765, February 18, 1766.
61. These passengers arrived at a time when the *South Carolina Gazette* suspended publication rather than conform with the Stamp Act, so there is no newspaper report. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 46–48.

62. *Belfast News Letter*, August 30, October 29, November 26, December 10, 1765, January 3, 21, 1766.
63. *Belfast News Letter*, October 29, 1765.
64. *Belfast News Letter*, January 17, 1766.
65. This number may include passengers on the *Falls*. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 118; Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 58–59.
66. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, April 1, 1766.
67. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, April 22, 1766.
68. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 18, 1766; *South Carolina Gazette*, June 2, 1766.
69. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, May 6, 1766.
70. *Belfast News Letter*, February 19, March 5, March 15, 1765.
71. *Pennsylvania Journal*, September 27, November 1, 1764.
72. “Ship Registers,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 27 (1903): 366, 492.
73. *Belfast News Letter*, June 17, 1766.
74. *Belfast News Letter*, June 27, July 8, 1766.
75. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 168.
76. *South Carolina Gazette*, October 20, 1766; *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, October 24, 1766. There is a puzzling statement in the Council Journal about assigning the bounty to “the owners of the ship Belfast Packet which they came over in” as they had not paid their own passages, since it seems to refer to a list of emigrants from Germany. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 64.
77. *Belfast News Letter*, February 9, 1767.
78. *South Carolina Gazette*, November 3, 1766; *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, November 7, 1766. The flax-seed export from Philadelphia and New York was the staple of Irish American commerce; nearly all direct trade between Ireland and the North American mainland bore some relationship to flax seed. Thomas M. Truxes, *Irish-American Trade 1660–1783* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 39.
79. *Belfast News Letter*, October 7, 1766.
80. *Belfast News Letter*, October 14, 1766.
81. *Belfast News Letter*, November 7, November 25, December 30, 1766.
82. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, February 20, 1767; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 17, 1767.
83. *Pennsylvania Journal*, October 29, 1767.
84. J. D. Chambers and J. E. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750–1880* (London: Batsford, 1966), 111.
85. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, May 15, 1767.
86. *Belfast News Letter*, December 30, 1766, January 3, 1767.
87. *Belfast News Letter*, February 6, 1767.
88. *Belfast News Letter*, February 20, 1767.
89. “Ship Registers,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 27 (1903): 491.
90. Robert A. Selig, “Emigration, Fraud, Humanitarianism, and the Founding of Londonderry, South Carolina, 1763–1765,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23 (1989): 17.

91. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, June 5, 1767.
92. Council Journal 33:178–84, SCAHC; Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 74–80.
93. South Carolina Assembly Journal, March 2, 1768, 545, SCAHC.
94. CO5/114/111–112d, National Archives of the United Kingdom, London, microfilm in Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as NAUK).
95. Ibid.
96. Selig, “Emigration,” 18–19.
97. South Carolina Assembly Journal, January 20, 1768, 500, SCAHC.
98. *South Carolina Gazette*, June 29, 1767.
99. Warren B. Smith, *White Servitude in Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1961), 42.
100. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, June 30, 1767.
101. South Carolina Assembly Journal, January 20, 1768, 500, 506, SCAHC.
102. South Carolina Assembly Journal, January 21, March 2, 1768, 508, 517, and 543, SCAHC; Hamer, *Papers of Henry Laurens* 5:505; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 118–19. For a more extended account of this incident and its aftermath, see Richard K. MacMaster, “The Voyage of the Nancy 1767,” *Familia* 19 (2003): 64–73.
103. Hamer, *Papers of Henry Laurens* 6:148–51.
104. CO5/114/111–112d, NAUK.
105. *Belfast News Letter*, February 24, March 3, 1767.
106. *Belfast News Letter*, April 14, 1767.
107. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, August 28, 1767.
108. *Belfast News Letter*, July 28, August 7, 1767.
109. *Belfast News Letter*, August 18, 1767.
110. *Belfast News Letter*, July 28, August 14, September 4, 1767.
111. *Belfast News Letter*, August 14, September 4, 1767.
112. *Belfast News Letter*, September 8, 1767.
113. *Belfast News Letter*, October 6, 1767.
114. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, December 11, 1767.
115. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, December 29, 1767; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, January 1, 1768.
116. There are ninety-one names on the list of passengers on the *Admiral Hawke* who qualified for land as foreign Protestants. Revill, *Compilation of the Original Lists*, 93–99.
117. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, January 4, January 5, January 12, 1768.
118. *South Carolina Gazette*, February 16, 1768.
119. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, February 12, 1768.
120. South Carolina Assembly Journal, February 23, 1768, 528, SCAHC.
121. South Carolina Assembly Journal, March 2–3, 1768, 545–48, SCAHC.
122. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, July 8, 1768.
123. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, 57; Green, “Queensborough Township,” 189–93.
124. Since there was now no bounty money, merchant Newman Swallow advertised “a few Irish Families, Passengers on the *Two Arthurs*, to be indented for their passage money.” *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, September 23, November 4, 1768; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, October 11, November 1, 1768.

125. South Carolina Assembly Journal, November 18, 1768, 16, 19–22, SCAHC. *Belfast News Letter*, May 27, 1768; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, November 25, 1768.
126. *South Carolina Gazette*, December 1, 1768.
127. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, December 28, 1769.
128. Howe, *Scotch-Irish*, 21.
129. *South Carolina Gazette*, October 24, 1771.
130. *Belfast News Letter*, November 26, 1773.
131. Hewatt, *Historical Account* 1:488.
132. South Carolina Assembly Journal, March 2, 1768, 545, SCAHC.
133. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 256–59.
134. Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 52, 238; Rachel M. Klein, *Unification of a Slave Society: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 15–36.
135. Howe, *Scotch-Irish*, 16.
136. Moore, *World of Toil and Strife*, 51–53.

“The Unacclimated Stranger Should Be Positively Prohibited from Joining the Party”

Irish Immigrants, Black Laborers, and
Yellow Fever on Charleston’s Waterfront

Michael D. Thompson

Irishmen labored on waterfronts throughout the Atlantic World in the nineteenth century. Although the work these Irish waterfront laborers performed was, more or less, similar regardless of the geographical location of the port, those who worked upon the wharves and transported goods to and from the waterfronts of port cities in the antebellum American South encountered experiences unlike those faced by their fellow countrymen elsewhere in the Atlantic World, including in the northern United States. Different, too, was the impact these Irishmen had upon southern ports. A sizable influx of working-class Irish immigrants during the middle decades of the nineteenth century shifted the racial and ethnic composition of Charleston’s laboring population and precipitated a vigorous and at times violent struggle between the city’s black and white waterfront and transportation workers. This willingness to work shoulder-to-shoulder with black men and to perform “nigger work” in the slave South enabled waterfront employers to exercise a preference for white laborers. Irish dock workers thus contributed to the significant decline in Charleston’s slave population during the 1850s and bolstered white workers’ calls for the enforcement of laws and ordinances against slaves hiring their own time.

But the Irish impact in antebellum Charleston was not confined to diversifying the waterfront labor force or complicating the city’s race relations. Irishmen also influenced public health debates and policies. This chapter will consider how yellow fever epidemics and nineteenth-century theories of epidemiology, maritime quarantine, and race-based disease acclimation influenced hiring practices on Charleston’s waterfront. Though Irishmen supplanted many free blacks and

slaves on the city's docks and drays during the 1850s, the decade's deadly yellow fever epidemics prevented blacks from losing even more waterfront jobs. Already stigmatized for performing work traditionally dominated by blacks, immigrant Irish laborers were branded by local medical authorities as "unacclimated" to lowcountry diseases, thus giving "acclimated" native blacks an advantage over their Irish competitors. Despite public pressure and municipal regulations aimed at preventing unacclimated immigrants from finding waterfront work during the fever season, some susceptible Irishmen were hired, facilitating the unprecedented propagation of the devastating disease from the docks into the heart of the city.

While visiting Charleston in 1857, Englishman James Stirling noted, "Few Irish, comparatively, come to the South. There is a natural aversion in the free labourer to put himself on a footing with a slave. Free labour, therefore, is scarce and dear in the Slave States."¹ Correspondingly, one scholar of labor in Charleston has argued that black laborers, mostly slaves, performed the arduous work of loading and unloading ships in the antebellum South and, furthermore, that white laborers "invariably" eschewed such exhausting and crude work as "an anathema and demeaning."² Despite such claims, by the mid-nineteenth century, Charleston's waterfront and transportation work force—which included stevedores, wharf hands, porters, draymen, and carters—was not cornered by one race or invariably avoided by another.³

Earlier in the century, however, common dock labor was conducted predominantly by slaves and free blacks, and white Charlestonians frequently placed notices in the city's newspapers regarding their slave property working on the waterfront.⁴ In April 1807 Peter Bee offered a ten-dollar reward for the return of Sancho, a twenty-eight-year-old runaway slave who "had on when he went away . . . his Badge as a Porter No. 20, by which means he gets work about Gadsden's Wharf, as he was seen there last Monday."⁵ A few months later John Smith warned readers "not to employ my two fellows, ABRAM and JACOB—the first a carpenter, the other a stevadore [*sic*]," both of whom had been hiring themselves out without Smith's permission.⁶ The transport of goods to and from the waterfront through Charleston's streets was also principally "Negro work." Some cart owners seeking to hire drivers in late colonial Charleston noted that "there is but very few white people who will follow that Employment in this Town."⁷ In 1799 Archibald Calder announced the absconding of his slave Cyrus, who was "well known upon all the wharves in Charleston, as a drayman."⁸ Moreover all seven draymen and carters listed in the city's 1822 directory of white and free black residents were free blacks, and all eight listed in the 1835–36 directory were free blacks.⁹

But during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Charleston's waterfront labor force underwent significant change. Between 1830 and 1860 nearly 5

million foreign immigrants poured into the United States, most of whom originated from Western and Central Europe, especially Ireland and Germany.¹⁰ By the eve of the Civil War, approximately 1.6 million Irish immigrants resided in the United States.¹¹ The vast majority of these immigrants landed in the North, and finding work and relatives in large cities such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, most remained north of the Mason-Dixon line. But Irish immigrants did make their way to southern cities, including Charleston, in search of employment and opportunities for upward social mobility. Though some Irish immigrants migrated seasonally between the North and the South, many others remained in the South permanently.¹² Thomas Carrol, for example, arrived in New York City as an eight-year-old child in September 1847 and by 1860 was working on Charleston's waterfront as a stevedore—in late antebellum Charleston a term employed to describe those men who hired and supervised common dock laborers. In 1891 the *Charleston Mercury* referred to Carrol as "a well known stevedore," and he still lived in Charleston in 1900 at the age of sixty-two.¹³ And William Doran, born in Ireland in 1809 or 1810 but residing in South Carolina by 1849, was working as a rigger in 1855 and then as a stevedore in 1860. Despite losing an arm during the Union bombardment of Charleston, Doran continued to work as a stevedore after the Civil War until his death in 1880.¹⁴ All told there were approximately 2,359 Irish immigrants living in Charleston in 1850 and 3,263 by 1860.¹⁵

When these Irish immigrants arrived in Charleston, they inevitably came into competition with the city's free blacks and slaves for waterfront and transportation labor.¹⁶ Stigmatized as "nigger work," most native white South Carolinians and southerners undeniably shunned such fields of employment.¹⁷ But whether by choice or necessity, many Irish immigrants found waterfront work to be acceptable, and it was on the city's docks and drays that Irish immigrants successfully challenged Charleston's free black workers.¹⁸ Considered unskilled common labor, most of Charleston's free dock workers were listed among all of the other "laborers" on the 1850 and 1860 United States census schedules.¹⁹ Tabulating their actual numbers with any degree of precision is therefore nearly impossible.²⁰ In spite of this, census takers did specifically list free stevedores, draymen, carters, and porters on their rolls.²¹ In 1850, for instance, the census shows that in addition to an unrecorded number of slave stevedores, there were 6 free black stevedores working on Charleston's waterfront along with 7 whites, 5 of whom were already Irish immigrants. The racial and ethnic composition of the waterfront work force was still in flux, however, and immigrants had not yet supplanted free black stevedores.²² But by 1860 whites had shattered the nearly equal distribution of stevedoring jobs between free blacks and whites, claiming 18 out of 19 of the stevedore positions listed, including 7 Irishmen, the most of any ethnic group.²³

The 1850s were the key years of the transition for the other waterfront occupations as well. In 1850 the census listed 75 free draymen in Charleston (16 Irish), 63 percent of whom were free blacks and 37 percent of whom were whites (21 percent Irish), while of the 12 carters recorded (3 Irish), free blacks comprised 67 percent and whites only 33 percent (25 percent Irish). In the same year 19 porters were listed (4 Irish), with free blacks constituting 74 percent and whites 26 percent (21 percent Irish). By 1860, however, a dramatic shift had occurred. In that year's census 147 individuals were listed as draymen (89 Irish), but with only 17 percent reported as free black and 83 percent as white (61 percent Irish). Moreover, among the 34 carters listed in the city in 1860 (17 Irish), 68 percent were now whites (50 percent Irish) and only 32 percent were free blacks, while of the 75 porters (41 Irish), whites claimed 69 percent (55 percent Irish) and free blacks 31 percent of these positions. In short, by 1860 the Irish had established a dominant presence among free workers on Charleston's wharves.

Just as the Irish successfully displaced many free black stevedores, draymen, carters, and porters, so too did they make inroads against Charleston's slaves. Although it is much more difficult to quantify this struggle, contemporaries did not fail to notice the shifting racial composition of the city's labor force. As early as 1840 Charleston's commissioner of the poor commented that the "laboring classes in our City are daily changing, the White labourer is gradually taking the place of the Slave."²⁴ When northern author and future Freedmen's Bureau agent John W. DeForrest arrived in Charleston in 1855, he was struck by what he observed upon reaching the wharf. "The crowd of porters & coachmen that met us on the dock presented not above half a dozen black faces," DeForrest wrote to his brother. "Instead, I saw the familiar Irish & German visages whom I could have met on a dock at Boston or New York." After DeForrest discussed his experience on the wharves with Charlestonians, he went on to explain that the racial makeup of the city's work force "was different years ago . . . and it is only lately that the whites have begun to crowd the blacks out of the more responsible lower employments."²⁵ In February 1861 the fire-eater editor of the *Charleston Mercury*, Leonidas W. Spratt, asserted that "within ten years past, as many as ten thousand slaves have been drawn away from Charleston by the attractive prices of the West, and laborers from abroad have come to take their places."²⁶ These Irish and other foreign laborers who were flowing into Charleston, Spratt continued, "have every disposition to work above the slave, and if there were opportunity would be glad to do so, but without such opportunity they come into competition with him [and] they are necessarily resistive to the contact. Already there is disposition to exclude [slaves] from the trades, from public works, from drays, and the tables of hotels; [slaves are] even now excluded to a great extent."²⁷

At times Charleston's Irish immigrants, indeed restive and frustrated with this contentious labor competition, turned violent and vicious.²⁸ As one local

magistrate declared in 1855, "It is but too true, that a great proportion of those we receive in Charleston from Ireland, manifest a proclivity to turbulence. I am afraid there is an inclination to make war upon the Negro. Not many years since one of the only two Irishmen who drove drays in this city . . . was tried . . . for knocking out the eye of a slave, his competitor."²⁹ Waterfront cooper Jacob F. Schirmer noted in August 1846 that a slave drayman named Sam—who was owned by Southern Wharf merchant A. O. Andrews—"got a severe beating from an Irish drayman."³⁰ And more than ten years later Schirmer reported "a row" that broke out near a boat "between some young men from town and the Irish, when Scott the carter was considerably cut up."³¹ Moreover Charleston's antebellum court records are rife with cases of Irish workers running amok of the law, the most common offense being assault and battery. Irish stevedore Thomas Nolan, for instance, was charged with assault and battery in November 1856 and sentenced to a one-month imprisonment and a one-hundred-dollar fine.³² But sometimes Irish workers were brought before the court for beating slaves. Martin Murphy, a drayman, was found guilty of beating a slave owned by commission merchant Charles L. Trenholm in October 1859, which cost Murphy twenty dollars. On the same day the grand jury indicted Murphy, it elected not to endorse a bill of indictment for the same offense against Patrick Carroll. This thirty-two-year-old Irish drayman did not remain out of the halls of justice for long, however. He was charged with murder in April 1860, and despite a plea of not guilty, Carroll was convicted of the lesser charge of manslaughter and was sentenced to a twelve-month imprisonment and a hefty five-hundred-dollar fine.³³ Although extant sources reveal sparse evidence concerning these cases, it is possible that the crimes committed by one or more of these Irishmen were in some manner related to employment competition with slaves or free blacks.

Despite occasional acts of violence and notwithstanding the undeniable dislocation of many free blacks and slaves from the city's docks and drays, the Irish were certainly not able to expel all black Charlestonians from their jobs. In the late 1850s and early 1860s many wharves and mercantile companies, including Brown and Company's Wharf, Railroad Accommodation Wharf, Mills, Beach and Company, and Hall and Company, owned slaves to work the docks.³⁴ Some wharf owners, such as Arnoldus and Elias Vanderhorst, required those who rented their wharves to also hire their enslaved wharf hands during the term of the lease.³⁵ And although some employers exercised a racial preference for white labor in late antebellum Charleston, financial expediencies often gave the city's blacks a marked advantage over Irish rivals. Whereas white laborers often earned one dollar per day, a slave laborer could be hired for an entire month for twelve dollars and sometimes for less.³⁶ In August 1846, for example, a "PRIME young Negro" wharf hand and laborer was advertised for hire for eight dollars per month.³⁷ As Scottish traveler James Stuart put it, "The prodigious saving by employing slaves is obvious."³⁸

But perhaps the greatest advantage afforded Charleston's black workers over their Irish competitors can be attributed to the annual threat of yellow fever. As hundreds of Irish immigrants poured into the city during the 1850s, the deadly yellow fever epidemics of that decade prompted public statements and even official resolutions that called for "acclimated" free black and enslaved waterfront and transportation workers to be preferred, even required, over "unacclimated" Irish immigrants.

During the mid-nineteenth century, broadly accepted medical theories were intrinsically embedded with contemporary notions of race, class, ethnicity, and nativity, which in turn impacted the labor history of Charleston's antebellum docks. It was widely believed, for example, that if a native of Charleston maintained uninterrupted residence in the city until maturity, he or she was thereafter "acclimated" or virtually immune to yellow fever. Furthermore, past epidemics had demonstrated that Charleston's black residents—both slaves and free blacks—were decidedly less liable to the disease than native whites, whereas rural folk, northerners, and especially recently arrived foreign immigrants were particularly susceptible.³⁹ "Our Stranger's Fever is most emphatically well named from its inhospitable tendency to assail . . . the newly arrived stranger," wrote Charleston physician Samuel Henry Dickson in January 1840. And the editors of the *Charleston Medical Journal and Review* asserted in November 1856 that the "Irish Celts, and the lower classes from Southern Europe, are most susceptible to the disease, and succumb most readily to its deleterious influence."⁴⁰ Not only were immigrants considered "unacclimated," but working-class immigrants—such as Irish dock workers—were thought to be the most vulnerable to their new surroundings. Mayor Henry L. Pinckney, reporting on the relief of the sick poor during the 1838 epidemic, claimed that the disease "was confined to those who were not only not accustomed to our climate, but whose constant exposure to the sun, aided by hard labor and dissipated habits, had emphatically prepared them to become its victims."⁴¹

Many medical doctors maintained, however, that immigrants who resided in Charleston for a number of years could develop acclimation, and others held that if an unacclimated person, including a foreign stranger, was stricken with yellow fever but recovered from the attack, then "the individual having it is not liable to another attack."⁴² But these theories had their exceptions and detractors. Physician J. L. Dawson reported that, in August 1856, Elizabeth Graham, "from Ireland, four years in Charleston," died with black vomit, which was regarded as the truest indicator and "most dreaded symptom" of yellow fever.⁴³ Meanwhile several physicians warned their colleagues that a mild illness may not protect immigrants from future attacks and that a misdiagnosis of yellow fever during a previous epidemic could lure some into a false sense of security.⁴⁴

No individual enjoyed complete and fail-safe resistance to yellow fever. But in late antebellum Charleston, it is evident that black slaves and free blacks

indeed were far less likely to contract or die from the disease than were whites. Therefore blacks were regarded as "acclimated" and thus virtually immune to yellow fever, whereas Irish immigrants were "unacclimated" and much more susceptible to contracting and spreading the disease. And it was in the context of such realities and beliefs that Charleston's municipal leaders—some of whom were physicians—debated the origins of yellow fever and how best to prevent the disease in the city.

In this "origins debate" the preponderance of the city's mid-nineteenth-century physicians subscribed to the erroneous theory that yellow fever arose in Charleston from a variety of local sources.⁴⁵ These "localists"—led by port physician Thomas Y. Simons—pointed to causes ranging from "meteorological phenomena" to dock mud that released a vaporous poison when disturbed.⁴⁶ Other commonly espoused local causes included stagnant water and low lots, the dumping of offal in the streets, and crowded and filthy dwellings and neighborhoods. Localists even imaginatively suggested that one of the "active agents of the disease" was the excitement of municipal elections. Irish and German immigrants were particularly vulnerable to this cause since their votes were always vigorously pursued by competing political factions.⁴⁷

Rejecting local explanations, a few Charleston doctors instead rightly focused on external sources of yellow fever. William Hume—a city alderman and professor of experimental science at the Citadel, the state military academy in Charleston—argued that rather than originating in the soil or climate of the city, commercial trade with foreign vessels was to blame for the introduction of the disease.⁴⁸ Medical authorities would later confirm this importation theory and that yellow fever was not indigenous to the Carolina lowcountry. But it also was not yet known that local *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which live and breed in stagnant water and thus pervaded Charleston's waterfront, were the vectors responsible for transmitting the yellow fever virus from infected foreign officers and crew at the wharves to susceptible Charlestonians. But without the benefit of this knowledge, "importationists" mistakenly claimed that inanimate objects including cargo or a vessel itself could become contaminated while lying in a port where yellow fever was endemic, such as Havana and other West Indies ports. Upon arrival in Charleston, the importationists contended, the disease could then be passed to unacclimated individuals who came into contact with the "foul air" of the vessel and imparted to those who handled the "infected" cargo.⁴⁹ In short, importationists believed that yellow fever was a contagious disease, meaning that it was spread by direct contact rather than by a vector.

Meanwhile this scientific squabble between localists and importationists over the origin of yellow fever in Charleston led to profoundly different preventive policies. The localists urged municipal and state leaders to improve the sanitation of the city.⁵⁰ Among the recommendations made in the name of eliminating potential domestic causes of yellow fever were the following: cleansing the docks

of decomposed vegetable and other offensive matter, flushing the city drains in wintertime, removing filth and offal from the streets to beyond the city limits, draining stagnant water and filling up low lots, keeping cellars dry and properly ventilated, outlawing internments within the city, preventing the excavation of the earth during the summer, and paving or macadamizing the streets. “These measures, if they can be accomplished,” wrote Simons in 1839, “constitute . . . judicious and important preventive means.”⁵¹

Even importationist William Hume acknowledged that such actions would likely inhibit the propagation of yellow fever, but after the disease was introduced into Charleston by a foreign vessel.⁵² The importationists thus argued that rational maritime quarantine regulations offered the best defense. To keep “infected” vessels from unhealthy ports away from the city’s waterfront and susceptible inhabitants, Hume emphasized that such vessels ought to be discharged using lighters⁵³ at the quarantine ground—located two miles from the city near Fort Johnson—rather than at Charleston’s wharves. The purportedly tainted cargo could then be purified and transported to their consignees in the city, after which the emptied holds would be thoroughly ventilated and cleansed at the quarantine before the vessels were permitted to enter the docks to load export cargo.⁵⁴

Importationists emphasized that it was vital that the quarantined vessels’ holds be purified before coming up to the city. Otherwise upon the “vessel’s arrival at the wharf, and the hatches removed, the infection is diffused” among “the usual congregations of seamen and other foreigners,” including Charleston’s most vulnerable residents. Hume insisted that such episodes were common but usually went unnoticed.⁵⁵ In 1849, for instance, a twenty-four-year-old German named Mr. Sahlman regularly boarded West Indies vessels tied up at the wharves to purchase cigars. On August 26, the day after one of these visits, Sahlman became ill, and on September 2 he died of yellow fever.⁵⁶ Then, in August 1852, three vessels from the West Indies similarly were allowed to come up to the city without being cleansed at quarantine and unload their cargoes at Atlantic Wharf, and two others at Accommodation Wharf. Late that same month an eight-year-old “little Irish girl” named Mary Ryan, “who was in the habit of frequenting the wharves to pick chips,” died of yellow fever at her house on Philadelphia Street not far from the waterfront.⁵⁷ Incidents such as these prompted William Hume to implore his fellow city aldermen in March 1854 to take action to keep West Indies vessels away from the wharves altogether. “Exclude the foreign element from our port, or extinguish it in the harbour,” he pleaded, “but never let it reach our wharves.”⁵⁸

On June 25, 1854, the British barque *Aquatic* departed Matanzas, Cuba, with a cargo of molasses bound for Cork, Ireland. On July 3 a member of the ship’s crew died of yellow fever, and the next day a second died and two more seamen took ill. Meanwhile the vessel sprung a leak, and with “the remainder of the crew

being more or less disabled," the captain was forced to run the vessel ashore north of Georgetown, South Carolina. The steamer *Nina*, under the command of Captain Magee, went to the *Aquatic's* assistance, and when Magee arrived the barque had eight feet of water in her hold. After pumping out the water and discharging some of the cargo to prevent the vessel from sinking, the *Nina* towed the *Aquatic* to Charleston with a steam engine pumping water out of the hold the entire way. On July 13, "in a sinking condition" and "with her hold in a very foul state," the *Aquatic* arrived and dropped anchor at Charleston's quarantine ground, where only her fore and aft cabins were cleansed and disinfected. None of the remaining members of the vessel's crew was ill, but all, as a precaution, were sent to the Lazaretto—the quarantine hospital located nine miles from the city on Morris Island. With the steam engine pump still running continuously to keep the *Aquatic* afloat and with no lighters available to unload the cargo, the port physician was faced with the decision of "whether she should sink or be brought to the city." Thomas Y. Simons chose the latter, and with its hold still filthy and "containing molasses in a state of fermentation, bilge-water, &c.," the *Aquatic* was released from quarantine and came up to North Commercial Wharf, where it laid for two days. Then, on July 16, the vessel was towed to Union Wharves to be pumped out, discharged, and cleansed.⁵⁹

Having taken a substantial public health risk by allowing the *Aquatic* to come up to the city's wharves in such an unsanitary condition, Simons stressed, "As regards the men to work on board the *Aquatic*, I had made it an especial condition with Captain Magee and the Stevedore, that blacks should be employed in discharging the cargo, which was done." Or so he thought. When on July 21 the stevedore commenced discharging the *Aquatic's* remaining cargo—approximately nine hundred hogsheads of molasses—he was reported to have "prudently determined to employ acclimated negroes in the hold, while his Irish hands laboured on deck, and on the wharf." A few hours into the unloading of the vessel, the Irish dock hands noticed that the Custom House officer, who ordinarily would have been carrying out his duty aboard the ship, was instead sitting on the wharf. When these white laborers asked him for an explanation, he replied that "the vessel had had yellow fever on board, and that he would rather remain where he was." Apparently having begun work on the *Aquatic* without being informed of the vessel's allegedly poisonous atmosphere, one of the Irishmen retorted, "And, by jabbers, is it yellow fever that's aboard this vessel, and divil a turn more will we give the windlass."⁶⁰ Exercising remarkable agency, the Irish wharf hands immediately went on strike until they were able to renegotiate their wages to account for the added peril inherent in such unhealthy and potentially fatal work.⁶¹

On August 4, after the last hogshead of molasses had been unloaded by the joint efforts of the Irish and black dock workers, the unnamed stevedore, accompanied by a Mr. Garvey and a Mr. McNeal, descended into the rancid and damp

hold of the *Aquatic*, which they washed out with a fire hose. Eight days later Garvey became ill, and within forty-eight hours he was dead. Subsequent reports revealed that Garvey was a twenty-six-year-old Irish stevedore who resided at 20 Pinckney Street and had been “employed in pumping out and disinfecting the barque *Aquatic* during the greater part of which time he worked in the hold,” where “heated by work he was wet by rain.” The city register, the clerk who kept a record of all marriages, births, and deaths, reported that on August 12 Garvey “had been at work on board of the *Aquatic*, and residing in Pinckney-street, sickened with fever and died on the 14th without throwing up black vomit.” Simons seized on the fact that Garvey “had no black vomit” and was originally determined to have died from “Congestion of the Brain.” But death records affirm yellow fever as the cause of Garvey’s death. As for McNeal, described as “an Irishman employed with Mr. Garvey in the hold of the *Aquatic*,” he also fell ill with yellow fever, but he recovered.⁶²

D. J. Cain, who was the physician of the Marine Hospital during the 1854 epidemic, reported that Garvey and McNeal “were the only men who were employed *in the hold of the vessel*,” presumably, that is, besides the black slaves. Fifteen other men—evidently the Irishmen who had struck for higher wages—were said to have been employed on the deck of the *Aquatic* during her unloading, but did not enter the hold.⁶³ The port physician, who likely was much annoyed that Captain Magee and the stevedore had broken their agreement to employ only blacks during the unloading of the *Aquatic*, wrongly claimed that these “15 were not sick at all.”⁶⁴ In fact two of these men died, whereas according to William Hume, “the rest still live ready to unload another yellow fever vessel at the same wages.”⁶⁵ Hume also claimed that the thirteen surviving Irish workers “had resided here many years, and may now be considered acclimated to the infected hold of a vessel.”⁶⁶

Among those purportedly newly acclimated Irish wharf hands who had worked on the deck of the *Aquatic* was a Mr. Gorman. Though Gorman did not sicken with yellow fever, Cain hypothesized that “it was communicated to his wife by the fomites of his clothes.” Mrs. Gorman, who was twenty-five years old in 1854 and was described both as “an Irishwoman” and the “wife of an Irishman,” resided on Calhoun Street with her husband and two-year-old daughter, Mary. Mrs. Gorman came down with yellow fever on August 15 and lay sick in her house for two days before calling a physician. Despite the best efforts of the doctor and several visiting friends, having thrown up black vomit, she died on August 18. Mr. Gorman not only lost his wife, but his daughter Mary, who shared a bed with her sick mother, died five days later, also with black vomit. William Hume mused that although Mr. Gorman “came to Charleston at the same time” as his family, he “passed the whole summer in the same house in perfect health.” Death records reveal that Mary Gorman was born in New Jersey, and being two years old when she died in August 1854, Mr. Gorman could not have resided in

Charleston for more than two years. And in fact, in an essay appearing in the *Charleston Medical Journal and Review* in March 1858, Hume revealed that the Gormans arrived in Charleston in January 1854, only seven months before Mrs. Gorman and Mary Gorman took ill and died. This refutes Hume's claim that the white workers who had labored on the *Aquatic* had lived in Charleston for "many years" and confirms that unacclimated Irishmen were hired to work on ostensibly contaminated vessels on Charleston's waterfront during the summer of 1854.⁶⁷

Before the 1854 epidemic William Hume recognized that unacclimated dock workers were potentially a major chink in the city's quarantine armor, and he warned that laborers who discharged "infected" cargo could become ill and spread yellow fever throughout the city. Though Thomas Y. Simons unequivocally dismissed Hume's claims—stating that such a "circumstance has not occurred in my experience of thirty years"—the 1854 epidemic demonstrated that Hume was not too far off the mark.⁶⁸ Again, ubiquitous mosquitoes along the Cooper River waterfront rather than "impure" cargo and vessels served as the true vectors of death, transmitting yellow fever from infected people to those who were healthy but susceptible. Hence the presence of scores and perhaps hundreds of unacclimated Irish dock workers such as Garvey, McNeal, and Gorman did put the city at greater risk and played a major role in the widespread propagation of the disease in 1854.

After all, Garvey and McNeal were the second and third Charleston residents to sicken with yellow fever in 1854, and by all accounts Garvey was the city's first resident to die in that year's epidemic. And some indeed implicated these Irishmen for the proliferation of the fever from the waterfront to the rest of the city. William Hume, for instance, implied that Mr. Garvey was to blame for spreading the disease to the Irishman's home and infecting Pinckney Street. Death records reveal that a twenty-five-year-old German named Mr. Livingston, who resided on the street, died of yellow fever on September 2. And John Slattery, a forty-seven-year-old Irishman and also a resident of Pinckney Street, was taken by the disease on September 21.⁶⁹ Meanwhile Mrs. Gorman was blamed for propagating the disease throughout her neighborhood on and near Calhoun Street. "Mrs. Gorham's case seemed to be the centre of radiation of the fever in that locality," wrote Cain in his history of the 1854 epidemic. On Calhoun Street alone, between Elizabeth and Meeting streets near the Gorman's residence, thirteen people were said to have died from yellow fever in 1854.⁷⁰

And so, as in 1849 and 1852, ineffective quarantine measures in 1854 left unacclimated residents working on or living near the waterfront exposed to the deadly scourge of yellow fever.⁷¹ As Cain observed, "It occurs first among the shipping, and then spreads" through the entire city and mainly "among the unacclimated foreign population, chiefly the Irish and Germans." In September 1854 the editors of the *Charleston Medical Journal and Review* belatedly announced, "It

is with great regret that we record the prevalence, in this city, of the Yellow Fever,” and added, “This summer the destroyer has laid his heavy hand upon . . . Charleston.” Indeed it had. Dr. Dickson reported that the number of sick was estimated at twenty thousand or more, prompting him to remark that “in 1854 the number of persons attacked by Fever in the city was wholly beyond precedent.” Cain labeled the outbreak a “Pandemic.” By the end of September the number of yellow fever deaths had already far exceeded the city’s previous record death toll of 354 during the 1838 epidemic. By late autumn, when frost killed off the disease-carrying mosquitoes, 627 were dead. Of these, 612 were white and 256—more than 40 percent of the victims—were natives of the Emerald Isle.⁷²

In the aftermath of this devastating epidemic, William Hume renewed calls for more stringent quarantine regulations. Labeling existing laws as defective, Hume again recommended the “exclusion of infected, or presumed infected vessels from our wharves,” which would—if enforced—be “common justice” to foreign seamen and unacclimated “citizens of our own.”⁷³ Alarmed by the previously unfathomable loss of life and pressed by “considerable excitement on the subject,” the Charleston City Council passed a new quarantine ordinance in April 1855. Vessels arriving between May 31 and October 1 from ports prevailing with yellow fever at the time of departure or having fever on board during the voyage to Charleston were to be quarantined for at least thirty days after arrival and at least twenty days after the discharge of all cargo. This ordinance aimed at preventing unhealthy vessels from coming up to the city’s wharves, which were swarming with “pure” vessels as well as unacclimated and thus highly susceptible immigrant dock workers and foreign seamen. After discharging their cargo and having their vessels “thoroughly cleaned and purified” at the quarantine ground, captains were encouraged to load freight using lighters and go back to sea without serving the full duration of their quarantine and without ever coming up to the city.⁷⁴

In the past, city authorities, most of whom were localists and thus dismissed the efficacy of quarantine measures, had not enforced even flawed quarantine rules and regulations. But William Hume and the importationists perhaps now could rely upon the support of Charleston’s new mayor, William Porcher Miles, who was elected in 1855 with the strong support of Irish immigrants. In fact disappointed supporters of the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing party maintained that three hundred of the votes for Miles, who won by only four hundred votes, had been cast illegally by immigrants who only recently had arrived in the city. And after Miles overhauled Charleston’s police force, with Irishmen largely filling the rank and file, the mayor’s critics derided the city’s policemen as “Paddy Miles’s Bulldogs.” So perhaps feeling obliged to better protect his Hibernian constituents laboring on or living near the waterfront, Mayor Miles advised the city council to “keep vessels arriving in our harbor from infected ports at a safe distance from our docks, and prevent their cargoes, charged with the seeds of death,

from being at once landed on our crowded wharves teeming with an unacclimated laboring population, peculiarly susceptible to disease."⁷⁵

Meanwhile, yellow fever did not strike Charleston during the summer of 1855, likely causing some to credit the new quarantine policies. But on July 8, 1856, after a six-day voyage from Havana, the brig *St. Andrews* appeared off the bar of Charleston Harbor with a healthy captain and crew. Under the old quarantine practices this vessel would have been allowed to proceed to the city's wharves. But under the new April 1855 regulations, because it had arrived directly from Havana after May 31, and because two seamen aboard had died of yellow fever while in the Cuban port, the *St. Andrews* reported to the quarantine ground. On July 15 the vessel's cargo of sugar was discharged using lighters, which then delivered the sugar to Brown's Wharf. Having no additional cases of yellow fever while in Charleston, the *St. Andrews* was apparently then loaded with export cargo again using lighters at the quarantine ground, and it sailed out of the harbor having never docked at the city's wharves.⁷⁶ The quarantine laws, it seemed, were working.

But then on July 26 John Abbott became ill at his residence on King Street with what was thought to be yellow fever. The attending physician asked Dr. Dawson to visit Abbott, and agreeing that the case was yellow fever, Dawson advised Mayor Miles to remove the sick man to the Lazaretto. Early the next morning Abbott was sent from the city to the Lazaretto, where he recovered. John Abbott was a twenty-three-year-old Irishman who had arrived in Charleston in February 1854 and had remained healthy during the 1854 epidemic while working as a servant at the Mills House. Not previously having had yellow fever, and only having been in Charleston for a little over two years, it is improbable that this recently arrived immigrant was acclimated. Nonetheless, during the week leading up to his illness, Abbott had been employed loading the *St. Andrews* at the quarantine ground. According to the city's Committee on Health and Drainage, consisting of William T. Wragg, James M. Eason, and William Hume and reporting "on the Origin and Diffusion of Yellow Fever in Charleston in the Autumn of 1856," Abbott's case "may be fairly traceable to the infected vessel."⁷⁷

Michael Denning was not as fortunate as John Abbott. Denning, an Irishman who had likely only recently arrived in Charleston, got sick with fever on July 31 and was sent from his residence on East Bay Street near Pinckney Street to Roper Hospital in the city. There it was ascertained that Denning had been employed loading the barque *Industria* at the quarantine ground. The *Industria* had arrived from Havana on July 13 with a load of wine and lead, twenty crewmen, and an unspecified number of passengers and was detained at quarantine. The next day a sick passenger was sent to the Lazaretto, where he died on July 17. On the sixteenth, three men were sent from the vessel to the Lazaretto but recovered, but two others were sent on July 23 and both subsequently died. Early in August lighters landed the *Industria's* cargo at Union Wharves, and soon thereafter the

vessel was loaded at the quarantine ground with lighters from South Dry Dock Wharf. The *Industria*, like the *St. Andrews*, went to sea without ever docking in the city. But once Mayor Miles was informed that the Irishman Denning had been working on the *Industria*, he ordered him to be transferred from Roper Hospital to the Lazaretto on August 6. Having thrown up black vomit, Michael Denning died the next day.⁷⁸

William Hume maintained that the *Industria* was undoubtedly an infected vessel, and though Denning neither touched nor saw any of the sick people on board, “it is apparent that [he] took his disease on board of the vessel after the sick crew had been removed.” The Committee on Health and Drainage agreed, concluding that even though Denning lived on East Bay Street not far from Palmetto Wharf, like Abbott he “most probably got his illness in the vessel.”⁷⁹ In short, even though the new quarantine rules had kept the *St. Andrews* and *Industria* away from the docks, they had failed to keep unacclimated Irishmen such as John Abbott and Michael Denning away from these West Indies vessels, their captains, crews, and passengers, and their cargoes, all thought to be shrouded with “seeds of death.”

As a result, as with Mr. Garvey and Mr. McNeal in 1854, Irish waterfront workers were the first Charleston residents to sicken with yellow fever in 1856, and Denning was the first to die from the disease.⁸⁰ Furthermore, like his fellow Hibernians Garvey and Gorman, the deceased Denning was blamed for spreading the disease to and throughout his neighborhood. The Committee on Health and Drainage reported that “other cases occurred near [his residence] afterwards which by some are attributed” to Denning. Hume theorized that when Denning was taken from his house on East Bay Street to Roper Hospital, “he left behind him the influence of his disease.” Denning’s fever reportedly spread when it struck Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, who dwelled with Denning, and Ann and Bridget Burns, who lived in an adjacent house. Ann was a seventeen-year-old Irish girl who died with black vomit on August 21. In total the 1856 yellow fever epidemic claimed 212 lives, of whom 203 were white and only 9 were black.⁸¹

Why, many Charlestonians began to ask publicly, were lightermen such as Abbott and Denning allowed to continuously pass between the quarantine ground where they toiled amid infection and the city where they lived, thus endangering the entire community? In a letter to the editors of the *Charleston Mercury* on August 13, 1856, “A Citizen” protested that workers employed in lightering cargo to and from vessels at quarantine were “allowed free intercourse with the city” and “permitted to visit the city at their pleasure, and mingle indiscriminately with the acclimated and unacclimated portions of our community.”⁸² Dr. Dickson too observed that a large number of “foul vessels” were anchored in the Cooper River not far from the wharves and “kept up a continual intercourse by captains and consignees and their boats’ crews, lighters, and lightermen—the latter furnishing . . . two of the earliest subjects” of the epidemic.⁸³ And the 1856

Committee on Health and Drainage confirmed that the "lighters employed in this business usually returned to the wharf after their trips to Quarantine," and it noted the frequency with which small boats had docked at the city's Cooper River wharves "with hands returning from working in the vessels at Quarantine."⁸⁴

As early as March 1854, William Hume had foreseen the potential danger of lightermen transferring cargo from vessels at quarantine directly to the Cooper River wharves, and he had called for the Charleston City Council to examine and perhaps replicate New York's quarantine system. New York, for instance, required a group of stevedores and dock workers to be hired to labor exclusively at an enclosed quarantine station located at a safe distance from the city, and then it prohibited these workers from leaving the station and entering the city. Though the city council formed a committee in January 1854 to look into such modifications, the April 1855 quarantine ordinance only stated that "all persons arriving in, or going on board of vessels brought to quarantine, shall be liable to be removed to such place as Council may appoint," but municipal authorities never designated such a location.⁸⁵

Hume had also made strong recommendations to the city council in March 1854 regarding who should and who should not be permitted to work on cargo lighters. "The acclimation of our [native] citizens to the infection of yellow fever presents a great advantage in the process of transshipment [*sic*]," Hume argued, "for they can pass from the vessels to the city without danger of taking the disease and transferring it to the city, while a foreigner would receive it in the vessel, bring it up in apparent health, and in a few days be the means of counteracting all previous efforts, by its development and subsequent extension." Hume had predicted exactly what was thought to have happened in 1856: unacclimated immigrants such as John Abbott and Michael Denning had been hired to work on lighters at the quarantine ground, became infected while working on quarantined vessels, and then transferred the disease to the city where it was spread throughout the community. Therefore he went on to explicitly advise that "great caution should be exercised in the selection of the transferring crews and labourers; negroes are decidedly to be preferred, and the unacclimated stranger should be positively prohibited from joining the party."⁸⁶ In short, if the 1854 epidemic suggested the impropriety of employing unacclimated stevedores and dock hands on the Cooper River wharves during fever season, it was also unwise to allow unacclimated men to work on cargo lighters and at the quarantine ground.

City authorities actually had attempted to regulate the acclimation of such workers after the passage of the April 1855 quarantine ordinance but before the 1856 epidemic. At a city council meeting on May 15, 1855, Alderman Hume had offered the following preamble to a resolution aimed at establishing acclimation restrictions: "Whereas, It has been well observed that long residence in the City of Charleston, or the actual having and recovering from Yellow Fever, affords ample protection against the same, and that personal communication between

the city and infected vessels, or vessels presumed to be infected, is indispensable to the due executions of the Quarantine Ordinance; and whereas the Quarantine Bill provides that in certain circumstances, certificates of acclimation may be granted by the Port Physician.” The resolution then stated that people could prove their acclimation and thus obtain a certificate by presenting a “competent witness,” obtaining documentation from an attending physician, or by any other means the port physician may deem “satisfactory and conclusive.” And as for workers hoping to gain employment on cargo lighters and aboard quarantined vessels, only those with certificates of acclimation “shall be employed about, or allowed to board, any vessel performing Quarantine, and afterwards return to the city.”⁸⁷

Under the authority of this resolution, which was adopted by the city council, evidently the port physician began to issue these certificates or permits to those working on cargo lighters. On August 18, 1856, Thomas Y. Simons publicly asserted that the “officers and crews of the lighters are required to be acclimated. Now, no permit has ever been given before the Port Physician has been fully satisfied that they were acclimated.” But how, if the port physician rigidly enforced the May 1855 resolution requiring lightermen to be acclimated, were Irishmen John Abbott and Michael Denning permitted to work on board quarantined vessels and to move freely between the quarantine ground, where they likely contracted yellow fever, and the city where—as with Garvey and the Gormans in 1854—Denning was accused of propagating the disease into the city? Simons explained that “of the great number of vessels to which the lighters have gone, either to discharge cargoes or load at Quarantine, only two cases of sickness occurred.” One of these cases, evidently Michael Denning, was sent to Roper Hospital with a “suspicious case of fever.” There the man confessed to the port physician in the presence of Dr. Gaillard “that he had no permit, but that Capt. Mills had obtained the permit, with [Mills] and three negros [*sic*] as his crew, and no white man, to carry to Quarantine.” In other words, Mills claimed that his crew would comprise acclimated blacks only, but nonetheless he hired the unacclimated Irishman Denning to work on his quarantine lighter. Captain Mills acknowledged his guilt and Simons took away his permit, thus depriving Mills of any future command of a lighter.⁸⁸

Thomas Y. Simons also detailed the case of John Abbott, “a decent young man, who had been here several years, and in the fever of 1854” and had been working “on board of a vessel carrying a cargo to the brig St. Andrew [*sic*], with a black crew.” When Abbott became ill he was sent to the Lazaretto, but convinced that the man’s condition was due to prolonged exposure to the sun and not yellow fever, Simons ordered Abbott to be treated at the “Doctor’s House” of the Lazaretto. Despite the fact that the Irishman soon recovered from his illness, Simons declared, “After this circumstance, no new permits were given to white men to go on board of lighters.” Then in a letter appearing in the *Charleston*

Mercury on August 20, 1856, "CHARLESTON" affirmed that "rigid regulations should be applied to vessels engaged in lightering cargos, that none should be employed on board but persons who can bring clear proof of their being acclimated."⁸⁹ In short, the rising public sentiment held that no Irish need apply for lightering work in Charleston.

Not only did the port physician stop issuing lightering permits for white workers, but employers, even those who may have preferred to hire white or Irish stevedores and laborers, felt mounting pressure to hire only acclimated blacks to safeguard the general health of the city.⁹⁰ Five of Charleston's leading West Indies commission merchants, for example, were obliged to issue the following public proclamation:

In regard to the stevedores the following is offered:

Charleston, 13th August, 1856.

We hereby certify that we have had none but black stevedores to load our vessels at Quarantine or discharge.

P. A. AVEILHE

MORDECAI & CO.

HALL & CO.

CAY, MONTANER & CO.

STREET BROTHERS.

NOTE.—The above statement holds good, with the exception, in our case, that the steamer *Isabel* had white acclimated persons to load and discharge early in the season, but not on the last trip.

MORDECAI & CO.⁹¹

During the 1854 epidemic Simons had attempted to ensure that Captain Magee and the stevedore employed only blacks—who were assumed to be acclimated—to unload the *Aquatic*. Also in 1854 William Hume reported that the loading of two Spanish vessels from Havana "was performed by acclimated negroes."⁹² Increasingly, then, Irish and other unacclimated white laborers were at a severe disadvantage in the contest for lightering and waterfront work in Charleston.

Irish draymen were not able to escape the impediment of their unacclimated status either. Prompted by the outbreak of yellow fever during the summer of 1856, the Charleston City Council appointed a committee to examine the quarantine system and suggest improvements. In April 1857 the committee published its findings, written by none other than William Hume, and recommended that a wharf and warehouses on the city's western Ashley River waterfront—an area where far fewer Irish immigrants resided—be acquired for the landing and storage of "infected" cargo lightered from the quarantine ground. Then, based on the principle that "where there is no unacclimated population, there will be no yellow fever," the committee suggested that "these cargos shall remain in these stores until wanted for immediate consumption, when they shall be delivered to

acclimated negro draymen, to be conveyed on drays to their proper destination.” The report also called for draymen to be “known,” further minimizing the likelihood that recently arrived immigrant draymen would be hired to transport this cargo. But Hume reiterated that the key to thwarting the spread of the “poison” into the rest of the city was that “the draymen should be acclimated negros [*sic*].”⁹³ At least in this case, then, acclimation alone was not sufficient; though regarded as not entirely white in the eyes of some native white southerners, Irish draymen—even those who were considered acclimated—were barred by their whiteness from handling this hazardous cargo.⁹⁴ Evidently persuaded by Hume’s remonstrations and choosing to protect the entire city at the risk of alienating Irish and other white draymen, the city council and Mayor Miles resolved to adopt the committee’s recommendations word for word on May 12, 1857.⁹⁵

Irish draymen were not only denied employment in transporting cargo brought from the quarantine ground to this western wharf but were also prohibited from transporting ostensibly tainted cargo still arriving at the eastern Cooper River wharves. At the city council meeting on June 23, 1857, commission merchants Hall and Company petitioned for the cargo of the quarantined vessel *Eben Atkins* to be brought to the city in lighters and landed at Union Wharves. At a special meeting held three days later, the council granted this request, provided that the cargo “be conveyed to the store by negro or acclimated draymen.”⁹⁶

Employment opportunities for Irish lightermen and draymen dwindled as the number of quarantined vessels swelled.⁹⁷ In 1856 Samuel Henry Dickson noted “the continuous squadron of foul vessels, sometimes amounting to nearly a score in number” at the quarantine ground. New port physician William C. Ravenel—who was appointed by the governor after the death of Thomas Y. Simons in June 1857—reported that between May 1 and October 1, 1857, 78 vessels arrived at quarantine, 36 of which were detained and therefore would have necessitated lighters to discharge and load cargo. And during the six months between May 1 and October 31, 1858, 103 vessels arrived at quarantine, 65 of which were detained.⁹⁸ Clearly an increasing number of vessels required black acclimated laborers to unload and load cargo at the quarantine ground and to transport these goods throughout the city. The result was far fewer jobs for unacclimated Irish workers during the yellow fever season.

Notwithstanding these mounting obstacles, some unacclimated Irishmen continued to find employment on lighters and on the city’s docks and drays during these months. After all, John Abbott and Michael Denning had managed to evade the rules, much in the way that Charleston’s slave owners habitually disregarded city ordinances prohibiting their slaves from hiring themselves out. And city death records reveal that many Irish immigrants found work on nonquarantined vessels at the waterfront during the fever season in the years before the Civil War: John McElroy died on board the ship *Southern* from the “effects of heat” in

July 1856, Matthew Stevens drowned near the *Southern* in August 1857, Michael Lanneau died of yellow fever on South Atlantic Wharf in November 1857, Thomas O'Brien died of yellow fever on Gadsden's Wharf in August 1858, John E. McMahon died of yellow fever on Cromwell's Wharf in September 1858, Michael Quinn drowned at Gadsden's Wharf in September 1858, and John Fisher died from sun stroke while on board a ship in July 1859.⁹⁹ Admittedly some of these deceased Irish immigrants may not have been waterfront workers, while others may have been considered acclimated. But despite what ought to have been the lessons of the 1854 and 1856 epidemics, the rising public sentiment against the employment of unacclimated immigrants, and official resolutions requiring the use of acclimated blacks for particular jobs while the quarantine was in effect, unacclimated Irishmen continued to find waterfront work during and after the summer of 1856.

But why did Charleston's wharf owners, commission merchants, stevedores, and lighter captains persist in hiring unacclimated dock workers and lightermen? Perhaps some in the city's commercial community preferred to hire Irish workers regardless of official restrictions or intense public pressure.¹⁰⁰ After all, by the mid-1850s an increasing number of Irish employers, including stevedores Thomas Carrol and William Doran, were joining more established and prominent Hibernians, such as wharf owners James Adger and Charles A. Magwood, on the city's waterfront. Again, employers had to balance any racial predilections with the fact that Irish laborers usually were more expensive to hire than enslaved dock workers. But as the episode of the striking workers on the *Aquatic* in 1854 demonstrates, once the Irish were hired it was not as easy to fire and replace them with black slaves as one might expect. Not only did the striking Irishmen exercise extraordinary agency and self-assertiveness—not to mention a willingness to work any job irrespective of personal safety and health—but their apparent lack of concern about being fired suggests that there was a relative shortage of slave dock workers in Charleston during the middle and late 1850s.¹⁰¹ In other words, as L. W. Spratt suggested in 1861, Irish immigrants evidently were occupying jobs vacated by slaves removed from the city and sent to rural plantations rather than pushing the slaves out of those positions.

Some in antebellum Charleston may have considered the lives of Irish immigrants to be less valuable than those of slaves.¹⁰² In the aftermath of the 1854 epidemic, William Hume suggested that greed was influencing hiring decisions and alleged that “the decree has gone forth that some must die that others may be enriched.” And Hume argued in March 1854 that “there is among our merchants a moral principle paramount to the love of gain,” adding, “Of death and desolation we need not argue, for habit has rendered us callous to such considerations; and the exemption which the native enjoys, may make him careless of the suffering of others.”¹⁰³ The Irish, despite their rising numbers, no doubt fell under the

category of “others” in 1850s Charleston, and for some an Irish worker struck down by yellow fever could be quickly replaced by another Irishman and was much less costly than the loss of valuable slave property.¹⁰⁴

Also making Irish workers more expendable was the notion shared by some Charlestonians that Irish immigrants were not entirely “white.” After all, unlike the vast majority of native white southerners, the Irish were willing not only to work unpleasant and hazardous jobs traditionally performed by blacks but also to labor alongside slaves on the city’s waterfront. In mid-nineteenth-century New York, as in most free labor northern ports, Irish immigrant dock workers were “becoming white” in part because of their refusal to work shoulder-to-shoulder with blacks, as the 1863 Draft Riots later laid bare. Even in the border state port of Baltimore, Frederick Douglass was nearly beaten to death in the mid-1830s by white ship carpenters who refused to continue working alongside black competitors.¹⁰⁵

Plainly the Irish in the South had far different experiences than their fellow immigrants in northern cities. And they had an impact on Charleston and southern history that went far beyond their labor contributions to the city’s and region’s vital export economy. The influx of unacclimated Irish workers to ports susceptible to yellow fever put these cities at substantially greater risk for the importation and widespread propagation of the potentially devastating disease. Prior to the arrival of thousands of white immigrants in Charleston, yellow fever epidemics as deadly as that in 1856 were rare, and ones as ruinous as that in 1854 unfathomable. Throughout the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s there were only four years in which yellow fever claimed more than 100 lives, and in most years the disease either did not strike or claimed only a few. According to Thomas Y. Simons, yellow fever did not spread to laborers who were unloading and loading “foul” vessels at the city’s wharves during the 1838 and 1839 epidemics.¹⁰⁶ In these years, however, those who were discharging and loading West Indies vessels and mingling with sick captains, mates, and crew members were almost exclusively acclimated black slaves.

But after the immigration of substantial numbers of mostly working-class Irishmen beginning in the mid-1840s, Charleston suffered its second most lethal yellow fever epidemic in 1852, when 310 people died, and three of the four deadliest yellow fever epidemics in the city’s history during the 1850s, including the most deadly in 1858, when 716 died.¹⁰⁷ The higher death tolls of the 1850s were in large part due to the greater preponderance of immigrant “strangers” present in the city. But Charleston had lost its defensive wall of acclimated black workers along the waterfront. The fact that in the past the vast majority of stevedores and wharf hands who had mingled with foreign sailors in ship holds, on the docks and in warehouses, and in the city’s filthiest taverns and back alleys were black men more or less immune to yellow fever prevented the propagation of the imported disease into the heart of the city. But despite efforts to prevent susceptible white immigrants from handling “infected” cargo or exposure to

the "poisonous" atmosphere of West Indies vessels, once scores of unacclimated Irishmen began working alongside acclimated black slaves on Charleston's mosquito-infested waterfront and at the quarantine ground, the city's human health shield was easily penetrated.

NOTES

1. Stirling also maintained that "at present the natural flow of immigration is dammed back from these States by slavery." James Stirling, *Letters from the Slave States* (London: J. W. Parker, 1857), 230, 247.

2. William C. Hine, "Black Organized Labor in Reconstruction Charleston," *Labor History* 25 (Autumn 1984): 505.

3. Porters were common laborers employed to carry goods and baggage both on the docks and between the waterfront and stores or hotels in the city.

4. Christopher Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization: The Irish Worker in Charleston, South Carolina, 1840–1860," in *South Atlantic Urban Studies*, vol. 3, ed. Samuel M. Hines, George W. Hopkins, Amy M. McCandless, and Jack R. Censer (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1979), 156–57.

5. *Charleston Times*, April 17, 1807. Many urban slaves were granted permission from their masters to hire themselves out to employers, who usually paid the slaves directly for their labor. Slaves were then expected to report to their masters periodically to turn over a previously agreed-upon portion of their earned wages to their masters. Slave owners in Charleston who wished to hire out their slaves were required to annually purchase slave badges, which were to be visibly worn and upon which was inscribed the year, a general occupation (such as porter, servant, mechanic, fisher, etc.), and a badge number. See Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); and Harlan Greene, Harry S. Hutchins Jr., and Brian E. Hutchins, *Slave Badges and the Slave-Hire System in Charleston, South Carolina, 1783–1865* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2004).

6. *Charleston Times*, January 2, 1808.

7. Quoted in Walter Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 106. Charles Town was renamed Charleston when the city was incorporated in 1783.

8. *Charleston Mercury*, June 7, August 23, 1799. In addition to the contemporary accounts cited above, see Loren Schweninger, "Slave Independence and Enterprise in South Carolina, 1780–1865," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (hereafter cited as *SCHM*) 93 (1992): 113; Bernard Powers, *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822–1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 11; and Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9, 30.

9. James R. Schenck, *The Directory and Stranger's Guide for the City of Charleston. Also a Directory for Charleston Neck Between Boundary-Street and the Lines; Likewise for the Coloured Persons Within the City, and Another for Coloured Persons residing on the Neck, for the Year 1822. To Which is Added an Almanac; The Tariff of Duties on All Goods Imported into the United States; and the Rates of Wharfage, Weighing, Storage, Dockage and Drayage, &c.* (Charleston, S.C.: Archibald E. Miller, 1822); James Smith, *The Charleston Directory; and Register, for 1835–6. Containing Names, Occupations, and Residences of Persons in Business, &c.*

Collected by James Smith and *The City Register; Consisting of A Variety of Useful Information, Connected with Our Trade and Commerce* (Charleston, S.C.: Daniel J. Dowling, 1835).

10. For excellent studies of immigration to Charleston and immigrants in Charleston, see Ira Berlin and Herbert Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves," *American Historical Review* 88 (December 1983): 1175–1200; Silver, "New Look"; Herbert Weaver, "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Towns of the Lower South," *Journal of Southern History* 13 (February 1947): 62–73; and David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815–1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

11. Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 20.

12. For evidence regarding seasonal migration, see Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 29; Silver, "New Look," 149–50; Robert G. Albion, *Square-Riggers on Schedule: The New York Sailing Packets to England, France, and the Cotton Ports* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1938), 229; and Allan R. Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information: The United States System of Cities, 1790–1840* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 172–73. One scholar has discovered that Irish immigrants who worked as longshoremen in Quebec City migrated southward each fall when the St. Lawrence River froze over to work on the waterfronts of New Orleans, Savannah, Mobile, and Pensacola. Monica Hunt, "Savannah's Black and White Longshoremen, 1856–1897" (master's thesis, Armstrong State College, 1993), 22–28.

13. Ancestry.com, *Irish Immigrants: New York Port Arrival Records, 1846–1851*, database online (Provo, Utah: Generations Network, 2001); Bureau of the Census, 1860 U.S. census; *Charleston Mercury*, October 3, 1891; Bureau of the Census, 1900 U.S. census.

14. Bureau of the Census, 1870 U.S. census; David M. Gazlay, *The Charleston City Directory and General Business Directory for 1855: Containing the Names of the Inhabitants, Their Occupations, Places of Business and Dwelling Houses: A Business Directory, A List of the Streets, Lanes, Alleys, the City Officers, Public Institutions, Banks, &c.* (Charleston, S.C.: David M. Gazlay, 1855); *Charleston Post and Courier*, April 7, 1980.

15. In 1850 the Irish in Charleston comprised 5.5 percent of the total population (11.8 percent of the white population), and in 1860 they comprised 8 percent of the total population (14 percent of the white population). See Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 35, table 3, 36, table 4.

16. See Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 231–32.

17. Fraser, *Charleston*, 106; Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*, 234–35, 237–38; Silver, "New Look," 147. In 1850 only approximately 5 percent of all waterfront and transportation workers (stevedores, porters, draymen, and carters) listed in the federal census for Charleston were native white southerners, while about 5.5 percent were native white southerners in 1860. Furthermore, in 1850 native white southerners made up about 13.6 percent of all white waterfront and transportation workers in Charleston, while in 1860 native white southerners constituted only approximately 7 percent of all such white workers.

18. See Silver, "New Look," 149–51; and Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 33–35, 38, 53.

19. The unspecified "laborers" employed on Charleston's antebellum wharves performed tasks corresponding to the work of "longshoremen," a term that did not gain ascendancy in Charleston until after the Civil War. Waterfront laborers in antebellum

Charleston were often referred to as “wharf hands” or “dock hands,” but they were not listed as such in the 1850 or 1860 U.S. census schedules.

20. Census manuscripts report that there were 2,336 laborers and only 31 stevedores and longshoremen in Charleston in 1870. And yet in 1875 Charleston’s mostly black Longshoremen’s Protective Union Association counted an estimated 800–1,000 members. This supports the argument that many of those recorded as unspecified “laborers” indeed worked on the city’s docks and identified themselves as dock workers or longshoremen. See Powers, *Black Charlestonians*, 270, 128; Christopher Silver counted 507 Irish laborers and 50 free black laborers in the 1850 U.S. census, and 497 Irish laborers and 44 free black laborers in the 1860 U.S. census. Silver, “New Look,” 156, 160, table 1.

21. The entire free population of the city of Charleston as listed in the 1850 and 1860 U.S. censuses was evaluated for this study. In an undertaking of this magnitude, errors are inevitable, despite my most conscientious efforts to avoid and eliminate them. Nevertheless I am confident that any errors that are incorporated into the figures appearing in this study are few enough in number and limited enough in scope as to have a negligible influence upon my conclusions.

22. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery*, 122.

23. Free blacks comprised approximately only 15 percent of Charleston’s free population in 1850 and about 12 percent of the city’s free population in 1860.

24. Quoted in Benjamin J. Klebaner, “Public Poor Relief in Charleston, 1800–1860,” *SCHM* 55 (October 1954): 213n8.

25. Quoted in Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), 178.

26. Richard Wade and Claudia Dale Goldin have offered alternative explanations as to why some southern cities such as Charleston experienced sharp decreases in their slave populations during the 1850s. Wade argues that this decrease was a natural result of the fact that slaves could not be properly controlled in the urban environment. In other words, the urban environment was not suited for slavery. Goldin disagrees and argues that the redistribution of the slave population from cities such as Charleston into the countryside was due to a rising demand for slave labor on rural plantations as slave and cotton prices rose. Both arguments are problematic because neither explains why the slave population in cities such as Richmond, Mobile, and Savannah increased during the same decade. Charleston did experience a decrease in its slave population and an increase of Irish during the 1850s. Though Spratt may have been correct in his observation that as many as 10,000 of Charleston’s slaves had been sold to work on the booming cotton plantations of the new Gulf Coast states, the city experienced a net loss of 5,623 slaves between 1850 and 1860. During the same decade the number of Irish immigrants residing in Charleston increased from 2,359 in 1850 to 3,263 in 1860, a gain of 904. See Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*; and Claudia Dale Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South: A Quantitative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

27. Spratt went on to lamentably predict that if the African slave trade was not reopened, “it is probable that more abundant pauper labor may pour in, and it is to be feared that . . . self-governing labor, as opposed to slave labor . . . may gain a foothold, and that here also the contest for existence may be waged between them.” *Charleston Mercury*, February 13, 1861.

28. See also Starobin, *Industrial Slavery*, 143; and Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans, 1863–1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20.

29. *Charleston Courier*, March 26, 1855.

30. Schirmer added that “Mr. Sanders also whipt [*sic*] him, and at the examination before the Mayor, some high words passed between Andrews & Sanders.” Schirmer Diary, August 7, 1846, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, S.C. (hereafter cited as SCHS); John H. Honour, *A Directory of the City of Charleston and Neck for 1849; Containing the Names, Residences and Occupations of the Inhabitants Generally: To Which Is Appended a List of the Banks, Insurance Companies, Societies, Fire Departments, Military, and Various Other Matters of General Interest* (Charleston, S.C.: A. J. Burke, 1849). The U.S. census slave schedules reveal that Andrews owned four slaves in Charleston in 1850, two of whom were adult black males.

31. This fight evidently took place on Sullivans Island near the ferry-boat landing. Schirmer Diary, August 23, 1857, SCHS. Scott the carter may have been a slave. But there were also three free black carters or draymen named Scott in 1850s Charleston: James Scott, a free black carter in the 1856 city directory; Daniel Scott, a mulatto carter in the 1850 U.S. census; and Joseph Scott, a free black drayman in the 1850 U.S. census. R. S. Purse, *Charleston City Directory and Strangers Guide for 1856* (New York: J. F. Trow, 1856).

32. *Charleston Mercury*, November 22, 1856.

33. Court of General Sessions, Criminal Journals (Charleston District), South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C. (hereafter cited as SCDAH); Court of General Sessions (Charleston District), Criminal Dockets, SCDAH. Martin Murphy was indicted again for the same offense in April 1861, but the criminal journals do not reveal the result of the case. Patrick Carroll, recorded as P. Carroll, appears in the 1860 federal census as residing in the Charleston city jail. He was joined in the jail by three of his fellow Irish draymen, including James Smith, who was serving a sentence for murder. The other two Irish draymen, along with five Irish laborers, some of whom may have worked on Charleston’s waterfront, were imprisoned for assault. Bureau of the Census, 1860 U.S. census; Gazlay, *Charleston City Directory and General Business Directory for 1855*.

34. Charleston City Tax Records, 1860–65, Charleston Library Society, Charleston, S.C.; *List of the Tax Payers of the City of Charleston for 1858* (Charleston, S.C.: Steam Press of Walker, Evans & Company, 1859); *List of the Tax Payers of the City of Charleston for 1859* (Charleston, S.C.: Steam-Power Press of Walker, Evans & Company, 1860).

35. Vanderhorst Family Papers, Wharf Business Papers: Vanderhorst Wharf, SCHS.

36. Charleston City Council, *Statement of Receipts and Expenditures by the City Council of Charleston from 1st July 1849, to 1st July 1850* and *Statement of Receipts and Expenditures by the City Council of Charleston from 1st Sept. 1850, to 1st Sept., 1851, with a List of the Tax Paying Citizens in the Upper and Lower Wards—Separated* (Charleston, S.C.: A. E. Miller, 1851).

37. *Charleston Mercury*, August 5, 1846.

38. James Stuart, *Three Years in North America*, vol. 2. (Edinburgh: Printed for R. Cadell, 1833), 103–4.

39. For example, in the 1819 yellow fever epidemic, 167 whites and only 5 blacks died; in 1838, 350 whites and only 4 blacks died; in 1839, 133 whites and only 1 black died; in 1849, 123 whites and only 1 black died; and in 1852, 309 whites and only 1 black died.

H. B. Horlbeck, *Maritime Sanitation at Ports of Arrival* (Concord, N.H.: Republic Press Association, 1891), 9. For a discussion of relative black immunity to yellow fever, see Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia H. Kiple, "Black Yellow Fever Immunities, Innate and Acquired, as Revealed in the American South," *Social Science History* 1 (Summer 1977): 419–36.

40. Samuel Henry Dickson to B. B. Strobel, in B. B. Strobel, *An Essay on the Subject of the Yellow Fever, Intended to Prove Its Transmissibility* (Charleston, S.C.: Printed by Asa J. Muir, 1840), 128–29; "Editorial," *Charleston Medical Journal and Review* (hereafter cited as *CMJR*) 11 (November 1856): 846.

41. Henry L. Pinckney, *A Report, Relative to the Proceedings for the Relief of the Sick Poor, during the Late Epidemic; and on the Subject, Generally, of the Public Health; to Which Is Annexed the Report of the Commissioners of the Temporary Hospital; Presented to the City Council on the 5th of November, 1838* (Charleston: W. Riley, 1838), 10. Port physician Thomas Y. Simons concurred with Pinckney, arguing that "among the number of strangers who take the fever and die, there are many who have to expose themselves to the hot sun in their daily labor." Thomas Y. Simons, *A Report on the History and Causes of the Strangers or Yellow Fever of Charleston: Read before the Board of Health* (Charleston, S.C.: W. Riley, 1839): 13. On August 31, 1852, Jacob F. Schirmer recorded in his diary that yellow fever was raging "principally among the lower classes." Schirmer Diary, August 31, 1852, SCHS. Dr. D. J. Cain noted in 1854, "It is the laboring class, upon whom the curse of poverty—one of fearful magnitude—presses with iron hand; in whom there is utter hopelessness of change of condition for the better, in short, in whom are united and intensified all the influences, moral, mental, and physical, which contribute to make up the sum of human wretchedness and woe—this is the class which, thereby rendered extremely liable to morbid impressions." D. J. Cain, *History of the Epidemic of Yellow Fever in Charleston, S.C., in 1854* (Philadelphia: T. K. and P. G. Collins, 1856), 23. And in November 1856 the editors of the *Charleston Medical Journal and Review* attributed the elevated vulnerability of the Irish to personal hygiene and filthy living conditions. "Editorial," *CMJR* 11 (November 1856): 846.

42. See, for instance, J. J. Chisolm, "A Brief Sketch of the Epidemic Yellow Fever of 1854, in Charleston," *CMJR* 10 (July 1855): 434; review of R. LaRoche, *Yellow Fever, Considered in its Historical, Pathological, Etiological, and Therapeutical Relations*, *CMJR* 10 (November 1855): 831; Simons, *Report on the History and Causes*, 21; Thomas Y. Simons, "An Essay on the Yellow Fever as It Has Occurred in Charleston, including Its Origins and Progress up to the Present Time. Read before the So. Ca. Medical Association, at Its Anniversary Meeting, 1851, and Published by Their Request," *CMJR* 6 (November 1851): 782; Strobel, *Essay*, 128–29, 201–2; H. L. Bird, "Observations on Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 10 (May 1855): 333.

43. William Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston, during the Summer of 1854," *CMJR* 10 (January 1855): 21; J. L. Dawson, "Report of the Cases of Yellow Fever which have occurred in our City, and on ship-board in our Harbor, up to August 25th," *CMJR* 11 (September 1856): 701. Dickson explained that after the occurrence of black vomit "recoveries were rare, and indeed, were never expected." Samuel Henry Dickson, "Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 11 (November 1856): 747.

44. See Joseph I. Waring, "John Moultrie Jr., M.D., Lieutenant Governor of East Florida: His Thesis on Yellow Fever," reprinted from *Journal of the Florida Medical Association* 54 (August 1967): 772–77; Chisolm, "Brief Sketch," 446–47; Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 11, 20–21; A. B. Williman, "An Account of the Yellow Fever Epidemic in Norfolk during the Summer of 1855," *CMJR* 11 (May 1856): 333–34. See also Dickson, "Yellow Fever," 745.

45. Many of city's physicians were influenced by the teachings of Charlestonian physician David Ramsay and especially of the Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush. See Simons, *Report on the History and Causes*, 15; review of R. LaRoche, 833; William Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston, on a Resolution of Inquiry relative to 'the Source and Origin of Yellow Fever, as it has occasionally prevailed in Charleston, and the means of prevention or exclusion, as may seem worthy of adoption, in order to obviate its future occurrence,'" *CMJR* 9 (March 1854): 148; Thomas Y. Simons, "A Report Read before the City Council of Charleston, and ordered to be printed with the proceedings; with an appendix, in reply to the report of Wm. Hume, M.D.," *CMJR* 9 (May 1854): 342; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 1; Thomas Y. Simons, "Observations in reply to William Hume, M.D.," *CMJR* 10 (March 1855): 175; William Hume, "On the Introduction of Yellow Fever into Savannah in the year 1854, in reply to a letter to the Editor from R. C. Mackall, M.D., late Health Officer of the City of Savannah," *CMJR* 11 (January 1856): 10, 15, 18–19; Strobel, *Essay*, 8.

46. William Hume, "Meteorological and other Observations in reference to the Causes of Yellow Fever in Charleston, with an outline of a plan for its prevention," *CMJR* 5 (January 1850): 2–3, 27; Simons, *Report on the History and Causes*, 18; Strobel, *Essay*, 34, 210.

47. After the disease became epidemic among the Irish and Germans in early September 1852, local authorities were so convinced of the "great influence" of the municipal elections that they petitioned the state legislature to alter the dates of these contests. On December 16, 1852, the South Carolina General Assembly passed an act changing the day of elections in Charleston from early September to early November. On October 28, 1853, the Charleston City Council ratified an ordinance confirming that the election of city officers would thereafter take place in early November. Thomas Y. Simons, "A Report on the Epidemic Yellow Fever as it Occurred in Charleston in 1852, with statistical and other observations," *CMJR* 8 (May 1853): 363–34; William Hume, "An Inquiry into some of the general and local causes to which the endemic origin of Yellow Fever has been attributed by myself and others," *CMJR* 9 (November 1854): 727; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 5; Petitions to the General Assembly, ND #5557, SCDAH; General Assembly Committee Reports, ND #5866, SCDAH; H. Pinckney Walker, ed., *Ordinances of the City of Charleston From the 19th of August 1844, to the 14th of September 1854; and the Acts of the General Assembly Relating to the City of Charleston, and City Council of Charleston, During the Same Interval* (Charleston, S.C.: A. E. Miller, 1854), 149, 185, 187; Grand Jury Presentments, Charleston District, January 1824 and May 1824, SCDAH.

48. See Dr. John Lining to Dr. Robert Whytt, Professor of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, December 11, 1753, quoted in Hume, "Report to the City Council of

Charleston," 148–49; Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston," 162; see also Dickson, "Yellow Fever," 754–55.

49. "For the Mercury. To the Citizens of Charleston—No. 5," *Charleston Mercury*, November 10, 1858. For information regarding infected vessels and cargo, see Dickson, "Yellow Fever," 749; and William Hume, "On the Germination of Yellow Fever in Cities, in contrast with the Incubation of Fever in Individuals," *CMJR* 13 (March 1858): 177.

50. Simons, "Essay on the Yellow Fever," 795–96; Simons, *Report on the History and Causes*, 22; Hume, "Meteorological and other Observations in reference to the Causes of Yellow Fever in Charleston, with an outline of a plan for its prevention," 28; William Hume, "Sequel to Meteorological and other observations in reference to the Causes of Yellow Fever in Charleston, brought forward to 1852," *CMJR* 8 (January 1853): 65; review of R. LaRoche, 838.

51. Simons, *Report on the History and Causes*, 22.

52. Simons claimed that during his thirty years as port physician and twenty-four as a member of the Charleston Board of Health, yellow fever was never imported into the city. Simons, "Report Read before the City Council of Charleston," 333–34; Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston," 147, 151, 161–62; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 19–20.

53. Lighters are boats used to transport cargo to and from ships in open water.

54. Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston," 160, 164; see also Simons, "Observations in reply to William Hume," 171, 174; and Simons, "Report Read before the City Council of Charleston," 334.

55. Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston," 162–64.

56. *Ibid.*, 157–58; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, S.C. (hereafter cited as CCPL).

57. Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston," 728–29; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL.

58. Hume, "Report to the City Council of Charleston," 160.

59. Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 4–5, 30; Chisolm, "Brief Sketch," 436; "Editorial and Miscellaneous: Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 9 (September 1854): 710–11; Simons, "Observations in reply to William Hume," 180–81; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 18–19; Hume, "On the Introduction of Yellow Fever into Savannah," 3. Hume and Simons reported in 1855 that the *Aquatic* was bound for Dublin, Ireland. Jacob Schirmer noted that Cork was the vessel's destination and that the *Aquatic* went ashore on Long Bay north of Georgetown. Schirmer Diary, July 10, 1854, SCHS. Simons recorded that the vessel was ashore on the Pawley Island Beach. Simons also wrote that the *Aquatic*'s fore and aft cabins were cleansed and disinfected before arriving in Charleston and that a "crew of blacks and whites, the latter North Carolinians, were put on board the barque to work; her crew not being employed, during her progress to Charleston." Simons added that none of this new crew was sick upon the ship's arrival in Charleston. Meanwhile, Hume argued that since the vessel arrived at the wharves without any of its original crew, the infection must have been attributable to the vessel. Finally, Cain reported that the *Aquatic* went to Dry Dock Wharf, rather than Union Wharves, on July 15, where she was finally pumped out and disinfected on or after July 16. Captain Magee was probably Captain Arthur Magee, who lived at 101 Broad

Street in 1852; J. H. Bagett, *Directory of the City of Charleston for the Year 1852. Containing the Names, Occupation, Place of Business & Residence of the Inhabitants Generally, with Other Information of General Interest* (Charleston, S.C.: Edward C. Councell, 1852).

60. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines a windlass as “any of various machines for hoisting or hauling” or “a horizontal barrel supported on vertical posts and turned by a crank so that the hoisting rope is wound around the barrel.”

61. The workers probably negotiated with the stevedore, who hired, contracted, and supervised dock hands in late antebellum Charleston. Simons, “Observations in reply to William Hume,” 181; Hume, “On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston,” 22; Schirmer Diary, July 10, 1854, SCHS.

62. Hume, “On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston,” 22; Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 6, 31; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL; “Editorial and Miscellaneous: Yellow Fever,” *CMJR* 9 (September 1854): 711; Chisolm, “Brief Sketch,” 437; Simons, “Observations in reply to William Hume,” 182. Garvey is also referred to as Garrie, and he appears in the death records as M. Garvin. McNeal is also spelled McNeill. Many medical experts believed that getting wet or sleeping in open air and thus being exposed to dew were contributing causes of yellow fever. See Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 14; and Simons, “Report on the Epidemic Yellow Fever as it Occurred in Charleston,” 369. Simons admitted that “afterwards the physician said [the cause of death] was yellow fever,” adding that such a change of opinion was “an unpleasant inconsistency for a physician to put himself in.” Cain reported that Garvey died “of coma.” Some physicians reported congestion of the brain as a symptom of those stricken with yellow fever, especially among the intemperate. For example, see Williman, “Account of the Yellow Fever Epidemic in Norfolk,” 333.

63. Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 6, 31.

64. Simons never acknowledged that Garvey, McNeal, and at least a number of these 15 men were Irish and likely unacclimated. Simons, “Observations in Reply to William Hume,” 182.

65. The names of these two deceased workers were not revealed. But an examination of Charleston’s death records from August 1854 reveals that Patrick Loone, a forty-year-old Irishman, died of yellow fever at the poor house on August 25, 1854, and that Francis Long, a twenty-six-year-old Irishman, died of yellow fever on Tradd Street on August 26, 1854. In addition two other Irishmen died of yellow fever at the Marine Hospital (which was normally reserved for seamen) on August 20 and August 22, and two more Irishmen died of the disease on August 31, one at the poor house and the other on Calhoun Street. Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL; Hume, “On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston,” 22.

66. Hume, “On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston,” 22. Such contemporary scientific beliefs were highly dubious and far from unanimously agreed upon within Charleston’s medical community. Also, only Garvey, McNeal, and the unnamed stevedore were said to have gone into the hold, so it makes little sense to argue that the workers who did not labor in the hold were thereafter acclimated. According to even disputed contemporary medical beliefs, only Mr. McNeal—who sickened and recovered—was thereafter acclimated to the disease, not those workers who had simply been in its atmosphere.

67. Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 6, 32, 34; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL; "Editorial and Miscellaneous: Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 9 (September 1854): 712; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 6–8, 26; Chisolm, "Brief Sketch," *CMJR* 10 (July 1855): 437; Hume, "On the Germination of Yellow Fever in Cities," 146. Cain refers to Mr. and Mrs. Gorman as Gorham, and the death records refer to Mrs. Gorman as Mrs. German and to Mary Gorman as Mary Gooman. The dictionary at Merriam-Webster Online defines a fomite as "an object (as a dish or an article of clothing) that may be contaminated with infectious organisms and serve in their transmission." Also, a minority of those infected with the yellow fever virus do not experience any symptoms and recover without being aware of ever having had the disease. It is therefore possible that Mr. Gorman did have yellow fever during the summer of 1854 and may have been the source of his wife's and daughter's infection. See John R. Pierce and Jim Writer, *Yellow Jack: How Yellow Fever Ravaged America and Walter Reed Discovered Its Deadly Secrets* (Hoboken, N.J.: J. Wiley & Sons, 2005), 7. Finally, Hume reported in March 1858 that Gorman "is still alive and well." Hume, "On the Germination of Yellow Fever in Cities," 146.

68. Simons, "Report Read before the City Council of Charleston," 334.

69. Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 4–7, 28–34; "Editorial and Miscellaneous: Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 9 (September 1854): 710–12; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 22; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL.

70. Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 8, 26–27; Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 34.

71. Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 17–19; Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 30–31.

72. At the end of September 1854, an estimated 445 people had died. Horlbeck, *Maritime Sanitation*, 9. The Germans were a distant second with 131 dead. J. L. Dawson, "Statistics Relative to the Epidemic Yellow Fever of 1854, in the City of Charleston," *CMJR* 10 (March 1855): 200; "Editorial and Miscellaneous. Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 9 (September 1854): 710; Dickson, "Yellow Fever," 745; Cain, *History of the Epidemic*, 7–8; "Editorial and Miscellaneous. Yellow Fever," *CMJR* 9 (November 1854): 851.

73. Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 32, 35.

74. "CHARLESTON" to the Editors, *Charleston Mercury*, August 20, 1856; John R. Horsey, ed., *Ordinances of the City of Charleston from the 14th of September, 1854, to the 1st December, 1859; and the Acts of the General Assembly Relating to the City Council of Charleston, and the City of Charleston, During the Same Period* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Company, 1859), 7–14. The ordinance was ratified on April 19, 1855.

75. Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 118–19; William Porcher Miles, *Mayor's Report on City Affairs: Submitted to Council at a Meeting Held Tuesday, September 29th, 1857* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Company, 1857), 25.

76. William T. Wragg, William Hume, and James M. Eason, *Report of the Committee on Health and Drainage, on the Origin and Diffusion of Yellow Fever in Charleston in the Autumn of 1856* (Charleston, S.C.: s.n., 1856): 2–3, 8, 11; Dawson, "Report of the Cases of Yellow Fever which have occurred in our City," 698–99; Robert Leiby, James H. Taylor,

E. Lafitte, and H. T. Peake, *Report of the Committee of the City Council of Charleston, on the Origin and Diffusion of the Yellow Fever in Charleston, in the Summer of 1858* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker, Evans & Co.'s Steam Power Press, 1859), 7.

77. Wragg, Hume, and Eason, *Report*, 15, 14; Lebby et al., *Report*, 8–9.

78. Denning does not appear in the 1850 U.S. census or the city directories; therefore it is assumed that he had only recently arrived in Charleston. Denning is also referred to as Dening and Denner, but these names do not appear in local records. Dawson, “Report of the Cases of Yellow Fever which have occurred in our City,” 699; Hume, “On the Germination of Yellow Fever in Cities,” 160–61; Wragg, Hume, and Eason, *Report*, 3–4, 7, 11, 14.

79. Hume, “On the Germination of Yellow Fever in Cities,” 160; Wragg, Hume, and Eason, *Report*, 16; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL.

80. Dawson’s city register report stated that John Abbott and Michael Denning were the first and second Charlestonians to sicken with yellow fever in 1856. Dawson also reported that the first case in 1856 occurred on July 14 on board the schooner *Exchange* at Palmetto Wharf, and the second case was Mr. Collens, a man from Savannah who had only been in Charleston for ten days when he took ill on the same day as Abbott.

81. Wragg, Hume, and Eason, *Report*, 16; Hume, “On the Germination of Yellow Fever in Cities,” 160; Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL; Horlbeck, *Maritime Sanitation*, 9.

82. *Charleston Mercury*, August 13, 1856; *Charleston Mercury*, August 15, 1856.

83. Dickson, “Yellow Fever,” 755.

84. Wragg, Hume, and Eason, *Report*, 8–9.

85. Hume, “Report to the City Council of Charleston,” 164; City Council Minutes, January 19, 1854, *Charleston Mercury*, January 23, 1854; Horsey, *Ordinances of the City of Charleston*, 2. A quarantine act passed by the state legislature in 1832 and a quarantine ordinance passed by the city council in 1840 included similar statements. The 1832 act granted the governor or Charleston City Council the power to “cause all persons arriving in or going on board of [a quarantined] vessel, or handling such infected cargo, to be removed to such place as may be designated by the Governor or City Council, there to remain under the orders of the Governor or City Council.” George B. Eckhard, ed., *A Digest of Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston from the Year 1783 to Oct. 1844. To Which Are Annexed the Acts of the Legislature Which Relate Exclusively to the City of Charleston* (Charleston, S.C.: Walker and Burke, 1844), 373, 213. For information regarding New York’s quarantine policies and stevedores, see the *New York Herald*, August 27, 1856; *New York Herald*, September 5, 1856; *Charleston Mercury*, September 20, 1858; “Editorial,” *CMJR* 11 (November 1856): 851–53; and “Proceedings and Debates of the Third National Quarantine and Sanitation Convention, held in the city of New York, April, 1859,” *CMJR* 15 (March 1860): 219–20.

86. Hume, “Report to the City Council of Charleston,” 164.

87. “Editorial,” *CMJR* 10 (July 1855): 596–97; City Council Minutes, May 15, 1855, *Charleston Mercury*, May 17, 1855.

88. Simons also informed the council in April 1857 that “the law instructed me . . . to have cargos discharged by lighters with crews acclimated, to be brought to the city,” and then added, “If the course pursued . . . as regards persons going in lighters and laborers to

discharge cargo of vessels and load them, is defective . . . you have full information so as to guide you in making improvements." *Charleston Mercury*, August 18, 1856; City Council Minutes, April 17, 1857, *Charleston Mercury*, April 18, 1857.

89. *Charleston Mercury*, August 18, 1856; *Charleston Mercury*, August 20, 1856.

90. Though it is true that native whites were also considered acclimated, very few native Charlestonians, South Carolinians, or southerners performed waterfront or transportation work. See note 17 above.

91. *Charleston Mercury*, August 18, 1856. The steamship *Isabel* plied regularly between Charleston and Havana during the 1850s, and it is estimated that the last trip of the *Isabel* referred to by Mordecai and Company departed Havana on July 28, 1856, and arrived in Charleston on approximately July 31, 1856.

92. Simons, "Observations in reply to William Hume," 181; Hume, "On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston," 22.

93. *Charleston Mercury*, April 7, 1857. Despite the fact that very few native white Charlestonians worked as draymen, they were considered acclimated. It is unclear why, then, the committee also did not permit native white Charlestonians to transport cargo brought from the quarantine. One possibility is that by establishing such regulations along racial lines, employers could more easily and quickly determine who was and who was not acclimated. See also note 90 above.

94. See David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 2007); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89 (June 2002): 154–73.

95. City Council Minutes, May 12, 1857, *Charleston Mercury*, May 14, 1857. This policy was continued under Charles Macbeth, who served as Charleston's mayor from 1857 to 1865. See *Charleston Mercury*, July 21, 1858.

96. City Council Minutes, June 23, 1857, *Charleston Mercury*, June 25, 1857; City Council Minutes, June 26, 1857, *Charleston Mercury*, June 29, 1857.

97. It should be kept in mind that the quarantine rules and regulations typically were only in effect for five or six months of the year and that the laws usually were not in force during the peak commercial season.

98. Dickson, "Yellow Fever," 755; Miles, *Mayor's Report on City Affairs*, opposite 88; Leiby et al., *Report*, 5, table C; During the 1839 yellow fever epidemic, about thirty-six vessels arrived from "infected ports in the West Indies" between May 1 and July 30. But at this time cargo lighters were not yet utilized and black slaves still dominated waterfront work, and thus very few unacclimated laborers would have been even seeking employment on Charleston's wharves that summer. Strobel, *Essay*, 171.

99. Charleston Death Records, 1819–1870, CCPL.

100. On the other hand, other employers in antebellum Charleston almost certainly preferred to hire slaves in support of the increasingly embattled institution of slavery.

101. See note 27 above.

102. For an example of a case when the use of Irish immigrants was considered preferable to more valuable black slaves, see Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 66.

103. Strobel, *Essay*, 9–10; Hume, “On the Introduction, Propagation, and Decline of the Yellow Fever in Charleston,” 12, 35. See also Hume, “Report to the City Council of Charleston,” 160.

104. Some slave owners undoubtedly considered waterfront work too hazardous for their black slaves, despite the latter’s assumed acclimated status. Dock work was indeed dangerous, and as numerous extant contracts demonstrate, masters often shielded their hired out slaves from the most perilous tasks, including the digging of canals and certain jobs on the railroads.

105. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave; Written by Himself* (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 93–96. Meanwhile, other Charlestonians suspiciously questioned whether Irish immigrants—many of whom spent several years in the abolitionist strongholds of Boston and New York before migrating to the South—fully supported the institution of slavery, concerns that were compounded by the fact that very few working-class Irish owned slaves.

106. About the 1838 yellow fever epidemic—the deadliest in Charleston’s history to that time with 354 deaths—Simons observed that the disease did not attack “even those who were loading and unloading the said-to-be infected [*Lord Glenelg*],” a British barque that arrived from Demerara in British Guiana on July 4 and was docked at Boyce and Company’s Wharf. Likewise, Simons inquired about the 1839 epidemic, which claimed 134 lives, “If the infectious principle was so powerful, why should it be confined so long to the [seamen], when a free intercourse was had with them by laborers.” Simons, “Report Read before the City Council of Charleston,” 345; Simons, *Report on the History and Causes*, 11; see also Hume, “Report to the City Council of Charleston,” 154; and Strobel, *Essay*, 124.

107. Horlbeck, *Maritime Sanitation*, 9.

The Orange Atlantic

Donald M. MacRaild

After three decades of conflict, the recent political settlement in Northern Ireland has inevitably led to new light being cast onto the Orange Order, an organization closely associated with the Protestant-Unionist hegemony in the province. The political situation has transformed so radically that the power base of the Protestant majority has been permanently eroded, presenting many challenges to both the political establishment and the grass roots. Inevitably these changing realities have also resulted in academic reconsiderations. The notion that Northern Ireland was an adamantine “Orange State”¹ gained currency from the political performance of the Unionist parties between 1945 and the recent cessation of hostilities in the 1990s, but a new and more complex reality is emerging that reveals enduring divisions within Unionism and a historic factionalism within Orangeism. The most recent and important scholarly works on the subjects of Unionism and Orangeism point to a much more brittle political culture and rather weaker social glue than was once envisioned.²

Recent studies of Orangeism suggest a movement more open to investigation by academics and, simultaneously, a culture in crisis.³ Declining membership, caused mainly by a sense of alienation among younger members of the Protestant community, has been a major issue. Drumcree in the 1990s sharpened the association of Orangeism with violence, and the laments of moderates within the organization intensified. Orangemen, it seems, regard themselves as victims of irrevocably changing times.⁴ So great is this change that some outside the organization, as well as some inside it, have proposed turning the “Glorious Twelfth” (July 12, commemorating the Battle of the Boyne in 1690) into something approaching the Mardi Gras in Rio de Janeiro or the Notting Hill Carnival in London. Funding has even been provided to probe this possibility.⁵

Some former Orangemen today blame their plight on a leadership that has allowed the balance of “rough” and “respectable” forces (which has been an ever present feature of the movement) to shift dramatically in favor of the former. This was certainly the point of Rev. Warren Porter’s scathing attack on the leadership

of the Orange Order in his foreword to the Reverend Brian Kennaway's study *The Orange Order: A Tradition Betrayed*. Porter suggests that a sensible, solid citizenry in the middle ground of the Orange Order authored its own "downfall" by allowing lodges to be overrun by "'kick the Pope' reactionaries, most of whom," Porter argued, "could not give an intelligent or intelligible critique of Roman Catholicism if it were to save their lives."⁶ This failure is why well-heeled middle-class people have less to do with the order now. The vacuum has resulted in a proletarianization of the movement and a corresponding radicalization of its politics. Porter and Kennaway do not like the fact, and they think it is unique.

However, to the social historian, there is nothing new in the tension between sober leaders, who stressed fraternity and comradeship, and a brutish element, which enjoyed drinking, goading, and fighting.⁷ When viewed from the perspective of the Irish diaspora placed around the seaboard edges of the North Atlantic, the competition between the "rough" and the "respectable" takes on a wholly different complexion. The history of Orangeism in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World tells of historic and continuing tensions between groups within the organization, graded by degrees of respectability. The violence of the "spirit of Drumcree," which so appals Kennaway and Porter today, was a regular feature of the Orange tradition in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in the 1870s and 1880s, violence was not just an Ulster phenomenon but also occurred in Canada, Britain, and, to a lesser extent, Australasia. Indeed, it may be argued that, if we take a historical perspective, violence was an ever-present threat to the spirit of self-improving collectivism of the "respectable" membership. For newspapermen and magistrates in various parts of the Atlantic World, violence was main mark of the Orange Order.⁸ Consequently Orangemen have always busily claimed to run a society of sober and sociable sorts—being at the same time kindred spirits in anti-Catholicism and brothers in self-improvement.⁹

The issue of "rough" and "respectable" needs to be discussed in more detail because of what it reveals about innate tensions in Orangeism. As such this chapter plots a route through some of the convergent issues that make for comparisons between Orange traditions around the Atlantic World, but mainly in Britain and Canada. The discussion also looks at some of the broader "no-popery" culture relating to Orangeism because such discussion fits more easily into a United States model of popular Protestantism.¹⁰ It may be contended that violence was most important where Orangeism struggled for a foothold: in competition with Catholics for civic power in the colonies, in the new urban polities of the Atlantic World, and in the changing Northern Ireland political climate. This is when, and why, violence carried such a clear prospect of gain. Thus it was that, from as early as 1807 in Manchester, but regularly throughout the century, street-level punch-ups gradually gave way to set-piece standoffs, dozens of adversaries grew into hundreds, and brickbats sometimes became deaths.¹¹

As it spread, Orangeism was one of the earliest and most complete transnational associations. From the early 1800s it became one of the most interesting examples of what scholars, in a reimagining of the old terminologies of empire, now described as the British world.¹² It was an example of “cultural transfer” through imperialism and migration: a body of ideas and attitudes, a way of viewing the world, and a palpable institutional framework that accompanied soldiers manning colonial frontiers and helped migrants negotiate their new surroundings through camaraderie and “clubbability.”¹³

The Orange Order’s distribution across the Atlantic represented a firm example of the durability of migrants’ cultural accompaniments. Its evolution into a genuinely global movement engaged in transnational conversations represents a noteworthy example of the circuits of communication that suggests viewing colonies or nation-states as discrete and disconnected entities is unhelpful in articulating a true sense of how people such as Orangemen saw their world and made sense of it.

In a paper written thirty years ago, the two most notable scholars of Canadian Orangeism, Houston and Smyth, noted the same characteristics I and others have commented upon in England, Scotland, and Australia—that the organization’s “rituals, rules and administrative structure provided for the settlers a sense of familiar order and direction, as well as a source of mutual aid in times of crisis.”¹⁴ This explains why, within only a few years of its formation in Ulster, the emotional attachments, noted by Houston and Smyth, led soldiers and emigrant weavers to carry Orangeism to Scotland and northern England. These early pioneers, particularly the warrant-carrying soldiers of units that had served in Ireland during the savage repression of the United Irishmen’s rising of 1798, were a key component in the concerted transferral of Orangeism beyond Irish borders. Once this aspect is recognized, it becomes additionally comprehensible that military units should be instrumental also in carrying the institution to Canada early in the 1800s and, by the 1820s, to Australia. By the 1840s the same process pushed the movement to the farthest outpost of empire, New Zealand.¹⁵

At midcentury Orangeism was pervasive across the British world, and from the 1880s virtually no significant urban center from Timaru to Toronto was without a lodge. Moreover, with the ethnicization of an Irish nationalist and Catholic community even more in evidence through religious and political infrastructures, Orangemen began to replace their old exhortations against the United Irishmen, supplemented their ubiquitous “no-popery” sloganizing, with a much more acutely party-political concern to preserve the Union between Britain and Ireland. As the Green diaspora took shape, the Orange Order sought to ensure that the wearing of the green was matched by a parading of the orange.¹⁶

In one sense the migration of Orangeism and other fraternal societies is a conundrum. For the spread of Old World mutualism does not really fit a utopian

model of colonialism, where migrants were supposed to find individual fulfilment through cheap land or high wages and hard work.¹⁷ Yet even those who fully expected to find the type of life described by the colonial propaganda still sought succor in fraternalism; whereas migrants bereft of utopian illusions, or driven simply by hostility to Old World mores, sought protection in the reconfiguration of existing social and cultural ties. The rise of New World Orangeism certainly accords with the most recent thinking on migration, which stresses transplantation and networking over uprooting and chaos.

Whether migrants were idealistic utopians, robust opportunists, or begrudging exiles, they clearly viewed clubs and societies as useful cultural and economic capital, as examples of both sociability and collective self-help. Continuing the Old World custom of “joining” (that is, having a habit of forming and joining clubs) made a great deal of sense in a rural or small-town setting at the colonial frontier. In the large cities, such as Toronto, the challenges of urban community building resulted in a variety of lodge- and club-based activities, of which the Orange Order was just one. For working-class Irish Protestant migrants, the order was the first response they knew because it combined social need with religious values.

All this was part of a growing trend. In the world that had made the migrants—the Old World of Ireland or Britain—this was an age of associations and friendly societies. Orangeism was just one of many societies; the largest were independent orders, such as the Oddfellows and Foresters. When the age of mass migration dawned, the confraternities were reaching peak powers as providers of collective financial self-help to the working classes.¹⁸ Like Orangeism, the independent orders also accompanied members who embarked on the colonization of the British world. Thus Orangeism was simply part of a process that David Fitzpatrick recognizes as “one of Europe’s major exports to the ‘New World.’”¹⁹

This movement into the wider world began to feed back to the Grand Lodge in Ireland. In the 1860s the regularity of communication from the colonies to Ireland seemed to demonstrate the existence of an Orange world.²⁰ The transplanting of Orange culture led the Grand Lodge to develop an international Triennial Council to maintain and enhance these global connections. The coalescence of this international movement was demonstrated in 1865, when the Orangemen of Ireland hosted the inaugural international jamboree at Downpatrick in county Down. Leaders from all over the Orange world headed a cast list of hundreds.²¹ The gathering passed a motion: to “take into consideration the state of Orangeism and Protestantism, with a view to devising means for the furtherance of the cause of Truth, and the extension of the Orange Society.”²² As the councils evolved, they met in other countries: Canada, Scotland, and England each hosted. By the early 1880s representatives from North America, Australia, and faraway New Zealand attended.²³

Financial mutualism imputed to Orangeism some of the hallmarks of a class organization. However, in situations where class and economic interests were stressed, sectarianism acted at a secondary level to underpin certain advantages for the members. Sectional strategies among men in shared occupations were underscored by sectarianism, a characteristic that represents one of the many reasons why Orangeism imported homeland traditions of violence to the colonial setting. In Canada, despite modifications brought about by specific national or colonial circumstances, violence followed the migrants because Orangeism supported Protestant artisans and workers who (as they became colonials) sought to maintain the same “marginal privilege” over Catholics that had shaped Orange ideology in the homeland.²⁴

As immigrants themselves, Irish and other Protestants who joined colonial Orange Orders almost universally directed their violence at Catholics, most of them Irish, whose culture they were programmed to disprove of and who they saw as competition for work, housing, and political leverage. In each colony or country of settlement, the local setting was different, and so complaints and protests against Catholic were often couched in specific and New World terms; however, the essential fault lines remained. This is why one of the leading historians of the movement, Hereward Senior, rejected the altruistic and benign readings of the Canadian movement that its founder, Wexford-born Ogle Gowan, had promulgated. Senior asserted that Orangeism was not a politically neutral mutualist fraternity. This image, Senior argued, did “less than justice to the potentialities of the lodges as a fighting organization”²⁵ and thus underplayed the important role that violence and struggle played in Orangeism inside and outside Ireland.

Such a perspective aligns with examples drawn from England. In most cases Orangeism took seed and flowered in a loam rich in hereditary grievance against Catholics, gaining further fertility in negative reaction to perceived and immediate threats. Orangemen were everywhere fewer in number than their Catholic counterparts. As committed anti-Catholics, these militant Protestants feared and loathed the spread of Catholicism, which the arrival of so many of their non-Protestant countrymen ensured; moreover, Fenianism and nationalist secret-society traditions fostered an additional layer of commitment from Orangemen. A sense of isolation and defiance spurred the development of Orange lodges, during the 1860s, in many remote communities in England. Lodges were also drawn together by conviviality, fraternity and mutual interest. But the Orange press, which reported their exertions in the small industrial outlier of Crook, in the remote west of the county, reflected an inherent balance between alarm and determination: “We understand that the . . . lodge is opened in the midst of a hot-bed of Papists, with a mass house among them that will hold 1000 people.”²⁶ The same type of language was uttered repeatedly on the platform of Orange Order

meetings. The Reverend Robert Thomson, addressing a large crowd gathered to celebrate the Glorious Twelfth in Glasgow in 1878, met disdain from the press when he offered a prayer that “the Pope might perish amid the intrigues of the Jesuits and the devil, whose servant he is.”²⁷ Twenty years later, also in Glasgow, the Reverend A. G. Townsend of the Clydeside town of Partick expressed the same sort of sentiment when defending himself against the charge of raising “the cry of ‘No-Popery.’” He made no apology because, he argued, this was “the cry of liberty against tyranny.”²⁸

Such views were deeply historic. From its foundation Orangeism offered a counterpoint to radical revolutionary or republican unrest across the Atlantic World in the aftermath of the French Revolution. It was in direct response to the United Irishmen’s threat to plant a “green bough” in “England’s crown” that Orangemen developed another arboreal metaphor, the “Orange Tree,” as a counterweight.

The political focus of R. R. Palmer’s “age of democratic revolutions” has been expanded with a growing historiography that stresses the cultural interactions that accompanied the growth of an Atlantic World.²⁹ Historians such as Marianne Elliott, David A Wilson, Kerby Miller, and Patrick Griffin have enormously expanded our understanding of Ireland and Ulster, of Catholic and Protestant, and of the elements of the cultural and political exchange that accompanied the expanding frontiers of migration and colonization in the Atlantic World.³⁰ The loyalists who stood against the American Revolution and defended Canada’s unique loyalist credentials were the forerunners of Orangemen who, from about 1800, would try to find a place as defenders of the same values in a world of continuing political turbulence and rapid social change.

Early Orangeism in Britain fitted a typology of resistance to change: Protestant and loyal, Tory and anti-Jacobin, and ultrareactionary in the face of social protest. Loyalism in Britain, of which Orangeism was just one component, manifested itself as a buffer against both political and materialist modes of radicalism, both republicanism and trade unionism. Moreover, Orangeism played a practical role. In the early 1800s its members in the north of England served in militias and volunteered as special constables to support the forces of law and order against Luddites and trade unionists. They locked arms with magistrates against the militant critics of the new economic order, particularly the machine-wrecking Luddites of the early 1800s. In a more typically Orange way, the organization also sought and gained mileage in the long Ultra-Tory struggle against Catholic emancipation prior to 1829.

Although the granting of emancipation to Catholics in that year left British and Irish Orangeism demoralized, there then unfolded a period of experimentation in which Orangeism became, for a while, the major implement in popular counterrevolutionary agitation designed to save the country from a revolution

that many Tories believed the Reform agitation of 1830–32 would yield. However, the union of elite and lumpen loyalists was never complete. The maverick leadership of Irish soldier William Blennerhasset Fairman prevented the dreamed-of progress, and the Orange Order's commitment to (then-illegal) oaths eliminated any prospect of a move into the mainstream. At this time various elite Tories toyed with the idea of Orangeism as a popular front; in the early 1830s the organization perhaps enjoyed more of this sort of support, certainly in England, than at any other point. Fairman toured the country, drawing support from gentry and nobility. England, however, lacked the threat of a turbulent peasantry or Defenderism (Catholic secret societies), and so the idea of organizing tenant farmers into lodges came to nought in England. In the towns, where Orangeism was strong, there was less opposition to reform; in fact many Tories were reformers in the sense that they opposed the factory culture of a mainly Whig-Liberal industrial class and sided with the working man in the fight against the tyranny of the machine.³¹ In the mid-1830s, following pressure upon Lord Melbourne's government from Irish members of Parliament, a select committee was set up to investigate the activities of this clandestine organization, and in the face of great public criticism, especially concerning lodge warrants in the army, and the position of the maverick Duke of Cumberland, the Grand Lodge dissolved itself.

In the north of England the Orange Order continued to be a force against political radicalism, trade unionism, and factory capitalism, the combined results of a vicious new industrial order. It was in the north, as part of this critique of urban-industrial modernism, that Squire Auty, the Bradford publisher and secretary of the Ten Hours' movement, established the Grand Protestant Association of the Loyal Orange Institute.³²

The 1840s and 1850s were the famine decades, when Irish Catholic immigration became the main source of complaint and reaction from Irish and other Protestants of an Orange disposition. To them the age-old requirement for a Protestant bulwark became even more pressing. Irish Catholics, settling in large concentrations of the unskilled and poor, posed numerous perceived threats. Working-class men feared for their jobs and reacted violently, with Orangeism hoping to benefit. Protestants beyond the confines of the order abhorred the religious implications of so many new Catholics requiring ministry and schooling. Entire towns, cities, and regions were transformed by these population flows, and the change was not restricted to Britain.

Many of the same impulses affected Protestants on the other side of the Atlantic. There was a convergence in experiences and responses during the Great Famine because the problems of mass pauperism and Catholic migration were essentially the same. Prior to that, however, militant American Protestantism also was stirring. But in the 1830s, prior to the creation of a national pan-Protestant

nativist movement, the main anti-Catholic societies outside New York were formed by Irishmen. Here the Orange Association of Philadelphia and the Boston Irish Protestant Society, which primarily organized “no-poper” lectures, offered a particular echo of the British dimension.³³

In America, as in Britain, the pressures of social change encouraged a mood of anxiety. In Massachusetts, for instance, centuries of hegemonic Puritanism was pressed increasingly hard by the social effects of industrialization, notably by urban growth and mass Catholic immigration. Drawing upon their foundational anti-Catholic tradition, the nativists of this state became key players in the Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s. American nativism included Orangeism but was not exclusively Orange. The waves of protest and violence against Catholics, which involved the hideous excesses of mob violence and convent burning described in Ray Allen Billington’s *Protestant Crusade*, included a very clear anti-Irish dimension.³⁴ But the differences between Irish Catholics and Protestants blurred, and both sides suffered to some extent simply because they were immigrants. There was another aspect to American nativism. Billington argued that Americans had some justification for their concern over the violence of the immigrants, both Catholic and Protestant, “for immigrants did tend to continue the feuds of the old country on the soil of the new.” So it was that “native citizens began to hear of Orangemen and Ribbonmen and Corkonians” and “began to witness street brawls and warfare between the rougher elements of the foreign-born.”³⁵ Certainly, by the 1830s, violence between and against Irishmen was a commonplace of life in the northeastern parts of the young Republic.

Yet some of the most extraordinary cases of violence during the Great Famine occurred in Canada. Scott W. See’s detailed analysis of communal violence in New Brunswick during the 1840s contains a litany of serious violence and bloodshed, with death tolls that were higher than elsewhere in the anglophone world. In towns such as Fredericton, Woodstock, and Saint John, the Orange Order engaged in the sort of tooth-and-claw struggle for social ascendancy that had motivated the earliest Orange violence in the 1790s. Two examples stand out. In July 1847 two armed forces of three hundred faced each other—Catholics on one side, Orangemen on the other—and fought a pitched battle with weapons in the township of Woodstock. Two years later, on July 12, 1849, an even bloodier clash erupted between two much larger forces at Saint John. In the first case ten people died; in the second, at least a dozen were killed. These standoffs were about the right to parade, but behind that right was the usual Orange concern that “where you can parade you can control.” As the police and army held back the hostile Catholic crowds, more than just the right to assemble and parade was at stake. The result, in both cases, “heralded a triumph of nativist ideology and proved the efficacy of vigilante tactics.”³⁶

During the 1850s renewed waves of anti-Catholic sentiment washed over both Britain and the United States. In the context of the Great Famine, generation-crossing reputations for anti-Catholicism were hardened and normalized. This was true of Liverpool, where the Orange bloc, feeling the fullest migratory effects of the famine, became very much stronger. Working-class disgruntlement at the risk of workplace competition merged with the wails of middle-class taxpayers who shouldered the burden of the spiraling cost of poor relief, and the city, which was already a key player in the “no-popery” movement, expanded its sectarian reputation.

Liverpool may have been the premier example of Britain’s expanding Orange tradition, but anti-Catholic and communal violence were more widespread.³⁷ The events of 1850 ensured this would be case. Anti-Catholic sentiment, which only ever slept lightly in England, was awakened in a furious mood that year by the pope’s declaration of the “Restoration of the Papal Hierarchy” in England and Wales—what the *Times* called the “Papal Aggression.”³⁸ In Stockport, local Tories, emboldened by the anti-Catholic mood, played the Orange card and the town was consumed by bitter riots.³⁹ Elsewhere in the northwest—in towns such as Oldham and Preston—Orange sectarianism became part of the cultural broadcloth. Irish Catholics, many of them extremely poor or restricted to lower grades of work, were pressed by the forces of popular Protestantism to such an extent that Neville Kirk contends that, for nearly twenty years after 1850, sectarianism acted as a significant brake upon class consciousness in the mill towns of the north.⁴⁰

Whatever the cause or context of Orange violence, it was a common aspect of life in the Irish diaspora. In the nineteenth century, situations of violent intent occurred across the British world and in the United States. Riots in places as diverse as Philadelphia in the 1840s and Tasmania and New Zealand in the 1870s suggest that Canada, Scotland, and Lancashire, England, were part of a network of robustly anti-Catholic cultures.⁴¹ Prolonged riots occurred regularly. The first major riots outside Ireland occurred in Manchester in 1807 and Liverpool in 1819. Scotland saw significant trouble in 1831; each decade from the 1840s to the 1880s witnessed Orange violence throughout the country.⁴² All of these years, and many others, saw major disturbances, and occasionally deaths, in British and Ulster towns and cities. A four-pound cannon, volleys of gunfire, assaults upon the police, numerous instances of wounding, and one death marred events at Girvan, Ayrshire, in Scotland in 1831.⁴³ Fifty years later, in 1884, it was pretty much the same, minus the cannon, when in Cleator Moor in Cumberland a local postman and Irish nationalist organizer, a seventeen-year-old lad named Henry Tumelty, was killed by an Orangeman’s gun.⁴⁴

So far, however, we have focused on parallel instances of violence; we have not really addressed transnational cultures. One of the most common agents of

discord was the no-popery preacher. For a time a legion of unscrupulous mavericks tapped into the popular consciousness in an age of great fear about religion and social change, inciting riots with their uncompromising spleen against the Roman Catholic faith. Moreover, some of them appeared in more than one territory. A few of them thus developed international reputations.

The market they tapped was not new. Public expression of anti-Catholic animus had been part of English Protestant culture since the sixteenth century: pope-burning processions have been with us since the 1590s, the “Popish Plots” of the 1670s demonstrated a widening of popular concern, and nothing in Victorian Britain was a match for the terrible violence of the Gordon Riots in London in 1780.⁴⁵ The loins of England issued a people well versed in the language of “wooden shoes” and “brass money,” who carried the imagery and actions with them to the colonies of settlement.

No-popery lecturing was a form of public performance and entertainment. In its Victorian form it was a product of modernity. Such activity was easier and more imposing in densely populated urban communities. The Belfast riots of 1857 offer a clear-cut example of the components of street corners, demagogues, and crowd size.⁴⁶ In the modern urban world, public forums also became more common. Lyceums, mechanics’ institutes, Oddfellows’ and temperance halls, the local town hall, literary or scientific institutes—these were just some of the many places that almost daily held lectures and public talks on politics, religion, science, antiquaries and history, and even “the errors of Rome.”⁴⁷ Good ticket sales, cult status, and large, noisy crowds encouraged many men to try out the profession. But like moths drawn by the light of the candle, some of them got their wings burnt.

A string of no-popery preachers made precarious livings in the heightened circumstances of “Papal Aggression” and famine migration. The Baron De Camin, a maverick apostate Catholic priest, lectured on two continents and disappeared in the United States. John Sayers Orr, the self-styled “Archangel Gabriel,” provides another example of transatlantic demagoguery in action. On July 12, 1851, with the “Papal Aggression” crisis still fomenting violence and discord, Orr stirred up serious Orange-versus-Green violence in the Clydeside town of Greenock. The crowd evinced such fury that the fighting lasted for two days.⁴⁸ The Catholic chapel and the priest’s house were badly damaged, and Irish workers’ homes were ransacked. The local authorities laid off the Irish employed on public works, while a Protestant mob numbering six hundred or more assailed Irish workers in nearby Inverkip. Three years later, in May 1854, Boston, Massachusetts, hosted another of Orr’s notorious lectures. Here a crowd followed him from place to place, clashes took place with Irish laborers, and his supporters tried to burn a Catholic church. At New York and Brooklyn, large and restive crowds were held at bay by “a whole army of special police,” but there were still clashes on the approaches to the ferries that would carry home Orr’s followers.⁴⁹

Behind these no-popery lectures lay organizations and money. In London the Protestant Evangelical Mission and Electoral Union provided money for many of them; other evangelical organizations did the same on a local basis. The Orange Order also played a sponsoring role, but this largely has been ignored. Reading press reports reveals the Orangemen provided a kind of praetorian guard drawn from local lodges. The wild Victorian demagogue William Murphy, for example, had some relationship with Orangemen in his adoptive Birmingham home.⁵⁰ In 1869 Murphy was said to have been brought to North Shields by Orangemen when a riot erupted, but the Orange Order's leaders denied it.⁵¹ However, the denials have been demolished recently in an account of Murphy's career in Birmingham, which clearly demonstrates the Orange connection.⁵² Further evidence of the order's involvement emerges in Cumberland, where, in 1871, Whitehaven Orangemen formed a bodyguard to protect Murphy after he had been jumped and beaten by a contingent of Irish Catholic miners. The Belfast Orange press got wind of Murphy's beating and chided their compatriots in Cumberland. Such a thing would not happen "with impunity in Ulster," wrote James Henderson, editor of the *Belfast Weekly News*, "because here we have the organization thoroughly defensive in its character [i.e., Orangeism], which would enable the people of Whitehaven to protect their persons and their properties."⁵³ The Cumbrian response was to form numerous local lodges.⁵⁴

Orangeism was also behind much popular anti-Catholic activity, including serious riots, in Canada. One of Canada's most famous no-popery preachers, the French Canadian former Catholic priest Pastor Chiniquy, is not remembered as a conspirator of Orangemen in his own country, but in 1879 he was invited to New Zealand by Orangemen who had heard about his riotous reception from Catholics in Hobart, Tasmania.⁵⁵

Violence was a near-endemic feature of Orange-Green relations in nineteenth-century Ulster,⁵⁶ though it could be equally as fraught elsewhere. In Ireland both Orangeism and Defenderism resulted in a series of laws to restrict the parading tradition and seditious public meetings, but neither there nor in Britain was the swagger of the Twelfth ever truly accepted by the ruling elite as a sign of unquestioned loyalty. Populists and tub-thumpers were happy enough to sidle up to Orangemen, occasionally seeking political leverage with their support.⁵⁷ From the perspective of a diaspora the effect of all this is clear: The outlandishness of Orange demonstrations stands in stark contrast to widespread acceptance of St. Patrick's Day, particularly in the twentieth century.⁵⁸ In Canada, in places such as New Brunswick, the Ottawa Valley, or on the shores of Lake Ontario, the Orange Order reflected what Europeans would imagine to be a North American-style frontier spirit.⁵⁹ It sought and gained a prominent position as society was in flux. Similar observations could be made of Australasia, where, as in Canada, Orangeism was faced with the challenges of a new society and the residual allegiance to the verities of the British imperial state (as was not the case in America).

The struggles of Canadian Orangemen down through the decades had the effect of ensuring, as Kealey said, that “riot had become ritual.”⁶⁰ The sanctity of the Glorious Twelfth, encroachment into annual celebration of the Irishman’s St. Patrick’s Day, and the noisy remembrance of Guy Fawkes Night—each ensured a heated civic context for the Orange Order.⁶¹ During the 1850s Canadian Protestants, already fired up by the “Papal Aggression” crisis in Britain and the rising tide of nativism in the United States, were given additional cause for fury by the self-defensive decision of Irish Catholics to begin their own parading tradition around St. Patrick’s Day. The situation reached such a pitch in 1858 that one Orangeman, Matthew Sheedy, was murdered on the streets of Toronto in an act that revealed the beleaguered nature of the city’s Catholic communities.⁶²

Throughout the British world these rituals of celebration and remembrance were set into a context of anti-Fenian hysteria, continuing and replenishing Irish immigration, and the rather more diffuse vagaries of urban-industrial society. Violence of this type in Britain also reflected the social disequilibrium of urban society mixed with age-old fears about popery. These same emotions were transferred from motherland to the imperial outliers, making for a remarkably consistent body of prejudices. In England specifically the problem was compounded by local civic issues and the issue of education. A cry of “Rome on the Rates” led Orangemen into battle against state support for Catholic schooling. But even then, though the rhetoric was harsh, the jousting was never bloody, as were the encounters resulting from Orange participation in Canada’s school question. It was this, after all, which led to the Caraquet Riots of 1875, as Protestants fought to protect New Brunswick’s Common Schools Act (1871), which effectively barred Catholic schools.⁶³ More seriously, Orangemen were involved in both the rebellions, in 1869–70 and 1885, in what would become Manitoba.⁶⁴ The rebellions were fought over land rights and governance and the division between French, Scots-Indian, and British-originated factions. The first rebellion began when the Canadian politician and founder of Manitoba, Louis Riel, had an Orange opponent executed; the second was finished when the government sent an Ontarian force to defeat and capture Riel, a majority of the soldiers being Orangemen. This dimension of Orangeism was way beyond events in Britain or Ireland; in fact it demonstrated the potentialities of an organization in a frontier land in flux.

It was one of the curiosities of the Orange Order that the organization fought violently for the freedom to march but sometimes fought almost equally as violently to prevent the other side from doing likewise. The worst example of Orange-related violence in Toronto’s history, for example, followed the pope’s declaration of 1875 as a jubilee year and the subsequent decision of Catholics there to undertake a “pilgrimage through quiet Toronto streets on the Sabbath carrying symbols of Popery.”⁶⁵ More generally there was significant anti-Catholic turbulence in the 1890s, when the nativist American Protective Association

(APA) spread to Canada.⁶⁶ By then Orangeism was no longer exclusively Irish and had developed a concern for Canadian, rather than just Irish, political issues.⁶⁷ The APA, however, tapped into Canada's own French-flavored anti-Catholic traditions and certainly did not create them.

Fighting between Irishmen in the new communities of North America or in Britain was neither novel nor rare. Many instances could be cited, but just a few serve to illustrate the durability of the party disagreements of the "auld country." Fighting between Irishmen was confusingly interlinked with nativist anti-Irishness in the 1820s and 1830s in the United States. In the early 1840s in Toronto, Irish Catholics and Orangemen fought pitched street battles during elections.⁶⁸ From the 1810s till the outbreak of World War I, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other British hotspots were marked by annual examples of hard fighting and violence. Even in the United States, where Orangeism was weaker than elsewhere and obscured by homegrown nativist anti-Catholic sentiment, there were riots that looked very similar to those habitually punctuating life in cities such as Toronto or Liverpool. The most extraordinary examples occurred during the Orange Day riots in New York in 1870 and 1871 and served to remind Americans that party squabbles survived relatively unscathed in the cultural baggage of the emigrants from Ireland.⁶⁹ The violence of the 1870s was, however, about more than petty squabbles among immigrants. The *New York Times* sought to distance America, and Americans, from a cultural attachment "which recall[s] to the Irish Catholic mind bitter memories of his native land" (again we hear the echoes of "foreignness," which regularly accompanied Orange and Green in their violent expressions of identity). Planting the blame for the riotous events of 1870 firmly in the court of the Orangemen, the newspaper struggled to comprehend the Orange Order's presence in the young Republic while demonstrating acute awareness of precisely where Orangeism fitted in: "Bad as it is in Ireland, or in Liverpool, or in the backwoods of Canada, there it is at least intelligible. . . . Let Ireland and Canada keep this curse of Orangeism to themselves."⁷⁰ The order existed in the United States, but it made little headway and probably remained mostly an Irish faction. Compared to the Ontarian version, it was, with forty-three lodges in 1873, rather small. However, the movement was late arriving in the United States, the modern version of the Loyal Orange Institution being introduced only in the 1870s.⁷¹ By 1920 wider connections had been made—probably through British and Irish Protestant migrations to the United States and via Canadians migrating south—because in that year the order in the United States had burgeoned to some 350 lodges. This was fewer lodges than in Canada, England, or Ireland, but it was not an inconsiderable number. There were undoubtedly more popular anti-Catholic organizations among the nativist traditions in the United States, but the Orange Order merits a mention.

In Britain riots continued to mark places traditionally associated with ethnic friction. Liverpool often presented the clearest examples of such violence. Nearby

Birkenhead was the site of a meeting of Orange and Green enemies from Liverpool and elsewhere when, in 1902, the professional no-popery lecturer John Kents received a mortal blow on the head from an iron file weighing two pounds.⁷² Overall, Liverpool was remarkably riot torn in the Edwardian years and after. As Joan Smith once remarked, “The pattern of politics was one of alternating riot: anti-Catholic riot, strike riot, anti-German riot, post-war riots, anti-black riot, unemployed riot.”⁷³ Liverpool was a particularly turbulent place, but the riot was a tool of operation in many spheres and places.

Even as it took shape in Ireland, as a deeply sectarian bulwark against what its adherents viewed as a threat from a fusion of Catholicism, republicanism, and revolution, the Orange Order was also shaped by considerations beyond Irish popular Protestantism. Had it been simply an Irish, Protestant, and sectarian organization, then it surely could not have maintained sway within working-class communities around the Atlantic World until World War II. Had it been thus restricted, we might have expected it to have died out more quickly than it did, as first-generation Irish-born Protestants died out. Instead it resonated beyond these limited communities.

This chapter has shown that Orangeism clearly demonstrates the importance and effects of a Protestant and loyalist tradition in many parts of the world where Irish people settled in large numbers. Space constraints have not allowed for discussions about the political aspect of Orangeism, but working-class, conservative voting blocs clearly emerged in Canada, Lancashire, and New Zealand and were supported, if not always created, by Orangemen. Orangeism is a useful surrogate for examining patterns of Irish Protestant migration around the British and Irish worlds. Consequently it provides a useful window onto the world of this less well-known Irish group, which remains a notable example of the “hidden Irish” of the wider diaspora.

Orangeism is not, however, a perfect fit, a synonym, for Irish Protestantism around the world. As a consequence there must have been a connection between Orangeism and the wider strains of nativist Protestantism, but historians have said little about it. This is particularly pertinent to the American scene, where Orangeism is little studied but was not as weak or unimportant as is imagined. The streams of puritan and Protestant no-popery, which Billington, Curran, and Higham have written about so vividly, clearly connected with the ideologies of Orangeism in other countries.⁷⁴ I am not convinced that it is enough to say that Orangeism, with its traditions of imperial loyalty, had no place in a Protestant republic and so drifted into nativist organizations such as the APA. Higham is convinced that British-born and Canadian Orangemen flocked to the APA in the 1890s;⁷⁵ there is no reason to question this, but it does not prevent those same Orangemen from maintaining an Orange position against Rome and against home rule for Ireland. After all, Orangeism in the United States was growing at this time. The gradations are likely subtler than that, as poor Irish Catholics

who participated in the fierce Orange riots of 1870 and 1871 saw “Orangemen as surrogates for wealthy Protestant New Yorkers and nativists whom they believed threatened to oppress them as industrial workers and to subvert republicanism.”⁷⁶ Scholar Michael A. Gordon’s words provide an interesting connection to the themes discussed here. But work remains to be done on the subject in other American contexts. I would contend, however, that while the comparable push to associational culture echoes Akenson’s thesis of “small differences,” the divisions of religious cultures enforces it. Ethnicization within nineteenth-century Irish communities suggests that the “small differences” in the socioeconomic world became chasms of separation in the political and ideological struggle over faith and fatherland.⁷⁷

NOTES

1. On which subject, see Michael Farrell, *The Orange State*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 1980).

2. Henry Patterson and Eric Kaufmann, *Unionism and Orangeism in Northern Ireland since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). For the fullest and best treatment of postwar Northern Irish Orangeism, see Eric Kaufmann, *The Orange Order: A Contemporary Northern Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

3. Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The Faithful Tribe: An Intimate Portrait of the Loyal Institutions* (London: HarperCollins, 1999); Kaufmann, *Orange Order*.

4. External criticisms of the Orange marching tradition came into sharper focus with the formation of the Parades Commission; for this has formalized grievances against the routes of parades and has required a repeated debate about legal rights and moral obligations.

5. In June 2006 it was reported that the Northern Irish social development minister had made a grant of one hundred thousand pounds to the Orange Order to promote the transformation of the “Glorious Twelfth” into a Mardi Gras–type event. This decision was met with some derision in the press; for example, Liam Clark, comment, *Sunday Times*, July 9, 2006.

6. William Warren Porter, foreword to *The Orange Order: A Tradition Betrayed*, by Brian Kennaway (London: Methuen, 2006), vii, viii.

7. The stress upon fraternity and financial mutualism is considered at length in “The Associationalism of the Orange Diaspora,” in *Orangeism in Canada*, ed. David A. Wilson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

8. Elaine McFarland, *Protestants First! Orangeism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

9. Thus in January 1864 Robert M’Kay told a large meeting of the Grand Protestant Association of Loyal Orangemen in South Shields, Tyneside, in the northeast of England, of precisely the problem when he said that although “many persons thought that there was something peculiar about Orangeism—something repugnant,” he stressed respectability when he said that they, the gathered, “did not forget to make provision for the body in time of sickness and in the hour of death, for they had connected with their association a benefit society.” *North and South Shields Gazette*, January 29, 1864. For context,

see Simon Cordery, "Friendly Societies and the Discourse of Respectability in Britain, 1825–1875," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (January 1995): 35–58.

10. On which, see R. A. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade: A Study in the Origins of Nativism, 1800–1860* (New York: Macmillan, 1938); and John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

11. Frank Neal, "Manchester Origins of the Orange Order," *Manchester Region History Review* 4, no. 2 (1990–91).

12. For a recent, persuasive discussion of the idea of the British World, see Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich, eds., *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), especially the introduction.

13. On its origins in Ireland, see Sean Farrell, *Rituals and Riots: Sectarian Violence and Political Culture in Ulster, 1784–1886* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

14. C. J. Houston and W. J. Smyth, *The Orange Order in Nineteenth-Century Ontario: A Study in Institutional Cultural Transfer*, University of Toronto, Department of Geography, Discussion Paper 2, February 1977, 1.

15. On which development, see Rory Sweetman, "Towards a History of Orangeism in New Zealand," in *Ulster–New Zealand Migration and Cultural Transfers*, ed. Brad Patterson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 54–64.

16. On the wearing of the green, see Daryl Adair and M. Cronin's important global study *The Wearing of the Green: A History of St. Patrick's Day* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

17. The utopian ideal was particularly in evidence in New Zealand, which became a magnetic example of such views. Its social state became strongly influential among liberal and progressive reform movements in Britain and even the United States. See Peter J. Coleman, "New Zealand Liberalism and the Origins of the American Welfare State," *Journal of American History* 69, no. 2 (September 1982): 372–91; and Peter J. Coleman, *Progressivism and the World of Reform: New Zealand and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1987).

18. P. H. J. H. Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England, 1815–75* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962); Simon Cordery, "Friendly Societies and the Discourse of Respectability in Britain, 1825–1875," *Journal of British Studies* 34 (January 1995): 35–58; Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750–1914* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan, 2003); Paul Johnson, *Saving and Spending: The Working-Class Economy in Britain, 1870–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

19. David Fitzpatrick, "Exporting Brotherhood: Orangeism in South Australia," in *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities since 1750*, ed. E. Delaney and D. M. MacRaild (London: Routledge, 2007), 129–62.

20. Donald M. MacRaild, "Networks, Communication and the Irish Protestant Diaspora in Northern England, c. 1860–1914," in *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities since 1750*, ed. E. Delaney and D. M. MacRaild (London: Routledge, 2007), 163–89.

21. Attendees included Ogle Gowan, of the Canadian movement, Squire Auty, founder of the English GPA, and the Ulster-born professor Rev. Thomas Macklin of the Andersonian College in Glasgow, a pioneer of the movement in Scotland. *Report of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Conference . . . 1866* (Downpatrick, Ireland: Loyal Orange Institution [LOI], 1866), 1.

22. *Ibid.*, 2.

23. *Reported in Report on the Proceedings of the Imperial Grand Council of Orangeism . . . 1867* (Downpatrick: LOI, 1868); *Report of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Conference . . . 1870* (Toronto: LOI, 1870); *Report of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Conference . . . 1873* (Glasgow: LOI, 1873), 1; *Report of the Triennial Meeting of the Imperial Grand Orange Council . . . 1882* (London: LOI, 1882), 10–11.

24. For the best interpretations of the Irish (Orange and Green) dimensions of ethnic-class struggle in a broader context, see Joan Smith, “Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool,” *History Workshop* 17 (Spring 1984): 32–56; Joan Smith, “Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1890–1914,” in *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth-Century Towns*, ed. R. J. Morris (Leicester, U.K.: Leicester University Press, 1986), 157–204; and Tom Gallagher, “A Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914,” in *Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 106–29.

25. Hereward Senior, “The Genesis of Canadian Orangeism,” *Ontario History* 60 (1968): 25.

26. *Orange and Protestant Banner*, November 1864.

27. *Scotsman*, July 13, 1878.

28. *Scotsman*, July 11, 1898.

29. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolutions: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, vol. 1, *The Challenge*, and vol. 2, *The Struggle* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959, 1964).

30. Marianne Elliot, *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), lucidly adds to the Irish dimension of this transatlantic radical political culture. This tradition is engaged in sustained analysis by others: David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998); David A. Wilson and Mark G. Spencer, eds., *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006); Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland’s Ulster Scots, America’s Scotch Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); K. A. Miller, A. Schrier, B. D. Boling, and D. N. Doyle, eds., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

31. This paragraph draws substantially upon Senior, *Orangeism*, chap. 11.

32. The Grand Protestant Association (GPA) grew out of the similarly named Grand Protestant Confederation (GPC), formed in 1835 after a damning select committee investigation led to the dissolution of the Grand Lodge. The GPC/GPA remained one of two separate Orange organizations in Britain at this time (the other being the Liverpool-based Loyal Orange Institution [LOI]). The GPA was based Bradford in the 1850s and was run by a local Tory called Squire Auty. The GPA and LOI were amalgamated in 1876. For context, see Donald M. MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c. 1850–1920* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 49–51. For Auty, see J. T. Ward, “Squire Auty,” *Bradford Antiquary* 42 (1964): 104–23.

33. Billington, *Protestant Crusade*, 78n48.

34. *Ibid.*, passim.

35. *Ibid.*, 193–94.

36. See *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), 3–4.

37. Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819–1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988).

38. Russell in a letter to the Bishop of Durham, published in the *Times*, November 4, 1850; W. R. Ralls, “The Papal Aggression of 1850: A Study in Victorian Anti-Catholicism,” *Church History* 43 (1974): 249–53; D. G. Paz, “Another look at Lord John Russell and the Papal Aggression, 1850,” *Historian* 45, no. 1 (November 1982): 47–64.

39. P. Millward, “The Stockport Riots of 1852: A Study of Anti-Catholic and Anti-Irish Sentiment,” in *Irish in the Victorian City*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

40. N. Kirk, “Ethnicity, Class and Popular Toryism, 1850–1870,” in *Hosts, Immigrants and Minorities: Historical Responses to Newcomers in British Society, 1870–1914*, ed. K. Lunn (Folkestone, U.K.: Harvester, 1980); N. Kirk, *The Growth of Working-Class Reformism in Mid-Victorian England* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

41. The British and Canadian works are cited elsewhere in this essay. But for New Zealand, see Séan Brosnahan, “The ‘Battle of the Borough’ and the ‘Saige O Timaru’: Sectarian Riot in Colonial Canterbury,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 28, no. 1 (1994): 44–59.

42. For Orange violence in Toronto, see Gregory S. Kealey, “Orange Order in Toronto Religious Riot and the Working Class,” in *Essays in Canadian Working-Class History*, ed. Gregory S. Kealey and P. Warrigan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983), 13–34. As a counterpoint to this, the creation of Irish Catholic culture in the city is examined in B. Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850–1895* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993); and Mark McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish, and Identity in Toronto, 1887–1922* (Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999).

43. *Times*, July 20, 1831.

44. See Donald M. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: The Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), 188–89.

45. George Rudé, “The Gordon Riots: A Study of the Rioters and their Victims,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 6 (1956): 93–114; Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 152–75.

46. Janice Holmes, “The Role of Open-Air Preaching in the Belfast Riots of 1857,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 102 (2002): 47–66. For a later period, see Matthew Kelly, “The Politics of Protestant Street Preaching in 1890s Ireland,” *Historical Journal* 48, no. 1 (2005): 101–25.

47. D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholic in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 25, captures this changing cultural scene well.

48. This style of street theater reached its apogee in the wake of the Fenian campaign and against the backdrop of the 1868 election (made all the more interesting by the extension of the franchise the previous year). The most famous exponent of this system of demagoguery was William Murphy. See W. L. Arnstein, “The Murphy Riots: A Victorian

- Dilemma," *Victorian Studies* 19, no. 1 (September 1975): 51–71; and MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration*, chap. 7.
49. Billington, *Protestant Crusade*, 305–6.
50. A. Peach, "Poverty, Religion and Prejudice in Britain" (Ph.D. diss., De Montfort University, U.K., 2000), 339.
51. [North] *Shields Daily News*, March 23, 1869; MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting*, 189–90.
52. Patsy Davis, "Birmingham's Irish Community and the Murphy Riots of 1867," *Midland History* 31 (2006): 37–66.
53. *Belfast Weekly News*, April 29, 1871.
54. "William Murphy, the Orange Order and Communal Violence: The Irish in West Cumberland, 1871–1884," in *Racial Violence in Britain in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Panikos Panayi (Leicester, U.K.: Leicester University Press, 1996), 44–64.
55. E. M. Dollery, "The Chiniquy Riots, Hobart," *Tasmanian Historical Association, Papers and Proceedings* 8, no. 1 (August 1959): 118–40.
56. Farrell, *Rituals and Riots*.
57. Donald M. MacRaild, "'Principle, Party and Protest': The Language of Victorian Orangeism in the North of England," in *The Victorians and Race*, ed. Shearer West (Leicester, U.K.: Polity, 1996), 136–37.
58. Adair and Cronin, *Wearing of the Green*.
59. A point made, in reference to clashes over property boundaries, smuggling, and many other social issues, by Michael S Cross, "Stony Monday, 1849: The Rebellion Losses Riots in Bytown," *Ontario History* 63 (1971): 182.
60. Kealey, "Orange Order in Toronto," 26.
61. Michael Cottrell, "Green and Orange in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Toronto: The Guy Fawkes Day Episode of 1864," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 19, no. 1 (1993): 12–21.
62. Michael Cotterill, "St Patrick's Day Parades in Nineteenth-Century Toronto: A Study of Immigrant Adjustment and Elite Control," *Histoire Sociale—Social History* 25 (May 1992): 64–65.
63. George F. G. Stanley, "The Caraquet Riots of 1875," *Acadiensis* 2 (1972): 21–38.
64. James Patterson Smith, "The Riel Rebellion of 1869: New Light on British Liberals and the Use of Force on the Canadian Frontier," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30, no. 2 (1995): 58–73.
65. Kealey, "Orange Order in Toronto," 31.
66. J. T. Watt, "Anti-Catholic Nativism in Canada: The Protestant Protective Association," *Canadian Historical Review* 48, no. 1 (March 1967): 45–58.
67. So argues William Jenkins in "Views from 'the Hub of Empire': Loyal Orange Lodges in Early Twentieth-Century Toronto," in *Orangeism in Canada*, ed. David A. Wilson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).
68. Billington, *Protestant Crusade*, 196.
69. Michael A. Gordon, *The Orange Riots: Irish Political Violence in New York City, 1870 and 1871* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993); C. D. Gimpsey, "Internal Ethnic Friction: Orange and Green in Nineteenth-Century New York, 1868–1872," *Immigrants and Minorities* 1, no. 1 (March 1982): 39–59.

70. *New York Times*, July 14, 1870.

71. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 67.

72. Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 207–8.

73. Smith, “Labour Tradition in Liverpool and Glasgow,” 43.

74. Billington, *Protestant Crusade*; Terrence J. Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration* (Boston: Twayne, 1975); Higham, *Strangers in the Land*.

75. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 83.

76. Gordon, *New York Orange Riots*, xiv.

77. Donald H. Akenson, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815–1922* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988).

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