

THE UNITED STATES CIVIL WAR: CAUSAL AGENT FOR
IRISH ASSIMILATION AND ACCEPTANCE IN
US SOCIETY

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by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE US CIVIL WAR: CAUSAL AGENT FOR IRISH ASSIMILATION AND ACCEPTANCE IN US SOCIETY, MAJ William T. Gillespie, Jr, 142 pages.

The American Civil War was a cornerstone event for the Irish in America. Their participation proved their duty to Union and Confederate causes, increased their acceptance in American society, and hastened assimilation. While the Irish participation and hard fighting reputation in the Civil War improved Irish acceptance in society, it proved ephemeral. However, it did provide the Irish with a new confidence and a sense of self-determination. The significant impact of the war was its unifying ability within the Irish communities. The war caused the Irish to organize and create a supporting infrastructure. This infrastructure and organization advanced the Irish in postwar America. The Irish became dominant in urban labor organizations, Democratic Party politics and city government. Furthermore, this organization allowed the Irish to dominate later immigrant groups, during the height of Great Atlantic Migration. “Ni neart go cur le cheile--Togetherness is Strength,” is the bond that made the Irish overcome discrimination, adversity and war, and succeed in postwar America.

Applications of this study can be used to assess other immigrant groups’ acceptance in America, both past and present, and as an applied model for their foreign-born military service.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

American society has always admired the integrity of soldierly courage and ready participation in the nation's wars. Established with their participation in the Revolutionary War, Irish immigrants and their offspring were thereafter quick to muster and fight in all of America's conflicts.¹ When the Civil War broke out in April 1861, among the first volunteers to take the fields were several Irish-born regiments from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, and Louisiana (see appendix A). The Irish, fighting for the causes of their new nation, used the war to unify and organize, gain confidence, and show loyalty as new citizens. While the Irish participation and hard fighting reputation in the Civil War improved Irish acceptance in society, it proved ephemeral. The 1863 Draft Riots and postwar Fenian Invasions of Canada eroded some of the Irish's hard-earned reputation and participation efforts. Sparked by confidence and unity, the definitive event for the Irish during this era was the war created infrastructure and inroads into the political system and organized labor. Irish actions in and reactions to the Civil War served as accelerating causal agents for advancement and acceptance in American society. The degree to which this occurred is the scope of this research.

Most Irish Americans lived in the Northeast or Midwest, and both regions sided with the Union. During the Civil War, 144,221 Irish-born participated in the Union cause and 40,000 in the Confederate cause; additionally, perhaps an equal number were of Irish descent.² The Irish born and the subsequent generations of Irish-Americans formed a significant portion of Civil War combat forces, possibly as high as 10 percent in the early

stages of the war.³ Irish participation was the second largest of the immigrant groups, just behind the German's total strength of 200,000.⁴ Eight Irishmen actually rose to the rank of general in the Union army, and the Confederacy had five Irish generals, mostly of Scots-Irish (Protestant) descent. Irish military service in turn helped to establish the respectability and acceptance of successive generations of Irishmen in the minds of Americans, and Irish community organization and infrastructure created during the war added further opportunity.⁵

While immigration has always been an important part of development and growth of the United States, America has not always welcomed the foreigner. Early nineteenth-century Protestant-Puritan ideals dominated American society, which was very much against Catholicism and Irish immigration.⁶ Many leaders and elites in society were afraid Irish Catholics would overthrow the principles of democracy, with an allegiance to Rome and the Church, not to America.⁷ In 1842, the American Protestant Association was founded and declared that Catholicism was "in its principles and tendency, subversive of civil and religious liberty, and destructive to the spiritual welfare of man."⁸ In 1846, the American (Know-Nothing) Party would bring anti-Irish animosity to the forefront of American politics. When compared to the German immigrants, who had to overcome a greater language barrier, the Irish were still at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. The Germans did not suffer from societal discrimination like the Irish, because they were mostly Protestant-Lutherans and their culture was accepted and appreciated by nativists. Additionally, they were not an urban phenomenon nor ghettoized like the Irish. The Irish clearly stood out in American cities. Despite adversity in America, Irish immigrants still flocked to fight America's Civil War. This

research will investigate the reason, as well as determine the degree to which Civil War participation effected Irish assimilation and social acceptance after the war.

To answer these questions the scientific research method, both inductive and deductive, and qualitative historical analysis--using primary and secondary resources--will be used. Of particular concern are the following research areas, which will be addressed in the conclusion. The first major research area is the role the Civil War played in Irish immigrant assimilation and acceptance in American society. The second major research area addresses the Civil War as the watershed causal agent for Irish immigrant assimilation and acceptance. Subordinate chapters examine the following secondary research areas: (1) Chapter 3 discusses the reasons that the Irish immigrants chose to fight in the Civil War--both Confederate and Union causes; (2) Chapter 4 looks at the impact Irish fighting had on their own identity and nativist's and societal viewpoints; and (3) Chapter 5 will summarize the important findings, then analyze and compare postwar assimilation and acceptance, and explain the difference from prewar conditions. Chapter 6 will have the final conclusions.

Historical ethnic research focuses on the period 1845 to 1890. The long postwar period is necessary because many follow-on events affected the way the Irish were viewed in society. This study remains broad, obtaining the total Irish viewpoint, both Union and Confederate; however, it primarily focuses on Catholic units. As stated previously, Catholicism was the primary assimilation and acceptance issue in America. Irish Protestants were generally fully integrated into society and did not suffer from discrimination and acceptance problems. In remaining broad, generalized comments are made on the Irish in America and the effects of the Civil War; thus, avoiding atypical

results from local concentrations. Key urban study areas will include New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. Additionally, the emigration-immigration process aspects have been kept to a minimum, such as the push-pull factors, the impact of the famine, transportation, and settlement. The included areas establish the required explanations to set the context.

This research is significant, because there is conflicting information about the impact the Irish had on the Civil War and of the impact the Civil War had on the Irish. This is one of the major discontinuities in Irish-American studies. “One of the marks of maturity in the Irish historical studies has been a growing interest in pinpointing discontinuities rather than ironing out elisions (omissions).”⁹ Michael Costello, in his chapter, “The Irish and the American Military Tradition,” from the book *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection* points out another large discontinuity in American Civil War studies. He concludes the Irish role in the Civil War has been minimized by American historians, but has been generously acknowledged by the best British historians of the period.¹⁰ Much has been written on the New York Irish brigade, but little has been written on other Irish units or on the consolidated efforts of the Irish in both the Union and Confederacy. Historical evidence and records are more abundant on the Irish brigade’s regiments. Particularly unique to the Irish soldiers in the Civil War were their Irish Nationalist-Fenianism and their Catholicism on the battlefield. In addition, only the Irish tended to view themselves as exiles not immigrants, and the Irish in the North did a dramatic turnaround in terms of political views. Originally, they were strong supporters of the Southern cause, but after the first shots on Fort Sumter, the Northern Irish were solidly behind the Union cause.

This research will address the discontinuities, omissions and Irish unique characteristics. Furthermore, applications of this study can be used to assess other immigrant groups' acceptance in American, both past and present, and as an applied model for their foreign-born military service.

To survive the societal pressures in America and from the war, Irish immigrant communities developed many coping mechanisms, which included strengthening the family unit and unifying tenement, social, and community bonds. These communal bonds and networks would become the recruiting grounds for Irish militia companies, regiments and brigades that would fight on both sides during the Civil War. Chapter 2 explains more of the background that led to these societal conditions and Irish developmental responses.

The Irish on both sides fought for many reasons, to include preservation or dissolution of the Union, training of Irishmen for future nationalist battles back in Ireland against Britain, and displaying loyalty to a new nation that promised opportunity. They fought to collect the sign-on bounty (bonus), and to achieve a break from menial labor. Many Irish on both sides thought that preserving the principles of democracy would enhance and strengthen Irish concerns back in Ireland. Many on the Union side felt that the safety of the great Republic was at risk and that a failure could reinforce aristocratic doctrines of monarchism. Most of the Irishmen fighting for the Union were Catholic, while the majority of Irishmen fighting for the South were Protestant.¹¹ On the other hand, Confederate Irishmen were fighting against a perceived oppressive federal government that infringed upon states rights, thus supporting a strong anti-Union position. Additionally, many Irishmen in the South objected to what they perceived as

the pro-black attitudes of Northerners. In the Southern urban and port areas, Irish immigrants competed with free blacks for neighborhood space and day laborer jobs. For various reasons, Irish immigrants fought and died to demonstrate their loyalty, love and patriotism for their new homeland, thus taking a small step towards integration.

While the majority of Irishmen on both sides fought in non-Irish units, some chose to fight in Irish ethnic organizations. The most famous Irish unit during the war was the “Fighting 69th,” from New York City, under the command of Colonel Michael Corcoran.¹² Ironically, the 69th saw combat only in the first battle of Bull Run, being mustered out after the battle when their enlistments expired. Colonel Thomas Meagher, a captain in the original 69th, later put together a New York Irish brigade, made up of the 69th, 88th, and 63rd New York City Volunteer regiments; soon after, the 28th Massachusetts and the 116th Pennsylvania were incorporated into the Irish brigade (1862). Corcoran would also put together an Irish legion, made up of Irish units from all over New York State. Both the Irish brigade and the Irish legion found their inspiration, strength and primary recruits, and leadership from the original 69th. While dedicated to American patriotic causes, Corcoran and Meagher, both Irish born, saw their brigade and legion more as symbols of Irish glory and nationalism than American patriotism. This dual-role concept will be examined in further detail in chapter 3, “The Civil War: Why the Irish Fought.”

Chapter 4, “How They Fought and War-Created Infrastructure,” will examine the Irish performance in battle and the validity of their “hard-fighting” reputation. While the New York Irish brigade and the legion were the most famous, Colonel James Mulligan of Chicago, Illinois, formed an Irish unit, known as “Mulligan’s Brigade.” While he called

it a brigade, it only remained regimental size. The Union formed other exclusively Irish regiments in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. In all, no fewer than 38 Union regiments were of Irish parentage. Twelve of these regiments served in the Army of the Potomac and were known as “Green Flag Regiments.” In 1862, the Irish brigade commanders and several of the regimental commanders petitioned Secretary of War Edwin Stanton for the permission to form an Irish Division, under the command of the Irish-born General James Shields. Stanton refused, thinking such an organization too powerful and politically unfavorable.¹³

Irishmen fighting for the Confederates included the New Orleans Irish Brigade,¹⁴ 6th Louisiana Regiment, Louisiana “Irish Tiger” Battalion; the 10th Tennessee “Sons of Erin” Regiment; the Emerald Guards from Alabama; the Emerald Light Infantry from South Carolina; the Emmet Guards from Virginia; and the Davis Guards (also known as the “Fighting Irishmen,”) from Texas. These units were the only Catholic-dominated Irish forces. Protestant Irishmen fought primarily in non-ethnic units. Protestant Irishmen considered themselves British, unless they supported the nationalist cause, which many did. Therefore, they had a much different experience; they were generally accepted as Americans.

Official records and battle commentaries indicate that Irish units on both sides trained and fought hard, and were loyal. With distinct green flags, embroidered with the ancient Irish harp, these Celtic soldiers were quite colorful and were often found in the fiercest fighting and battles. The tenacity and tough fighting spirit of these Celtic warriors was well documented throughout the war, and they established a clear “hard fighting” reputation. After Fredericksburg, General Robert E. Lee exclaimed about the

performance of the Irish brigade, “Never were men so brave.”¹⁵ Stonewall Jackson paid them the ultimate compliment by calling them “that damn Brigade.”¹⁶ Union Generals George McClellan, Edwin Sumner and Winfield Scott Hancock were very attached to and appreciative of their Irish units, and on several occasions President Lincoln thanked the Irish for their involvement and hard fighting, proclaiming with emotion, “God Bless the Irish Flag.”¹⁷

The Louisiana Tigers had the reputation of being one of the toughest fighting forces in the Confederate Army.¹⁸ General Richard Taylor, brigade commander of the Louisiana Tigers, reflected, “Strange people, these Irish! Fighting every one’s battles, and cheerfully taking the hot end of the poker, they are only found wanting when engaged in what they believe to be their national cause. . . . As Argyle’s to the tartan, my heart has warmed to an Irishman.”¹⁹ Even the New Orleans *Daily Delta*, which in the past classified the Irish as the “worst elements,” wrote after the First Battle of Bull Run, “Our Irish friends are daily proving that they are entirely with the true men of the South.”²⁰

Chapter 5, “The Impact of Fighting and War-Created Infrastructure,” examines the impact of their hard-fighting reputation and will address how this influenced their assimilation and acceptance in postwar society. More specifically, research efforts will investigate the influence to which this fighting reputation broke down barriers, promoted loyalty, advanced Irish causes, and changed Irish and nativist’s viewpoints. To try to answer these questions, the research investigation will rely on the *Official War Records*, important leader memoirs, soldier letters, and published newspaper articles of the war and postwar era, and other accepted scholarly works.

Established models of immigration classify levels of change or resistance and help to determine acculturation, assimilation, and acceptance. Sociologist Milton M. Gordon’s assimilation model will be the primary comparison tool to attain the level of acceptance and immigrant change. His model is an accepted base model for the assimilation process. All three components of the model apply to the Irish during the selected research period 1845 to 1890. Gordon’s theoretical assimilation framework includes:

1. Anglo Conformity (1840-1865): Anglo identity defines “Americanism” during this period. Immigrants were expected to abandon their unique values and traditions and melt into the dominant middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant (WASP) northern culture.
2. Melting Pot (1865-1921): This was the dominant U.S immigrant theory during the period of mass immigration. The model depicts the societal pressure of an ethnic, racial, cultural group to assimilate into society by abandoning their distinct cultural traits.
3. Pluralism Model (1880-Present): A society where two or more population groups, each practicing its own culture, lives adjacent to one another without mixing residentially. Cultural resistance allowed groups to retain a certain level of cultural distinction.²¹

To understand the assimilation model steps and immigrant experiences it is necessary to examine and to apply the essential migration processes in table 1.²²

Table 1. Key Factors in Migration and Assimilation Processes	
1.	Migration Reasons “Push vs. Pull”
2.	Contact
	- Societal Response/Pressure
	- Psycho-Cultural Viewpoint/Group Response
	- Support Structure
3.	Time and Generation Experience
4.	Adaptation and Maladaptation
	- Coping Mechanism
	- Acculturation
	- Cultural Acceptance and Societal Acceptance
5.	Assimilation: Minority loss of distinct cultural traits

During the prewar and post-Civil War era, the dominant US social belief was that everyone should adopt similar values and beliefs, a position called the “melting pot” theory. The external melting pot assimilation pressures were severe and included abandoning distinctive cultural traits, religious practices, dress, and diet.²³ The idea was simple; immigrants, lower social classes, and minority groups were expected to abandon their unique values and traditions and “melt” into the dominant middle-class, white, Protestant ethic (see table 2, Ethnocentrism at Work, and table 3, Aspects of Culture and Ethnicity). The applications of tables 1-3 should be sufficient to analyze and address the military impact and to answer the primary and secondary assimilation and acceptance questions. The models establish the required before and after analysis. Chapter 6 will present the final conclusions on the Civil War as causal agent for assimilation and acceptance in the US, tying in systematic evidence from Chapters 2 through 5.

Table 2. Ethnocentrism at Work

Our People (WASP)	Their People (Irish)
True believers	Heathens
Patriots	Warmongers or terrorists
Civilized	Barbarian
Modern	Backward
Progressive	Underdeveloped
Cultured	Savage
We worship the true God	They worship false idols

Source: Victor Baldridge, *Sociology: A Critical Approach to Power, Conflict and Change* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1975), 27.

Note: The English and later Americans felt that most Irish were uncivilized and greatly needed some help if they were to become really human. This feeling led to cultural imperialism--the attacking of one culture and forced change to another culture.

Table 3. Aspects of Culture and Ethnicity

1. Social group interaction patterns: Intra and intergroup relations
2. Value orientations
3. Language and communication: Verbal and nonverbal
4. Family life processes
5. Beliefs and practices (non-religious)
6. Religion
7. Art and expressive forms
8. Diet
9. Recreation
10. Clothes

Source: Mikel Garcia, "An Anthropological Approach to Multicultural Diversity," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 1995, 32-4, 494.

Note: Table 3 provides ten categories of cultural/ethnic aspects that act as tools for comparison. The Irish and WASP/American culture would have clashed on most and sometimes all of the listed aspects.

This investigation assumes that Irish immigrant assimilation and acceptance can be measured and that primary resources: official records, journals, memoirs and letters; and secondary sources: media related reports, scholarly and direct research are a valid and reliable means to attain this measurement. Also assumed is that Union and Confederate Irish Catholic experiences are similar. Unless indicated, use of the term Irish means Irish Catholic, to include Confederate forces. Confederate Irish Protestants will have their own category and are marginalized in this study. Their experience in America is different from Catholic immigrants and is more aligned with nativist experience.

Additionally, Irish immigration statistics lack proper standardization in definitions, making the identification in Irish born, first generation, and successive generations almost indistinguishable. Furthermore, definitions of what is Irish is also confusing in nineteenth century and even most twentieth century documents, i.e., Irish,

Irish-American, American-Irish, Irish-Catholic, Ulster-Scots Irish, Scotch-Irish, Anglo-Irish, and Protestant-Irish (see Definitions).

The closest studies to this proposed research are a Ph.D. dissertation by Marion Tuslow, titled *Peasants Into Patriots: The New York Irish Brigade Recruits and Their Families in the Civil War Era* (1994, NYU), and the book by William Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: Foreigners in the Union Army*. While Dr. Tuslow looks closely at the Civil War, he focuses on the economic, political and community infrastructure, and the effects of Civil war pensions on the Irish New York City community. His focal point is the more publicized New York Irish brigade; New York City having the largest Irish community had a unique experience. Burton's book examines the role of immigrants in the Union army, their contributions to the war efforts, and what they gained from participation. His work is a modern update of Ella Lonn's, 1951, classic and definitive work, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* and was invaluable to this research. Lonn's other definite standard is the 1940, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*. Burton and Lonn's works provide a thorough analysis of Irish and Catholicism's role in the war and show the effect military service has on assimilation and acceptance.

The following essential US Civil War Irish contribution primary works showed the day-to-day experience of Irish in the war, what they thought and how it evolved over time. They include: Lawrence Kohl's (editor) *The Irish in Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh* (1986); Father William Corby's *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years with the Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac* (1894); D. P. Conyngham's *The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns* (1869); St. Clair Mulholland's *The Story of the 116th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War of Rebellion* (1903);

and William Beudot and Lance Herdegen's (editors) *An Irishman in the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of James P. Sullivan*.

Other essential Irish Civil War secondary resources include: Frank Boyle's *A Party of Mad Fellows: The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Army of the Potomac* (1996); Susan Provost-Beller's *Never Were Men so Brave: The Irish Brigade During the Civil War* (1998); The Sergeant Kirkland Society's *The History of the Irish Brigade*; David Gleeson's Ph.D. dissertation, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877* (1997, MSU); Ed Gleeson's *Rebel Sons of Erin: A Civil War Unit History of the Tenth Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Irish), Confederate States Volunteers* (1993); and James Gannon's *Irish Rebels. Confederate Tigers: A History of the 6th Louisiana Volunteer, 1861-1865* (1998).

Much has also been written on pre-Civil War and post-Civil War America. There is also a wealth of books on the history and accomplishments of the Irish in America. Important modern works used during research included: Lawrence McCaffrey's *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (1997); Kerby A. Miller's *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America* (1994), and *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (1985); David Doyle and Owen Edward's (editors) *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection*; Ann Kathleen Bradley's *The History of the Irish in America* (1986); Donald Akenson's *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (1993); Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and American Emigration, 1850-1900* (1970); and David Fitzpatrick's *Irish Emigration, 1801-1921* (1984).

Most of these books are institutional histories dealing with political and social groups, labor issues, and the Catholic Church. There are also many notable community

studies that make generalizations about the Irish, but they fail to capture the nationwide ethnic and cultural characteristics of the group. These local and institutional histories tend to be positive. They show a steady progression, successful acculturation and assimilation to mainstream America, usually culminating with the John F. Kennedy presidency. However, Irish-American society was not always progressing, and there were many losses for each small gain.

For specific Irish regional and urban case studies in the US, the following are the most famous scholarly studies. These books were of tremendous value in interpreting the Irish urban environment and ascertaining assimilation and acceptance: Oscar Handlin's *Boston's Immigrants: A Study of Acculturation* (1941) and *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (1951); Dennis Clark's *The Irish in Philadelphia* (1973); Ronald Baylor and Timothy Meagher's (editors) *The New York Irish* (1997); Earl Niehaus's *The Irish in New Orleans* (1965); John Bodnar's *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (1985); David Ward's *Cities and Immigrants* (1971); and Daniel Moynihan and Nathan Glazer's *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and the Irish of New York City* (1973).

Why the Irish emigrated to America is a complex story, rooted in the centuries old conflict with England. Irish nationalism or "Fenianism" is a direct result of the conflict. A brief explanation on emigration and nationalism, and how it relates to Irish life in America is found in chapter 2.

¹Michael J. Costello, “The Irish and American Military Tradition,” in David N. Doyle and Owen D. Edwards, eds., *America and Ireland, 1776-1976, American Identity and the Irish Connection* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 217.

²Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1997), 103.

³Note: A consolidation and estimation from various sources: Lawrence McCaffrey’s, *The Catholic Diaspora in American*, 103; Ella Lonn’s, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 1-6; Susannah Bruce’s “Irish-American,” in *Civil War: A Political, Social and Military History*, vol. 2. *Encyclopedia of the American* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 1037; and Ann Kathleen Bradley’s *History of the Irish in America* (London and Edison, NJ: Quantum Books, Inc., 1986), 60.

⁴Angel Schwartz, “Immigrants,” in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social Military History*, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Press), 1028.

⁵Costello, 226.

⁶Bradley, 54.

⁷Ibid., 54.

⁸Ibid., 56.

⁹R. F. Foster, *The Oxford History of Ireland* (New York, Oxford Press, 1989), v.

¹⁰Costello, 226

¹¹Ed Gleeson, *Rebel Sons of Erin* (Indianapolis, IN: Guild Press, 1993), 11.

¹²Sergeant Kirkland Society, *The History of the Irish Brigade* ed. Pia S. Seagrave (Fredericksburg, VA: Kirkland Museum, 1997), 3.

¹³Frank A. Boyle, *A Party of Mad Fellows: The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Army of the Potomac* (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1996), 403.

¹⁴Note: The New Orleans Brigade was not pure Irish, but had a significant amount of Irishmen and other foreigners.

¹⁵Kirkland Society, 5.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Jason H. Silverman, “The Irish in the Confederacy,” in *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, Vol. 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster Publishing, 1993), 822.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, 823.

²¹Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in America: Theory and Reality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 279-83.

²²Note: Self-created for the purposes of this research.

²³Chester E. Zimolzak and Charles A. Standfield, *The Human Landscape: Geography and Culture*, 2 ed. (London: Merrill Publishing, 1983), 178.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

“Nothing so defines the North American nations as the motto on the Great Seal of the United States: E Pluribus Unum--Out of Many, One.”¹ Immigration has been an important part of development and growth of the United States. Indeed, the history of this country could largely be read as the history of immigration. Between 1800 and 1970, more than 40 million persons left Europe to create a new life in North America.² The Great Atlantic Migration, as it is called, was perhaps the most extensive movement of peoples in history. The highest portion of the Great Atlantic Migration occurred between 1880 and 1814. More than 7 million came from Ireland. These Irish immigrants have more than 40.2 million descendants living in the US today.³ Ireland, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was characterized by emigration (see table 4). In relation to its size, Ireland, due to famine and suppressed national aspirations, lost more of its population through out-migration than did any other nation. The majority came to the US (see figures 1 and 2).⁴ By 1880, 33 percent of native-born Irish people were living in America.⁵ As David Fitzpatrick, the leading modern authority on Irish emigration patterns has noted, “growing up in Ireland meant preparing oneself to leave it.”⁶

Table 4. Emigrants from Ireland

	1851- 55	1856- 60	1861- 70	1871 -80	1881- 90	1891-1900	1901- 10	1911 -21	1851-1921
United States	740,216	249,618	690,845	449,549	626,604	427,301	418,895	191,724	3,794,852
British North America	104,844	13,274	13,274	40,079	25,783	44,505	10,648	38,238	313,622
Australia, New Zealand	53,801	47,740	82,917	61,946	55,476	11,448	11,885	17,629	342,842
Other Overseas	2,298	4,428	4,741	5,425	7,890	11,885	16,343	9,691	62,702
Total Overseas	901,159	315,060	818,582	542,703	734,475	461,282	485,461	255,295	4,514,017

Source: Kirby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford Press, 1985), 569.
 Note: Number of Overseas Emigrants from Ireland classified by destination, 1850-1921. British North America became Canada in 1867.

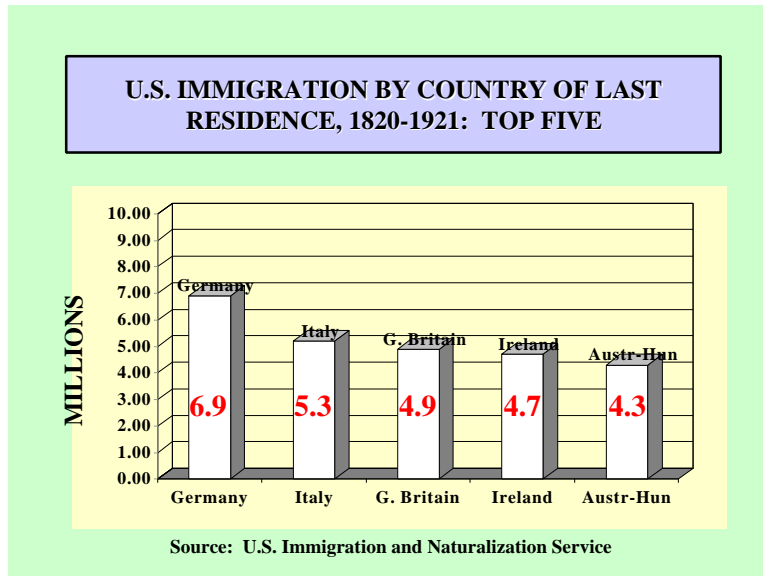


Figure 1. US Immigration by Country of Last Residence, 1820-1921: Top Five Countries. *Source: Arnold Schrier, Ireland and American Emigration, 1850-1900* (New York: MacMillan, 1970), 157.

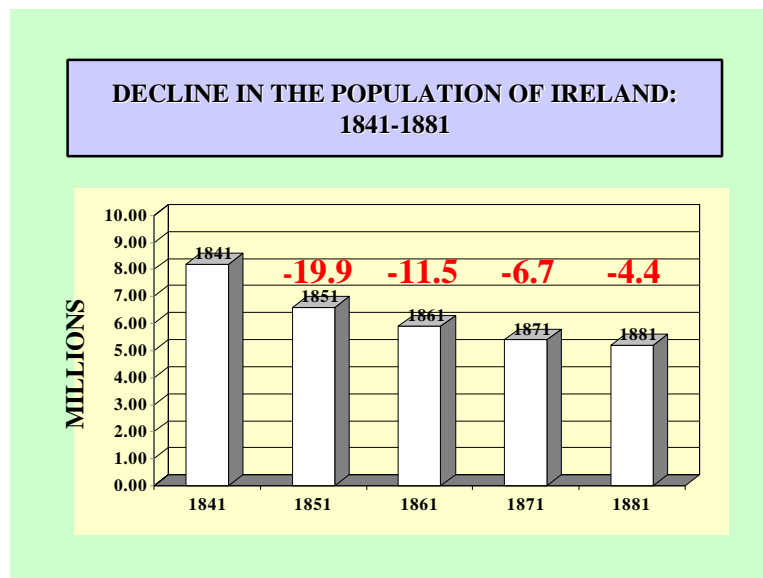


Figure 2. Decline in the Population of Ireland: 1841-1881. *Source: Schrier, 158.*

The Potato Famine, better known now in Ireland as the Great Hunger, was the most important event in modern Irish and Irish-American history. During the period of 1845 to 1851, over one million Irish died of starvation and over two million were forced to emigrate.⁷ The population that topped 9 million in 1840 was reduced to less than 6 million by 1855.⁸ With the potato crop failure and stores depleted, the tenant farmers were unable to pay rent. Pushed off their land and left to seek shelter and food, death quickly came in the form of typhus, cholera, scurvy, relapsing fever and dysentery.

Slow to respond and fearful of disrupting the political economy,⁹ England mismanaged relief efforts which generally were grudging and insufficient.¹⁰ They were designed primarily to keep the Irish from becoming economically dependent. Many in power saw the famine, evictions, and emigration as God's final solution to the Irish question.

Those who fled Ireland during this period did so out of panic and fear of death. The ones who fled, and those that stayed, blamed the English for their sheer lack of concern, thinking that if the Irish ruled themselves this would never have happened. This feeling of misrule solidified the psychocultural hatred, nationalistic movements, and aggression towards the English, a feeling neither gone from the minds of Irish nationalists nor forgiven.¹¹

The poorest, who lived in western Ireland, were forced to remain in Ireland and suffered the most severely from the famine. Others who had some economic means, but could not afford the passage migrated to Scotland or England. Those that could afford the trans-Atlantic steerage fare emigrated to the US or Canada. It was very common for Irish to enter the US via Canada and filter their way down the East Coast.

During the famine, it was not uncommon for whole extended families or small towns to emigrate and settle in a new area. Later emigrant groups were composed of primarily young men and women and immediate family members. With death and emigration also went the last large communities of Irish speakers and traditionalists. As American immigrants, Irish (Gaelic) speakers were slower than previous Irish groups to adapt to the new land because of the language barrier, and a large number had no skills other than growing potatoes (see figure 3). Fear that the land would fail them again caused them to settle in American commercial and manufacturing centers, supplying America with cheap industrial and transportation labor.

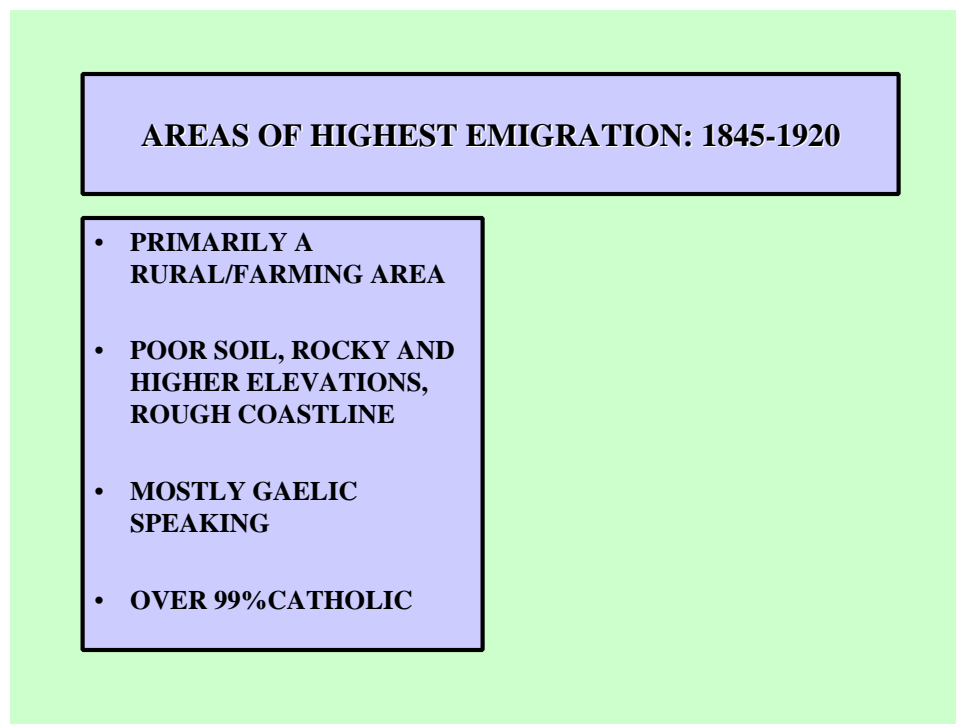


Figure 3. Ireland, Areas of Highest Emigration: 1845-1920. *Source:* Kerby Miller and Paul Wagner, *Out of Ireland: The Story of the Irish* (Washington DC: Elliot and Clark Press, 1994), 65.

The famine's result was selective depopulation and the exportation of memories of horror. The Irish famine emigrant was truly an involuntary exile. This exile image would persist in the next group of nearly 3 million Irish coming to America.

While millions fled their troubled land, those left behind advanced the cause for a free Irish nation. Oddly enough, this cause profited from the famine. Another crop failure in 1877 spurred the formation of the Irish Land League. The Land League organized a successful cottiers' strike on the estate of an absentee English landlord, Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott; similar "boycotts" soon followed.¹² Large-scale activism spawned a number of national leaders and other successful organizations. Some of these new organizations advocated violence and with the violence came more repression. This cycle divided Irish society even more, and the nationalistic trend found a strong support base in the Irish immigrant enclaves. The call to arms theme and support for the nationalist cause was a strong centripetal force in America.

The same guilt, refracted through the stark memories of the American wakes (leaving ceremonies), provided fertile ground for the appeals of Irish-American nationalists that the emigrants "do something" for Mother Ireland.¹³

The images in the emigrants' mental landscape--a mother's tears, a father's grave, English oppression, suffering, poverty, famine, eviction, death, and coffin ships--were used successfully by nationalist leaders to find support in the US. The nationalist theme that "freeing Ireland was a debt the emigrant owed," reinforced the involuntary exile theme and perhaps left the US Irish community discontented and unsettled.¹⁴

Irish Nationalism in America ran rampant from the early 1860s through the Irish Revolution (1919-1921). Irish-American organizations provided leadership, money, equipment and soldiers to the nationalistic cause and rebellion. Reports of British

atrocities--indiscriminant and mass arrests, excessive force, civilian deaths, and property damage--would help fill the purses of nationalistic organizations. These atrocities attracted the attention of world democracies and humanitarian groups, bringing swift and powerful condemnation of the British government.

By 1890, the US had 64 percent of Ireland's emigrants, Great Britain had 25 percent, Australia 7 percent, and Canada had 4 percent.¹⁵ America had experienced Irish immigration before and actually welcomed those newcomers. America's other Irish, the Ulster-Presbyterian Irish had already been established in America since the late eighteenth century. They called themselves the Scotch-Irish to identify that they were not Catholic. In 1830, there were only around 300,000 Irish Catholics living in America, mostly in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.¹⁶ America was dominated by Protestant-Puritanism and was very much against the Popery (Catholics).¹⁷ The newly arrived Irish Catholics were not discreet in their faith or traditions. Many leaders in society saw the Irish-Catholic as a threat.¹⁸

With the bad taste of farming and dislike for large-scale American farming, the port cities were the favored centers for Irish settlement. Because they lacked money to buy land or supplies to travel westward the Irish more than any other immigrant group of this period (1845-90) became an urban population. Most Americans at this time were still farmers. The large, newly arrived Irish populations in the cities made them even more conspicuous.

Most Catholic immigrants were peasants who had lived in crowded rural settlements called *clachans*. These clachans consisted of a few dozen to several hundred, one or two-room thatched cottages. Unfenced fields for raising potatoes and grazing

livestock surrounded these randomly clustered cottages. These were not villages in the sense that they are thought of today, for they lacked the shops, markets, churches, public buildings, and other amenities typically found in communal village life.¹⁹

When the early Irish immigrants settled within America's urban environment, they settled with friends and family from home. These settlement patterns were based on the parish, diocese and county of origin in Ireland. When they came to America in the famine and early post-famine era they often fought amongst themselves. When they first settled in New York City's Five Points, the infamous Six Ward area and Brooklyn's Fourth Ward, they were separated in Cork, Galway, Donegal, and Mayo sections. The Irish communities of New Orleans's, Irish Channel, South Boston, and Philadelphia's Kensington all had a similar settlement pattern. The Irish county identification was the largest initial unifying identity for the immigrants. Often county locations would not be adjacent sections of the city and would be further apart. The location pattern based on parish, diocese and counties from Ireland provides firm evidence that there was a lack of a national Irish identity among new immigrants.

This new urban frontier brought many changes in regards to site and landscape. The natives with a British-inherited contempt for everything Irish soon blamed the Irish immigrants for increased noise, pollution, crime, and job competition.²⁰ Nativists came to see the Irish as rough, crude, boisterous, and horrifyingly--anti-American (nondemocratic, allegiance to Rome).²¹ This analogy supports the ethnocentric model as seen in table 2.

The American Protestant Association, founded in 1842, declared Catholicism "in its principles and tendency, subversive of civil and religious liberty, and destructive to the

spiritual welfare of man.”²² With this discriminatory animosity came much anti-Catholic propaganda, found in billboards, newspapers, and published cartoons. Major ethnic riots were common in the cities with large Irish populations; many Catholic churches were set on fire and communities burned out. In 1845, the American Party (Know-Nothings) would bring anti-Irish animosity to the forefront of American politics. “In 1854, the Know-Nothings reached the height of their influence by electing governors or a majority of legislatures in seven states.”²³ The American Party was the strongest in states and cities with a large Irish population. To add to this adversity, job discrimination, poor living conditions, and the lowering of real wages with more immigration caused the Irish to develop coping mechanisms. These coping mechanisms included strengthening the family unit and unifying tenement and community bonds. Successful Irish businessmen and community political leaders formed new emigrant societies; these societies provided special banking needs, job information and training, moral and spiritual coaching, and financial and legal aid. Good at organizing, the Irish built churches, meeting halls, parochial schools, hospitals and founded newspapers. These engineering projects and their associated spatial arrangement to the community are good examples of a cultural geographic infrastructure coping mechanism. While the origins of some of the infrastructure were in place before the war, the war served as a catalyst for expedient growth and faster advancement.

In such an unfriendly urban environment, Irish neighborhoods, focused around the parish, served as psychological havens, preserving faith, traditions, values, and they perpetuated a sense of community.²⁴ Irish Catholic parish communities also functioned as half way houses between two cultures, easing the immigrants’ fears and assisting in

adaptation and assimilation. The Catholic Church and school system also played a pivotal role in society, helping to provide unity, discipline, and vision. While poor, Irish immigrants made substantial contributions to the Church. Intern Catholic teaching and nursing orders established schools and hospitals, and the collections built many cathedrals, churches, rectories, convents, and seminaries. For the first time the poor Irish-Catholic has access to education, which helped many to find better jobs, enter professions and pursue higher education. The Church as an institution helped to unite the Irish communities and reinforced Irish-Catholic identity. Within seventy years (1789-1860), the energetic Irish Catholic Church in America grew from 30 thousand to 3 million.²⁵ During this period of U.S history, the Irish-American Catholic Church became the US Catholic Church, significantly minimizing French and German influence. Irish-American Catholicism was more liberal than the traditional Catholicism found in Ireland, often putting the two Churches at odds.

Scholars have called the building of the Catholic Church in America the important achievement of the Irish.²⁶ Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Illinois concluded that, “No other people could have done for the Irish Catholic faith in the United States what the Irish people have done.”²⁷ Furthermore, he praised their “unalterable attachment to their priests, their deep Catholic instincts . . . the unworldly and spiritual temper of the national character, their indifference to ridicule and contempt, and their unfailing generosity.”²⁸

The Irish immigrants formulated a strong and aggressive political approach that included the formation of organized labor, support for the Democratic Party, and political patronage within the ward and city government. Irishmen Martin Burke, in 1861 founded

the American Miners Association, the first national union of coal miners.²⁹ This helped to establish an Irish precedent and many other Irishmen followed Burke's led. Terence Powderly in Philadelphia, 1869 founded the Knights of Labor, and became its first Grand Master. The Knights of Labor was the first nation wide labor organization, and by 1886 had 800,000 members.³⁰ Irishmen were very good at manipulating the fledgling US constitutional system to their advantage, unsurprising with their years of experience fighting the English for reform measures. Locally, the pub emerged as an important node for news, politics, nationalism, sports, and comfort. The pub also reaffirmed Irish identity and promoted nationalism.

The population numbers of Irish in the large cities made them clearly stand out against the Anglo-Saxon (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant)--"Yankee" culture. New York City's population doubled between 1840 and 1855; and by 1860 numbered 383,717 out of a population of 805,651.³¹ There were more Irish born residents in New York City than Dublin.³² Boston in 1865 had 72,065 Irishmen out of a population of 331,005.³³ New Orleans in 1860 recorded 24,398 Irish out a population of 168,000.³⁴ Other large Irish enclaves included Lowell, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; Jersey City and Hoboken, New Jersey; San Francisco, California; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; South Bend, Indiana; Butte, Montana; Troy, Albany, and Poughkeepsie, New York; and Providence, Rhode Island (see figure 4).³⁵ The Irish laborer dominated the construction, mining, and transportation (canals, railroads, and roads) industries. These industries, especially the railroad, helped bring the Irish-American westward after the Civil War. Additionally, the postwar Irish became strong and dominant members of the Democratic Party. Irish loyalty during the

war to the Democratic Party made them a stronger political force and brought thousands of civil service and city government jobs to the Irish. Many of these jobs were white-collar positions. By 1870, the Irish were the foremost political force in New York City and Boston.³⁶

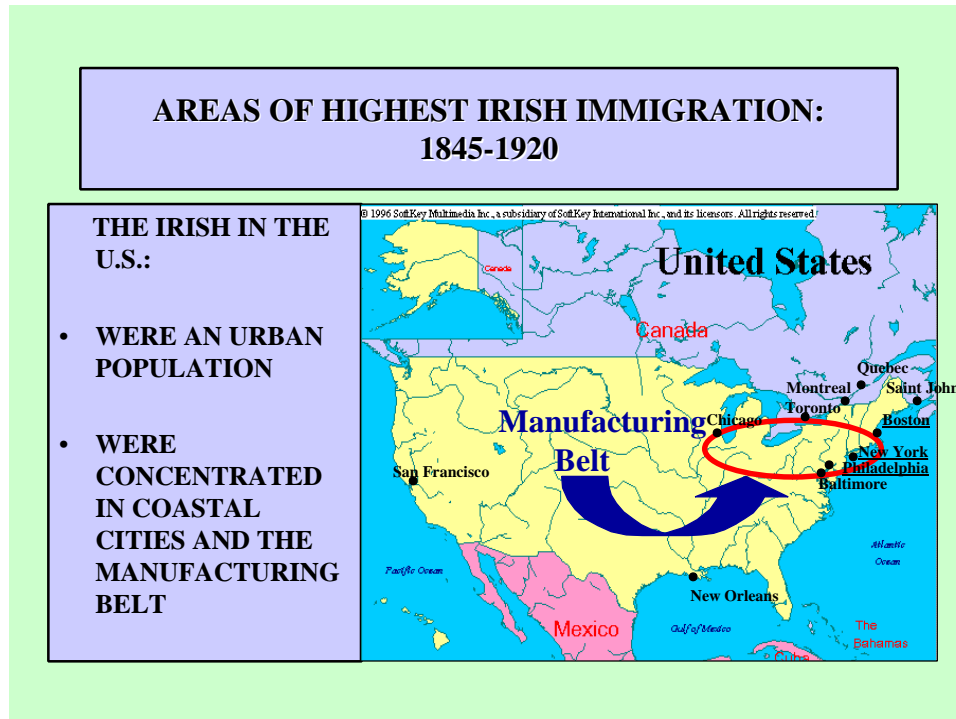


Figure 4. Areas of Highest Irish Immigration in the U.S: 1845-1920. David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants* (New York: Oxford Press University, 1971), 65. Note: New York City had the largest population, followed by Boston, followed by Philadelphia. Other North American cities shown on the map had large Irish concentrations. Source: The base map was created using *Compton's Interactive World Atlas*.

Irish military units, both North and South, had typical Civil War structure and organization. The company and regimental structure was the basic building block of the Civil War armies. A Union company numbered around 100 men, and a regiment

between 850 to 1046 men. A Confederate company and regiment were usually larger, numbering 130 and 650 to 1,300, respectively. The regiment was the basic fighting unit of the war. Union and Confederate regiments both had ten companies, but often the Southern forces broke the regiment down further to two battalions, of five companies each. Two to four regiments, more often four, made a brigade, and two to three brigades made a division. A captain commanded a company, a major a battalion, a colonel a regiment, a brigadier general a brigade, and a major general a division.

The American Civil War helped the Irish cause and accelerated Irish acceptance in American society. With participation in the war, the Irish took advantage of the opportunity to show support for the Union and Confederate causes. These Irish immigrants fought and died in part to demonstrate their loyalty and love for their new homeland, thus taking a small step towards integration. However, they did not forget they were Irish.

¹Daniel P. Moynihan, "A Nation of Nations," in J. F. Watts, *The Irish Americans: The Immigrant Experience* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996), 11.

²Ibid., 10.

³Ibid., 10.

⁴Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Toronto: P. D. Meany Co., 1993), 17.

⁵Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and American Emigration, 1850-1900* (New York: MacMillan, 1970), 158.

⁶David Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration, 1801-1921* (Dundalk, Ireland: Dundalgan Press, 1984), 4.

⁷Thomas Gallagher, *Patty's Lament: Prelude to the Hatred* (Jovanovich, London: Harcourt Brace, 1985), 21.

⁸Ibid., 21.

⁹Note: The political economy is pure market capitalism with no government intervention.

¹⁰R. F. Frost, *The Oxford History of Ireland* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 276.

¹¹J. F. Watts, *The Irish Americans: The Immigrant Experience* (New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996), 54.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Kirby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford press, 1985), 568.

¹⁴Ibid., 568.

¹⁵Sean Duffy, *The MacMillan Atlas of Irish History* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1997), 103.

¹⁶Ann Kathleen Bradley, *History of the Irish in American* (Edison, NJ: Quantum Books, 1986), 56.

¹⁷Ibid., 54.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Kirby A. Miller and Paul Wagner, *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America* (Washington, DC: Elliot and Clark, 1994), 68.

²⁰Bradley, 55.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 65.

²³Ibid., 56.

²⁴Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1997), 71.

²⁵Bradley, 65.

²⁶Bradley, 104.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid, 100.

³⁰Ibid, 101.

³¹Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (New Orleans, LA: Louisiana University Press, 1951), 3.

³²Bradley, 57.

³³Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants: 1790-1880* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Press; The Belkap Press of Harvard University Press, 1941), 246. Note: Boston in the 1860 census included the greater Boston area of Middlesex, Norfolk and Suffolk Counties. This is why the 1865 date is selected.

³⁴Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 9.

³⁵Note: Consolidated form Bradley, 45; and Ward, 65.

³⁶Bradley, 111-112.

CHAPTER 3

WHY THEY FOUGHT

The Irish in America fought the Civil War for a variety of reasons. These reasons often changed during the four-year struggle. For whatever reason Irishmen fought, initial recruitment was not a problem, in most major urban centers more men enlisted than were required. Clannish and not trustful of the intentions of outsiders, Irish soldiers tended to enlist and fight together for the ethnic communities they represented. While most Irishmen sided with the Union cause, ironically, prior to the war, most prominent Irish-Americans and Irish newspapers in the US were very supportive of the Southern viewpoint and the Democratic Party.¹ This social and political support existed until the firing on Fort Sumter. After Fort Sumter, the Northern Irish immediately supported their adopted country, and president, and expressed detestation of the rebellious southern citizens who were inciting civil war. Reversing their feelings, the Irish leaders recognized the Civil War was an opportunity to create favorable social, economic, and political change. On the other hand, Irish Southerners enthusiastically supported the Southern cause and war efforts. They also wanted to gain respect and find their place in Southern society.

The Irish volunteered for four primary reasons. To a lesser degree, these were the same reasons why they fought in both the Revolutionary and Mexican-American War.² The first reason was to support the ideals of democracy and the nation and local communities that accepted them. The second was to gain military experience, so they could return to Ireland to fight the British in an eventual war of rebellion. The third

reason was to gain employment because soldiering was a respectable position and better than menial labor or unemployment. The final reason was to collect the very lucrative war enlistment bounties. Often the decision to enlist blended two or all three of these reasons together. Irish leaders knew successful soldiering could gain them respect in their new nation, thus proving their loyalties and worth and advancing their social and political agenda.

Before the outbreak of war, Irish newspapers and editors began to adopt a strong Southern viewpoint over the issue of slavery and the rights of states.³ Prominent Irish community leaders saw Southerners somewhat as revolutionaries, people trying to break free from an oppressor just as the Irish in Ireland were trying to achieve their own independence from Britain. Ireland's strong anti-Union position with Britain found a similar voice in the Southern causes. The common Irish viewpoint compared Northern aggression to that of British domination of their homeland. Lonn states that the Southern Irish had a burning zeal for independence.⁴ The Irish slaveholders were entering the war to secure redress for the wrongs inflicted by the North, and to prevent themselves from being robbed of their property.⁵ Other Southern Irishmen, to include Patrick Cleburne viewed the war as Northern abuse of power, and saw themselves like the Revolutionary era "Sons of Liberty," protecting freedom, the Constitution, and States Rights.⁶

With the start of war, vocal Northern Irish leaders quickly turned the anti-Union and oppressive national government message into the new mantra, "liberty-loving Irishmen must help to preserve the Union."⁷ Because so many of the Irish immigrants were illiterate and lived in ethnic communities, educated Irish political leaders were very influential in establishing and swaying Irish opinion.⁸ Ed Gleeson concludes, most Irish

immigrants did not understand the sectional issues and could not tell you where Washington and Richmond were.⁹ Bell Irvin Wiley from *The Life of Billy Yank* supports the notion that the Irish were less idealistic than other soldiers were.¹⁰ The war letters of Sergeant Peter Welsh, of the 28th Massachusetts and the memoirs of Sergeant James P. Sullivan, of the Iron Brigade show just the opposite. Welsh was a man of deep conviction. He understood the challenge to the Constitution and democracy, and wanted to play his part.¹¹ Welsh also knew America democracy could serve the Irish nationalistic cause.¹² Sullivan was a great admirer of President Lincoln, and often quoted his speeches in his letters.¹³ He was eager to serve Lincoln's fight and play his role as a citizen.¹⁴ Welsh and Sullivan's writings clearly show that they were informed and had well thought-out views on the war. Captain D. P. Conyngham in his memoirs about the Irish brigade also shows that the common Irish soldiers were informed and had a strong sense of constitutional democracy.¹⁵ Father William Corby, the Chaplain of the Irish brigade, in his memoirs also supports the idea that his men were informed patriots, ". . . they (the soldier) understood America's cause."¹⁶ Perhaps the discrepancy is an issue of literacy versus illiteracy and the flow of information--whether one can be knowledgeable about events when illiterate. The research supports the conclusion that the common Irish soldier new the issues, but was probably influenced by literate well-educated leaders.

As war broke out, many Irishmen found themselves with a difficult decision. While most initially supported the Southern position, they could not walk away from the country that had received them and given them opportunity.¹⁷ While the Irish had not achieved social, economic, and political freedom, they did realize the potential opportunities that American democracy offered.¹⁸ The Northern Irish became staunch

and loyal Unionist, at least for the first year of the war. While Northern Irish public opinion would wane after severe battle losses, the soldiers' loyalty to the Union appeared to grow stronger.¹⁹

Dr. Noel Ignatiev in his book *How the Irish Became White* concludes that the Irish in America had a flawed argument in supporting the Southern anti-Union position and outlines an argument why oppressed peoples would unite to overcome adversity. While the free black population in the north and south was small, the Irish on occasion competed with free blacks for the lowest paying, day-laborer positions. Both groups often lived adjacent to each other in city slums. While there were notable clashes, both groups also often intermarried and had much in common.²⁰ By supporting antislavery, the Irish would put their labor monopoly at risk; something they were utterly unwilling to renounce.²¹ Additionally, to many Irish the ascendancy of the "abolitionist Republicans" seemed to connote a revival of the detestable Protestant-Puritanism. Even influential Irish clergy interpreted the agitation for abolition as radicalism, a radicalism that could be turned against Catholics, as seen in Europe.²² Both Archbishop Hughes of New York City and Bishop James Duggan of Chicago leaned towards rigid obedience to the law and strict interpretation of the Constitution of the United States with its guarantee of slavery.²³ As late as the fall of 1861, after the outbreak of war, Archbishop Hughes wrote, "We despise, in the name of all Catholics, the 'Idea' of making this war subservient to the philanthropic nonsense of abolitionism."²⁴ David Conyngham, summing-up the reasons for why the Irish fought, also supports this notion in his 1869 book *The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns*. Conyngham writes, "The Irish soldier did

not ask whether the colored race were better off as bondsmen or freeman; he was not going to fight for an abstract idea.”²⁵

Ignatiev’s conclusion and statements from above contrast sharply with the generalized, modern, and romanticized, revisionist history often found in books about the Irish in America. Kerby Miller, one of the foremost Irish historians in America, also supports Ignatiev’s idea in his epic work *Emigrants and Exiles*. An example of this revisionist, romanticized history is found in Sergeant Kirkland’s society, *The History of the Irish Brigade*. The book often states the Celts of the Irish Brigade were fighting for the equality of other oppressed people in America, regardless of religion or ethnicity, and concluded that the Irish supported abolitionism.²⁶ While this is a noble ideal, it is not substantiated in academic research. At best, this “fighting for the equality of the oppressed” could mean the rights of Irish and German Catholic immigrants’ rights. Kathleen Bradley from the book *The History of Irish in America* concludes, “The Irish had no desire to fight to free slaves when they saw themselves still oppressed and persecuted in the land of liberty and equality.”²⁷ While the Irish fought for many reasons, fighting for the freedom of blacks was not one of them.

When the final choice had to be made, many Irish immigrants chose to fight to preserve the democracy and ideals of their new nation and to show support for their community.²⁸ Color Sergeant Peter Winch, from the New York Brigade, summed up the democratic argument best in a letter home, “America is Ireland’s refuge and Ireland’s last hope. Destroy this republic and Ireland’s hopes are blasted. If Ireland is ever to be free the means to accomplish it must come from the shores of America.”²⁹ The Catholic people of Ireland were fascinated with the evolution of America, and her revolution

directed against the British. The Irish “Republican” movement found many of its ideals in US revolutionary writings and the US Constitution.

Irish leaders in America also felt a desire to assuage the resentment of the Americans at the hesitation on the part of the foreign born to get involved in politics and army enlistment. Bitterness was growing in different areas of America about new immigrant citizens receiving America’s opportunities and privileges, but not assuming the responsibilities of citizenship. The Irish were one of the first ethnic groups to understand this sentiment, thus they attempted to prove their worth and potential, and assume their citizenship burden. Thomas Francis Meagher, the first colonel of the Irish Brigade, during a recruitment speech, eloquently supports this position,

I will not appeal to the gratitude of Irishmen in this invocation to arms. I will not remind them that when they were driven from their own lands, when their huts were pulled down or burned above their heads, when turned out by the roadside or into the ditches to die, when broken in fortunes, and when all hope was lost, the Irishmen came here (America) and had a new life infused into them . . . and found thousands to give them encouragement and sustaining hands.³⁰

Conyngham, Meagher’s Adjutant in the Irish Brigade, in his book *The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns* states that the men were fighting for the safety and welfare of their adopted country and its Constitution.³¹ Conyngham thought the first duty of Irish citizens of America was to support the Constitution and laws of the country. As exiles, the Northern Irish appreciated America’s principles of democracy, which appeared at odds with Southern aristocratic doctrines. Conyngham wrote, “To destroy this government would be a crime against their (citizens) indefeasible rights. Should the latter prevail, there was no longer any hope for the struggling nationalists of the Old World.”³² When the war appeared inevitable, Northern Irish leaders played on the

traditional hostilities toward the wealthy upper class and characterized Southern slave owners as arrogant and lazy aristocrats.³³ Ironically, prior to the war, Southern aristocracy was seldom attacked by the Irish leaders as being antidemocratic and reflective of the class rule and monarchism found in Britain.

Gleeson explains that the Tenth Tennessee, predominantly an Irish Catholic unit fighting for the South, decided to fight to support the local community that accepted them and showed them kindness. The Protestant Irish were more accepted and found roles in normal units. From the start of the war, the Protestant Irish were seen as more American. The Nashville area had several thousand Irish-Catholic immigrants and a strong Irish community and leader. When Tennessee and Nashville decided to support the Confederacy, it was only natural for these Irishmen to stand behind their community. Again, fearful of the intentions of outsiders they decided to fight together. The Tenth Tennessee's experience is not very different from the Irish experiences in Union enlistment in Boston or New York. These men saw the war as a chance to gain long-sought-after Southern approval and as a break from menial labor. Many of men of the 10th did object to what they perceived as the pro-black attitudes of the Northerners, and they tended to view the abolitionist as an evil radical.³⁴ The men of the 10th were primarily common laborers prior to war and would have interacted daily with blacks. The black slaves had value, when often the Irish laborer did not. This was a strong point of contention with Irish laborers; slaves often made fun of them.

The Irishmen in the Louisiana Brigade from New Orleans, and especially the Irishmen of the 6th Louisiana and Louisiana "Tiger" Battalion were zealous supporters of secession and the Southern war efforts. When Governor Thomas Moore of Louisiana

called for volunteers to defend the South and the state, the New Orleans Irish responded in great numbers. The New Orleans *Daily Delta* reported that “Our Irish citizens-- whew! They are ‘spilin’ for a fight with old Abe.”³⁵ The Irishmen of New Orleans more so than any other Southern Irishmen competed and interacted with blacks on the docks of Lake Pontchartrain, New Orleans Harbor. Typical Irish dockworkers when moving cotton on and off boats were given the worst position, at the foot of the gangway. Black slaves were usually at the top of the gangway in a safer position. The callous division of labor was noted by a local, “The niggers (slaves) are worth too much to be risked here; if the Paddies are knocked overboard, or get their backs broke, nobody loses anything.”³⁶ This precedent let the blacks scorn the Irishmen; “A Negro, seeing another slave carrying mortar, called out with a loud laugh, ‘Hallo! You is turned Irishman is ‘ou?’ ”³⁷ Like the Irishmen of the 10th Tennessee, these New Orleans Irishmen disliked the blacks and enthusiastically adopted the Southern cause.

The idea of fighting for democracy and the country and community that accepted them is often mixed with the purpose of obtaining military skills for a future war with Britain. Among all the motives of the Irish, perhaps one of the strongest was enlistment to gain soldier skills in hopes of one day striking a blow at England.³⁸ The presence of the green flag used by all Irish regiments was a reminder of the dual purpose of the fighting. For most, the freedom of Ireland was paramount.³⁹ However, this feeling would change after several years of bloody fighting. Many vocal Irish leaders agitating for this cause were the exiled veterans of the 1848 Young Ireland Rebellion. They had fled to America to escape incarceration and death. These individuals, being great orators and organizers, attracted many new immigrants into the American versions of the Fenian

Brotherhood, Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), and other Irish societies that supported insurrection. These nationalist organizations were well established in America prior to the war, but were also strengthened and enlarged during the war. Most exiles of the Young Ireland Rebellion had pledged to return to Ireland with the money, arms, and men to continue the rebellion. These leaders capitalized on the opportunity of the American Civil War to strengthen their own cause.

The concept of fighting for Ireland in America had been well established by 1851. The 69th Regiment of the New York State Militia was formed from the Second Irish Regiment of Volunteers on 12 October 1851. It had been formed for the expressed purpose of organizing and training troops for the liberation of Ireland.⁴⁰ Many New York Irish leaders started their political and military careers in this unit. At the outbreak of the war, the most famous veterans of the 1848 Rebellion in America were Thomas Francis Meagher, chief editor and owner of the *New York City Irish News* and founder of the New York Irish Brigade; Michael Corcoran, who was the first wartime commander of the 69th New York Militia and founder of the New York Irish Legion; Darcy McGee, an outspoken Bostonian agitator of Irish issues; and John Mitchell, the chief editor of the *Richmond Examiner*. Other prominent Irish nationalists in America included John Burke, Robert Nugent, Michael Doheny, Richard O’Gorman, John O’ Mahoney, and John Savage. These men were very influential in shaping public and political opinions. Corcoran and Meagher would serve the Union eventually as generals; Mitchell was too old to serve the South, but would lose a son fighting for the Confederacy at Gettysburg.

Corcoran and Meagher, both chief officers in the Fenian Brotherhood, initially saw the war as a distraction from the homeland liberation cause. Corcoran was one of the

most successful Irishmen in New York City prior to the war. He was a key Democrat in New York City ward politics and Tammany Hall. In 1859 he was elected Colonel of Regiment, for the 69th New York Militia, and in 1860 was elected to the Tammany Judiciary Committee. Corcoran at first implored all Irish non-members of the state militia not to enlist, so they could reserve their lives for the causes of Ireland.⁴¹ However, Corcoran added, if they wanted to fight for America they should demand to fight with those of their national identity and not among strangers. This idea was very popular in all Irish communities throughout America, and gave rise to the idea of all-Irish regiments and brigades and even to the notion of an Irish division in the Army of the Potomac.

Eventually, both Corcoran and Meagher saw a practical reason for the Irish to support the fight for the Union, which many thought would win quickly. Ireland needed trained military leaders and soldiers if they were going to gain their independence from Britain. Meagher's intent is clearly stated in his writing,

It is a moral certainly, that many of our countrymen who enlist in this struggle for the maintenance of the Union will fall in the contest. But even so, I hold that if only one in ten of us come back when this war is over, the military experience gained by that one will be of more service in a fight for Ireland's freedom than would that of the entire ten as they are now.⁴²

Conyngham, also a member of the Fenian movement, had seen the same opportunity and wrote, "Many a patriotic young Irishman wanted to learn the use of arms and the science of war, with hope of one day turning them to practical use in his own country."⁴³ With such views in the minds of leaders and men, it is not strange that the quick Irish imagination led many to look upon the war as nothing more than a favorable training opportunity for preparing them to fight England.

Many scholars believe the Irish volunteered to find respectable work, collect bounties or sign-on bonuses and escape menial labor, thus implying the Irish soldier was a mercenary. Conyngham's writing in 1866 is very sensitive to this idea and states, "The Irishmen had just the same right to fight for America that the native American had. The Irish soldier was, therefore, a patriot, and no mercenary."⁴⁴ Lonn, writing about the motives of the foreign-born, believes poverty to be the primary reason for why the Irish fought.⁴⁵ Most Irish day laborers were the lowest paid of any ethnic group. This was tiring, physical work and was not considered respectable or a route to greater opportunity. To induce men to enlist, many states, cities, and regiments offered bounties. This recruitment technique became increasingly popular as the war continued and casualties increased. Many regiments offered signing bonuses (average equaled \$100), a monthly wage (\$11 to \$16, average equaled \$13), free clothes and food.⁴⁶ This seemed very good to most average unmarried, Irish male immigrants, plus it gave them an opportunity to travel and gain new experiences. Often immigrants were recruited right off the docks from which they entered the US. Recruiting officers and runners usually took advantage of the new immigrants; some were even abducted into service.⁴⁷ Union agents and consuls in Ireland distributed free passage tickets to induce Union enlistment and to provide more contract laborers for war production.⁴⁸

This reasoning is expressed in an immigrant letter home (August 1861), "The time is miserable in this contrey, since the rebellion has stoped all publik works and men is going about in thousants and cant get an thing to Do."⁴⁹ Miller in *Emigrants and Exiles* states that there were few alternatives to enlistment. Another letter from a Corkman in Boston laments, "The business of the Country is wholly prostrate, and all the

people who have lived by their labour and only from hand to month are going to War.”⁵⁰ The *New York Herald*, in August 1861 concluded the Irish laborer enlisted more from “the desire of preserving the union of their bodies and souls, than by the wish to preserve the union of the states.”⁵¹ Miller also supports the argument that while some Irishmen were idealists fighting for a democratic cause, most, however, were fighting poverty and were very satisfied to risk death to claim the lucrative bounties.⁵² By 1863, bounties ranged from \$700 to \$1500 for a three-year enlistment. A new immigrant in 1863, Thomas McManus in a letter home wrote, “by Gor’ the bounty of \$700 was very tempting, and I enlisted the first day I came here.”⁵³ In Ireland, \$700 was more than ten years wages for a laborer.

By 1863, with limited Union success on the battlefield after two years of war and large numbers of Irish casualties, in the Union Army,⁵⁴ the Irish communities, newspaper editors, and many Irish politicians grew tired of the war. In December 1862, news of the New York Irish brigade’s virtual annihilation at Fredericksburg (Marye’s Heights, 13 December) exasperated the problem, “Driven to mere slaughter,” claimed the Irish press, by incompetent generals and nativist politicians.”⁵⁵ By mid-1863 Irish emigrant newspapers were admitting that the Irish spirit for the war was dead.⁵⁶ The *Boston Pilot* was urging election of a Democratic Congress and even an armistice. Battles were now called senseless, and even the beloved Meagher was called incompetent. The losses increased anti-American sentiment in Ireland, as immigrants sent home accounts of war and of the tricks and coercions used to attract them into the Union Army. Irish clergymen and politicians began to condemn wartime emigration to America. The American consul at Galway, Ireland, noted, “That the Irish countryside was filled with

thousands of bereaved households, bitterly bewailing the loss of brothers, sons and husbands in our disastrous war.”⁵⁷ These losses and sorrows worked themselves into the culture, even the period’s popular ballads displayed the hostilities, as seen in the Civil

War era song Paddy’ Lamentation:

Well it's by the hush, me boys, and sure that's to hold your noise
And listen to poor Paddy's sad narration
I was by hunger pressed, and in poverty distressed
So I took a thought I'd leave the Irish nation

Here's you boys, now take my advice
To America I'll have ye's not be going
There is nothing here but war, where the murderin' cannons roar
And I wish I was at home in dear old Dublin

Well I sold me ass and cow, my little pigs and sow
My little plot of land I soon did part with
And me sweetheart Bid McGee, I'm afraid I'll never see
For I left her there that morning broken-hearted

Here's you boys [Chorus]

Well meself and a hundred more, to America sailed o'er
Our fortunes to be made [sic] we were thinkin'
When we got to Yankee land, they shoved a gun into our hands
Saying "Paddy, you must go and fight for Lincoln"

Here's you boys [Chorus]

General Meagher to us he said, if you get shot or lose your head
Every murdered soul of youse will get a pension
Well meself I lost me leg, they gave me a wooden peg,
And by God this is the truth to you I mention

Here's you boys [Chorus]

Well I think meself in luck, if I get fed on Indian buck
And old Ireland is the country I delight in
With the devil, I do say, it's curse Americay
For I think I've had enough of your hard fightin'⁵⁸

Another key factor in the Irish diminishing support for the war occurred when President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in the fall of 1862. Irish Americans felt betrayed, for now it was a different war, one quite different from the one they had supported so valiantly.⁵⁹ To compound matters, it was apparent by the second year of war that the North needed more soldiers to support its efforts. On 3 March 1863 a draft law was passed which made men between twenty and forty-five eligible for conscription. An exemption was granted for those that could pay \$300 or find a substitute. The Irish community was outraged. They felt that since they could not buy their way out, the burden fell unequally on them.⁶⁰ Again, they argued that they would not fight to emancipate the blackman.⁶¹ With this viewpoint, tensions between the Irish and blacks grew. The first real clash occurred in April 1863, when black scabs were brought in to break a strike led by Irish longshoremen, on the docks of New York City. Then on the eleventh of July, in New York City the first names of draftees were drawn, almost immediately sparking the four-day New York City Draft Riots of 1863.

Despite the Irish-American warnings and accumulating sorrows, Irish emigration to war-torn America not only continued, but between 1861 to 64 nearly tripled in volume.⁶² The early 1860s were especially bad years for rural Ireland's farmers. Unusually heavy rains ruined pastures, cash crops, potatoes, and turf production, thus crippling graziers, commercial tillage farmers, subsistence cultivators, and laborers alike.⁶³ From 1861 to 1864, male emigration from the worst hit areas increased threefold, and evictions were up 65 percent from the four preceding years.⁶⁴ Kerby Miller concludes that many of these latter immigrants had no intention to fight nor, in fact, did they fight. After 1863, American consuls in Ireland were inundated with demands for

draft exemption certificates. Irish workers could get exemption certificates if they committed to being a contract laborers for large US companies, which were booming from the war business but short of workers. Others were not so lucky and were happy to embrace any opportunity to remove themselves from their misery and starvation. Bounties and free passage tickets from Union recruiters also increased dramatically during this latter period. So too did the tricks of unscrupulous recruiters in the harbors of America.

For an Irish community whose regiments had already suffered heavy losses, the new situational changes set off the worst rioting in the nation's history.⁶⁵ Angry Irish mobs looted and burned the draft office and took revenge on unpopular nativists and blacks. They beat, shot, and lynched any blacks they could find and even burned down a colored orphan asylum. The violence did not end until Union troops were sent in and until Archbishop Hughes used his influence to calm the rioters. Estimates of the dead and wounded ranged from 300 to more than 1,200.⁶⁶ These riots would renew "know-nothing" politics and were used by nativists as proof of Irish disloyalty and barbarity.

While the feelings of the Irish were not without some justification, the Irish did perpetrate horrendous acts of violence, for which history has clearly given them the blame. The *Irish-American* newspaper in New York City, on 12 September 1863, printed the drafted men's names, attempting to show that Irishmen from Democratic wards were unfairly overburdened.⁶⁷ Miller also supports this idea, stating the draft system was inequitably burdening working-class Irish wards. While the riots were a setback in Irish-American relationships and undermined the soldiers' war effort, the Irish as a whole had emerged more confident, unified and organized. This strengthened the Irish-Catholic and

Irish-Catholic-American identities. In the long term this confidence, unity, organization and identity made up for the setback.

With the changing circumstances of 1863, the Irish political and community positions shifted almost to their prewar point, though this had little effect on the soldiers in the field. Sergeant Peter Welsh annoyed at the criticism in Irish communities wrote, “Let our Irish contemporaries have nothing to do with what they can not comprehend.”⁶⁸ Father Corby in December, 1863 writes about veteran reenlistment, “The members of the Irish brigade were among the very first to do so.”⁶⁹ Corby calls them battle-hardened veterans, “In the cause of Union and Liberty.”⁷⁰ After two long years and tremendous unit casualties, the Irish soldiers, who might have originally fought to gain military experience for the future fight with Britain, were now feeling like America citizens, citizens who had proved their worth. Their support for the war effort remained strong for the duration of the conflict. Unfortunately, the timing of this soldier sentiment clashed with political fervor, as seen during the New York City draft riots. The draft riots proved pivotal in changing Irish-American relationships. They might have undone the first years of Irish loyal support to the Union cause and the gallantry of Irish regiments on the battlefield. It would even affect how history viewed the contributions of the Irish during the war. This will be assessed further in chapter 5.

¹Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1951), 41.

²Michael J. Costello, “The Irish and American Military Tradition,” in David N. Doyle and Owen D. Edwards, eds., *America and Ireland, 1776-1976, American Identity and the Irish Connection* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 226.

³Susan Provost Beller, *Never Were Men So Brave* (New York: Margaret McElderry Books, 1998), 22.

⁴Ella Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), 53.

⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 76.

⁸Sergeant Kirkland Society, *The History of the Irish Brigade* (Fredericksburg, VA: Kirkland Museum, 1997), 10.

⁹Ed Gleeson, *Rebel Sons of Erin: A Civil War Unit History of the Tenth Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Irish), Confederate State Volunteers* (Indianapolis, IN: Guild Press, 1993), 11.

¹⁰Lawrence Kohl, *The Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 3. Note: Kohl quotes from Bell Irwin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Civil War* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobb-Merrill Publishing, 1951), 308-309.

¹¹*Ibid.* 10

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³William J. K. Beaudot and Lance K. Heregen, eds., *An Irishman in the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of James P. Sullivan* (New York: Fordam Press, 1993), 13-14.

¹⁴*Ibid.* 1-2.

¹⁵D. H. Conynningham, *The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns* (New York: Patrick Donahoe Press, 1969), 6.

¹⁶William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years with Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac*, xxi.

¹⁷Gleeson, 10-11.

¹⁸Edward K. Spann, "Union Green: The Irish Community and the Civil War," In Ronald Meagher and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 194-95.

¹⁹Kohl, 49-50.

²⁰Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995), 26.

- ²¹Ibid., 41.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Ibid., 42.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Conyngham, 6.
- ²⁶Kirkland Society, 9.
- ²⁷Ann Kathleen Bradley, *The History of the Irish in America* (London and Edison, NJ: Quantum Books, 1986), 66.
- ²⁸Beller, 26.
- ²⁹Ibid., 22.
- ³⁰Ibid.
- ³¹Conyngham, 6.
- ³²Ibid., 6.
- ³³Gleeson, 11.
- ³⁴Ibid.
- ³⁵Jason H. Silverman, "The Irish in the Confederacy," in Richard Current, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, vol. 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster 1993), 822.
- ³⁶Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy*, 28.
- ³⁷Ibid., 29.
- ³⁸Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 74.
- ³⁹Ibid.
- ⁴⁰Kirkland Society, 186.
- ⁴¹Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 75.
- ⁴²Beller, 21.
- ⁴³Ibid.

- ⁴⁴Conyngham, 6.
- ⁴⁵Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 75.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 75.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸Kirby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford Press, 1985), 356.
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 359.
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*
- ⁵²Miller, 360.
- ⁵³*Ibid.*, 361.
- ⁵⁴Note: Union casualties from the Richmond Campaign, spring 1862, and Antietam, September 1862.
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 343.
- ⁵⁶*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 359.
- ⁵⁸Irish Music Website, Celois; available from www.celois.washingtonstate.edu; Internet; accessed on January 2001.
- ⁵⁹Bradley, 66.
- ⁶⁰Miller, *Emigrant and Exiles*, 324-325.
- ⁶¹*Ibid.*
- ⁶²*Ibid.*, 359.
- ⁶³*Ibid.*, 360.
- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵Bradley, 67.
- ⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 43.

⁶⁸Kohl, 7-8.

⁶⁹Corby, 213.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 214.

CHAPTER 4

HOW THEY FOUGHT AND WAR-CREATED INFRASTRUCTURE

The Irish born and the subsequent generations of Irish-Americans formed a significant portion of Civil War combat forces, possibly as high as 10 percent in the early stage of the war.¹ While many Irishmen served in ethnic companies, regiments, and brigades, most Irish-Americans, North and South, served in nonethnic regiments. The Irish efforts in nonethnic regiments are almost impossible to trace, but no doubt would have had an effect on Irish-American relationships. Some Irish units and leaders performed extremely well, establishing a “hard-fighting” reputation, others did not. The Irish units that performed well, and most did, had an increased sense of confidence and loyalty to their cause. This change in attitude fostered a positive collective conscientiousness in the Irish soldiers. They were no longer just outsiders. This feeling in turn made them identify themselves as more American, or at least hyphenated Irish-Americans. As the war progressed northern and southern Irish identity differed; southern Irishmen became less ethnically motivated. Furthermore, this battlefield confidence was transported back home to the urban Irish communities, which help to strengthen unity and organization, in support of war efforts. Initially this show of unity and organization was a coping mechanism, but later became a source for community infrastructure growth. Wartime bounties, bonuses, pensions and labor efforts in support of war industry fueled the growth. The war-created confidence and infrastructure were definitive events for the Irish in America.

This chapter will focus on the fighting efforts of the predominately Irish ethnic units and assess how they fought and what influences this had on the Irish, nativists, and societal viewpoints. Secondly, the research will address unique Irish characteristics, leadership, and unit performance, and assess its impact. Lastly, the research will focus on the Irish communities wartime coping mechanisms and infrastructure improvements that were created by communal unity and organization and battlefield confidence and success. Chapter 5 will assess the impacts of the fighting and the war-related communal improvements; an analysis of these two areas will provide the basis for postwar assimilation and acceptance.

Irish military units, both North and South, had typical Civil War structure and organization. The company and regimental structure was the basic building block of the Civil War armies. A Union company numbered around 100 men, and a regiment between 850 to 1046 men. A Confederate company and regiment were usually larger, numbering 130 and 650 to 1,300, respectively. The regiment was the basic fighting unit of the war. Union and Confederate regiments both had ten companies, but often the Southern forces broke the regiment down further to two battalions, of five companies each. Two to four regiments, more often four, made a brigade, and two to three brigades made a division. A captain commanded a company, a major a battalion, a colonel a regiment, a brigadier general a brigade, and a major general a division.

Unique characteristic that differentiated Irish regiments on the battlefield from other ethnic units included the persuasive influence of Fenian rhetoric, the established relationship with the Catholic Church, and a hard-fighting reputation. Fenianism and its associated symbols--green flags, green shirts, badges, songs, and secret societies fueled

old-world sentiments and ethnicity. Fenianism also added to the rigor of battle and the goal of establishing a tough-fighting reputation. Fenianism on top of duty to America increased the ordinary dangers of military life, “because of his dual loyalty, the Irish-American soldier was doubly driven by concern for reputation.”²

The close association with the Catholic Church provided invaluable emotional and spiritual support and was a strong link to families. The Catholic Church’s role also stressed and emphasized ethnicity and differentiation from native units. Each Irish regiment had its own dedicated chaplain. While other ethnic and nonethnic units had chaplains and religious leaders, there was not the one per regiment ratio. Irish chaplains were the battlefield spiritual enforcers and played a large and unique role. They would promote Catholic and American democratic view, and their opinion weighed heavily in external and internal regimental politics. Father Corby of the Irish brigade described the soldiers as a “body of about 4,000 Catholics marching--most of them to--death but also to glory of the their Church and country.”³ Irish chaplains also served as a link between the soldier and his family. Union Irish units were simply a military version of the Boston or New York neighborhood parish.⁴

Catholicism and Fenianism emphasized and valued Irish ethnicity and distinctiveness, especially in the North. This emphasis would continue to isolate the Irish as different and could have encouraged further nativist discrimination, even after valued war participation. However, what was seen as clannish behavior to outsiders, actually strengthened and unified the group and more importantly, provided confidence in themselves. War-related Catholicism and Fenianism strengthened not only Irish identity,

but Irish-American as well. Once unified and confident, the Irish community was more aware of its dual identity and role as citizen.

Confederate units did not have the same sense of communal Irish ethnicity, as the war went on. Southern regiments did not have as many dedicated chaplains and lacked the strong Fenian demagogues found in most Union Irish units. They also lacked new Irish immigrants and Irish replacements for battlefield losses. Due to these critical missing pieces, southern Irishmen were less resistant in retaining a more-pure Irish identity. With less ethnicity, the Irish were better accepted in society. They were seen as more American, and most wealthy Southerners did not oppose Irish presence in their communities.⁵ Furthermore, unlike many Northerners, most Southerners were not concerned with a person's religious affiliation and Irish Southerners did not suffer serious discrimination because of their Catholic faith.⁶ As the war progressed Irish identity and acceptance in society became very different for the Union and Confederate Irish. The Irish southerner had a much easier time fitting in and being accepted. The next section will examine the hard-fighting reputation established by the Irish units.

Irishmen in non-Irish units often had a difficult time, and some struggled very hard to get into an Irish regiment. "Irishmen, particularly a Catholic, has a devilish hard road to travel when not in an Irish regiment," remarked an Irish-born captain.⁷ In a letter to Colonel James Mulligan, commander of the 23 Illinois (Irish), a private in a non-Irish unit wrote, "If you can possibly do it, . . . get us transferred to you, where we can be amongst our own race and people."⁸ Fighting together as Irishmen built confidence and fostered a spirit of dual loyalties to America and Ireland. The new loyalty to America did not diminish loyalty to Ireland.⁹

Fighting in all-Irish units facilitated the information flow from Ireland and Irish-American communities and helped solidify the Irish reasons for fighting the war. Sergeant Peter Welsh of the 28th Massachusetts received the *Boston Pilot* newspaper weekly from his wife.¹⁰ He shared the writings and his thoughts with the other men in his unit. While sharing viewpoints reinforced Irish nationalism, it all reinforced their oath to America and their role as a citizen. Over time, what emerged was a strong sense of idealism and democracy. Welsh, and others thought Ireland would benefit from a Union victory, and America was the place the Irish masses might prosper, “is this not worth fighting for?” he concluded.¹¹

Many Irish and American soldiers as well as local and regional newspapers embraced the concept that the Irish by nature were exceptional fighters. Many of the successes and the failures of the Irish units were highly publicized events. High-ranking commanding officers were very proud and thankful for their Irish units. General Edwin Sumner, Second Corps commander, Army of the Potomac, often asked of Meagher’s brigade, “Are the Irish green flags ready?”¹² A Confederate General Richard Taylor, one of the fiercest fighters of war noted,

If tomorrow I wanted to win a reputation, I would have Irish soldiers in preference to any other; and I’ll tell you why. . . . They have more dash, more *elan* than any other troops that I know of; then they are more cheerful and enduring--nothing can depress them.¹³

Fighting for independence, glory, even martyrdom, was part of the Irish heritage and culture.¹⁴ James Gannon, from the *Irish Rebels: Confederate Tigers*, calls the Irish, “rebels at heart, romantics by tradition and fighters by heritage.”¹⁵ While this seems embellished, it does reflect the way Irish soldiers and leadership viewed themselves. Ella

Lonn in *Foreigners in the Confederacy* further supports this notion, “Their fondness for their own companies is explicable: the Irishman fights better shoulder to shoulder with Irishmen as comrades, and always yearns to reflect honor on ‘Ould Ireland’.”¹⁶ He further adds that one of the strongest inducements in initially winning Irish recruits was the fighting reputation of the particular company and regiment.¹⁷ On many Civil War battlefields, on both sides and in both the eastern and western theaters, the green flag with the harp meant an Irish regiment was fighting. Fighting under the green Irish flags made the combat experience for the Irish soldier even more powerful; the Irish had to live up to their reputation, plus honor both of their homelands. Almost every Irish-designated regiment flew a green standard.

With ethnic Irish regiments North and South having fierce reputations as loyal fighters, they were usually found in the worst fighting. For the enemy the green flag meant a hard bloody fight was ahead. Not surprisingly Irish units on both sides took heavy casualties, some of the highest in the war. The New York Irish Brigade had the third highest casualty rate of any brigade in the Union army; 4,000 were either killed or mortally wounded out of a total enlistment of 7,715.¹⁸ Often the Irish were not the most polished and disciplined soldiers, but what they lacked in professional finesse they made up for in enthusiasm, courage, and determination. Lonn from *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* further generalizes the Irish fighting character, “More important than the Irishman’s zeal for combat was his poise and steadiness, his watchfulness, his patience in impending battle; coolly, indifferently, even lazily, he met the dread intimations that death had commenced in havoc.”¹⁹ In honor of Irish patriotism and fighting performance, in March 1863 a large new gunboat was christened the USS *Shamrock*.²⁰

Irish performance and its impact will be expanded upon in the next sections on Irish leaders and units.

The Irishmen had the traits that made them good officers.²¹ Irish officers knew how to manage people, and more Irish than Germans rose to higher ranking office.²² In general, Irish leaders were charismatic, good orators, and liked by their men and superiors. Initially, many Irish leaders had other agendas than fighting, which included Fenianism, Irish political unity, and self-interests. Many of the Fenian-Irish Nationalists were heroes of the Irish Rebellion of 1848. These leaders used their influence to help recruit and rally others to the war causes. For the Union General Thomas Meagher, Colonel Michael Corcoran, and Colonel James Mulligan were the most famous and controversial. While these men were controversial in the cities in which they came from, they were admired and respected by their soldiers. Sergeant Peter Welsh wrote in a letter that the defense of a just government was a great motive to influence Irishmen to take up arms, and Generals Shields, Mulligan, Corcoran, and Meagher were true and talented leader for that cause, “exposing themselves to all the hardships and dangers of war.”²³ For the Confederacy Patrick Cleburne was considered the most competent foreign-born officer and one of the best in the Confederacy. Only one other foreigner, a Frenchman, rose to the rank of major general in the Confederacy.²⁴ Unlike the three northern Irish leaders, Cleburne was respected by all. He also had the unique ability to unify the Catholic and Protestant Irishmen.²⁵ These Irish leaders provided unity and strengthened pride in their units, men, and communities.

Colonel Michael Corcoran was a fervent and militant Fenian. Prior to emigration, he was a member of the Irish constabulary (police), working for the British. He resigned

his service after the 1848 Rebellion, as a protest against Ireland's wrongs, then emigrated to America. Due to his constabulary service, Corcoran advanced rapidly in the 69th prior to war, rising from private to colonel of the regiment by 1859.²⁶ Initially, he did not want Irishmen to fight America's war. Corcoran did not want them distracted from the cause of liberating Ireland. He soon realized the war could serve two purposes: training the American Irish for the future conflict in Ireland and establishing the Irish as an organized political force, loyal to the causes of the Union. Corcoran's stature among the American Irish was further solidified when he refused to march the 69th New York in a parade honoring the British Prince of Wales, during a 1860 US friendship tour. In the eyes of nativists, this proved his disloyalty, and he was tried for court-martial offenses. The charges were dropped when the unit was needed for active serve.

Corcoran was well liked in the Irish community and by his soldiers. Corcoran earned his war fame as a result of his and the 69th New York's performance at the First Battle of Bull Run, the first major conflict of the war. The 69th under his direct and disciplined leadership stopped the disorganized Union retreat at Bull Run from being a rout. Unfortunately, for his courage and heroic stand, Corcoran was taken prisoner during a Confederate counterattack. The heroic action of Corcoran and the 69th, after the battle known as the "Fighting 69th," endeared them to a pleased and grateful nation.²⁷ While in prison Corcoran's frame grew. There were many high-level, diplomatic attempts to free him over a one-year period. His prison stay was prolonged because he refused to take an oath stating that he would not fight against the Confederacy again. Corcoran wanted to command Irishmen on the battlefield again. Corcoran was the most-popular Irishman in America, during the early war years.

After his year in several Confederate prisons, Corcoran was paroled and reemerged to form the Irish Legion or Corcoran's Legion. His fame and personal influence were instrumental in attracting the necessary 5,000 soldiers, especially after the Irish brigade's heavy losses at Antietam. The *Irish American* newspaper stated that with a great outpour of enthusiasm Corcoran could have raised a whole division of 10,000 men and that he excited hopes, valor, and energy in all the Irish.²⁸ Corcoran then used his influence and fame to ensure the new Irish Legion would be assigned to the Army of the Potomac and not the Washington Garrison, where they would have guarded empty stretches of railroad track. He was looking for honor for his men and for them to do their duty.²⁹

Corcoran's popularity and reputation waned in the non-Irish community after he killed Lieutenant Colonel Edgar Kimball, of the 9th New York infantry. Kimball, drunk on duty, at a forward picket site would not let Corcoran and his party pass in the darkness. "Not for no damned Irish son of a bitch like you or anyone else,"³⁰ shouted Kimball. Kimball pulled his sword and Corcoran shot him dead. Corcoran's reputation suffered a major blow, and his political influence declined sharply thereafter.³¹ Unfortunately, Corcoran died on 22 December 1863, after being thrown from General Meagher's large gray horse, which had a reputation as an unruly beast. While galloping ahead of his party, Corcoran was thrown from the horse and the horse fell on top of him. He never regained consciousness. Alcohol was suspected to have caused the accident. Most pro-Irish publications state that Corcoran died of stomach problems, brought on by war and prison environments. His funeral was one of New York City's biggest events, and in honor, his body was lay in state at the New York City Hall Rotunda. Corcoran

was generally regarded by his soldiers and nativists as competent, dedicated to Irish and American causes, and not self-serving.

General Thomas Meagher was the most popular and controversial Irish leader during the war. He served as a company commander in the 69th New York and as the first commander of the New York Irish brigade. Like Corcoran, he was a fervent Fenian; however, he was seen as much more of a self-serving politician. Meagher was already famous prior to war from his service in the 1848 Rebellion and his later escape from a British penal colony in Tasmania, Australia. Meagher is best known for his oratory skills, organizational skills, and drinking. He was also a devout Catholic and assisted in making religion take a front rank in the brigade.³²

Many soldiers and leaders thought that what Meagher lacked in military skill, he made up for it in dash and charisma. He relied on others to manage the day-to-day affairs of the brigade and its movements and actions.³³ Meagher's tactics, techniques, and weapons preferences were not current, which resulted in higher casualties for the brigade. He actually preferred the smoothbore rifle to the new rifled musket that had improved range and accuracy. Meagher often stated he thought nothing better than the, "buck and ball, and bayonet charge."³⁴ Meagher drove the brigade fiercely to establish its hard-fighting reputation, and the men supported him. Meagher gave the soldiers more than just confidence in their fighting ability. Father Corby stated that Meagher gave them confidence as Catholics, Irishmen, and Americans.³⁵

Unlike Corcoran, Meagher was seen by many nonsoldiers as an opportunist, willing to advance his own career and fame, perhaps at the cost of his men. He was a "political general" more concerned with New York City Irish politics and power than

soldierly duties. William O' Grady, a former lieutenant in the British Royal Marines who rose from private to captain in the 88th New York, commented that Meagher was, “not excellent as a tactician, but was worth thousands of men to the Union for his magnetism in recruiting.”³⁶ Early in the war Meagher himself stated he lacked the requisite military training and credibility.³⁷ Private Peter Rafferty, stated Meagher was “irrepressible and irresponsible. The casualties suffered by the Irish Brigade resulted not from its commander's incompetence or vague conspiracies however, but from the brigade's status as an elite unit which would rather fight than run, no matter what the odds, and the poor luck of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.”³⁸

Meagher's career is marked with tremendous controversy. He is depicted as a hero leading charges and also as a leader, who is not in the middle of the hardest fighting, when leadership really counts. William Russell, a correspondent for the *London Times*, questioned Meagher bravery during the battle of Bull Run, claiming in an article that he saw Meagher running “across country” away from the fighting.³⁹ Through many editorial challenges in the paper and death threats on Russell, Meagher's name and honor were eventually cleared several months later. At Antietam during the difficult attack on Bloody Lane, Meagher was not present. General George McClellan, the commander of the Army of Potomac in his official report heaped praise on the soldiers of the Irish Brigade, and noted that Meagher had fallen from his horse.⁴⁰ Winfield Scott Hancock, 1st Division commander of the Army of Potomac at Fredericksburg, also said Meagher, because of lameness, did not lead the charge as normal.⁴¹ Additionally, Hancock was very disappointed in Meagher's uncoordinated decision after nightfall to have the brigade withdraw across the river. Hancock states he sanctioned Meagher.⁴²

After the Irish brigades' losses at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, Meagher wanted permission to return to New York City to recruit more soldiers. General Hooker, Commander of the Army of Potomac, felt he could not be spared and turned down the request. Meagher, thinking a battalion-sized unit beneath him, resigned in disgust on 19 May 1863.

Alcohol played heavily in the life of General Thomas Meagher. Henry Villard, a correspondent from the *Cincinnati Commercial* newspaper, accused Meagher of being drunk prior to the Battle of Bull Run.⁴³ Whitelaw Reid of the *Cincinnati Gazette* accused Meagher of being drunk at Antietam and cited it as the reason why he had fallen from his horse.⁴⁴ Colonel Davis Hunter Strother of McClellan's headquarters staff recorded in his journal that Meagher was drunk at Antietam and fell from his horse.⁴⁵ General Robert Cox stated years after the battle that it was common knowledge that Meagher was drunk at Antietam.⁴⁶

Both Irish and non-Irish alike questioned Meagher's leadership after these episodes. Meagher, after the death of his friend and peer Corcoran on Meagher's own horse, felt partly responsible for his death. He accompanied Corcoran's body to New York for burial. The trip served a dual purpose. Meagher thought he deserved and would get Corcoran's command, but it was not offered to him. Many Irish leaders in New York City had grown weary of Meagher and this trip to the city reaffirmed their views that he was self-serving. Maria, the influential wife of Judge Charles Daly, wrote of Meagher, "He is the fox all over, as anyone might see by watching his small bright eye. I confess I do not want him to come near us. . . . Now that Corcoran is gone, he is the representative of the Irish Brave--what he has all the time been aiming at!"⁴⁷ Meagher emerged as a

charismatic, but controversial, leader in and outside the Irish community. People loved or hated him, even his death is controversial. In 1867, while serving as the Territorial Governor of Montana, he was drowned in a fall from a riverboat. Again, alcohol was suspected.⁴⁸ Meagher's drinking problems and controversies reinforced stereotypes among nativists and elites. However, among his soldiers he was revered as a gentleman and patriot to Ireland and America.

The American born James A. Mulligan from Chicago, Illinois, put together an all-Irish regiment, officially called the 23rd Illinois, better known as Mulligan's Brigade. Mulligan got permission to call it a brigade although it was only the size of a regiment. Using the title of "brigade" for a regiment reflected Mulligan's ambitions and romantic notions about the Irishmen's fighting ability. Often he embellished the stories of the "Wild Geese Irishmen," who fought as Erin's exiles at Waterloo and Fontenoy and in many European armies. Mulligan always compared his own men to them. Mulligan, though born in the US, was a strong Irish nationalist and supported Fenian causes. He had strong political ambitions and eventually wanted to command all western Irish Regiments in a true Irish Brigade. He was fighting for the glory of Ireland and Irish-American interests in America.⁴⁹ At first there was mixed feeling about the formation of an all-Irish regiment in Illinois. Prominent Irish-Americans in Chicago accused Governor Richard Yates of being anti-Irish and of having strong Know-Nothing views. Yates finally relented and allowed the formation of an Illinois Irish regiment. A letter from Senator Stephen A. Douglas to President Lincoln on the behalf of Mulligan and his Irish regiment also helped solidify their acceptance. Mulligan, proud of his Irish heritage

and very knowledgeable about Irish history in word, dress, and deed was seen by Chicagoans as a professional Irishman.

After a brief training period in Chicago, the 23rd was sent to guard St. Louis and then to guard the state legislature in Jefferson City, Missouri. General Grant in his memoirs sourly stated that Mulligan did not train his men long enough.⁵⁰ Mulligan became famous for his defense of Lexington, Kentucky, against the Confederate forces of General Sterling Price. Price's men, fresh from a difficult and bloody victory at Wilson's Creek, Missouri, laid siege to Mulligan's brigade. Mulligan's men along with a Home Guard unit defended admirably, but could not fend off the Confederates. At one point Mulligan challenged Price to a duel, which the national papers gloried as a chivalrous act. When Mulligan handed his sword to Price, Price returned it saying a man of valor should not be seen without a weapon.⁵¹ While Price let all of Mulligan's men go home, Mulligan refused his parole and remained Price's prisoner. His efforts and the efforts of his men won them national admiration. The Battle of Lexington and captivity of Mulligan made him and the 23rd Illinois famous. Two months later Mulligan was finally exchanged for Confederate Daniel Frost. Chicago gave its national hero a triumphant welcome that included bonfires, booming cannon, bands, fireworks, and a parade.⁵²

Mulligan's celebrity status attracted more recruits for the regiment.⁵³ With a special action from Congress, Mulligan's regimental green flag carried the name Lexington emblazoned on it. In June 1862, after months of guarding prisoners near Chicago's Camp Douglas, Mulligan's Irish Brigade was sent to the vicinity of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. For years, the brigade saw little action, and Mulligan was

disappointed, believing opportunity and fame was passing him and the brigade by. In the summer of 1864, the inaction ended and the Irish Brigade now found itself in the middle of the action. Mulligan suffered a mortal wound at Kernstown and died on 24 July 1864, as a Confederate prisoner. He had forbid his men to carry his body off the field of battle while the brigade colors were still flying. On 30 May 1885, a large stone monument was dedicated to Mulligan in Chicago's Calvary Cemetery. This was a unique honor for Chicago and showed his popularity. The monument was a clear sign of the changing attitudes toward the Irish and Catholicism. Carved into the stone dedicated to the renowned military hero was the phrase, "Lay Me Down and Save the Flag."

Two famous Irish leaders were the Chaplains William Corby of the Irish brigade and Peter Paul Cooney of the 35th Indiana. Father Corby became famous for being upfront in the fighting and by giving the soldiers absolution under cannon fire, just prior to the Confederate onslaught at Cemetery Ridge, Gettysburg. Corby thought he was ministering to only his Catholic soldiers, but he found out all the Union soldiers around him knelt in prayer. Colonel Mulholland, commander of the 116th Pennsylvania, remarked, "more than impressive; it was awe-inspiring."⁵⁴ Even Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, the Second Corps commander, removed his hat and bowed in reverential devotion.⁵⁵ Afterwards Corby stated, "In the presence of death, religion gives hope and strength."⁵⁶ The unified Christian blessing is one of the most popular human-interest stories of the Battle of Gettysburg and helped in Catholicism's greater acceptance. Another famous and courageous chaplain was Father Cooney of the 35th Indiana. Cooney was considered one of the bravest men in the regiment. Cooney, who served with the regiment for almost four years, was often seen in offensive charges and

always amongst the firing line. He had helped in recruiting the unit and acted as a stabilizing force during the regimental infighting. In battle, he offered prayers, cared for the wounded, and attended to the financial matters of the dead. This gave comfort to the soldiers and also to the families back home. The research will now focus on Irish leaders in the Confederacy and show how they compared to Union Irish leaders.

Many Irish units in the South were initially led by non-Irish leaders. This situation did not cause the same internal problems as it did in the North. While several Confederate units were Irish, Irish ethnicity did not dominate the role of the unit, like the Union units. The units lacked the Irish nationalist demagogues that other Irish units had, thus Americanism was valued over Irish identity. Irish leaders did not emphasize Fenianism and Irishness at the expense or opportunity to be Irish-Americans. Additionally, most non-Irish leaders were well liked and thought competent by their men.

Patrick Ronayne Cleburne born in Cork, Ireland, was considered one of South's greatest generals. He was also a successful and gifted lawyer, writer, and speaker. General Robert E. Lee called Cleburne, "the most famous Irish general in his army, . . . a dashing military man, who was all virtue, and who inherited the intrepidity of his race."⁵⁷ Before Cleburne emigrated, he had served in the British army and had advanced from private to corporal. He was considered by many to be a master tactician and an aggressive and tenacious fighter. "He took interest in everything connected with tactics, and personally taught it all," noted General Basil W. Duke, of the Arkansas Volunteers. Cleburne, while a Protestant, was a supporter of the Catholic-Nationalistic causes, in Ireland. He was also an idealist dedicated to the Southern cause. Cleburne, in a letter to his brother, in May 1861 stated, "I am with the South in life or in death, in victory or

defeat. I never owned a Negro and care nothing for them, but these people (Southerners) have been my friends and have stood with me on all occasions.”⁵⁸

Cleburne served as regimental, brigade, division, and acting corps commander in the Army of Tennessee. His division was considered the best drilled in the Army of Tennessee.⁵⁹ Cleburne earned the name “Stonewall Jackson of the West” for his determined defense of Ringgold Gap, against General Joseph Hooker’s corps. Cleburne’s heroic defense saved General Braxton Bragg’s army from annihilation and checked further Union operations in that area for several months.⁶⁰ He saw action in some of the most important engagements of the war--Shiloh, Perryville, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, the Battles for Atlanta, and Franklin.

Cleburne towards the end of the war controversially offered the idea that the South should enlist slaves to fight. For their efforts, they would win their freedom. While prudent, due to the South’s inability to sustain losses of men, this idea was not popular among Southern elites. Afterwards Cleburne was ostracized for the idea. He was killed during a charge at the bloody battle of Franklin. General D. H. Hill wrote of Cleburne, “He deserves a prominent place among the great heroes, who have illustrated Southern heroism and Southern history. . . . His presence brought success wherever he moved on the field of battle. ‘Cleburne is here!’ meant that all was well.”⁶¹ Cleburne’s competence and leadership was sorely missed. The Fenian Brotherhood and the Irish Society of St. Andrew marched behind his coffin on the way to burial.⁶² While he never commanded an Irish ethnic unit, he did rally Irishmen from Arkansas to enlist.⁶³ Cleburne had the unique ability to unify the Irish Catholic and Irish Protestant, something that did not happen often in the North. Lonn, noted, “Idolizing ‘Old Pat’ the two nations

shared (Ireland and America).”⁶⁴ After the war and in his honor, Southern Irishmen, both Catholics and Protestants founded the Patrick Cleburne Society to promote Irish-American unity and history in the US. Beside Cleburne, the next most famous Irish Confederate leaders served in the 6th Louisiana and the 10th Tennessee.

The 6th Louisiana and the 10th Tennessee are the two most famous Irish regiments in the Confederacy. The 6th Louisiana was led by both Irish and non-Irish leaders. The non-Irish, Isaac Seymour, a respected newspaper editor of social prominence, was the first to command the 6th Louisiana. Seymour was born in Connecticut, graduated with honors from Yale, and had served in the Seminole Wars and in the Mexican-American War. Seymour was considered an experienced leader, an accomplished tactician, and strict disciplinarian.⁶⁵ While he decided to fight for the Confederacy, he thought the wrongs of the South could better be addressed while in the Union than out of it. While Seymour was not Irish, his second in command was the Irish born Henry Strong. Additionally, most of the staff and company commanders were Irish. Seymour was a respected and competent commander. He died while commanding the 1st Louisiana Brigade at the Battle of Gaines Mill.

The 6th was then commanded by Henry Strong, who was killed leading a charge in Miller’s cornfield, near the East Woods of Antietam, on 17 September 1862.⁶⁶ Another Irish-born leader, William Monaghan, then commanded the 6th. Monaghan, like the commanders before him died. He was killed near Shepherdstown, in August 1864, during General Jubal Early’s Maryland raid. Monaghan died steadying his infantry soldiers against the attack of mounted Union cavalry. Monaghan had led the 6th for nearly two years and had served with the unit since its inception. His death was a striking

blow for the Confederacy, which could no longer replace competent, experienced commanders. General Early, who was known for harsh judgments and few compliments to subordinates, noted in his memoirs, “A valuable officer was killed.”⁶⁷ The next commander was the Irish-born Joseph Hanlon. He was captured during a Union attack, at the Battle of Cedar Creek while protecting wounded soldiers.

Colonel Adolphus Heiman, a Lutheran German immigrant from Prussia, formed the 10th Tennessee regiment at Fort Donelson, with the help of Randal McGavock. McGavock a fourth-generation Scotch-Irish, American Presbyterian brought his Irish company of 122 men to the unit. McGavock, a lawyer, writer, politician, and soldier was instrumental in Nashville democratic politics. He had big political plans, first running and winning the mayoral race for Nashville and later wanted to run for Congress. Being an astute politician, he did mix religion with his politics and he joined many Irish-Catholic societies, including the St. Patrick’s Club. This is where he earned the admiration of a loyal Irish Catholic following. Heiman, as a trained engineer was also placed in command of the new Forts Henry and Donelson. He helped to design and build the fortifications. The Irish were sent to him as laborers. While the German was the official in charge, McGavock was the de facto commander, running the daily affairs of the regiment.⁶⁸

During October and November 1862, on long, cold marches to Jackson, Mississippi, in hopes of reinforcing the Confederate forces to the east of the Vicksburg area, many of the men got sick, nine died of fever, to include Colonel Heiman. McGavock would take command and lead the regiment to great success at the Battle of Raymond, Mississippi. McGavock died during the battle leading a charge into the 17th

US Missouri. When General Joe Johnston got the word of Colonel McGavock's death, he expressed much regret at losing a competent and charismatic leader.⁶⁹ After McGavock's death, the unit lost two other Irish-born commanders William Grace and John O'Neal. It was the quality of leadership that kept the defeated unit on its feet.⁷⁰ "The very last of the Tennessee Irish warriors had to keep fighting, had to keep the tiny regiment viable because of an idea those brave leaders (McGavock, Grace, and O'Neal) had showed them: that Irishmen in America had the right to their pride and the chance to show their strength."⁷¹ The next section will focus on how the Union and Confederate Irish units performed and what was its impact.

Irish leadership in Irish regiments was generally seen as positive by the soldiers and non-Irish commanders at the next level. Irish soldiers were very loyal to their leaders, and they seldom had anything negative to say. Irish leaders displayed enthusiasm and confidence that in turn was embraced by their own men. The emergent confidence is just as important in the war and warpost analysis, as was the hard-fighting reputation of leaders, units, and soldiers.

The 69th New York Militia earned fame as a result of their performance at the First Battle of Bull Run, the first major conflict of the war. The 69th's steady, disciplined rear battle fighting stopped a disorganized Union retreat from being a rout. Colonel Andrew Porter of the 14th US Infantry wrote about the 69th's final stand during the Bull Run Union retreat:

The marines also, in spite of the exertions of their gallant officers, gave way in disorder; the fourteenth on the right and the column of the left hesitatingly retired, with the exception of the Sixty-ninth and the Thirty-eighth New York, who nobly stood and returned the fire of the enemy for fifteen minutes.⁷²

Colonel William Tecumseh Sherman, the 69th's brigade commander, witnessed this event and noted their bravery and impact on the successful Union retreat. Earlier in the fight, Sherman watched the 69th charge three times, in sweltering July heat, a Confederate hill with placed artillery. Each attack started with a mixed Gaelic-English yell. Corcoran order the flag lowered, but the men insisted on keeping the colors up even though it was drawing tremendous fire. Man after man died picking up and raising the colors. Many Irishmen blamed Sherman's leadership for the unit's failure and for the capture of its leader and harbored resentment against him for the entire war. For their heroic actions, General Edwin Sumner, a division commander at the time, took a special liking to Corcoran and his Irish soldiers.⁷³ Meagher, a company commander at the time, commented that the Irish soldiers at Bull Run proved that they could hold their own and stand as equals with the native-born, in the defense of the Constitution.⁷⁴ Due to the ninety-day active duty, enlistment commitments, the 69th New York was mustered out of active service after Bull Run.

With the 69th's mustering out, there was enough support in New York City's Irish community to form an entire Irish Brigade, under Meagher. The soldiers and officers of the 69th formed the foundation of the new Irish Brigade, which at its height would have six regiments and almost 5,000 men. The 69th and the Irish Brigade used the same motto beneath the harp, on their green standard, "RIAM NAR DRUID O SBAIRN LANN"--Who Never Retreated from the Clash of Spears. Living up to the motto and reputation would be romantic and patriotic, but more importantly--costly.

A daring last effort charge by the Irish Brigade, against General Longstreet's forces during the Peninsular Campaign saved the day for General Sumner, now the 2nd

Corps commander, for the Army of the Potomac, at the battle of Fair Oaks, in June 1862. Again, in Sumner's mind, the Irish had proved their worth as an exceptional fighting force.⁷⁵ The brigade also won great praise for its bravery during the Seven Days Battles, the final stages of the Peninsular Campaign: Gaines Mill, Savage Station, and Malvern Hill. Chaplain Corby, in his *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, states that after the Seven Days Battles the Irish Brigade was called the "Irish Blockade" in the local circles.⁷⁶ The brigade received praise for helping to cover the Army of the Potomac's retreat to Harrison Landing. While encamped there McClellan thanked the brigade, "for their superb conduct in the field, and wished he had twenty thousand more of them."⁷⁷ President Lincoln visited the Harrison Landing camp and according to Lieutenant James Birmingham of the 88th New York, President Lincoln lifted a corner of the green flag of the 69th New York, kissed it, and exclaimed, "God bless the Irish flag."⁷⁸ Additionally, Sumner and McClellan now saw the Irish Brigade as a special force that could be counted on in the worst of situations.⁷⁹

The battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg dominate the history of the New York Irish Brigade. At Antietam, the brigade made famous and heroic charges, but with deadly costs to the lives of its soldiers; 506 were killed, wounded, or missing.⁸⁰ At Antietam, the 63rd and 69th New York Regiments suffered nearly 60 percent losses, and the other regiments only slightly less during the attack at the Bloody Lane, near the Roulette Farm.⁸¹ While the Irish attack stalled under fire, a follow-on supporting attack, beat back the Confederate troops of General D. H. Hill and General Longstreet. Fifteen color-bearers were killed keeping the Irish Brigade's colors raised.⁸² As a remarkable show of bravery, when the flag staff was broken by a bullet, Big John Gleason, a captain

in the 63rd, wrapped the Brigade flag around his six-foot seven-inch frame and led the charge, finishing the fight unscathed.⁸³ Again, McClellan heaped praise on the soldiers of the Irish Brigade, noting that it “sustained its well-earned reputation,”⁸⁴ Lieutenant James B. Turner, an officer on Meagher's staff, writing for the New York *Irish American* newspaper, in October 1962, commented about Antietam and the fight at the sunken road:

The leaden hail fell thick and fast, and never before were the horrors so strongly impressed upon my mind. As comrade after comrade fell and was passed over, you could still hear our boys say “On!” Our banners are inscribed no retreat, and the motto shall never be falsified. I heard an enthusiastic youth say, “Come on Jackson, Shields whipped you at Winchester, and Meagher will trash you at Sharpsburg.” Our boys thought that Jackson was pitted against them, and fought with double daring.⁸⁵

Turner also noted that Antietam was the brigade’s best performance to date.

Two months later at Fredericksburg, the Irish Brigade was ordered to take an impregnable Confederate position, on a fortified hill, with excellent fields of fire. Confederate General D. H. Hill commanded this terrain. While watching Union units move into attack formations, commented, “There are those green flags again.”⁸⁶ Hill must have been talking about the national Irish flags the regiments carried and the 28th Massachusetts regiment’s green colors. The brigade’s and all but the 28th's regimental flags had been sent to New York City for repair, prior to the battle. With the missing flags, Meagher urged the men to fasten an evergreen twig to their caps to show their Irish ethnicity, in place of the brigade flag. The Irish Brigade would attack the fortified, strongpoint, which was the center of the Confederate line. The brigade lost nearly 40 percent of their force, 545 men out of 1,300 in numerous charges against another sunken road and the stone wall of Marye's Heights.⁸⁷ The brigade surged forward with an old

Irish cheer *Faugh-a-Bellah--Clear the Way*. While the Union's and brigade's attack failed, the closet soldiers to the Confederate fortified positions had evergreen twigs in their caps. Fredericksburg was a clear Union defeat, but again reaffirmed the fighting reputation of the Irish Brigade. Fredericksburg and the Irish Brigade's attack are synonymous in the annals of Civil War history. After the battle the *London Times* reported:

After witnessing the gallantry and devotion exhibited by Meagher's troops the spectator can remember nothing but their desperate courage. He called the tragic scene, "the best evidence of what manner of men they were who pressed on to death with the dauntlessness of a race which has gained glory on a thousand battlefields, and never more richly deserved it than at the foot of Marye's Heights on the 13th day of December, 1862."⁸⁸

Following the battle, General Robert E. Lee honored the Irish Brigade's courage by his poignant comments, "Never were men so brave. They ennobled their race by their splendid gallantry on that desperate occasion. Though totally routed, they reaped a harvest of glory. Their brilliant, though hopeless, assaults on our lines excited the hearty applause of our officers and soldiers."⁸⁹ General George Pickett who witnessed the brigade's charge, after the battle wrote,

Your soldier's heart almost stood still as he watched those sons of Erin fearlessly rush to their death. The brilliant assault on Marye's Height of their Irish Brigade was beyond description. Why, my darling, we forgot they were fighting us, and cheer after cheer at their fearlessness went up all along our lines.⁹⁰

In a tragic irony, some of the Confederates opposing the Irish Brigade at Marye's Heights were Irish soldiers from the 24th Georgia and 2nd South Carolina. As the battle subsided a couple of Irish soldiers from the 24th Georgia and 2nd South Carolina, led by Sergeant Richard Kirkland, went to give the brave but fallen Irish soldiers and other Northerners in the area water and some comforting words. The efforts to care for the

wounded were not so much based on ethnicity, but on soldierly admiration for a brave charge. This example of humanity and ethnicity was popular in the press.⁹¹

To Civil War historians, Fredericksburg is the high water mark for the Irish Brigade; however, the *Official Civil War Records* for the brigade's performance is unremarkable, stating only that French and Hancock's Divisions, the later to which Meagher's men belonged, did most of the fighting.⁹² Perhaps this is so, because Fredericksburg was a very disappointing loss, under new leadership. General Hancock did write that the Irish Brigade attacked gallantly, but was repulsed like Zook's Brigade.⁹³ Hancock's report did not focus on the unit's ethnicity; the Irish Brigade was just one of many in his command. Perhaps with the gallantry of the brigade's attack and heavy losses, ethnicity was in a secondary role, behind duty.

At Chancellorsville, the 116th Pennsylvania and the 88th New York received great praise for its fierce covering fight during the retreat, and was the last unit to leave the field. After Chancellorsville and during Gettysburg, the Irish Brigade was only the size of a battalion; around 340 were present for duty in February 1863. After Meagher's resigned, on 19 May 1863, Colonel Patrick Kelly took command of the brigade. Kelly, who had been with the unit since its inception and was also an officer in the original "Fighting 69th," assumed command. He led the brigade at Gettysburg. The Irish born, Colonel Thomas Smyth led the unit at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and Richmond. The last commander Colonel Robert Nugent led the brigade at the end of war and at the Grand Review in Washington and during the New York City parades. After Gettysburg, Kelly and Smyth would be allowed to recruit again to bring

the brigade back to full strength. At Gettysburg, the brigade was consolidated into a battalion. Kelly's men fought gallantly in the wheat field and on the cemetery ridge.

Fighting close to the New York Irish brigade at Gettysburg was the 69th Pennsylvania, an Irish regiment from the Philadelphia brigade, also in the Army of the Potomac. The 69th Pennsylvania was in the middle of the fighting at the Angle, during Gettysburg. The unit was positioned exactly where General George Pickett's three brigades converged. Men of the 69th watched Lieutenant Alonzo Cushing's cannons fire their last volley and watched General Lewis Armistead go down.⁹⁴ Behind a stone wall, the unit did not waver, while it fought a division-sized organization. All the 69th officers were killed and the unit casualties totaled fifty percent.⁹⁵ General Webb, the unit's brigade commander, was amazed at their courage under fire, but knew, "that to a man that I could count on them."⁹⁶ Confederate Major Charles Peyton, acting commander of Garnett's Brigade, wrote in his official report that the hand-to-hand fighting at the wall was a desperate struggle, but the Union line was too strong.⁹⁷ The tough Irishmen did not relent; as the Confederates retreated, the 69th collected eight regimental flags.⁹⁸

The New York Irish brigade fought along side Corcoran's Legion at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. In bitter fighting near the end of war, after being brought up to full strength, the brigade again would suffer many losses, about one-third of the force.⁹⁹ The unit assaulted the Confederate salient, known as the "Mule Shoe," at Spotsylvania and took many casualties. At Cold Harbor, the brigade and the legion together enhanced the fighting reputation of the Irish soldier when they together charged an unnamed hill and held the crest for two hours, against fearful odds. It was a small success during the disastrous Union day of 3 June 1864. At the end of the

war, the brigade participated in General Philip Sheridan's victory at Five Forks and the subsequent surrender at Appomattox on 11 April 1865. The brigade was proud of its hard-fighting reputation and service to the Union's cause. After years of bloody fighting the men of the brigade felt they earned the right to be called Americans. The men of the brigade and the Irish community that supported them would emerge from the war as a strong, organized and unified force in New York City politics and labor issues.

The back-to-back large losses of life at Antietam and Fredericksburg had a great effect on the Irish New York community, and war support took a drastic turn. Recruiting to fill the losses after Antietam and Fredericksburg would be poor. Southern sympathizers now controlled the politics of New York City. Around Christmas 1862, Irish widows took to the streets of New York City to demand compensation for their spouses' death. Many Catholic-based institutions were established to support wounded soldiers and widows and to educate and support orphans. These support structures strengthened the sense of community and would serve as a powerful infrastructure for further growth and opportunity after the war. Within five years of the war's end, the Irish in New York City would dominate the interworkings and politics of the city. It is doubtful that this would have occurred without the war's unifying ability in the Irish community. This will be discussed further in chapter 5.

New York State would produce another brigade-sized Irish unit. After one year in Confederate prisons, Corcoran was paroled and reemerged to form the Irish Legion or Corcoran's Legion, which consisted of the 155th, 164th, 170th, and 182nd New York Regiments. Because recruitment for two brigade-sized Irish units was getting tough in New York City, Corcoran's Irish soldiers came from all over the state. There is evidence

that these “second generation” Irish regiments did have a large number of less desirable soldiers.¹⁰⁰ Burton’s conclusions are based on prewar criminal records and not war-related desertions, insubordination, or court-martial rates. The Legion served first for the Department of Virginia, then for the Army of the Potomac, through July 1865, and saw combat at the Deserted House, Suffolk, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Deep Bottom, Reams’ Station, Boydton Plank Road, and Hatcher’s Run.¹⁰¹ The Legion’s experience at Cold Harbor and Petersburg was similar to the Irish Brigade’s at Antietam and Fredericksburg. The Irish Legion’s accomplishments were undermined by the success and prominence of the Irish brigade.

New York City produced another famous Irish regiment called the 37th New York, also known as the Irish Rifles. The 37th was a descendant of the old state 75th Rifles Militia. Prominent Irish-American politicians helped organize and equip the unit; these included the three judges Charles P. Daly, Lewis P. Woodruff, and James Moncrief. The 37th was mustered in for two years and served with distinction at the battles of Fair Oaks, Malvern Hill, Chantilly, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. The unit had no hint of misbehavior or leadership problems and was considered a consistent and worthy performer.

Boston, Massachusetts, had a large Irish ghetto and had many influential Irishmen in the Democratic Party. Massachusetts fielded the two Irish regiments the 28th and the 9th, both of which served in the Army of the Potomac. In December 1862, after the large Irish Brigade casualties at Antietam, the 28th was added to Meagher’s Brigade. Boston had been the scene of the worst WASP and Know-Nothing prejudice and discrimination. Most Boston Irish viewed themselves as victims and harbored bitter memories. During

its three years of service, the 9th regiment had a proud service record, fighting at Malvern Hill, Hanover Court House, Gaines Mills, Chancellorsville, and the Wilderness. The regiment itself was mustered out at the same time having served its three-year obligation.¹⁰² Prior to the war, Boston had been the scene of the worst Know-Nothing prejudice. Irish units were offended jeered and pelted with bricks. Now at war's end, Boston recognized the 28th and 9th with a parade for its participation, bravery, and commitment. Their efforts were often highly publicized events. The Irish had done their duty to cause of American democracy. Research will now focus on the fighting experience of the Irish Confederates.

New Orleans had the largest number of Irishmen when compared to other Southern cities. The 1860 census found 24,398 Irish-born residents in New Orleans, most of whom had come to New Orleans after the Potato Famine of 1845-1849.¹⁰³ Many Irish units were raised for the defense of New Orleans, but most of these were ephemeral, quickly disbanding after the threat subsided. As a full-strength Irish brigade never materialized, most Irishmen from New Orleans would fight in mixed ethnic units, though some were as much as one-third Irish. These units included the 1st Louisiana, 7th Louisiana, 1st Special Battalion (Louisiana), 9th Louisiana, and 10th Louisiana Volunteers. The New Orleans Irish community lacked a charismatic leader with the necessary political ties to form a pure Irish Brigade. Irishness in New Orleans was less of a unifying force when compared to New York City, Boston, or Philadelphia. Irish men signed up to fight for their greater community, not just their ethnic-local community. While the units were primarily Irish, Irish ethnicity did not dominate the role of the units. The units lacked the Irish nationalist demagogues that other Irish units had, thus

Americanism was valued over Irish identity. Leaders did not emphasize Fenianism and Irishness at the expense or opportunity to be Irish-Americans. Additionally, Confederate Irish units were mainly commanded by non-Irish leaders, something that only occurred infrequently in Northern Irish units.

The most famous Irish Confederate unit and the most Irish in its composition was the 6th Louisiana Volunteers, better known as one of the Louisiana Tiger Regiments. The actual Irish Brigade of New Orleans was only two companies and was assigned to the 6th Regiment. Company I and Company F, known as the Irish Brigade, were almost entirely Irish. The name “brigade,” like Mulligan’s Irish Brigade of Chicago, was an ambitious hope and a romantic notion. Again, the unit often compared their unit to and highlighted the past military success of Irish Brigades fighting for European powers, that is, Waterloo, Fontenoy. James Gannon, from the book *Irish Tigers: Confederate Rebels*, states that the regiment to be about 60 percent Irish by birth and ancestry.¹⁰⁴

The 6th was composed of Irishmen primarily from the docks of New Orleans, known as “wharf rats.” It also had a distinct ethnic mix with 123 German immigrants and 73 others born abroad--English, Scottish, French and Canadian, Norwegian, Swedish, Hollanders, Cubans, and Mexicans.¹⁰⁵ Because of the large number of foreigners, the 6th chose to fight under the Louisiana Standard, not the normal Irish green harp. The 6th fought for the Army of Northern Virginia from the opening battle of Bull Run through the surrender at Appomattox, and virtually saw action in every major battle inbetween, in the Eastern Theater. The unit suffered heavy losses at Port Republic, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. The 6th also fought at the Battles for Richmond, Second Manassas, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and the Siege of Petersburg. The

unit also served with General Stonewall Jackson in the early Shenandoah Valley Campaign, and later with General Jubal Early in his Northern Raids. As the result of their difficult fighting, fewer than 75 of the original 1,000 soldiers were still serving with the unit at end of the war.¹⁰⁶ The original men of the 6th had signed on for the duration of the war.

After the First Battle of Manassas, the Louisiana 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Regiments were placed in the 1st Louisiana Brigade, under the command of Georgian, General William H. T. Walker. The arrangement helped establish the fighting reputation of the Louisianans and would help foster the legend of the “Louisiana Tigers.” The nickname was originally applied to the 1st Special Battalion, under the command of Major Roberdeau Wheat and later used more generally to refer to all Louisiana troops.¹⁰⁷

The regiment is best known for its fighting ability and its continued struggle under difficult circumstances, fighting in twenty-five major battles and dozens of smaller skirmishes during four years of war.¹⁰⁸ The regiment usually lacked the supplies and clothes necessary to sustain itself; winters were noted as the worst time for the regiment. While the official tally was 1,215 serving in the unit, 219 were killed in action, 104 died of disease of noncombat causes, and 269 deserted, which is a high number for a regiment.¹⁰⁹ The 6th is credited with playing an important role in Jackson’s Valley Campaign of 1862. Generals Clement Evans, John Gordon, Richard Taylor, and Henry Hayes had nothing but praise for the soldiers of the 6th. Taylor thought the Irish Louisianans the most dedicated soldiers to the Confederate cause and stated that he could always count on them, “these men would follow their officer to the death.”¹¹⁰ John Francis Maguire, an Irishmen in the British Parliament, came to America after the war to

study and record the Irish efforts in the Civil war. He was very impressed with the 6th accomplishments and reputation. Maguire compared the performance, importance, and fame of the 6th as the South's equal to the New York "Fighting 69th."¹¹¹

The 6th Louisiana, as mentioned should not be confused with the notorious Louisiana Tiger's Battalion, also known as the 1st Special Battalion, under the command of Major Roberdeau Wheat. These soldiers were primarily all Irish born and came from the worst parts of New Orleans and were seen as undesirables. The regiment received the name "Tigers" for fierce, unwavering, and reckless performance at the First Battle of Bull Run. Ironically, the unit spent the end of battle fighting the 69th New York Irish. Many of the Tigers originally wore Zouave uniforms. They were soon feared by Union and Confederate soldiers alike.¹¹² They were famous for their battle tactics, as well as harsh bare-knuckle brawls. Outsiders thought the unit just as happy fighting another Confederate company as the Yankees.¹¹³ After Bull Run, two men from the unit were court-martialed and shot for insubordination. They had stomped a man to death after a disagreement.¹¹⁴ The unit was also known for its thirst for whiskey and lack of morals.

After the Seven Days' Battle the unit was also assigned to General Richard Taylor, who was happy for their service and who made good use of them. The commander declared, "None were braver, none more loyal to the cause, and none more easily handed in a fight."¹¹⁵ Their method of fighting was described by an English correspondent:

Now, the battalion would keep up a lively fire from the woods, creep through the brush, make a sudden charge, upset a cannon or two, and retire. Again, they would maintain a death-like silence until the foe was not more than fifty paces off; then delivering a withering volley, they would dash forward with unearthly

yells, and as they drew their knives and rushed to close quarter, the Yankees screamed with horror.¹¹⁶

The next most famous Irish unit in the South was the Rebel Sons of Erin or the 10th Tennessee, which was formed in the Nashville area. The Irishmen of the 10th served in many little known campaigns in the western theater. They did not suffer from the internal and external bickering often found in Union Irish regiments, but they did have their share of alcohol-related problems. In spite of its infantry designation, the regiment was uniquely used as engineering laborers, perhaps based on their postwar occupations and discrimination. The unit helped prepare many defensive forts and breastworks. The 10th did establish a reputation as effective skirmishers and sharpshooters and were often deployed in rear battle and delaying operations. The regiment had its first war experience in the Tennessee River forts of Fort Henry and Donelson in April 1861 and fought all the way to the bitter end at Greensborough, North Carolina. The 10th fought in twenty-two battles, for nine different brigades, and for three Confederate Armies, the Department of West, the Department of Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana, and the Army of Tennessee.¹¹⁷ Most of the time, they were fighting with General Bushrod Johnson or General William Bate's division.

While Forts Henry and Donelson eventually fell, after almost a year on the defensive, the soldiers and leaders of the 10th had established themselves as an effective and competent fighting force. During the Battle of Erin Hollow, the end of the River Forts Campaign, the entire regiment was taken prisoner, and story of the 10th as a full regiment ended. The 10th's men did not feel defeated by the Federals, but by the poor generalship of John Floyd and Gideon Pillow.¹¹⁸ Of the 714 soldier present for duty on

16 February 1862, the day of the capture, 446 soldiers went to Union prisons, showing that 268 escaped, deserted, or were missing in action.¹¹⁹ By late August 1862, all the captured men were paroled and 383 showed up for the reorganization of the unit.¹²⁰

During October and November 1862, on long, cold marches to Jackson, Mississippi, in hopes of reinforcing the Confederate forces to the east of the Vicksburg area, many of the men got sick; nine died of fever, to include Colonel Heiman. McGavock would take command and lead the regiment to great success at the Battle of Raymond; unfortunately, he died during the battle leading a charge. Lieutenant Colonel James Turner, the second in command, continued the attack and decisively defeated a single company from the 32nd Ohio, which helped reestablish the unit as an infantry regiment. After the attack, the 10th deployed as skirmishers and sharpshooter and helped to pin down two Union regiments. In the *Official Records*, Turner cited three officers from the unit for their bravery and gallantry, including William Grace, Lieutenant John O'Neal, and Theodore Kelsey.¹²¹ After the battle, William Grace was promoted to colonel and assumed command of the regiment. Unfortunately, the senior Turner was not promoted, so General Gregg gave each man two company-sized units, Turner with the 13th Tennessee and Grace with the 10th.¹²² The regiment would not be officially consolidated again for another eighteen months.

With the fall of Vicksburg, the 10th was assigned to the Army of the Tennessee and participated in the Tullahoma and Chickamauga Campaigns. The 10th advanced with Longstreet's column on 20 September at Chickamauga and deployed along Steedman's Hill. The engagement on the hill lasted about twenty minutes, and killed most of the leaders of the unit and many soldiers, forty-nine in all.¹²³ Grace was wound

and did not return to duty for several months; Major John O'Neill assumed command in his absence. By the end of the Battle for Chattanooga and Missionary Ridge, the 10th was down to sixty-nine men.¹²⁴ Grace assumed command again in May 1864, but was mortally wounded at action in Jonesborough, Georgia, on 31 August. He was remembered as a huge, strikingly powerful soldier, who was pugnacious in battle and respected by all.¹²⁵ After Jonesborough, the unit was down to thirty-six men. During the rest of war, the 10th served as sharpshooter and a rear guard unit.

After the war Nashville and Tennessee welcomed the men of the 10th home as proud soldiers and heroes. They had done their duty for the Southern cause and had proved their worth as citizens of the community. After the war, Irish identity for these men had become less important. Irish identity was now always expressed in terms Irish-American identity, perhaps even being secondary. Their community erected a statue to McGavock and they honored the 10th regiment's participation in the 1866 St. Paddy's day parade. The St. Paddy's day crowd was a large mixture of Irish and non-Irish. Both the memorial statue and the parade had the same themes, "They deserved to be remembered as soldiers and Americans committed to a their cause and community."¹²⁶

Participating in the remarkable recapture of Galveston Harbor was the Texas Davis Guards, known as the Fighting Irishmen. They were lead by the Galway-born Lieutenant Richard Dowling and were composed of forty-four Irish enlisted men from the docks of Houston and Galveston. The unit was officially Company F, Texas Heavy Artillery.¹²⁷ In late August 1863, Dowling's unit was dispatched by General John Magruder, to Fort Sabine, on the Gulf, to spike (disable) the six cannons in the fort.

Instead of obeying orders, Dowling and his men proceeded to strengthen the fort and man the guns.

In early September, 20 Union ship carrying 5,000 men left New Orleans to invade Texas by the way of Galveston and the Sabine Pass.¹²⁸ Lonn, from *Foreigners in Confederacy* states that the Union fleet was carrying 16,000 men.¹²⁹ The ships arrived at Galveston on 7 September, and three gunboats were given the task of knocking out the shore batteries before troops landed. The three gunboats approached what they thought was an empty fort. The gunboat *Sachem* attempted to flank the rear of the fort, but was quickly knocked out of action by the roar of the six cannons of the fort. After the *Sachem* was disabled, the unit concentrated fire on the other two gunboats the *Clifton* and the *Arizona*. The *Sachem* and the *Clifton* surrendered, and the *Arizona* and the Union fleet sailed way. In forty-five minutes, and after 137 rounds, the Davis Guards repulsed a Union fleet, captured two gunboats and took 317 prisoners, without a loss of a man.¹³⁰ After their heroic action, the Guards were able to man the fort for the remainder of the war. This little band of men stopped the Union invasion of Texas.

The Congress of the Confederacy passed a special resolution thanking the commitment and courage of the Davis Guards. Additionally, the city of Houston raised \$3,000 for them as a reward and the state of Texas erected a monument at Sabine Pass, so their courage would be remembered. President Davis said of their efforts, “The success of this company of forty-four men is without parallel in ancient or modern war.”¹³¹ President Davis presented each soldier with a special silver medal, the only honor of this kind bestowed on Confederate soldiers during the entire Civil War.

Research has shown the Irish experience in the Union differed from that of the Confederacy as the war prolonged. Irish ethnicity was strongly reinforced in the Union by Fenian leaders and Catholic priests, while Irish identity became less important in the Southern units. This is due to the lack of strong, charismatic Irish leadership, less Irish ethnically pure units from the start, and a smaller population to draw from for Irish replacements after battle losses. From the beginning of the war, Southern Irishmen's war efforts were better received than in the North. The New Orleans *Daily Delta* commented, "Our Irish friends are daily proving that they are entirely with the true men of the South."¹³²

The Irish leaders and soldiers both North and South believed in their fighting reputation. They were fighting hard for many causes and the records have shown they established a tough, fighting image amongst the units they fought with, and in the main city newspapers. The Irish thought they earned the right to be called valued citizens of the nation. This was even expressed by many nativists. By joining the majority, "The moment the immigrant donned his uniform he ceased to be only a foreigner, an outsider. He was (now) a comrade-at-arms."¹³³ The response to immigrants, not just Irish, would be different after the war. Burton, also notes that survival in a protracted war reduced ethnicity's role, "As the war continued the regiments and their colonels lost ethnic enthusiasm and survival replaced the ethnic purity as the top priority."¹³⁴ As the war went on Irish units became just another unit on the team. "Without regard to nationality, soldiers of one regiment shared their rations with those of another who were in need of food. The American element seemed to absorb the foreign elements."¹³⁵ Irishmen were dependent on the units on their left and right, and these units were dependent on them.

They needed each other to survive and win. Through sharing the same experience, they had much in common. This served to break down barriers and promote acceptance.

The bloody battlefields of the Civil War became the melting pot that made all soldiers, foreign and native-born, comrades in arms.¹³⁶ It cemented friendship between men of differing European countries and of foreign birth with Americans.¹³⁷ What emerged with the immigrants' suffering for America's causes was patriotism and "Americanization."¹³⁸ They were more confident and rooted more firmly in American conditions.¹³⁹ This wartime recognition improved not only the soldiers, but the communities from which they came as well. This confidence reinforced by war-created unity accelerated Irish organization and community infrastructure growth.

Reaction to the Civil War increased the need for Irish unity, organization, and supporting infrastructure. While the men went to war, the wives worked in the war industries to provide for their families. The role of women in Irish society was strengthened by their war efforts. As the war progressed and as men died or became maimed, the Irish families became more dependent on neighborhood support. The typical Irish urban communal responses to the war were to strengthen the family unit and tenement, community, church, social, economic, and political bonds. War enlistment bounties, paychecks, bonus monies, death and injury compensations, war-related donations, and wartime labor efforts fueled the infrastructure growth. Irish immigrant monies built churches, orphanages, hospitals, meeting halls, and schools and founded more Irish newspapers and societies.

Archbishop Hughes of New York, in December 1862 after the heavy Antietam and Fredericksburg Irish losses, formed the Catholic Protectory for Homeless and

Wayward Children. By May 1863, the Protectory was providing homes for over a thousand children.¹⁴⁰ Other new emigrant and Irish societies were formed and strengthened by the war, many assisted in special banking needs, job information and training, moral and spiritual coaching, and financial and legal aide. Enrollment in Irish societies saw a dramatic increase during the war years.¹⁴¹ Especially in the Irish Republic Brotherhood (Fenians), Irish Democratic Party associations, Irish emigrant and St Patrick's Day societies, and the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, an Irish benevolent association. During the war years, the Irish experienced an increased job sector change, going from primarily labors, to larger representation in skilled work, and civil service.¹⁴² These improvements in infrastructure and opportunities not only aided returning veterans and community members, but other newly arrived immigrants as well. These new immigrants would have a better experience because of the improved conditions.

The Catholic Church was a dominant force in the Irish unity and organization effort. Catholicism gave the Irish solace, strength, and discipline.¹⁴³ Miller, in *Emigrant and Exiles*, stressed the emergent importance of Catholicism being synonymous with Irishness in terms of identity markers. Catholicism actually became a more-dominant cultural marker during the war period. Catholicism for the immigrant reduced the importance of provincial and county localities and linguistics and established a strong Irish-Catholic identity.¹⁴⁴ To Miller the Catholic Church in America built an infrastructure, that is, churches, cathedrals, rectories, convents, orphanages, hospitals, parochial schools, colleges, and seminaries that supported the urban working class and defended the faithful in an increasingly secular and urban-industrial world.¹⁴⁵ It offered the Irish some hope and a possible chance at advancement and opportunity. The Catholic

Church and school system showing support for the war, American democracy, and the rule of law, added patriotism to their teachings, which furthered wartime acceptance.

In Boston and New York Catholic church building nearly doubled during the war years and would continue to increase in the postwar era.¹⁴⁶ The Catholic Sisters of Mercy and Charity and the Society of the St. Vincent de Paul also grew during the war years. The priest, nuns, and brothers of these orders served in war hospitals in both the North and South. Their efforts in the war helped to spread the acceptability of Catholicism and breakdown stereotypes.

With the Irish communities' strong support for the Democratic Party during the prewar and war years increased their role in city and state politics, and added many civil services for the Irish. This inroad into the American political system would strength the Irish role in America and serve for as the catalyst for increased political service and civil service Irish patronage in the postwar period. Irish community war organization strengthen Irish voter turnout and helped the Irish establish dominance in other smaller ethnic neighborhoods. The Irish Democratic voting block emerged as a significant force during the later war years, especially in Boston, New York, and New Orleans.

Additionally, the importance of Irish labor also took root in the war years. The war industries and increased American industrialization needed Irish labor to produce the demanded goods. With labor having more value, the role of organized labor increased. With the increased demands on Irish working women, Judge Daly formed the Working Women's Protective to support seamstresses and other factory workers during the war.¹⁴⁷ With English-speaking skills and the developed skills of fighting British political and legal systems, the Irish became the leaders of many of the emergent labor organizations.

Edward Spann, writing about the Irish community in the Civil War, in the *New York Irish* states, “Four years of cooperation in support of the regiments in the fields and of the needy at home strengthened the community in New York, rooting it firmly in American conditions.”¹⁴⁸ With the end of war, war pensions and war related injury compensation helped many Irish families stay above the destitute--poverty line, and served as a springboard to greater opportunity.¹⁴⁹ Marion Truslow, in *Peasants into Patriots: The New York Irish Brigade Recruits and Their Families in the Civil War Era, 1850-1890*, concludes that the war participation made the Irish patriotic and proud Americans and that the war created infrastructure and pensions improved opportunity, which helped later Irish immigrants assimilate faster--cushioning the cultural shock.¹⁵⁰

The war-created unity and organization, along with the soldiers’ hard-fighting reputation, gave the Irish a new confidence and improved opportunities, something they did not have during the prewar years. The Catholic Church and school system and community Irish politicians played a pivotal role in Irish societal organization, helping to ease war suffering and by providing unity, discipline, and vision.¹⁵¹ The Irish organization improved community infrastructure, and their created roles in organized labor and the Democratic Party formed during the war years are more definitive in the long term assimilation and acceptance, than the direct war related fighting. War era Irish-Americans were starting to discover a larger identity and a wider sense of purpose that extended beyond the neighborhood and local community.¹⁵² The Irish changing role, view of ethnicity, the impact of the Irish hard-fighting reputation, and the emergent community support structure will be further developed in the next chapter, as research explores their impact on postwar Irish assimilation and acceptance.

¹A consolidation and estimation from various sources: Lawrence J. McCafferey, *The Catholic Diaspora in American* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1997), 103; Susannah Bruce, “Irish-American,” *Civil War: A Political, Social and Military History*, 1037; and Ann Kathleen Bradley, *History of the Irish in America*, (London and Edison, New Jersey: Quantum Books, Inc., 1986), 60.

²Edward K. Spann, “Union Green: The Irish Community and the Civil War,” in Ronald Meagher and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 210.

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⁴William Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union’s Ethnic Units* (Ames, IA: Iowa State Press, 1988), 154.

⁵David Thomas Gleeson, “The Irish in the South.” (Diss., Mississippi State University, 1997), 375.

⁶*Ibid.*, 376.

⁷Kirby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Press, 1985), 324.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (New Orleans, LA: Louisiana University Press, 1951), 699.

¹⁰Lawrence A. Kohl, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 3.

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¹²Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 646.

¹³Ella Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 228. Noted by John Francis Maguire, an Irishman in the British Parliament, in his book *The Irish in America*. The quote is attributed to General Richard Taylor, but was not firmly established by Maguire. Also noted by James P. Gannon, *Irish Rebels: Confederate Tigers: A History of the 6th Louisiana Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing, 1998), 323.

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- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, 325.
- ¹⁶Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy*, 228.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*
- ¹⁸Roy Cornish, “The Irish Brigade,” in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Civil War: A Political, Social and Military History*, vol. 2, *Encyclopedia of the American* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 1038.
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- ²¹Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy*, 647.
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- ²⁴Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy*, 482.
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- ²⁸Spann, 200.
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- ³⁰Sergeant Kirkland Society. *History of the Irish Brigade* (Fredericksburg, VA: Kirkland Museum, 1997), 30.
- ³¹William Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union’s Ethnic Units* (Ames, IA: Iowa State Press, 1988), 119.
- ³²William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years with Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac*, 29.
- ³³Joseph Bibly and Stephan O’Neill, eds., *My Sons Were Faithful and They Fought: The Irish Brigade at Antietam* (New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1997), 71.

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- ³⁶Ibid., 67.
- ³⁷Ibid.
- ³⁸Ibid., 71.
- ³⁹Burton, 122.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 123.
- ⁴¹Burton; and *OR*, Series I, vol. 21, 228 (Hancock).
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- ⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 447.
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- ⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 315.
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¹⁰¹Boyle, 393.

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¹⁰⁷Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 320.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 319.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 321.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy*, 105.

¹¹³Ibid., 106.

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¹¹⁸Ibid., 144.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

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¹²¹OR, pt. 1, vol. 38, 742 (Turner).

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- ¹²⁵Ibid., 357.
- ¹²⁶Ibid., 326.
- ¹²⁷John Brendan Flannery, *The Irish Texans*, 101.
- ¹²⁸Ibid., 101.
- ¹²⁹Lonn, *Foreigner in the Confederacy*, 154.
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- ¹³⁴Burton, 153.
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- ¹⁴⁰Spann, 202.
- ¹⁴¹Bradley, 58; and Spann, 202-203.
- ¹⁴²Leo Hershkowitz, "Irish Settlement," in *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 20-23.
- ¹⁴³Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 651.
- ¹⁴⁴Miller, 526.
- ¹⁴⁵Ibid., 527.
- ¹⁴⁶Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1941), 130; and Bradley, 104.
- ¹⁴⁷Spann, 202.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 209.

¹⁴⁹Marion A. Truslow, “Peasants into Patriots: The New York Irish Brigade Recruits and Their Families in the Civil War Era, 1850-1890” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1994), 304.

¹⁵⁰Truslow, 301.

¹⁵¹Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 169.

¹⁵²Bradley, 100.

CHAPTER 5

IMPACT OF FIGHTING AND WAR CREATED INFRASTRUCTURE

Four bloody years of war did strengthen the Irish claim on America. Most historians believe the Irish military service proved a mechanism for assimilation; others argue that military service in an Irish regiment fostered the retention of ethnic identity. It did both. This chapter will provide conclusions on the impact the war had on Irish assimilation and acceptance and will evaluate the war as a watershed event. The true watershed event for the Irish might not be the actual successful participation in the fighting, but the unity, organization, and infrastructure created by the Irish in reaction to the war. The war unified the Irish identity, like never before. In Ireland, national Irish identity did not exist. Identity was based on county, diocese and parish origin. This local and regional identity association based on Irish origin existed in US Irish prewar communities. The emergent Irish identity and unity helped compensate for war and postwar setbacks.

The Irish “hard-fighting” reputation established in the Civil War was ephemeral when compared to the war-created coping mechanisms of unity, organization, and improved infrastructure. War created organization and infrastructure enhanced the Irish not only socially, but even more importantly politically and economically. The improvements served as a catalyst that allowed a highly discriminated ethnic group, with a strong rural-agrarian background to dominate the urban scene and politics of the major US cities, by the 1880s. Organization and mastery of the political system also gave the Irish a tremendous advantage over the next immigrant groups, during the era of the Great

Atlantic Migrations. The Christian, English-speaking Irish did not appear so foreign during this later period. America now had others that were less desirable, groups that were largely nonwestern Europeans, including a large Jewish population. Additionally, the Irish's insistency to hold on to their ethnic identity and culture produced a change in the way America looked at assimilation and acceptance. To accomplish the research intent, this chapter will briefly summarize direct war-related participation impacts associated with the fighting; examine other significant Irish events during the research time period and how they changed American attitudes; then examine and apply generalized assimilation models and traits to key topical areas. Key topical areas for assessment and analysis are: Irish identity, role of the Catholic Church, community infrastructure, and Irish roles in American society, politics, and economics.

As seen in chapter 4, the Irish soldiers and units clearly and justifiably had a "hard-fighting" reputation. They were often distinguished as an elite force, to be committed at the critical spot on the battlefield. The Irish soldiers believed in their fighting superiority and so did their commanders, and even more importantly, so did the skeptical local and regional newspapers writers and owners. The *York New Times*, in July 1865, quoted a Union general on the Irish, "a gallant soldier and loyal citizen."¹ General Richard Taylor called his Southern Irish soldiers, "the finest soldiers that ever shouldered a musket."² This is a clear difference from prewar views. This show of Irish dedication and appreciation had its rewards and tragedies.

Irish soldiers and units were honored for their bravery in commander and newspaper write-ups and in postwar memorials and parades. The after-action write-ups portrayed the Irish as doing their duty for the cause, both Northern and Southern.

Famous Confederate officers considered the Union Irish units their toughest enemy.³ Seventy-three Irish-born soldiers in the Union received the Medal of Honor for their superior service, the highest of any ethnic group.⁴ A similar Medal of Honor for the South was only given out to the forty-four Irishmen of the Texan Davis Guards, who single handedly stopped Union forces numbering several thousand from invading Galveston Harbor. Additionally, the Irish-born Confederate General, Patrick Cleburne received the rare Confederate Congress joint resolution of thanks, for his accomplishments and defense at Ringgold Gap, Georgia. On the other hand, with the special fighting status the Irish units incurred some of the heaviest casualties. The New York Irish Brigade had the third highest brigade casualty rate in the war, and two of its regiments the 116th Pennsylvania and the 28th Massachusetts ranked sixth and seventh, respectively, in highest regimental losses, for the Union.⁵ For the Confederacy the 6th Louisiana ranked in the top five for losses, and the 10th Tennessee suffered the highest casualties during the Chickamauga campaign.⁶

Many distinguished historians and sociologists have portrayed the Irish participation in the America Civil War as a watershed event, in terms of acceptance and integration.⁷ They concluded that the often heroic efforts and hard-fighting Irish performances on the battlefield were rewarded by the disappearance of the ideas of nativism and overt discrimination from normal life. The service, sacrifice, and slaughter, of Irish men in the cause of American democracy proved their worth, duty, and citizenship, which in turn opened further opportunity, assimilation, and acceptance. While this is a noble thought, it is only partially true. The “No Irish Need Apply” signs did not come down over night, nor did Catholicism and the Irish become totally accepted

in the mainstream. However, the burning of Catholic churches did stop after Appomattox, and the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic American Party (Know-Nothings) and the Sons of America vanished after the war.⁸ Clark, from the *Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience*, summarizes the inconsistency of battlefield bravery versus the home front discrimination, “glorious Irishmen, heroic in the war and yet discriminated against on the home front.”⁹ Boyle, from the *Irish in the Army of the Potomac* describes the postwar era of Irish-Nativist tolerance, “The next phase of the relationship was a wary and watchful stomaching of each other by both sides.”¹⁰ Spann, in “Union Green: The Irish Community in the Civil War,” further supports and adds to this sentiment, “The war by no means eliminated nativist hostility to the Irish, but it did make it far more difficult to deny them (Irish) a place in America.”¹¹

Civil War and Irish studies scholars differ on the motivations of the Irish soldiers, as established in chapter 3 and also on the long-term cultural effects of war. The following important historians offer strong evidence supporting the positive change in Irish and Nativist relations. Clark concludes that with the military participation of the Irish in Civil War, public opinion of the Irish was much improved, if not favorable.¹² Spann, concludes that the war established the Irish as dutiful citizens and patriots to America.¹³ Bradley from the *History of the Irish in America* concludes that the bravery and self-sacrifice of the Irish-American officers and enlisted men was of incalculable importance in winning the war for the Union and served as a means for acceptance.¹⁴ Costello from his chapter in “The Irish and the American Military Tradition,” from *America and Ireland, 1776-1976: The American Identity and the Irish Connection*,

concludes that Irish soldiers' courageous efforts established the respectability of successive generations of Irishmen in the mind of Americans.¹⁵

Only Kerby Miller, in his book *Emigrants and Exiles*, which is considered the epic, but controversial work on the Irish in America, does not make a clear position on the impact of the Civil War. However, this omission for Miller helps establish his thesis argument, which states that the Irish worldview--exile mentality and inferior culture--caused backwardness or maladaptation in America.¹⁶ Lawrence McCaffrey, a prominent Irish historian and Miller critic, does not believe in Irish backwardness or maladaptation in America; he concludes just the opposite. McCaffrey in his book, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America*, supports a more definitive "cornerstone" experience for the Irish, stating that Irish on both sides fought gallantly and were recognized for their performance, but that anti-Catholic Nativism did not disappear because of it.¹⁷

The famous immigrant historian Oscar Handlin, in his book, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880*, concludes that Irish participation in the war drew them more closely into Boston's city life and resulted in improved relations, "creating an appearance of harmony within the city. The lines that divided the Yankees from the Irish were as clear as ever; but there were grounds for hope."¹⁸ Handlin remarks that a Bostonian volunteer noted in 1863, the strange celebration of St. Patrick's Day, by the Irish soldiers, but the following year found him participating in the festivities.¹⁹ Handlin also notes that Robert Ferguson, in a London publication titled, "America During and After the War," wrote about camp life near the end of war and states that you could not tell Americans from Irishmen, "You cannot go through the camp and say--'There is the sedate Yankee--

there the rollicking Irishmen'-- all seem subdued together into the same good behavior."²⁰

Another good example of soldier unity is seen in the changing attitudes of the 29th Massachusetts, which was Protestant dominated and considered the "blue bloods of Boston." Initially the 29th loathed having to serve in the Catholic Irish brigade, after the Peninsular campaign.²¹ However, after six months of fighting together, the Irishmen and non-Irishmen on both sides admired each other; the 29th's soldiers were made honorary Irishmen.²² After the war the 28th Massachusetts Regiment (Irish), which replaced the 29th in the Irish brigade, both celebrated Civil War anniversaries jointly. This joint sentiment was not supported by all of the people of Massachusetts. In the more traditional and nativist Worcester, American elites belittled Irish war contributions, and excluded or minimized Irish participation in victory celebrations.²³

For the Confederate Irish Dave Gleeson, in his dissertation, "The Irish in the South: 1815-1877," concludes that the participation in the war dramatically advanced the Irish in Southern society and furthered and completed Irish assimilation.²⁴ Considering the Southern Irish never viewed themselves as victims like the Irish in the North, wartime participation further facilitated acceptance. Southern Irish saw themselves as an important part of the Southern economy.²⁵ Gleeson notes, Irish identity did not go away; however, it became secondary to American identity. The freedom of the blacks was the catalyst for Irish advancement and acceptance, plus few new Irish immigrants moved to the occupied South, during Reconstruction. A constant flow of new immigrants tends to renew traditional and ethnic ties to the country of origin. As for the blacks, they no longer had an associated monetary value. They were now clearly at the bottom of social

ladder, a place that the Irish previously held. By speaking out against Reconstruction policies that favored blacks, the Irish furthered their acceptance in the postwar South.²⁶ Additionally, the Irish skilled worker and laborer after the war were more valued in society and better paid.

Gleeson adds that the respectability of Irish Southerners had grown to such heights that Margaret Mitchell was able to create an entirely believable Gerald O'Hara, who as a hard-drinking Catholic immigrant, became the model patriarch planter.²⁷ This means the archetypal belle of the South--Scarlett O'Hara, was a Catholic! Gleeson also adds that the Southerners in this era were not as puritanical as the Northern; Southerners drank to excess and often settled disputes with violence.²⁸ During this era, the South was not the American Bible belt, like later decades. Gleeson concludes, "With the aid of tolerant neighbors, they (Irish) assimilated better than any other Southern minority and became the 'forgotten' people of the urban South."²⁹

Many Irish leaders in the war went on to greater service to the nation after the war, something unthinkable in the prewar era. By their position, they advanced the cause and acceptance of the Irish in society, as well as in politics and economics. General Thomas Meagher, of the New York Irish Brigade became the territorial Governor of Montana. Father William Corby, the Irish Brigade's original chaplain, was the President of Notre Dame University and a dominant Irish-Catholic leader and voice in American politics. The Irish-born Brevet Brigadier General James Rowan O'Beirne, the commander of 37th New York "Irish Rifles" became the United States Commissioner of Immigration. Medal of Honor winner General St. Clair Mulholland, a brigade commander and former commander of the 116th Pennsylvania became Philadelphia's

first Irish Catholic chief of police.³⁰ Mulholland, during the 1880s was one of the favorite Civil War speakers for the two largest veterans organizations--the Grand Army of the Republic and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United State.³¹ Major General James Shields, from County Sligo, Ireland, served with distinction in the Mexican-America War and Civil War, then went on to be a US Senator in three different western states. General Phillip Sheridan, who distinguished himself in the war as a division and corps commander, went on to eventually lead the postwar US army, serving as Army commander and chief of staff. Two of the most famous Americans during the war and postwar era were the Dublin-born Patrick Gilmore, who wrote the lyrics to "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," and first-generation Irishmen and pioneer photographer Mathew Brady, whose photographs dominated the press.³² The Irish were now found in all parts of American life--socially, politically, and economically.

There were also many setbacks for the Irish that did inflame or cause the reemergence of Nativism. As seen in chapter 3, the New York City draft riots of July 1863 and to a lesser extent in Boston and Philadelphia reinforced the lawlessness and antidemocratic tendency of the Irish to staunch Nativists. For many this diminished the positive gains the Irish soldiers and units won on the battlefield. Historians have established this as a clear setback for the Irish, after some hard-gained advancement. Kerby Miller, from *Exiles and Immigrants: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, writes that the New York draft riots were seen as continued proof of Irish disloyalty and barbarity.³³

The Fenian Army's invasions of Canada in 1866 and 1870 were also an embarrassment and setback for the Irish and were widely covered in the press.³⁴ No

doubt, this made a deep impression on the minds of Americans. While the invasions were seen as extreme, many Americans and elitists were “Anglophobic” during this period and supported Ireland’s liberation.³⁵ The Fenian invasion aims were to take Canada hostage and exchange it for a free Ireland and to start a revolution in Ireland. Most of the men were former Civil War veterans, from both the North and South. In the greater New York City area the Fenian Brotherhood had over 50,000 men under arms.³⁶ According to Miller, Fenianism had become the most popular and powerful ethnic organization in America.³⁷ During a March 1866 rally, in New York’s Yorkville section, over 100,000 Irishmen attended.³⁸ The first attack of Canada, though a small-scale operation, succeeded until the USS *Michigan* and her crew stopped the Irish from reinforcement and resupply. The second attack ended when their leader Captain John O’Neill was arrested by US Marshals, upon a return to New York for reinforcements. President Grant let it be known that he would not tolerate another Irish invasion of Canada. After this, the Fenians and the newer, more radical Clan na Gael “children of the clan” adopted a new strategy of supplying money and arms directly to Ireland to support insurrections and revolution.

Other setbacks that eroded Irish war accomplishments included the Orange Riots of 1870 and 1871, the Molly Maguires militant terrorism and subsequent executions in 1877, radical Irish labor movements and the close association with the Knights of Labor, notorious Irish gangs, and the corruption and power of Irish political machines in the large, eastern cities. These events were all-important anti-Irish circumstances, prior to the Great Atlantic Migration. The Irish were still a distinctive ethnic group from 1865 to 1875 in American society, but that would change after the Great Atlantic Migration.

To determine the Civil War's impact on Irish assimilation and acceptance, the following tools outlined in chapter 1 are applied: Sociologist Milton Gordon's Theoretical Assimilation Model, Key Factors in Migration and Assimilation Process (table 1), Ethnocentrism at Work, and Aspects of Culture and Ethnicity (tables 2 and 3). An assimilation framework is necessary to measure acceptance and assimilation, because the Irish-Catholics were considered America's first large "out-group." Additionally, the Civil War was the first test of American democracy and the immigrants' role in that democracy. The assimilation tables serve as a tool and analysis filters for important Irish and American events and their impacts during this study period, as well as for the screening primary and secondary source information. Research supports that the applied assimilation tables and their generalizations apply equally to Irish Confederate and Union ethnic units, most of whom were primarily Catholic, poor laborers, and lived in Irish communities.

Milton Gordon viewed assimilation as a linear process, starting with minor cultural borrowing and ending with cultural modification resulting in loss of distinct cultural traits. He provided a seven-step process of assimilation: cultural, structural, martial, indentificational, attitude-receptional, behavior-receptional and civic assimilation. An abbreviated seven-step assimilation process is used in table 1, along with the key factors in the migration process. Simplified, the assimilation process has two distinction phases. Firstly, there is behavioral assimilation, which is formed from shared history, sentiments, and attitudes that are incorporated into a common cultural life. Secondly, there is structural assimilation, which is the keystone to the arch of assimilation and is based on minority integration into social and occupational

stratification.³⁹ The factors influencing the rate of assimilation included ethnicity, language, cultural traits, religion, economics, status attitudes, education, and intermarriage. These areas are assessed using table 3. Applied to the Irish, the assimilating Irish minority would become similar and be absorbed in to the host population, “core culture--Protestant-Nativist indigenous culture.” The Protestant-Nativist cultural elites of the era made intentional efforts to act the guardians of social order and the “Americanization” process, defining what an American was and how one should act. This ethnocentrism is assessed using the combined processes from tables 2 and 3. The primary assumption was that the foreigner was inferior and that the core culture was superior. The core culture could dominate minority groups through the political, economic, and social systems of the community, state, and country. Further exacerbating the Irish assimilation in American were the anti-Irish feelings and issues transplanted in American society from British history and politics. This helped to fuel prewar anti-Irish discrimination. Protestant-Irishmen needed to distinguish themselves, the Anglo-Saxons, from the “Irish Celts.” Societal elites now believed it took four or five generations of gentlemen and gentlewomen to be assimilated.⁴⁰

The Civil War participation helped tear down many of the Irish stereotypes and helped ease some of the discrimination, especially as Irishmen fought and died next to nativists. Irishmen were depicted less as the negative “baboon” caricature in political cartoons. Intermarriage of Catholics and Protestants increased after the war; before the war, this was almost nonexistent.⁴¹ The Irish and non-Irish soldiers had common wartime experiences that helped link the two groups. By the 1870s many veterans associations were formed to promote their experiences and honor battle anniversaries.

The veterans' societies were not organized ethnically; the immigrant was just another American soldier.⁴² The immigrants' improved image was also transported back to nonethnic, mainstream communities, further facilitating acceptance. For postwar comparison, assessment, and analysis the following areas are evaluated: Irish identity, role of the Catholic Church, community infrastructure, and Irish roles in American society, politics and economics.

Noel Ignatiev, in his work *How the Irish Became White*, establishes that the Irish were the most discriminated group in America and that no one cared about the poor Irish; even the downtrodden blacks had the Quakers and abolitionists to bring their plight to the public attention.⁴³ As briefly stated in chapters 1 and 2, the prewar Irish suffered from severe cultural discrimination and nativist ethnocentrism. The life the prewar Irish immigrant had in the American urban environment was cold, competitive and hostile. The old rivals--the Anglo-Protestants still controlled business, commerce and industry. They loathed Irish Catholics as a subservient race, barbarian interlopers and feared them as working class competitors. In such an unfriendly environment, Irish neighborhoods rallied around the family, community and parish, which served as psychological havens, preserving faith, traditions, values, and perpetuating a sense of community.⁴⁴ The Civil War served to dramatically strengthen these bonds in the postwar era. In turn, this unity and confidence served to strength all the assessment topical areas during the postwar: Irish identity, role of the Catholic Church, community infrastructure, and Irish roles in American society, politics and economics.

When the early Irish immigrants settled within America's urban environment, they settled with friends and family from home. These settlement patterns were based on

the parish, diocese and county of origin in Ireland. In prewar America, the Irish were divided. When they first settled in New York City's Five Points, the infamous Six Ward area and Brooklyn's Fourth Ward, they were separated in Cork, Galway, Donegal, and Mayo sections. Similar spatial arrangements occurred in the Irish communities in Boston, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. The Irish county identification was the largest initial unifying identity for the immigrants. Often county locations would not be adjacent sections of the city and would be further apart. Irish national identity in Ireland due to eight hundred years of British control did not exist. Irish Identity was learned in America, and Irish initial settlement patterns in America supports this conclusion. Their ethnicity, Catholicism and ghettoization, along with nativist discrimination caused the initial unity. The Civil War acted as an accelerating mechanism for unifying and strengthening the Irish identity in America. To survive the Irish needed to unify and mutually support each other. Irish politicians and priests assisted in leading the unity effort. Postwar Irish communities emerged as a dominant voice and voting block in the large Eastern cities. Postwar Irish communities became a source of strength, hope, and opportunity, when before they were a place of despair.

The prewar, large, urban Irish populations were relatively a new phenomena in the large Eastern cities, which made the Irish clearly stand out. Urban ghettoization caused the Irish to be stereotyped by nativists, but it also increased Irish confidence and identity. In Ireland, most of these immigrants lived in rural-agrarian societies. In urban America, they lived in overcrowded Irish communities, mostly in abject poverty. The Irish were America's first large, ghettoized ethnic group. Poverty and overcrowding have been shown to delay adaptation, acculturation, and assimilation.⁴⁵ Ghetto life

strengthened Irish society by reinforcing Irish ethnicity and Catholicism. New Irish immigrants constantly reinforced this Irish-Catholic ethnic flavor of the ghetto. Irish ghetto life helped to fuel racial vice⁴⁶ and stereotypes.⁴⁷ This initially helped to isolate the Irish from mainstream American society and form nativist negative attitudes towards the Irish. The Irish had distinct social patterns, clothes, language, diet, and beliefs that set them apart from society. Further setting them apart from native culture, the Irish dominated the menial manual-labor sector, supplying America with cheap industrial and transportation labor. These jobs were typically looked down upon by nativists. The war changed both Irish and non-Irish communities; distinctions became less evident.

War participation and Irish organization helped diffuse the Irish stereotypes and Irish-American differences. Postwar Irish communities emerged from the war confident and started to promote Irish-American identity. By 1870, Irish-Americans of the Civil War generation came to identify themselves as American's, while their loyalty to Ireland was fading into ethnic sentiments and St. Patrick's Day celebrations.⁴⁸ From their war journals and memoirs Sergeant Welsh, Sergeant Sullivan, Captain Conyngham, Colonel Mulholland, and Father Corby all viewed themselves as Irish-Americans by war's end. Sullivan and Welsh saw their service to the nation as the most important time in their lives.⁴⁹ In the postwar, nativists became more accepting and the Irish became more American. The sections on Catholicism, politics and economics will further support this conclusion.

The Catholic Church had a major role in shaping Irish-American identity and improving Irish communities. The Catholic school system also played a pivotal role in Irish society, helping to provide discipline and improve opportunity. The postwar Church

emerged stronger financially, increased its infrastructure and had a more dedicated and devout following.⁵⁰ The Catholic Church had a war boom, then an even bigger postwar boom in attendance, new churches, cathedrals, rectories, convents, orphanages, hospitals, parochial schools, colleges, and seminaries.⁵¹ Working with Irish politicians the Catholic Church's hierarchy deliberately targeted housing areas and communities within the Ward structure for future takeover by Irish-Catholics, thus planning for the arrival and future infrastructure for new Irish-Catholic immigrants.

John Hughes, New York's archbishop during the prewar and war years, and other important Catholic leaders located along the eastern seaboard supported Irish ghettoization. They argued that the concentrated Irish population located in urban areas permitted the church to minimize financial and human resources, and maximized the spiritual needs of their parishioners. This approach was seen as the only realistic way to defend against American secularism and Protestant proselytism. Irish Catholic parish communities functioned as half-way houses between two cultures, easing the immigrants' fears and assisting in adaptation and assimilation. During the war and postwar, the church's role in Irish communities would grow. The Church supported fighting in ethnic units. The role of military chaplains' in Irish units reinforced this overseeing philosophy. The chaplain was their protector from the evils of Protestantism, temptation, and American secularism. Fighting in Irish ethnic units reinforced and preserved Irish-Catholic thought, isolating the Irish in a protective enclave. This would not have enhanced assimilation and acceptance, just the opposite, but as mentioned in chapter 4, established Irish identity, confidence, unity, and organization. Many Americans were suspicious of the hold the Irish priest and politician had on their Irish communities.

Caustically, on 9 September 1868, the *Chicago Evening Post*, noting the city's problems, remarked, "Scratch a convict or pauper and the chances are that you tickle the skin of an Irish-Catholic made a criminal or pauper by the priest and politician who have deceived him and kept him in ignorance, in a word, a savage, as he was born."⁵²

With closer analysis, Catholicism actually had very much in common with other Victorian religious denominations. Both groups tended to be conservative and rigidly dedicated to their version of religious certitude. Both were strict towards alcohol and sex--supporting total abstinence. Furthermore, both groups encourage strong leadership in the community and a hard, energetic work ethic. These common Christian traits were emphasized more during the last decade of the nineteenth century, when large amounts of eastern and southern Europeans and Jews immigrated to America. Thus, making Catholicism more acceptable and American.

The Catholic Church along with Irish politicians and businessmen helped build an Irish community infrastructure that thrived in postwar America. The war- and postwar-created infrastructure helped later Irish immigrants assimilate faster--cushioning the cultural shock.⁵³ The infrastructure improved and satisfied the communities' religious, education, legal, social, political, and economic needs. War pensions and paychecks from war-created manufacturing industries helped to fuel and sustain this growth. New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral was finished in 1879 and symbolized the growth, strength, prosperity, and esteem of the Catholic Church. The official Catholic University in Washington, D.C., was completed in 1889 and offered many Irish-Catholics an opportunity to enter the professions. In the postwar era three powerful national Irish ethnic associations emerged, the Irish Catholic Benevolent Union (1869), the Catholic

Total Abstinence Union (1872), and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (reorganized 1871). They were committed to the social and financial betterment of Irish-Americans.⁵⁴ Clark remarks about the improved postwar Irish networks in Philadelphia, “That the structure was erected by the segment of the city’s population that was the least affluent, the most beset by social problems, and the least able to have recourse to power and influence is truly remarkable.”⁵⁵ To an even-greater degree, these postwar infrastructure and network conditions existed in Boston, New York, and New Orleans. The Irish created a subsystem with the urban structure that suited their needs. This accomplishment served them well and became a model for other ethnic groups to follow.⁵⁶ The infrastructure, unity, organization, along with the soldiers’ hard-fighting reputation, invigorated Irish self-esteem, morale, and advancement, something they did not have during the prewar years.

By the 1870s, the unified and confident Irish communities within the ward--district structures were able to dominate city politics and administration in Boston, New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, Jersey City, Buffalo, St. Louis, and Francisco; ushering in, the era of Irish-dominated political machines, and to a lesser extent in Philadelphia and New Orleans.⁵⁷ The Irish ability to speak with one voice in democratic politics was the decisive event that furthered postwar Irish advancement.⁵⁸ By the end of the war, the Irish in New York had a foothold in Democratic Tammany Hall politics that would guaranty a large number of returning Irish soldiers jobs. For Irish loyalty during the war, Tammany Hall boss William “Boss” Tweed (not Irish) had given 754 city government jobs to Irish New Yorkers, and he gave 46 to Germans.⁵⁹ Through political patronage, the postwar Irish began to dominate the police forces and fire departments of Boston,

New York, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. By 1872, John Kelly became the first Irish Catholic leader of New York's Tammany Hall, and in 1880 William Grace, became New York's first Irish-Catholic mayor. Boston elected its first Irish Catholic mayor in 1886. Richard O'Gorman, a participant in the Irish Rebellion of 1848 and a key Irish leader in the prewar and war years, was appointed a New York Supreme Court Justice.

The Irish benefited psychologically from seeing some of their people rise to power.⁶⁰ This also furthered nativist acceptance; the Irish became a force to take seriously. The postwar Irish were succeeding. For decades to come Irish bosses honed an urban political machine that through a system of patronage provided city public works and civil service employment to thousands of Irishmen.⁶¹ This political acumen created bastions of opportunity in public employment during the US's transition to a manufacturing and an industrial-based economy. Irish applications for jobs would no longer be scorned but welcomed.⁶²

Capitalizing on the need for workers during the war years, the postwar Irish continued to make great advances in business opportunities and organized labor. The Irish-born Terence Powderly in Philadelphia, 1869, founded the Knights of Labor and became its first Grand Master. The Knights of Labor was the first nationwide labor organization, and by 1886 had 800,000 members.⁶³ In the following postwar period the Irish would have leading roles in the International Workers Union, United Garment Workers Union, Women's Trade Union League, and American Federation of Labor. Increasing, the Irish used labor movements to redress their economic and social grievances.⁶⁴ During the war, many Irish men and women found jobs in the booming war supply and production industries. Their labor became even more important as the war

advanced the nation into the industrial era. The postwar Irish had an improved economic situation; only 20 percent were labors in 1880, compared to 86 percent in 1860.⁶⁵

Irishmen and women moved into manufacturing and had increased representation in the small-business sector and education field.⁶⁶ Sergeant James P. Sullivan had enough confidence and money after the war to take his family to the South Dakota Territory to farm and raise livestock.⁶⁷ Many other Irish soldiers took advantage of western expansion to improve their financial situation, something that was infrequent prior to war.

The urban environment had many unfamiliar and unfavorable elements; strengthened by the war's organization it offered a social, political, economic, and religious support structure and a base of operations for the new immigrant and returning soldiers. "*Ni neart go cur le cheile*": "*Togetherness is Strength*" is the motto that let the Irish overcome their new urban discrimination and lack of opportunity, plus organize and unify during the war. Success had its rewards; the Irish were making inroads into the American way of life and greater acceptance.

The postwar Irish in America, wanting to be American, but also wanting to preserve their traditional ethnicity identity, changed the way America looked at immigrants and what it expected from them. Ethnicity was no longer something the immigrant was supposed to shed; a dual, hyphenated identity was becoming more acceptable. The Irish-Americans, through self-determination ushered in the age of "Structural or Cultural Pluralism,"--a society in which two or more population groups, each practicing its own culture, live adjacent to one another without mixing.⁶⁸ This model is still predominant in American minority societies today. Within this model the average Irishmen would typically work with other non-Irishmen, perhaps even socialized with

them, but live within an Irish community. While this showed societal acceptance, it was not complete assimilation; however, the choice was now more of the Irish minorities' choosing. The proximity to churches and schools also had a lot to do with this settlement pattern. With improved transportation, Irish communities migrated into better areas, while retaining their identity. Sociologist Milton Gordon found that white European immigrants, to include the Irish, in the American acculturation process in society during this era was "overwhelming triumphant."⁶⁹ This proved their flexibility and allowed adaptation to American culture while still preserving Irish ethnicity. This is also clearly demonstrated by Henry Cabot Lodge, a historian and Senator from Boston, during a postwar address on immigration. Lodge concluded, "The Irish spoke the same language as the people of the United States; they had the same traditions of government, and they had for centuries associated and intermarried with the people of Great Britain. . . . They presented no difficulties of assimilation."⁷⁰ This truly shows how far the Irish had come.

¹Ed Spann, "Union Green: The Irish Community in the Civil War," in Ronald Meagher and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 209.

²James Gannon, *Irish Rebels: Confederate Tigers: A History of the 6th Louisiana Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing, 1998), 324.

³Lawrence McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1997), 103.

⁴Medal of Honor Website, "Irish Brigade and Other Irish Born Recipients" [article on-line]; available from http://Irishvolunteers.tripod.com/medal_of_honor.htm; Internet.

⁵Gannon, 319-20.

⁶Ed Gleeson, *The Rebel Sons of Erin: A Civil War Unit History of the Tenth Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Irish), Confederate States Volunteers* (Indianapolis, IN: Guild Press, 1993, 250-251.

⁷William Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Units* (Ames, IA: Iowa State Press, 1988), 226. Note: Refers to John Higham (historian), Milton Gordon (soc), Howard Stein (soc).

⁸Frank A. Boyle, *A Party of Mad Fellows: The Story of the Irish Regiments in the Army of the Potomac* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1996), 390.

⁹Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 122.

¹⁰Boyle, 390.

¹¹Spann, 209.

¹²Clark, 171.

¹³Spann, 209.

¹⁴Ann Kathleen Bradley, *The History of the Irish in America* (London and Edison, NJ: Quantum Books, Inc., 1986), 65.

¹⁵Michael J. Costello, "The Irish and American Military Tradition," in David N. Doyle and Owen D. Edwards, eds., *America and Ireland, 1776-1976, American Identity and the Irish Connection* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 227.

¹⁶Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Press, 1985), 3-4.

¹⁷McCaffery, 73 and 105.

¹⁸Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1941), 211.

¹⁹Ibid., 210.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Sergeant Kirkland Society, *The History of the Irish Brigade*, ed. Pia S. Seagrave (Fredericksburg, VA: Kirkland Museum, 1997), 74 and 77.

²²Ibid, 205.

²³Miller, 324.

²⁴David Gleeson, “The Irish in the South” (Ph.D. diss., Mississippi State University, 1997), 333.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 366.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 334.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 377-78.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 377.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 378.

³⁰Clark, 123.

³¹St. Clair A. Mulholland and Lawrence F. Kohl, eds., *The Story of the 116th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer*, xviii.

³²Bradley, 65 and 69.

³³Miller, 324.

³⁴Bradley, 59.

³⁵Handlin, 209 and 218.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 58.

³⁷Miller, 336.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in America: Theory and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 81.

⁴⁰Handlin, 177.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 176.

⁴²St. Clair A. Mulholland, *The Story of the 116th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996), xviii.

⁴³Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (NY: Routledge Press, 1995), 178.

⁴⁴McCaffrey, 71.

⁴⁵David Ward, *Poverty, Ethnicity and the American City, 1840–1925* (New York: Cambridge Press, 1989), 3.

⁴⁶Note: Racial vice was used to describe alcohol, fighting, crime, and prostitution; traits associated with Irish ghetto life during the era.

⁴⁷McCaffrey, 71.

⁴⁸Spann, 209.

⁴⁹William J. K. Beaudot and Lance J. Herdegan, eds., *Irishman in the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of James P. Sullivan, Sergt., Company, 6th Wisconsin Volunteers*, Irish in the Civil War, Series no. 3 (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993) 2; and Kohl, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh*, 50.

⁵⁰Bradley, 104.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²McCaffrey, 103.

⁵³Marion Truslow, "Peasants into Patriots: The New York Irish Brigade Recruits and Their Families in the Civil War Era, 1850-1890" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1994), 301.

⁵⁴Bradley, 100.

⁵⁵Clark, 169.

⁵⁶Ibid., 124.

⁵⁷Bradley, 106.

⁵⁸Hasia R. Diner, "The Most Irish City in the Union: The Era of the Great Migration, 1844-1877," in *The New York Irish*, 102-3.

⁵⁹Diner, 102.

⁶⁰Kerby Miller and Paul Wagner, *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America* (Washington, DC: Elliot and Clark, 1994), 66.

⁶¹Larry McCaffrey, "Forging Forward and Looking Back," in Ronald Baylor and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 212.

⁶²Miller and Wagner, 58.

⁶³Bradley, 101.

⁶⁴Lawrence McCaffrey, "Forging Forward and Looking Back," 227.

⁶⁵Diner, 98.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 105.

⁶⁷Beaudot and Herdegen, 2-3.

⁶⁸Harm De Blij and Peter Muller, *Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts*, G-3.

⁶⁹Milton Gordon, 107.

⁷⁰Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880*, 226.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The American Civil War was a pivotal and centripetal point for the Irish in America. Irish participation in and reaction to the war provided accelerated mechanisms for the Irish to succeed, assimilate, and gain acceptance in America. With the strongly established Irish fighting reputation, improved community unity, organization, and infrastructure, there was increased hope and prospects for opportunity for the Irish in postwar America. The Irish on both sides fought for many reasons, but in the end almost all the reasons led to increased patriotism and dedication to America.

Northern and Southern Irishmen had different experiences prior to the war, during the war, and after the war. Before the war, Irish Southerners did not view themselves as victims, like the Irish in the North. Many Irish found a valued role in the Southern economy as laborers, and they fought to support their communities' communities that were more accepting of Irish-Catholics than in the North. With the start of the war, Irish immigration to the South stopped. The absence of new immigrants and of strong Fenian demagogues eroded Irish ethnicity and identity faster in the South. Irish Confederate soldiers, like their Northern counterparts, established a hard-fighting reputation, and Irish units and leaders received much praise. Irish participation in the Southern cause was appreciated and rewarded with increased acceptance and a greater role in postwar Southern society. The postwar Irish Southerners furthered their assimilation and acceptance by supporting anti-black and anti-reconstruction policies. With the war and postwar changes, Irish identity in the South became secondary to American identity.

The Northern Irish population had a different experience. The Irish population in the North was almost twenty times greater than in the South. Irishmen in the North stood out more amongst the Northern nativist population, and tended to be more ghettoized in Irish urban neighborhoods. Because of this, the Northern Irish experienced more discrimination, adversity, and greater difficulties in assimilation and acceptance. Initially, many Irishmen in the North enlisted to earn bounties and to obtain fighting skills to advance the liberation of Ireland from Britain. The Irish in the North, having a better prewar community infrastructure than the Southern Irish, were more susceptible to collective thoughts and deeds. Irish newspapers, strong Fenian-Irish nationalist leaders, and politicians helped to dominate and shape community attitudes. Irish leaders used the war to help unify and organize the Irish communities, promote American democracy, and to show that the Irish could do their duties as American citizens. Modeling American democracy was believed to be the answer to the problems of Ireland and the Irish-British struggle. By fighting for and supporting the Union cause, Irish leaders expected a greater role in postwar society and an increased voice in urban affairs.

As the war progressed, Irish Northern communities were often out of synchronization with the Irish soldiers in the field. Because of battlefield losses, draft problems, and antiwar sentiments, Irish community support for the war waned after the summer of 1863. However, this had little effect on the battle-hardened Irish soldiers in the field. The Irish soldiers emerged more dedicated to America, and did not waver in their cause of supporting the Union.

While the Irish units in the Union had established an excellent fighting reputation and record, the greater accomplishment of the war is the Irish collective confidence that

was achieved from their fighting participation. This confidence was transported back to the Irish communities, which made them unify like never before. Confidence created unity, which promoted self-determination, organization, and war-related coping mechanisms. These coping mechanisms strengthened the family unit and unified tenement and community bonds. To support the war efforts successful Irish businessmen, church, and community political leaders formed emigrant and charitable societies; these societies provided special banking needs, job information and training, moral and spiritual coaching, and financial and legal aid. With war monies the Irish built more churches, meeting halls, parochial schools, and hospitals and founded more newspapers. While the origins of some of the infrastructure were in place before the war, the war served as a catalyst for expedient growth and faster advancement in America's social, political, and economic sectors.

The Catholic Church and school system also played a pivotal role in Irish society, helping to provide unity, discipline, and vision. Irish-Catholic parish communities functioned as halfway houses between two cultures, easing the immigrants' fears and assisting in adaptation and assimilation. Irish neighborhoods, focused around the parish, served as psychological havens, preserving faith, traditions, values; and they perpetuated a sense of community. During the war and postwar years the Irish-Catholic Church and school system began to promote democracy and American traditions. What emerged was a stronger Irish-Catholic identity and a dual loyalty to both America and Ireland.

While the Irish hard-fighting war participation improved the Irish image in the North, it proved somewhat ephemeral. The Draft Riots of 1863 and the Fenian invasions of Canada were viewed by many nativists as setbacks for the Irish, eroding their gallant

and dutiful war participation. The more significant impact of the war was the war-created organization and supporting infrastructure. This organization and infrastructure advanced the Irish in postwar America. The Irish by the 1870s became dominant in urban labor organizations, Democratic Party politics and city governments in many of America's largest cities. Furthermore, this organization allowed the Irish to dominate later immigrant groups, during the height of the Great Atlantic Migration. By 1890 the Irish were roughly in parity with nativists in the areas of education and income. The American-Irish had come a very long way from the agrarian famine exiles of late 1840s.

The American Civil War is a definitive event in the Irish experience in America. The war accelerated Irish self-determination, opportunity, and advancement, which furthered assimilation and acceptance in American society. One of the best-kept secrets of the war was how truly American-Irish ethnic regiments became. Irish-Catholic identity was still strong, but it emerged as a greater Irish-Catholic-American identity. The Irish were proud citizens of the American democracy. Though it did not happen overnight, to nativists they had proved their rightful citizenship by duty, blood, labor, commitment, and determination. The Irish proved to be very adaptive--very American. The Civil War for the Irish may well be seen as both "an end and a new beginning."

The Irish experience in the Civil War and urban America is still an invaluable research tool for social science researchers and new immigrant groups looking for successful groups to model in their quest to succeed in America.

APPENDIX

UNION AND CONFEDERATE IRISH UNITS

Union Irish Units (predominately, more than 50 percent):

New England

9th Massachusetts (Boston)
28th Massachusetts Regiment (part of the New York Irish Brigade)
19th Massachusetts, Company E
15th Maine Regiment (Aroostock and Washington Counties)
9th Connecticut Regiment
10th New Hampshire Infantry
13th Vermont Regiment, Company A, Emmett Guards (Burlington)

New York

Infantry

69th Militia [New York City (NYC)]
Irish Brigade
63rd New York Regiment (NYC)
69th New York Regiment (NYC)
88th New York, Connaught Rangers or Faugh-a-Ballagh or Mrs. Meagher's Own
Irish Legion or Corcoran's Legion
155th New York Regiment
164th New York Regiment
170th New York Regiment
175th New York Regiment
182nd New York Regiment
11th New York Regiment, First Fire Zouaves
20th New York State Militia, Ulster Guard (recruited among Irish miners)
25th New York (formed in June 1861, disbanded in December, 1861).
37th New York Regiment, Irish Rifles
150th New York Regiment, Company G, H and I
Western Irish Regiment, Companies G, H, and I

Artillery

2nd Independent Battalion Light Artillery, Batteries A and B, later called the 14th and 15th Independent Batteries

Pennsylvania

Infantry

2nd Regiment Pennsylvania Reserves, Company C, Hibernian Target Company
13th Pennsylvania Reserves, Company F
24th Pennsylvania Infantry (3 months service)
69th Pennsylvania Infantry
116th Pennsylvania Regiment or Cameron Dragoons (part of the Irish Brigade)

Cavalry

Gallagher's Battalion, of the Irish Brigade, part of the 116th Pennsylvania Regiment, later called the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry

Central West

Infantry

8th Ohio Regiment, Company B, Hibernian Guards

10th Ohio Regiment

61st Ohio Regiment (two companies)

35th Indiana Regiment (First Irish Regiment)

61st Indiana Regiment, later merged with the 35th Indiana Regiment

23rd Illinois Regiment, Mulligan's Brigade (recruited in several western states)

19th Illinois Regiment or Irish Legion

7th Missouri Infantry

11th Wisconsin Regiment

17th Wisconsin Regiment or the Wisconsin Irish Brigade

27th Michigan Regiment

Artillery

Artillery Company, 23rd Illinois Regiment or Irish Guards, later Battery L, First Illinois Light Artillery (Oconto, Wisconsin)

11th Wisconsin Independent or Rourke's Battery, in the 23rd Illinois Infantry; later Battery L, First Illinois Light Artillery

Confederate Irish Units (predominately, more than fifty percent):

Alabama

Alabama Light Dragoons (Mobile)

Mobile Dragoons

Co. I, 8th Alabama, Emerald Guards (Mobile)

Co. B, 24th Alabama, Emmett Guards (Mobile)

Alabama Rebels (Firemen) (Montgomery)

Irish Volunteer (Montgomery)

Georgia

Irish Volunteers (Augusta)

Frazier's Battery (Savannah)

Irish Jasper Greene, Companies A and B (Savannah)

Co. B, 19th Georgia Infantry, Jackson's Guards (Savannah)

Louisiana

Avengo Zouaves, 13th Louisiana, Governor's Guards, two Irish companies: Southern Celts and St. Mary Volunteers

Co. D., 1st Louisiana, Emmett Guards

Co. E., 1st Louisiana, Montgomery Guards

Co. C., 5th Louisiana, Sarsfield Rangers

Co. B., 6th Louisiana,

Co. F., 6th Louisiana, (part of New Orleans Irish Brigade, two companies only)

Co. I., 6th Louisiana, (part of New Orleans Irish Brigade, two companies only)

Co. D., 7th Louisiana, Virginia Guards
Co. F., 7th Louisiana, Irish Volunteers
Co. E., 9th Louisiana,
10th Louisiana Regiment
20th Louisiana Regiment (four companies)
1st Special Louisiana Battalion, Bob Wheat's Tigers

Missouri

Irish Battery, under General Price
Shamrock Guards, under General Price
Two Regiments, under General Bevier

North Carolina

Co. H., 40th North Carolina
Irish Company, Wilmington, Captain Edward D. Hill

South Carolina

Charleston Battalion, two companies
Irish Artillery, two companies
Old Irish Volunteers, 1st South Carolina

Tennessee

2nd Tennessee Regiment
10th Tennessee Regiment
Co. I., 21st Tennessee, later Co. B., 5th Confederate Tennessee
Irish Company, from Nashville, under Captain St. Clair Morgan

Texas

Co. F., 1st Texas Heavy Artillery, Davis Guards
Captain's Redwood's company, Rio Grande Regiment
Irish Company, from San Patricio, Terry's Rangers

Virginia

Irish Battalion, 1st Virginia
Co. H., 11th Virginia (Lynchburg)
Co. G., 17th Virginia (Alexandria)
Co. I., 17th Virginia (Alexandria)

Sources:

Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*
Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*
William Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments*
Encyclopedia of the Confederacy, Richard Current (ed)
Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History, David and Jeanne Heidler (eds).

GLOSSARY

Acculturation. A minority cultural modification resulting from cultural borrowing from the dominant indigenous culture, but retention of one's own cultural identity.

American-Irish. A descendant of Irish immigrants who still identifies with the Irish culture and/or traditions, but is foremost an American (assimilated); used within the same context as Irish-American (Catholic); a contemporary term.

Anglo-Irish. (Anglican Protestant Irish). A term that is rarely used in American social history, but is a great aid in accurately analyzing the Irish migrants and their descendants in North America.

Assimilation. A cultural modification resulting in minority loss of distinct cultural traits. The assimilated minority becomes similar to and absorbed into the indigenous culture.

Backwardness. Is used in a way to describe Irish Catholic difficulties with the normal immigrant adaptation process in the U.S; usually perceived from an Anglo melting pot (normal) perspective; used within the same context as dysfunctionism.

Culture. The sum total of the knowledge, attitudes, and habitual behavior patterns shared and transmitted by the members of the society.

Dysfunctionalism. Used by Miller to mean Irish backwardness and lack of adaptation. See backwardness.

Gaelic-Irish. A native Celtic Irish Catholic.

Irish. A difficult interpretation that needs to be considered within a certain context: often the modern context Irish means Irish Catholic. Some nationalists believe that Protestants in Ireland are not really Irish and, therefore, their descendents in the US are not Irish. In a literal sense, it means people born within the boundary of Ireland or who think of themselves as ethnically Irish.

Irish-American. A naturalized Irish immigrant in the US or a descendant who identifies with both cultures, but is foremost Irish (experiencing acculturation and leading to assimilation). In almost every context in which it is used, it refers only to Catholics; synonymous with Irish-Catholic. Within normal context, it excludes Protestants on sectarian or racist grounds because a real Irish native can not be Protestant.

Irish-Born. A term to differentiate the Irish-born migrants or first generation Irish, from those persons of Irish ethnicity (multigenerational) born in the US

Irish-Protestant. The Anglo-Irish, Scots-Irish and Ulster-Scots.

Maladaptation. Immigrant rejection of or an impediment to the acculturation and assimilation process. Maladaptation is an uncommon word in the social sciences. Its opposite--adaptation, is used often in geography and other social sciences. It is used in psychology and has a negative connotation; not adapting as expected.

Mental Landscape. An emotionally imprinted memory of a major event(s) and landscape(s); a subset of cultural landscape.

Psychocultural Viewpoint (Perspective). How a culture views itself; an insider's 'ethnic' view.

Scotch-Irish (also Scots-Irish). A term adapted and used as a badge of pride, which meant "woodsman." The standard interpretation of the adaptation of the term is that Ulster-Scots assumed it solely to separate themselves from the Catholic Irish. It is not as simple as that, but will currently suffice for a simple working definition. It is often misused to represent non-Catholic Irish.

Ulster-Scots. Almost universally of Presbyterian background, having originally moved to Ulster from Scotland.

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