

"While Ireland holds these graves": The Survival and Revival of Catholic Identity in
Northern Ireland, 1925-1968

by

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Northern Ireland, 1925-1968

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Abstract

Collective cultural identity is a powerful force. It is forged in battle, suffering, and celebration. It can encompass generations and it moves beyond borders drawn on a map. In Ireland, as in other nations, cultural identity is passed down through music, folklore and mythology; in Ireland, sports, religion and politics are added to the mix, each of them acquiring their own Irish manifestations. Unfortunately, for many years the tradition of violence, self-sacrifice, and revolution has also been passed down as a part of Irish Catholic identity. The creation of the two new states, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, divided that collective identity for half a century. This thesis will ask: how did the collective identity of Irish Catholics get divided? How did that common identity evolve in separate directions, and then, by the 1960s, how did this once common culture grow back together, and what were the results?

This thesis will discuss how the creation of Northern Ireland affected the collective identity of Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1968, the beginning of the time of the Troubles. The intent is to understand the origins of the Troubles through the lens of cultural history, specifically how the Fenian Cycle of Irish myth and traditional Irish songs contributed to a more traditional and combative culture for Irish Catholics. The thesis will argue that that culture led Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland to challenge their imposed inferiority in the six northern counties and resulted in a violent response from Northern Irish Protestants and the British military alike.

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Introduction

Collective cultural identity is a powerful force. It is forged in battle, suffering, and celebration. It can encompass generations and it moves beyond borders drawn on a map. In Ireland, as in other nations, cultural identity is passed down through music, folklore and mythology; in Ireland, sports, religion and politics are added to the mix, each of them acquiring their own Irish manifestations. Unfortunately, for many years the tradition of violence, self-sacrifice, and revolution has also been passed down as a part of Irish Catholic identity.

In 1921 when the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed, it sent two states on the same island hurtling in different directions. While the Republic of Ireland erupted in a civil war that would last until 1923, six northern counties of Ireland settled into an uneasy state of peace, continuing as a part of the United Kingdom. As industry in the North flourished and cities modernized, the South in some ways regressed into a world where the traditions and culture that were suppressed for so long could thrive. The peace in the North did not mean things were miraculously better. Years of fighting and the ever-growing separation between the Protestants and Catholics on both economic and cultural levels were not going to be solved with a few signatures on a treaty. Yet a relative peace did endure in Northern Ireland for almost forty-seven years.

The creation of the two new states, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, divided the collective identity of Irish Catholics for half a century. This thesis will ask: how did the collective identity of Irish Catholics get divided? How did that common

identity evolve in separate directions, and then, by the 1960s, how did this once common culture grow back together, and what were the results?

This thesis will discuss how the creation of Northern Ireland affected the collective identity of Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1968, the beginning of the time of the Troubles, by establishing an understanding of the roots of cultural identity. The intent is to understand the origins of the Troubles through the lens of cultural history, specifically how the Fenian Cycle of Irish myth and traditional Irish songs contributed to a more traditional and combative culture for Irish Catholics. The thesis will argue that culture led Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland to challenge their imposed inferiority in the six northern counties and resulted in a violent response from Northern Irish Protestants and the British military alike.

Identity as a concept in history is not easily explained. For the purpose of this thesis, collective identity will be defined as shared feelings of peoplehood tied to a specific old world ancestry and how that group understands their place in the social world, as well as how others view them as a collective.¹

From very early on Ireland has been invaded, fought over, colonized, and controlled by clans, kings, and foreign powers. Despite years of constant power change, there was always a solid cultural base in Ireland, so much so that there seems to be a history of cultural assimilation on the part of the invaders. Invaders and colonizers often became "more Irish than the Irish themselves."² In 1606 when the English government "planted" Scottish settlers in the Ulster province of Ireland, England secured Protestant

¹ Russell Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3.

² Sean Connolly, *Contested Island: Ireland 1460-1630*, (England: Oxford University Press, 2007), 34-35.

hold on Catholic Irish land. The Plantation Period was new in that it not only represented a loss of Irish land to an occupying population but it also introduced the presence of a people with a culture and religious background that was not willing to assimilate and become like the Catholic Irish.

Over time the lines between foreigners who lived in Ireland and the native Irish people were blurred. In early years the "invaders" married Irish brides and created new family groups. The new family groups often took on many of the Irish traditions and even the Catholic religion at times. Irish culture seems to be all encompassing: it consumes the lives of those who live within its sphere and is infectious for many people. At this time in Irish history there is not a lot of ethnic diversity. Most of the island's inhabitants are either of British, Scottish, Native Irish, or Welsh descent. It is difficult to identify people as a specific heritage by appearance. Even as the lines of separation blurred for many cultures and ethnic identification was almost impossible, Catholic and Protestant became the defining identification for people.

The relationship between Irish Catholicism and Irish Nationalism is rather complicated. These complications arise from the fact that religion and identity in Ireland have been intertwined since the Plantation Period. After the Reformation saw England turn Protestant under the Anglican Church, Catholicism in Ireland became a symbol for a community that was powerless and disenfranchised under English domination, while Protestantism in Ireland became a symbol of agency and power.³ Over future centuries, Gaelic culture played a huge part in reinforcing the cultural barrier between the British

³ Lawrence McCaffrey, "Irish Nationalism and Irish Catholicism: A Study in Cultural Identity," *Church History*, 42, no. 4 (1973): 524-534, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3164971> (accessed October 5, 2014).

and the Irish, especially as it began to die out under British rule. With its cultural roots in early Irish history, Gaelic culture denoted a time when High Kings ruled, when the land was prosperous, and seanchaithe (traditional storytellers) recited poems of brave deeds and ancient histories. Most of all it referred to a time in Irish history when the Irish ruled Ireland. The values celebrated in Gaelic culture, of self-sacrifice, family, and community loyalty, are the same values that aided Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland during the darkest times of British colonization.⁴

Gaelic culture has been represented in many published works on Ireland, but rarely does it take center stage in a historically minded work. *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (1989) by Dr. Joseph Lee focuses on a period of seventy-three pivotal years in Ireland's history. Lee is a professor of Irish Studies at New York University. He is a former member of the Upper House of the Irish Dail, or Parliament, and a former member of the British-Irish Parliamentary Body at Stormont in Northern Ireland. Despite his experience with Irish politics, his book has a very impartial tone. Unlike previous Irish histories, Lee's work focuses on the state Ireland is building after the Anglo-Irish Agreement, rather than the common study of Anglo-Irish relations. Lee's book is very strongly driven by economic information and analysis. The original research he conducted using government documents took Irish scholarship to a new level. Along with his view of the economic environment in Ireland, Lee attempts to psychoanalyze Irish society by tracing modern Irish cultural developments back in time, past the era of British colonization to what is termed the "Gaelic" era.⁵ Similarly, *Ireland in the Twentieth*

⁴McCaffrey, "Irish Nationalism and Irish Catholicism", 524-534.

⁵ Joseph Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Century (2004) by Tim Pat Coogan focuses on a single century in Irish history. Coogan's book is a comprehensive look at a time in Irish history where circumstances were constantly changing. Although the book does not fully develop the cultural history of Ireland, it does shed some light on the background of the Northern Irish state.⁶

There is a faction of Northern Irish scholarship that is dedicated to national identity and its formation. The focus of these pieces, however, is either extremely modern, dedicated to Northern Ireland's history from the 1990s onward, or the text is not viewed through a historic lens. In Shelly McKeown's book *Identity, Segregation and Peace-Building in Northern Ireland: A Social Psychological Perspective* (2013), she looks at information regarding education, marriage, geographical location, and household income to determine identity trends.⁷ *Identity in Northern Ireland: Communities, Politics and Change* (1999) by Cathal McCall focuses on political identity in the North. While McCall does discuss culture in Northern Ireland, it is present, not as a reason for the development of identity, but as an outcome. His thesis really focuses more on how identity has changed over time as opposed to the roots of Irish cultural identity.⁸

Cultural history finds its footing in Northern Irish history as smaller parts in books that have very specific topics. For example, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (1993) by John Sugden and Allan Bairner relates the cultural impact of sports culture in Ireland to the larger political movements of the time.⁹ Music is also a

⁶ Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

⁷ Shelly McKeown, *Identity, Segregation and Peace-Building in Northern Ireland: A Social Psychological Perspective*, New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2013.

⁸ Cathal McCall, *Identity In Northern Ireland: Communities, Politics and Change*. London: McMillian Press, 1999.

⁹ Sugden, John, and Alan Bairner. *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*. London, England: Leicester University Press, 1993.

popular cultural topic in Irish and Northern Irish history. Traditional music has such a strong cultural base in Irish history and has become an invaluable source when it comes to understanding a time period. David Cooper's book, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diaspora* (2009), puts music into a social and historic context.¹⁰ Similarly, Ray Cashman analyzes the cultural trends in storytelling through the development of the Northern border and discusses duality of identity in the border towns in his book *Storytelling on the Northern Irish Border: Characters and Community* (2011). Cashman's research is based heavily on personal interactions and field research. He spent time listening to the stories of people living in mixed religion border towns, and it is his belief that the new shared common culture that is developing in these towns has helped paved the way for peace in the North. Books like *Storytelling on the Northern Irish Border* and *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diaspora* bring a deeper understanding of how culture plays into historic events.¹¹

This paper will plant its theoretical feet in the realm of cultural history. The goal of cultural history is to understand a topic by looking at the cultural influences that surround it. Historians cannot completely understand or recreate the past. It is the responsibility of the cultural historian to study what past generations have left behind and to create a profile of the average person living in that time period in order to better understand the society. Irish society is a result of Irish culture. Therefore, it makes sense to study the deep-rooted cultural trends and traditions to better understand the timeline of

¹⁰ David Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and Its Diaspora: Community and Conflict*, Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009.

¹¹ Ray Cahsman, *Storytelling on the Northern Irish Border: Characters and Community*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 2011.

Irish history. Two historians who have had strong influences over the methodological theory of this paper are Robert Darnton and Henry Glassie. Darnton has captured the essence of cultural history in his book *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (1984). His idea that culture gives insight to social construction and the events that transpire based on that construction is highly influential.¹²

Henry Glassie's basis for his book *All Silver No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mumming* (1976), which looks at Irish material culture, is that the representation of the past, as it exists in memory, is equally as important as the imposing forces of the present. In Irish culture there is a lot of weight put on memory and honoring the past. Glassie's use of tradition and folklore as serious primary sources is also a model for the development of the thesis.¹³ Glassie's book *Irish Folk History: Tales From the North* (1998) will also contribute to the deeper understanding of Irish folklore in this thesis.¹⁴ *Irish Folk History* is a compilation of essays and stories pulled from another of Glassie's books *Passing the Time in Ballymenone* (1982). Both books look at folk life in the form of song, story, architecture and historic institutions. Although Glassie's research is focused on a time that is outside the scope of this thesis, his research methods and analysis can be applied to study any era of Irish history.¹⁵ Glassie's book *Material Culture* will also provide a strong base for these sources to rest upon. His work on this topic pushed the idea of culture influencing every aspect of life into the line of sight of

¹² Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

¹³ Henry Glassie, *All Silver No Brass: An Irish Christmas Mumming* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

¹⁴ Henry Glassie, *Irish Folk History: Tales From the North* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

¹⁵ Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

the historic world. Both Glassie's and Darnton's methods of studying and understanding culture will contribute to the framework of this thesis.

This thesis will be based in twentieth century Ireland, but because the cultural history of Ireland goes back much further, it is necessary to include background that will help readers understand the cultural changes and stagnancy of Irish culture. Unlike much of the scholarship that is currently published about Ireland, this thesis will attempt to use Irish culture, traditions and patterns to show that culture has been the driving force of major events in Irish history specifically focusing on the division and reunification of Northern and Southern culture that resulted in the Troubles.

Chapter One: Pulling up the Roots of Cultural History

While discussing the peculiarities of Irish history one political scientist noted that Ireland is "almost a land without history, because the troubles of the past are relived as contemporary events."¹ The past is so present in Irish history that the roots of most modern events can be traced back decades or even centuries before the actual event. When studying the Irish people's sense of national identity, understanding the context and circumstances of Irish history is an important aspect of the field.

In order to have a solid understanding of a twentieth century Irish Catholic cultural identity, its roots in other centuries must first be understood. Those roots encompass the Troubles in the North, the rebellions in the 18th century, the famine era, the Tudor conquest, the Norman invasion, Viking raids and St. Patrick. The identity that became so important to Irish Catholics in the 1900s started in the early Celtic period and transformed over time as each cultural era left its mark.

The Celts are thought to have arrived in Ireland during the sixth century BC. Celtic tribes were prominent in Europe prior to their arrival in Ireland, but as the Romans conquered the different Celtic sects, the Celtic culture in Ireland was left almost untouched. The Celts in Ireland lived in clans and tribal communities that centered on a male bloodline. A king oversaw these communities and the laws were upheld by a group of learned men called Brehons.² Brehon Law governed most of the island in the early

¹ "Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland." In *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian McBride, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2001. 1-2

² Patrick Kiely, "Early Irish Society: 1st-9th Century", in *The Course of Irish History*, edited by T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and Dermot Keogh 5th ed. (Plymouth: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 2012), 38.

centuries and many of the aspects of the law have remained deeply imbedded in Irish society. The practice of hospitality, for example, is discussed at length in the laws. It is thought that being hospitable to travelers and strangers was not only a good deed, but it encouraged trade.³ The roots of Irish hospitality are deep and enduring.

The transitions of cultural movements or time periods are not as clean and neat as some would like them to be. Instead of solid layers easily distinguished and separated from each other, the major eras of change in Ireland act more like powerful opposing forces colliding with each other. In the wake and wreckage of these colliding forces, cultural change and development occurs. When Catholicism and the Celtic Pagan beliefs collided in Ireland in 400 A.D., Ireland felt a lasting impact. Historical sources from Ireland in the third and fourth centuries are fairly rare. Much of what historians know about Ireland at the time comes from a document titled, *Confessio*, or *The Confessions of St. Patrick*. As its name suggests, the document focuses on Ireland's most famous son, Saint Patrick. Although many details of his life can be easily intertwined with the myth and legends that surround his name, it is clear that St. Patrick had a profound effect on the course Irish history would take.

During the second half of the 4th Century, when Roman power was in decline in Britain, Irish raiding expeditions were common along the west coast of Britain. Many people along the coastal area were kidnapped and sold as slaves in Ireland. Sometime around 403 A.D. raiders carried off Patrick himself. He was sold to an Irish king where he worked as a herdsman for ten years. During this period of enslavement, Patrick

³ Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. 1988.

learned Gaelic and developed an appreciation for the Irish culture and pagan traditions.⁴ Patrick's understanding of the people and culture of Ireland would be of great value to him in the future. After several years, Patrick escaped back to Britain.

Patrick was not the first person sent to bring Ireland into the papal fold. In *The Confessions of St. Patrick*, Pope Celestine sent a Greek envoy named Palladius to Ireland. It was the pope's plan to make this man the first bishop of Ireland in 431. The envoy had no experience with the Irish; he did not understand their community structures, laws, or cultural traditions. A few churches were established during the time in northwest Ireland but the envoy was met with tremendous resistance from local kings. Unwilling to stay in this hostile environment, Palladius soon abandoned Ireland. In the following years Patrick returned to Ireland and with great success Christianized the pagan population.⁵

As per-usual in Irish history, much of Patrick's story is up for debate. The more fantastic and mythological aspects make for a great story, but despite some inaccuracies, the influence Patrick had on Ireland is undeniable. For centuries after Patrick, Christianity remained the driving force in much of Irish history.

Rather quickly after Patrick's introduction of the faith, the Catholic Church, or at least the idea of the church, permeated every aspect of life in Ireland. The converted Irish were very deeply devoted to Catholicism and to the Pope, but many of the pre-Christianized traditions seeped into the fabric of Irish Catholicism. Monasteries grew in Ireland and monastic life became a cultural norm on the island. Monasteries like

⁴ Ludwig Bieler, *The Confession of St. Patrick* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 1990.

⁵Ludwig Bieler, *The Confession of St. Patrick*

Clonmacnoise became important not only for religious reasons, but for economic and protective reasons as well. Today Clonmacnoise is a shell that holds the memory of the church's power in Ireland. Built in 548 A.D. Clonmacnoise was established by St. Ciaran. The monastery is located on the river Shannon in County Offaly. For 600 years Clonmacnoise flourished as a center of religious instruction. The monastery produced many of the cultural art pieces and manuscripts that are known throughout Ireland and the world. One of the most notable pieces is the first known manuscript written in Gaelic, *Lebor na hUidre* or *The Book of the Dun Cow*.⁶

Round towers, grand arched entranceways, and a cemetery filled with what were once elaborately carved stone crosses and more modestly carved tombstones make up the small property that was tended to by the monks of Clonmacnoise. Within its walls scholars produced treasured texts and histories and within its grounds kings are buried. The last High King of Ireland, Rory O'Connor was buried at Clonmacnoise in 1198.⁷ Irish Kings, who in the past would have never been buried on sacred Catholic ground, were at this time laid to rest within the walls of a monastery. The power of the church in Ireland can be seen through the history of Clonmacnoise. All across Ireland monasteries became centers of life and education, making the Catholic Church the center of culture. Kings and peasants alike turned to the church as a source of enlightenment, income, and religious salvation. The idea of a foreign entity like the church creating a space for itself in Irish society became a trend in Irish history.

⁶ John O'Donovan, "The Registry of Clonmacnoise; With Notes and Introductory Remarks", *The Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society, New Series* 1, no. 2 (1857): 444-60 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25502530> (Accessed March 24, 2015).

⁷ O'Donovan, "The Registry of Clonmacnoise; 444-60.

The first Viking raid in Ireland was recorded in 795 A.D. along the northern coastal islands. The series of small raids in the north gave the Irish a taste of Viking hostility, and also gave the Vikings a taste of what tradable goods and valuable metals could be found in Ireland. In 806 A.D., Viking raids on the monastic communities of Iona and Skelling Michael devastated the small religious community, forcing the surviving occupants of Iona to abandon their island and head for the Irish mainland.⁸

For some time the invaders seemed content with fast moving raids on coastal towns, but eventually they tired of this tactic and turned their sights on inland communities that could be reached by river. The Vikings were not just raiders; they were skilled traders who found the Irish coast a strategic place for ports. Some of the most advanced settlements in Ireland were those established by the Vikings, such as Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford.

At the time of the Viking invasions and establishment of the port cities Ireland was still separated into regional kingdoms ruled by kings. Although many things divided them, the fear of the Norsemen caused several kingdoms to ally against the foreigners. The Irish Kings knew the strength of the men they had to face. In a poem recorded by a monk in *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* or *The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, the writer describes his fears for Ireland and what he sees as the inevitable conquering of the island by the Viking invaders. The poem says:

Gentiles shall come over the soft sea;
They shall confound the men of Erinn;
Of them there shall be an abbot over every church;

⁸ Kiely, "The Age of the Viking Wars: 9th and 10th centuries", 79.

Of them there shall be a king over Erin⁹

The religious communities who were often targeted by Vikings because of their poor defenses and rich stores of gold perhaps saw the danger long before the Kings.

The fear of the Vikings and their increasing power over Ireland culminated at the battle of Clontarf. In a small town on the eastern coast of Ireland, Brian Boru, the Irish High King, led his men into battle against the Viking leaders and several Irish kingdoms. The battle was fought over Brian Boru's claim that he was the rightful ruler of Ireland, including the Norse towns. On April 23, 1014 Boru marched toward Dublin to establish his claim over all of Ireland. He was met not only by the Viking troops, but also by men from Leinster who sided with the Norsemen. Boru's men were victorious, but many were lost in the battle, including Brian Boru himself.¹⁰ The battle settled any doubt in the mind of the Irish and their neighbors about who ruled the island. At this point in Irish history the Viking threat was over.

Despite the Irish Kings' attempt to rid Ireland of the Vikings, their influence was injected into the bloodline of Irish culture. By 1014 the Viking settlements were thriving as port cities. Viking men married Irish women, some Vikings converted to Catholicism, and the settlements of Dublin, Wexford, and Limerick grew dense with Norse art and architecture. A culture developed that was an amalgamation of the Nordic and Gaelic-Irish tradition. Although the Viking-Irish relationship started and ended on hostile notes,

⁹ James Henthorn Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel Re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill, Or, The Invasions of Ireland by the Danes and Other Norsemen* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), 11.

¹⁰ Brian O Cuiv, "Ireland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: c 1000-1169", in *The Course of Irish History*, edited by T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and Dermot Keogh, 5th ed. (Plymouth: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 2011), 96-97.

somewhere in the middle a cultural appreciation and friendship developed amongst the common people.

The Norman invasion of Ireland happened almost by accident due to the actions of Dermot MacMurrough. If a personal drama had not gotten out of hand, the world might know a very different Ireland. This is true in many historic plot twists where one act changes everything: Would ancient history look the same if Paris had not coveted Helen of Troy? What would England's fate have been if King Henry VIII had not been so insistent on marrying Anne Boleyn? Would the Normans have invaded Ireland if Dermot MacMurrough had not run to them for aid? Although it is interesting to speculate on counterfactual history, the real story of Dermot MacMurrough, Dervorgilla, and Tiernan O'Rourke is told and retold with some variation as a central piece of the Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century. The storytellers cast MacMurrough as the brave warrior who kidnaps Dervorgilla, the wife of the powerful and cruel Tiernan O'Rourke. There are several accounts of this tale; the most notable is from the *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*. The Annals give large-scale accounts of events all over Ireland. The first time the kidnaping is mentioned it is in a section that is describing the changing of land titles. The *Annals* says:

Dermott Mac Murrogh, king of Lynster, tooke the Lady Dervogill... wife of Tyernan O'Royrck, with her cattle, with him, and kept her for a long space, to satisfy his insatiable, carnal, and adulterous lust. She was produced and induced thereunto be her unadvised brother, Melaughlyn, for some abuses of her husband, Tyerana, done to her before.¹¹

¹¹ John O'Donovan, *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616*, volume II (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1854), http://www.askaboutireland.ie/aai-files/assets/ebooks/176-182_Annals-of-the-Kingdom-of-Ireland/177_Annals-of-the-Kingdom-of-Ireland-2.pdf.

It is assumed that the two men had quarreled previously and the kidnaping was both an act of passion and of retaliation. After about a year Dervorgilla was returned to her husband, but O'Rourke continued to go after MacMurrough. MacMurrough saw no way to survive any altercation with O'Rourke, so he fled to find aid in England and France in 1166, looking for Henry II. He found Henry II in the south of France and presented him with an offer to claim Ireland as his own. MacMurrough sparked Henry's interest in the island and was encouraged to return to England with a letter calling for Henry II's English, Scots, Welsh, and Norman subjects to go with MacMurrough to conquer Ireland.¹²

There were some missteps at the start of MacMurrough's campaign, but he did eventually return to Ireland with the Norman warrior Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, known more commonly as Strong Bow. In exchange for Strong Bow's aid in Ireland, MacMurrough promised him his oldest daughter in marriage and the claim to the kingship of Leinster, one of the four provinces of the Irish island.¹³ In 1171 Strong Bow and the Normans captured Dublin, but for quite some time after, rebellions and uprisings occurred in opposition to Norman rule. The Normans also fought off new invasions from the Norsemen. Each rebellion that was thwarted solidified the Norman hold over Ireland. Strong Bow and his men claimed much of the lowlands, leaving the native Gaelic Irish to

¹² F.X. Martin, "The Normans – Arrival and Settlement: 1169-c. 1300", in *The Course of Irish History*, edited by T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and Dermot Keogh, 5th ed. (Plymouth: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 2011), 106-107.

¹³ Martin, "The Normans – Arrival and Settlement", 108.

inhabit the highlands.¹⁴ But even this system would not last; by 1177 most Ireland had been parceled up by Henry II and divided amongst his loyal lords.

It is difficult to look at the Norman era in Ireland as anything but a good story and an unfortunate turn for native Gaelic Irish. Yet it was also a time full of cultural, political, and economic advancement. Under Norman rule, Ireland was unified under one leader, and under those leaders castles were built, the most notable being Dublin Castle. A monetary system based on coinage rather than trade was established and the peasantry moved away from the ancient laws toward the new jury system that was established. Towns grew rapidly under Norman rule, fairs and markets were held regularly and towns like New Ross and Drogheda were built up to be great walled cities. These towns were inhabited mainly by Welshmen, Normans, Norse, and English, and their incoming customs had lasting effects on the Irish community's structure. There was also a resurgence of the Catholic monastic life. This meant that both native and foreign Irish men and women had access to religious education.¹⁵ The advancements in civilization on the island were beneficial, but traditional Gaelic Irish culture was subordinated in the long run. Over time, losses of land and power to the English became the norm in Ireland.

Ireland has an interesting effect on those who invade and inhabit it: "Invaders and colonizers often became 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'."¹⁶ Eventually the Normans fell into step with Ireland as a whole – her customs became their customs, their Irish brides taught their language to their children, and their religion in part became

¹⁴ Martin, "The Normans – Arrival and Settlement", 114.

¹⁵ Martin, "The Normans: Arrival and Settlement", 116-119.

¹⁶ Sean Connolly, *Contested Island: Ireland 1460-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 34-35.

theirs. This worked well for Ireland until a foreign king set about reforming what the country was at its core.

When Henry VIII renounced the Catholic Church and declared himself both king and the leader of his own church, his subjects were forced to follow. They were coerced into renouncing the pope and the traditions of Catholicism and, over the course of the Tudor century, they picked up the Protestant cross and carried it with the monarchs to whom they were loyal. This did not work as seamlessly as many in court would have hoped. During the medieval period, Ireland's ties with Rome and the Catholic Church grew stronger as the church secured itself in the lives of the ordinary Irish people.¹⁷ Any split or deviation from the Catholic tradition would not come easily in Ireland.

Henry VIII was not interested in converting every single peasant to Protestantism; he turned his sights to the Anglo-Irish lords and the Gaelic chiefs. Henry VIII established the position of Lord Deputy of Ireland – his personal deputy on the island – as a way of conversion without any significant damage to the royal treasury. After some persuasion, many of the Gaelic chiefs declared themselves loyal to the English crown. As a sign of good faith, the chiefs were granted land and titles by the king under a process called "surrender and regrant".¹⁸ The idea was to encourage the chiefs to come into the fold of the English crown of their own accord rather than having to resort to violent means. This practice was promising at first, but quickly stagnated.

¹⁷ Salvador Ryan, "The Devotional Landscape of Medieval Irish Cultural Catholicism", in *Irish Catholic Identities*, edited by Oliver Rafferty (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) 62.

¹⁸ Christopher Maginn, "'Surrender and Regrant' in the Historiography of Sixteenth-Century Ireland," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 38, no. 4 (2007): 955-74 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20478623> Accessed March 24, 2015.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, she saw Ireland as a headache. Once she had secured her place in the monarchy and felt that France and Spain were no longer immediate threats, she resolved to keep watch over Ireland but make no real efforts to secure English power there. At the time, Ireland was divided between the Gaelic Irish who lived in bogs and wooded areas in the north and west and the Anglo-Irish who lived in eastern cities like Dublin and in parts of the South. The Gaelic Irish who lived outside conventional cities existed in a world that was unlike any in England. The small pastoral communities were self-reliant and centered on local government and domestic ties. They felt no connection to the English monarch or English traditions. On the other side, the Anglo-Irish existed as an extension of an English lifestyle. They felt strong patriotic and nationalistic ties to England and identified as loyal English subjects. Despite the fundamental separation of Englishness and Irishness, some aspects of Gaelic language and tradition found their way into Anglo-Irish society.¹⁹

Elizabeth I tried for a very long time to keep a level of civility present in her dealings with Ireland. There was a great deal of pressure on her to take swift action by wiping out the Irish clan leaders, eradicating any fear of a Gaelic Irish rebellion against the Anglo-Irish and the English landlords. Elizabeth would not agree to any action in Ireland she felt would unhinge the delicate balance that had been in place since her father was declared king of Ireland. As the English gentry and peasantry developed their new religious identity as Protestants, the divide between England and Ireland grew. The Gaelic Irish were religiously loyal to the pope, politically loyal to clan leaders and family,

¹⁹ Steven Ellis, "Turning Ireland English," BBC News (February 17, 2011) http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/tudors/elizabeth_ireland_01.shtml [Accessed March 24, 2015].

and in some way loyal to the Irish land itself. The Anglo-Irish were religiously and politically loyal to the English monarch, and patriotically loyal to the concepts of English society. As the divide grew between the two groups, Ireland braced itself for another change brought around by the collision of opposing forces.

There was a second "diplomatic" attempt to secure English hold of Ireland in the latter half of the sixteenth century. A resettlement of English and Scottish settlers in strategic towns in Ireland was an attempt to sway the Irish toward the English ways of life. In 1608 a more drastic resettlement occurred that is referred to as the Plantation of Ulster. Through this plan, the northern coast of Ireland became the new home to many Protestant English and Scottish settlers.²⁰ The Plantation of the Ulster Province confiscated Catholic-owned land and gave it to foreign-born Protestants, displacing the Catholic community in the north. It caused a huge demographic, political, and cultural change in the north. This series of plantations created the Protestant majority in the north that had a huge effect on the future of Irish history. Finally it laid the ground for the penal laws that devastated the Gaelic Irish way of life.

The resettlement of Ireland for British gain occurred for almost the entirety of the first half of the 1600s. The final phase of the plantation happened under the watchful eyes of Oliver Cromwell. After some disturbance and rebellion in Ireland in the 1650s, Cromwell turned the might of his troops on several cities with largely Catholic communities. Throughout this whole process of plantation, the theoretical boundaries between the Catholic and Protestant communities thickened. As the fear of a Catholic

²⁰ Raymond Gillespie, "Gaelic Catholicism and the Ulster Plantation," in *Irish Catholic Identities*, edited by Oliver Rafferty (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) 124.

uprising against the Protestant communities grew in Ireland and England, a series of laws was issued that weakened the Catholic community. From 1695 to 1829 the "Penal Laws" became the basis of a Protestant Ascendancy, one that dictated life for Catholics in Ireland. The Protestant Parliament that was set up in Ireland passed the laws. Under the laws, living any semblance of Irish Catholic life with expectation of political, cultural, social or economic advance was made impossible. Catholics could not own land, run for office, speak the Gaelic language, practice Catholicism, serve in any high-ranking military position, own a weapon, or live within a city.²¹ As more and more agency was taken away from the Gaelic Irish Catholic community, the Protestant community pursued the goal of the plantation period: to dominate the unruly and barbaric Gaelic natives by imposing a lifestyle upon them that was so intolerable that they might give it up to become the ideal English citizen. The penal laws were nothing short of an apartheid system that would plague Irish Catholics for centuries.

In the 1790s a young Protestant barrister, Theobald Wolfe Tone took up the cause of Catholic emancipation. Tone's argument was that Ireland had no "national government" and that England should release Ireland from its influence. Wolfe Tone spent some time in London where he attempted to uplift the Catholic community through political means. His efforts in London were successful on a small scale, and while he was there some restrictions of the penal laws were relaxed, but Wolfe Tone's larger goals of emancipation were not reached.²² Therefore, in 1798, Wolfe Tone and his Society of

²¹ Patrick Kiely, *The Course of Irish History*, Edited by T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and Dermot Keogh 5th ed. (Plymouth: Roberts Rinehart Publishers), 1995, 187-200.

²² "CAIN: Background: Chronology of Key Events 1169 to 1799." CAIN, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch1169-1799.htm> [Accessed April 30, 2015].

United Irishmen organized a rebellion that they hoped would succeed with French aid. They inspired a series of uprisings across Ireland aimed at forcibly and violently pushing the British occupying authorities out of Ireland. The British government reacted quickly to the rebellions and the military shut them down. Many were killed and Wolfe Tone was captured. More than anything else, the rebellions showed the English government that Ireland was going to be a larger political problem than they had thought.²³ The result was the Acts of Union of 1801, by which the Irish parliament was dissolved and Ireland formally became a part – or was forced to become a part – of the United Kingdom.

With the signing of the Catholic Relief Act in 1829 the penal laws were repealed, but the damage was done, without their language and economic position, the Irish Catholic psyche struggled to recover. Irish Catholics still gained some ground in the political world. Daniel O'Connell was one of the first Irish Catholics to become a barrister and fight for the rights of Irish Catholics in a political field. O'Connell fought with his words and through public demonstrations rather than weapons and violence. O'Connell met with some great successes and some failures, but he influenced Irish Catholics to assert themselves in a way that had not been done before. O'Connell opened up the path to representation in parliament and achieving the goal of a peaceful and equal Ireland. Unfortunately the British government put a stop to O'Connell and his ideas of equality when they put a ban on large public meetings that were the base of O'Connell's non-violent movement.

One of the lasting parts of O'Connell's legacy was his Young Ireland group and their nationalistic newspaper. The men who worked within the Young Ireland group felt a

²³ Martin, "The Protestant Nation; 1775-1800, 212-213.

responsibility to the ideology of Wolfe Tone and O'Connell. They wanted an Ireland where both Protestants and Catholics could live without fear of inequality or violence. Although O'Connell and his followers did have some success, their larger failures pointed out to many groups that the tactic of peace and politics was not going to bring the Catholic community equality under a Protestant or English administration.²⁴

As O'Connell's political success began to fade, a devastating blight struck rural - event in which the grief, desperation, fears, and sorrows of modern Ireland would be anchored. The Irish potato famine lasted the greater part of a decade, and was quite possibly the most famous famine in history. The famine became a catalyst for changes that would affect not only life in Ireland, but the world.

By the 1840s the countryside's ownership was divided between Protestant English and Anglo-Irish with property inherited from one generation to the next. As a result, very few Irish Catholic natives owned land. Many landlords were absent and not interested in the people working their land. More often than not, absent landlords had local representation, such as overlords, who managed their estates, while the landlords raked in the profits and lived lavishly in England. This system allowed the lords to disconnect from the Irish people while continuing to collect their money.²⁵

Introduced as a staple crop from America in the seventeenth century, the potato thrived in Ireland and became a staple across the country because it produced a high yield per acre. More than three million Irish peasants lived almost solely on the vegetable,

²⁴ J.H. Whyte, "The Age of Daniel O'Connell: 1800-1847", in *The Course of Irish History*, edited by T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and Dermot Keogh, 5th ed. (Plymouth: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 2011.), 216-228.

²⁵ Hasia R Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983) 2-4.

growing grains exclusively for market and the profits of their landlords.²⁶ The potato bolstered the Irish economy and had a huge impact on the Irish population. In a matter of 65 years the population of Ireland had grown from about 4 million to over 8 million. The growth in population did not have a positive effect on life in Ireland. Workable land became a scarce commodity and landlords and families began dividing and subdividing plots, taking advantage of the renters until the only crop worth growing was potatoes because of the large yield in small areas.²⁷ Without knowing it, the Irish became dependent on the success of the potato crop. They hung their lives on a hook that would not hold.

The worst year of the famine is referred to as Black 47. By 1847 the famine was in its third year of crop failure and desperation swept the country. The devastation was unspeakable. Death was so overwhelming that people could scarcely keep up with burying the bodies. Malnourishment left people particularly susceptible to disease and fever. Sickesses like dysentery, fever, typhus, and famine dropsy spread quickly from town to town as the homeless and the poor traveled the country looking for work. In an account from the Magistrate in Cork, Nicholas Cummins did his best to describe what he saw as he rode out to assess the state of his town:

I entered some of the hovels, and the scenes which presented themselves were such as no tongue or pen can convey the slightest idea of. In the first, six famished and ghastly skeletons, to all appearances dead, were huddled in a corner on some filthy straw, their sole covering what seemed a ragged horsecloth, their wretched legs hanging about, naked above the knees. I approached with horror, and found

²⁶ John Percival, "The Potato Culture", in *The Great Famine: Ireland's Potato Famine, 1845-51*, (New York: Viewer Books, 1995), 36.

²⁷ Austin Bourke, , "Towards the Precipice: The Potato in Pre-Famine Ireland", in *The Visitation of God?: The Potato and The Great Irish Famine*, Jacqueline R. Hill, and Cormac Gráda (Dublin, Ireland: Lilliput Press, 1993), 9.

by a low moaning they were alive -- they were in fever, four children, a woman and what had once been a man. It is impossible to go through the detail. Suffice it to say, that in a few minutes I was surrounded by at least 200 such phantoms, such frightful specters as no words can describe, [suffering] either from famine or from fever. Their demoniac yells are still ringing in my ears, and their horrible images are fixed upon my brain.²⁸

For centuries the Gaelic Irish population had lived in close-knit communities. They worked to provide for their families, and they fought to preserve their way of life. For the first time in centuries the proud Gaelic culture that had been associated with the Irish Catholics was in real trouble that they were too weak to fight their way out of.

Several more hard years followed Black 47. Ireland was left in ruins. It is difficult to accurately calculate the death toll during the famine mainly because people did not keep records like they had previously done. Prior to the famine the church kept records of births, marriages, and deaths but the death rate during the famine made this nearly impossible. It is estimated that one million people died during the famine years due to hunger and disease and another million people emigrated.²⁹ The old Irish way of life suffered a demoralizing blow. The obvious destructions from the famine were to the landscape and the population of Ireland. Millions were lost and the land scarred forever.

Sir. Robert Peel, a leader in the British government, set up a scientific commission with hopes of assessing the situation in Ireland and collect data of the crop failure. With his results he put together a plan to aid the Irish people. Peel had the idea of buying Indian corn from the Americas and selling it to the starving Irish population. The two shipments of corn were rationed and sold for one penny a pound. People referred to

²⁸ Percival, "The Potato Culture", 9.

²⁹ Cormac Grada, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 230.

the meal as “Peel’s Brimstone” because the color and taste reminded people of sulfur.³⁰

Charles Trevelyan was Assistant Secretary at the Treasury; he had only traveled to Ireland on one occasion and had not made it passed Dublin. Trevelyan was very controlling and insisted on managing the Ireland account almost completely by himself. The system that was put in place was very corrupt. The British Government was taking a laissez-faire stance on the Irish issue. They wanted to help, but those in charge were wary of the Irish becoming dependent on the British government. Under Lord Russell, Trevelyan was able to pull the British government back. What little good the corn distribution was doing was halted and new shipments canceled. Trevelyan and Peel created a policy that was meant to “make the Irish property support the Irish poverty.”³¹

The not so obvious destruction was to the Irish culture and psyche. It is clear that the Irish language had been fading into disuse for many years prior to the famine because of the laws against the use of Gaelic. On a more practical level, the language never transitioned into the world of commerce. This had a major affect on those who spoke Gaelic as a primary language. In order to interact with the landlords and ruling class in Ireland, native Irish speakers needed to learn English. Speaking Gaelic tagged a person as a member of a lower class. Now, after the millions dead in the famine – particularly in the western part of Ireland, where Gaelic was still spoken more than English – the Irish language that had been spoken for years was almost completely wiped out. The rapid decline of Gaelic led the Irish peasantry to involuntarily shed their culture and become more English or at the very least more modernized, which many people did not like.

³⁰ Percival, "The Potato Culture", 59.

³¹ Kinealy *A Death-Dealing Famine the Great Hunger in Ireland*. 119.

There are few moments in history that can be pinpointed by historians and scholars as turning points. The scale of death and loss during the famine is without a doubt the greatest social catastrophe in Irish history. It only makes sense that something of that magnitude would have an impact on the hearts, minds, and spirits of the Irish people.

An Gorta Mór changed Irish culture, but it also reinforced some of its basic principles. Much like the ancient Irish warriors allegedly fought dragons and giants and survived to fight another day, the Irish people have a long history of surviving. Through Viking, Norman, and British invasions, Irish culture endured. Through rebellion and famine the culture endured, and through trouble and strife the culture endured. The Irish draw their strength from the past. Whether it is surviving the famine or surviving in a new world, Irish culture has been the backbone of survival in the Gaelic Irish Catholic community.

As time passed, the Irish put their efforts into recovering from the great losses claimed by the famine. Yet despite any progress, Irish-Catholics could not move past the fact that Britain turned their backs toward them during the famine. Frustrations grew and many in the native Irish population decided that there needed to be some working movement to get the British out of Ireland. Two very different Irish nationalist movements arose in the late 1850s. The Fenians took violent action to rid Ireland of the British. Meanwhile, the Irish Home Rule Movement fought on a political level, running candidates for Parliament and trying to persuade British politicians to allow the Irish to govern themselves.

The Fenians were mostly uneducated working class men who attempted several revolutions that failed.³² Although many leaders that stood on the platform of Home Rule promoted the unification of Irish-Catholics and Irish-Protestants, their differing forms of nationalism and patriotism would eventually pull the two religions further apart. Charles Stewart Parnell quickly became a champion for the Irish people. Parnell was a landlord and a Protestant who aligned himself with those who fought for home rule. In 1875 Parnell was elected to parliament where he represented County Meath. Parnell along with Michael Davitt helped get some of the land back in the hands of the Gaelic Catholic population. Parnell's influence in parliament grew and many aspects of Irish cultural life flourished. Literary and language revivals happened all over the country, and in 1884 the Gaelic Athletic Association was founded to promote the traditional Irish sports.

It is within this time of cultural revival and political hope that the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising were raised. It is worth noting that in this time there were less issues between Protestants and Catholics and more issues between those who wanted political Home Rule and those who wanted to remain close to England. The leaders of the Rising held varying degrees of nationalist views, but they all had the same core belief: that Ireland would not and could not be the place they envisioned as long as the British continued to govern them.

On Easter Monday in 1916, Pádraig (Patrick) Pearse stood on the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin and declared Ireland free from any foreign power. The document he was reading was the *Poblacht Na h-Eireann*, or the *Proclamation of the Irish Republic*. Pearse was backed by the six other signators of the proclamation and

³² James Morris, *Heaven's Command: An Imperial Progress* (London, England: HBJ Book , 1973), 469.

1,500 Irish men who volunteered to take up arms against the British government.³³ The Rising is many things to many people, but at its core it was a show of Irish nationalism, a display of frustration with the British government, and a plea for Irish Home Rule to be taken seriously. The 1916 Easter Rising was a culmination of sentiment from every failed rebellion, every bitter victory, every loss from the famine, and every Irish person who felt displaced in their own country.

When the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in 1921, the united Irish Catholic nation gets divided between two states. The Civil war that erupts in the new Irish Free State lasts until 1923, the six northern counties of Ireland settled into an uneasy state of peace, continuing as a part of the United Kingdom under their own Home Rule government, situated in Belfast. When the border was created, its lines had been drawn to give the British government the best part of Ireland's industry and natural resources. In many ways the South regressed into an ancient world. As the South struggled to create an identity within their new state, the traditions and culture that had been suppressed under the British rule could thrive. Unfortunately the peace that the North had created would not last. The peace quickly turned into tension, and frustration grew in the minority catholic community. A few signatures on a treaty could not disregard the level of economic and cultural division between the two groups in the North. For almost half a century the Irish Catholics fell into a submissive reality that would never reflect their valued cultural identity.

³³ Edward Purdon, *The 1916 Rising* (Dublin, Ireland: Mercier Press, 1999), 39.

Chapter 2: The Creation of the North and its Effect on the Collective Catholic Identity

On and after the appointed day there shall be established for Northern Ireland a Parliament to be called the Parliament of Northern Ireland consisting of His Majesty, the Senate of Northern Ireland, and the House of Commons of Northern Ireland. For the purposes of this Act, Northern Ireland shall consist of the parliamentary counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone, and the parliamentary boroughs of Belfast and Londonderry.¹

In 1920 the Government of Ireland Act was passed in the British parliament as a solution to their long ailing "Irish Problem". For almost 750 years Ireland had been the bane of Britain's existence. Yet they held on to the island in order to expand their empire, and to insure Ireland would not be a security risk in any future war. The British often looked at the very nature of the Irish people as distasteful and foul. After years of attempted conquest of the Irish people, the British finally came to a solution that would suit their needs. When the Government of Ireland Act was signed into action it did several things. First it divided the country into twenty-six counties in the Catholic-dominated Republic with a government run from Dublin and six primarily Protestant counties in the North with a government run out of Belfast. Second, the sanctioning of a separate Home Rule government in the North insured that England would maintain a section of Ireland that would most likely never have a Catholic majority. Third, England strategically kept the centers of industry in Ireland, creating a border that cut off the most profitable areas of Ireland for themselves. The fourth thing that the Government of Ireland Act did was divide the Catholic nation in Ireland. A community that had some

¹ *Government of Ireland Act, 1920* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956).

regional differences but shared much of the same cultural tradition and history was now divided both metaphorically and geographically.²

After the separation, people across Ireland had to adjust to their new way of life. For the south there were several years that were filled with civil war and a lot of violence. The civil war in the south was at its core an ideological dispute, pitting those who were in favor of the Anglo-Irish Treaty against those who were opposed to the treaty. Despite the military struggle in the south, there was a sense that the Irish people had no need to fear the government because for the first time in centuries the Irish people *were* the government. The new Irish Free State's representatives more accurately represented the farmers or the people from the port cities because they were farmers and people from the port cities, average people. In the Republic a new sense of nationalism was building.

Nationalism builds on many foundations. In Ireland one of the many ways nationalism grew when the civil war ended in 1923 was through a return to cultural ideals. After all of the fighting, cultural suppression, and political upheaval the country was tired. When peace seemed like a possibility again in 1925, the Irish Free State as a whole country took a metaphorical deep breath, let out a sigh of relief, and settled into a life that would have made their ancestors proud. Since the late 1800s, groups like Daniel O'Connell's Young Ireland, Conradh na Gaeilge, The Gaelic Athletic Association, and the leaders like Patrick Pearse and Thomas Clarke pushed people to embrace the traditions of ancient Ireland, traditions that were untainted by England and undiluted by the culture of foreign invaders. Through the work of these groups and contributions to the literary

² "CAIN: Background: Chronology of Key Events 1800 to 1967" Conflict Archive on the Internet <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch1800-1967.htm> [Accessed April 6, 2015].

revival by the folklorist Lady Gregory, renowned poet W.B. Yeats, and eventually James Joyce, the population of the Republic created an idealized version of a pre 1177 Ireland to which they were bound and determined to return.³

Looking at the past through rose-colored glasses is never advisable. It paints a picture that is beautiful but inaccurate. Yet in Ireland, the past five hundred years had been so bad for the Catholic community that many in power felt they had no other option than to retreat to a time that they felt was a cultural zenith in their society and attempt to reform their new reality from that point. This was not an easy task. As colonizers, the British were determined to make Ireland as English as they could. Sir John Davis was the British appointed Attorney General for Ireland in 1603. His attitude toward the Irish was one that would reverberate in relations between the Irish and British and later the Protestants and Catholics in the North for centuries. In regards to his hopes for Ireland he said: "We may conceive and hope that the next Irish generation will in tongue and heart, and every way else become English, so as there will be no difference or distinction but the Irish Sea betwixt us."⁴ This effort by the British to transform the Irish was a direct attack on the Irish sense of identity and nationalism, by a political and economic entity that had the means to pursue its goals aggressively. The Irish Free State would spend its first few years trying to establish its own identity free from British influence.

³ Mike Cronin, "Projecting the Nation through Sport and Culture: Ireland, Aonach Tailteann and the Irish Free State, 1924-32", *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 3 (2003): 395-411 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180644> [Accessed April 8, 2015].

⁴Tony Crowley, *The Politics of Language in Ireland, 1366-1922 A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2000). 60.

One way the government tried to create a new sense of nationalism and cultural pride was to pull traditions from the past and apply them in the 20th century. For Ireland, the so-called land without a past, every action of the pre-English and anti-English past did affect, is affecting, and will continue to affect the course of Irish history and Irish identity. For example, in the 1920s the Irish government brought back an ancient festival called Aonach Tailteann. Aonach Tailteann was a pre-Christian festival that was played in Ireland in 1896 BC as a way to honor Queen Tailte of Meath at her funeral. The games called together the High Kings, clansmen, and commoners for a week of religious celebration, mourning, sporting competitions, cultural celebrations and matchmaking festivals. After the first Aonach Tailteann was held, every so often the High Kings would call together the country in another Aonach Tailteann to issue new ordinances, collect monies, and celebrate their culture and religion. The very last Aonach Tailteann occurred in 1169 under the reign of Rory O'Connor, the last true High King of Ireland. Shortly after the last games, the Norman invasion significantly changed the cultural landscape of Ireland, pushing many of the ancient traditions to the side. The new government of the Republic brought the games back in 1924, 1928, and 1932.⁵ Again parts of the country unified to compete in and attend sporting events, to hear old folktales and the old histories, and sing and dance and celebrate a culture that had faded but was never truly forgotten.

When the Republic of Ireland was created and borders were drawn on a map, the northern six counties were excluded from the treaty and the once shared identity of Irish

⁵ Cronin, "Projecting the Nation through Sport and Culture"

Catholics under British rule was divided. As the Irish Free State was working through their own problems and trying to create an identity, the Catholics in the North were forced to find a way to live a dignified life under continued British rule and discrimination from Protestants. Northern Irish Catholic culture suffered greatly under Protestant Home Rule. Laws of suppression during the Protestant Ascendancy had been in place since the 17th and 18th centuries.⁶ The laws were phased out over time, but their effects had a lasting impact on the Catholic community in Northern Ireland even after the 1921 treaty. The suppression of Irish Catholic peoples and culture under the Protestant penal laws created a society that was hugely unequal. The inequality and disenfranchisement of Northern Irish Catholics lasted well into the twentieth century and permeated every aspect of society.

When the North was established it was agreed upon that the new state would operate from the City of Belfast. The government that was established in Northern Ireland is often referred to as "Stormont". In 1932 the parliament of Northern Ireland moved to their new building located on the Stormont estate in East Belfast. The Stormont government was made up of men from elite Protestants families. The British Government backed out of Ireland very quickly after the creation of Northern Ireland. They were confident that with the Protestant control of Stormont their interests would be well taken care of.

It is important to note that Catholics were the minority in Northern Ireland. Many of the Protestants in the six counties traced their roots to the Plantation Period and

⁶ Senia Pasete, *Modern Ireland: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 19.

considered themselves Irish, just not Irish Catholic. In fact, the vocal Protestant population of the northern counties defined themselves against two juxtaposed ideas that were central to the Irish Catholic identity, the first being Protestantism and the second being their loyalty to Britain. Protestantism and British loyalty were the core values of Northern Ireland that had been established as symbols of Protestant-dominated Ulster centuries before.⁷ The result of these values was that while Irish Catholicism in the north lost much of its legal inferiority after the partition, it was still culturally devalued and in many cases discriminated against by the Protestant majority.

The second Protestant ascendancy in Northern Ireland is the closest a society can get to an apartheid system without actually being called apartheid.

From the creation of Northern Ireland in 1921 until the suppression of the unionist-dominated regime in 1972, only three members of the Northern Ireland Cabinet were not members of the Orange Order (and one of those was a Catholic and therefore ineligible to join, even had he wanted to).⁸

The Orange Order was a group that dates back to 1795 in Armagh, a county in the north of Ireland. Their founding is a direct result of the unrest that plagued the Catholic and Protestant communities. Their name comes from William of Orange, the Protestant King of England who boldly defeated the Catholic champion King James II at the battle of the Boyne. William of Orange was hailed as the deliverer of the Protestant community in Ireland from the evil clutches of Catholic domination, and he and his victory are celebrated on July twelfth. The commemoration of the battle is in fact a national holiday in Northern Ireland. The battle is important and still relevant in Irish culture not because

⁷ John Brewer and Gareth Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland, 1600-1998: The Mote and the Beam* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 87.

⁸ Feargal Cochrane, *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 12.

of the events of the day but because Protestant domination over the Gaelic Catholics was reaffirmed, and every celebration is a "re-statement of the region's current political and cultural status".⁹ The holiday is really only celebrated by the Protestant portion of the community and it serves as a reminder of the cultural and civil inequalities that govern Northern Ireland.

There was an obvious divide between those who identify as Catholics and those who identify as Protestants built on years of ridged boundaries and unjust actions. By this time the Northern border was established, the religion a person identified with, whether practiced or not, defined every aspect of their life. Where they lived, what school they attended, where they could seek employment, where they could shop, what sports they could play, and where they were most likely to be met with hostility was all determined by a Catholic or Protestant familial background. The Catholic community had little to no trust in the government. And why should they? They did not vote for these people, who did not represent them. Why would a community feel loyalty or devotion to a government that devalued them on every possible level?

James Craig was the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from its creation to his death in 1940. At the start of his career Craig seemed hopeful that the administrative powers in Northern Ireland could be fair and just. However after some time in office it became clear that there was no division of church and state in the North. In 1934 Craig said:

I have always said I am an Orangeman first and a politician and Member of this Parliament afterwards... The Hon. Member must remember that in the South they

⁹ Cochrane, *Northern Ireland: The Reluctant Peace*, 10

boasted a Catholic State. They still boast of Southern Ireland being a Catholic State. All I boast is that we are a Protestant Parliament and Protestant State.¹⁰

This statement is a testament to the fact that there were no lines between religion, culture, and politics in the government and official culture of Northern Ireland. The cards were stacked against the Catholic community from this point on. While the Catholics in the Republic were promoting their once shared cultural identity and attempting to create a successful free state, the Catholic community in the North had to worry whether or not their religion would hinder them from finding work. For example, Sir Basil Brooke of the Unionist Party referred back to a speech he gave during the celebrations of the battle of the Boyne. He said: "When I made that declaration last 'twelfth' I did so after careful consideration. What I said was justified. I recommended people not to employ Roman Catholics, who were 99 per cent disloyal."¹¹ This statement would not mean much if no one supported Brooke. The problem was that a huge percentage of government officials and Protestants in the community agreed with him and took these words to heart. In response, Prime Minister Craig stated:

My right hon. Friend (Sir Basil Brooke) spoke [on 12 July 1933 and 19 March 1934] as a Member of His Majesty's Government. He spoke entirely on his own when he made the speech, to which the hon. Member refers, but there is not one of my colleagues who does not entirely agree with him, and I would not ask him to withdraw one word he said.¹²

¹⁰ Sir James Craig, Unionist Party, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 24 April 1934 Reported in: Parliamentary Debates, Northern Ireland House of Commons, Vol. XVI, Cols. 1091-95.

¹¹ Sir Basil Brooke, Unionist Party, and then Minister of Agriculture, 19 March 1934 [Reported in: Belfast News Letter, 20 March 1934].

¹² Sir James Craig, Unionist Party, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 20 March 1934 Reported in: Parliamentary Debates, Northern Ireland House of Commons, Vol. XVI, Cols. 617-618.

With Craig's support and the support of the majority of the population and his fellow Members of Parliament, Sir Basil Brooke became the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland in 1943. Thanks to the assertion of Protestant power in the north and the unbelievable corruption in the Northern Irish Government, the Catholics and Unionists were set up to be second place in a two horse race.

It is difficult to accurately describe the frustrations that came with being Catholic in Northern Ireland in the middle of the 20th century. The powers at play seemed to constantly be stacking the cards against the minority community. Whether this was done out of fear, hatred, or spite is hard to say, but the fact is that they continued to exert their power over those without agency in the North. In 1922 the Civil Authorities Act or the Special Powers Act was passed to deal with the residual violence that occurred in the wake of the creation of Northern Ireland. The act gave the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) the power to invoke the act and then take action against a person or group of people with little to no repercussions.¹³ The Special Powers Act says that the RUC had the right to internment of a person without trial and power to enter a home or business without a warrant. Along with many other violations of civil liberties, the Special Powers Act legalized police violence in Northern Ireland.

The act was only meant to last a year. The document says "This Act shall continue in force for one year and no longer, unless Parliament otherwise determines."¹⁴ Well of course Parliament did otherwise determine the end date of the Special Powers Act. The act proved to be useful to the government beyond its intended purpose. Often

¹³ *Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland)*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922.

¹⁴ *Ibid*

the people on the receiving end of the special powers that were being executed by the RUC were those who lived in nationalist communities.

A hope for the Catholic community appeared in the form of Terence O'Neill in 1963. O'Neill preached inclusion and government reform. He wanted to bridge the gap between the two communities in the North. Unfortunately O'Neill's time in office was based more on nice hopeful words rather than action. O'Neill met opposition from both communities. To the Nationalists and the Catholics he came off as arrogant and out of touch. He often spoke about helping them find their place in the United Kingdom.¹⁵ What he meant by this was that he wanted to make them more Protestant in culture and less Gaelic Catholic. In one statement he discussed the issues with explaining to the Protestant faction the way the Roman Catholics live. He says:

It is frightfully hard to explain to Protestants that if you give Roman Catholics a good job and a good house they will live like Protestants because they will see neighbors with cars and television sets; they will refuse to have eighteen children. But if a Roman Catholic is jobless, and lives in the most ghastly hovel, he will rear eighteen children on National Assistance. If you treat Roman Catholics with due consider and kindness, they will live like Protestants in spite of the authoritative nature of their Church ...¹⁶

By trying to help the Catholic community, O'Neill managed to trade in cultural stereotypes and insult the Catholics in a major way. He felt that Catholicism was a

¹⁵ Marc, Mulholland, *Northern Ireland: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002 48-49.

¹⁶ Captain Terence O'Neill, Unionist Party, Northern Ireland Prime Minister, May 1969, Reported in: *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 May 1969.

behavioral problem, and with a bit of assistance the Catholic community could be raised to the Protestant standard.¹⁷

O'Neill did not receive much support from the Unionist and Protestant factions either. Many of his constituents felt that he was betraying the Protestant values that the North's identity centered around. O'Neill's biggest threat was Rev. Ian Paisley. Paisley spoke out against O'Neill, calling him a traitor outright and slamming his attempts to "build bridges". "A traitor and a bridge are very much alike for they both go over to the other side"¹⁸ Paisley was vehemently anti-Catholic. Rev. Paisley founded the Free Presbyterian Church; he was cut from the fire and brimstone cloth and spent a great deal of time attacking the government from outside of the political ring. Paisley was greatly underestimated for many years, but as Protestants became less satisfied with O'Neill's government, many turned to Paisley and his radical rhetoric.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) took inspiration from the Civil Rights movements that had caught the eyes of people around the world. The Campaign for Social Justice was the forerunner to NICRA and hoped to show that the Stormont government in Belfast was actively discriminating against the minority Catholic community. NICRA worked much like any other social movement group. They would hold rallies and protests, petition leaders, and spur communities into action. NICRA had a number of goals they hoped to see through. They started the "one man one vote" campaign that called for voting rights for all citizens. At the time there were laws that

¹⁷ Cochrane, *Northern Ireland*, 38.

¹⁸ Cochrane, *Northern Ireland*, 40.

prevented much of the minority from voting. They also called for reform on public housing and an end to the Special Powers Act, as well as employment discrimination.¹⁹

On October 5, 1968 the powder keg that was building up under the Nationalist Catholic Community was sparked. Derry was Northern Ireland's second city. The city was a particularly volatile place because it was one of the few places in the North where the Nationalists had the majority, but due to some rather obvious gerrymandering of voting boundaries, the majority was not in control. A Civil Rights march was set to take place on October 5, 1968. The goal of the march was to draw attention to issues relating to the housing, employment, and electoral divisions in the city. While the NICRA did support and participate in the demonstration they were not the organizers. A radical group called the Derry Housing Action Committee (DHAC) was the main support and organizers for the march. After the group had publicized the event, a Loyalist group announced that they were also holding a parade that would conveniently take place on the same day at the same time and in the same place as the Civil Rights march. Petitions were made to Stormont and the government issued a ban on all marches. The ban did not stop the Civil Rights marches.²⁰ The RUC set up a blockade and ended up charging the crowd. Many people were injured and the footage that was captured by the media did not capture the best side of the RUC. Although there is no official start of the era in Irish history called "the Troubles", October 5, 1968 is the date that most consider its origin point.

¹⁹ "CAIN: Background: Chronology of Key Events 1800 to 1967." Conflict Archive on the Internet. Accessed April 6, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch1800-1967.htm>.

²⁰ "CAIN: Background: Chronology of Key Events 1800 to 1967." Conflict Archive on the Internet. Accessed April 6, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch1800-1967.htm>.

Chapter 3: Folklore, Music, and Sports Culture the Elements that Unite a Nation on a Divided Island

In 1915, Patrick Pearse stood at the graveside of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa and gave a speech that perfectly captures the essence of the Irish mindset in their fight against a British presence in Ireland. The speech was meant to inspire the Irish people to dig deep within themselves and realize that the fight that was ahead may be difficult but worthwhile. At the end of the speech Pearse says these lines:

They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us, and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything. They think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.¹

Memory is a huge aspect of Irish history, art, music, literature and other material signs of Irish culture; for many it determines the actions that will affect the present and the future. Pearse, being of the Irish Catholic tradition, understood that by invoking the name of the dead and the bitter memories of harsher times in Irish history he could provoke the crowd. He really made them think about their situation and in 1916 called many of them to action.

As Northern Ireland was settling into its nationhood, the Catholic people had been somewhat suppressed. At least on political and economic fronts the Catholics did not have much bargaining power. Where the long arms of Protestant power could not reach however was into the minds and hearts of the Northern Irish Gaelic Catholics. For

¹Eleanor Hull, editor, "Oration of P.H. Pearse Over the Grave of O'Donovan "Rossa"", in *A History of Ireland and Her People* (London: Ayer Co Pub, 1972), <http://www.libraryireland.com/HullHistory/Appendix2b.php>.

centuries, the core of the "Irish problem" for the British government had been the lack of Britishness in Ireland. Much of the time England occupied Ireland was spent attempting to pull the native Gaelic Catholic Irish toward the British light. As Pearse says "They think that they have purchased half of us, and intimidated the other half."² Many efforts, like the policy of surrender and regrant under Henry VIII and later the plantation of Ulster Scots, were made in the attempt to make Ireland a better reflection of English society.

Despite all of these efforts, many aspects of traditional Irish life endured. It is true that there was not consistently a strong bond amongst Irish Catholics; hard times like the famine, the enforcement of the penal laws, and different failed rebellions often pulled the Gaelic nation apart. Yet through the propagation of a culture of resistance and memory – through art, literature, music, language, sports – a Gaelic Irish Catholic identity endured. What made it prove so elastic, what made it endure? The two things that British hegemony could never touch: their minds and their hearts, as represented in their memories and their communal pride. Through memory, histories are preserved and stories passed down from one generation to the next; through sports and community events a connection and strength is forged between like-minded people. For Northern Irish Catholics in the twentieth century, traditional folklore, music, and sports became the inspiration to challenge the unjust system in which they had been ensconced, due to the simple circumstance of a somewhat arbitrarily drawn border.

The complexities of memory, remembering, and how collective memories impact action is a topic that is discussed and debated indefinitely. Arguments can and have been

²Hull, "Oration of P.H. Pearse Over the Grave of O'Donovan "Rossa"".

made on either side of the validity of memory and the importance of memory in the larger scheme of history. Understanding the way things are remembered in Irish history is key to understanding the context in which events happened because every past action in Irish history was built on the actions of the previous generations with an emphasis that was unusual amongst western nations.

Alessandro Portelli describes the use of memory and how it applies to history in his book *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*. In the book, Portelli discusses the idea that just because memory is not always factual does not make it any less true. Portelli begins his book by relaying the story of Luigi Trastulli, a young man from Turin Italy. Historic fact says that Trastulli, a 21 year old industrial worker died on March 17, 1949 in a clash with police on his way to a protest. What Portelli discovers is that if the town's people were asked when Trastulli died they would recall that he was killed during the street fights that followed the firing of thousands of steel workers in 1953. For Portelli, this breakdown of memory raises a lot of questions about truth and the validity of memory. There is a larger take away in Portelli's work, other than the questions raised about the historical timeline of the events surrounding the young man's death. The take away is that history is second to meaning and memory. The way the Italians remember Trastulli's death is more important than how it actually happened because their recollection of the incident is what is informing their world and in turn their actions.

Portelli's analysis of Trastulli's death can be applied to elements of Irish history and memory, in places where memory trumps historical facts. In Irish history myths and

legends are pulled and intertwined with actual historic events. This makes a lot of good stories, but it also makes it difficult to decipher the myth from the historical plot line.

In Irish legend there are three major cycles that contain stories of romance, warriors, creation, death, and celebration. The first cycle is the Mythological Cycle of gods, demons, creation myths, and characters that would not naturally inhabit earth. There is no real time period designated to these stories but it is clear that the happenings are set in a time before man inhabited the island. The second mythological cycle, the Ulster cycle, presents its characters in a more earthy setting. There are still fanciful tales of giants and gods, but there is a dramatic human element to these stories. The third group of stories is the Fenian cycle. The Fenian cycle is also referred to as the Ossianic cycle and deals with the stories surrounding Fionn Mac Cumhill and his Fianna warriors. There are many brave and powerful characters in the Fenian cycle, but the tone of the stories is much more akin to that of normal life. The charm of the Fenian cycle lies within the picturesque life it paints of a distant world that is now unrecoverable to the descendants of this ancient class of warriors.³ That same world that the Irish Free State aimed to create after the civil war was painted within the world of the Fianna.

The world of Fionn Mac Cumhill and his Fianna warriors also had strong ties in the North where the thought of a pre-conquered Ireland was a pleasant escape from the dim reality. The legends of Fionn and his men are recorded in *Tales of the Elders of Ireland*, the most complete translation of the original text *Acallam na Senorach*. In the text the stories are told through the recollections of the last two Fenian warriors, Oisín the

³George Townshend, "Irish Mythology," *The Sewanee Review* 23, no. 4 (1915): 458-67, Accessed April 16, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27532846>.

son of Fionn Mac Cumhill and Cailte the son of Crundchu. The stories are told to St. Patrick, and his scribe is supposedly recording them. Cailte is the narrator of most of the book, telling the readers about the glory of Fionn, as well as his rivalry and eventual defeat of Goll mac Morna. There are also tales of Fionn's exploits to the "Otherworld" or the home of supernatural beings and his dealings with Tuatha Dé Danann.⁴ All of the stories reiterate the strength and bravery of the Fianna, but also their nobility and just ways in an almost nostalgic tone.

The Fianna were an elite group in old Ireland. In *Gods and Fighting Men* by Lady Gregory, a renowned patron of the arts in Ireland, she lists the attributes that a person must possess and tests a man must pass before he is deemed worthy of the title Fianna.

And the number of the Fianna of Ireland at that time was seven score and ten chief men, every one of them having three times nine fighting men under him. And every man of them was bound to three things, to take no cattle by oppression, not to refuse any man, as to cattle or riches; no one of them to fall back before nine fighting men. And there was no man taken into the Fianna until his tribe and his kindred would give securities for him, that even if they themselves were all killed he would not look for satisfaction for their death. But if he himself would harm others, that harm was not to be avenged on his people. And there was no man taken into the Fianna till he knew the twelve books of poetry... And after that again, his hair would be fastened up, and he put to run through the woods of Ireland, and the Fianna following after him to try could they wound him, and only the length of a branch between themselves and himself when they started. And if they came up with him and wounded him, he was not let join them... And they would not take him among them till he had made a leap over a stick the height of himself, and till he had stooped under one the height of his knee, and till he had taken a thorn out from his foot with his nail, and he running his fastest. But if he had done all these things, he was of Finn's people.⁵

⁴ Harry Roe, and Ann Dooley, *Tales of the Elders of Ireland: A Translation of Acallam Na Senorach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

⁵ Augusta Gregory, "Finns Household." In *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland*, 154. Charleston, SC: Forgotten Books, 2007.

No average man could achieve these tasks and many of them seem almost impossible. Often tied into the story were elements of magic and godliness; this caused many to believe that Fionn Mac Cumhill was actually a giant.⁶

The stories of Fionn and the Fianna have been told and retold for centuries in Ireland and are often considered a favorite amongst storytellers and listeners alike. This is not only because of the obvious bravado and drama, but also because of the humanity that is relatable in the stories. There was an obvious human side to these men: they died, they loved, and they mourned. Still, they were also brave beyond words and immeasurably strong. Their stories not only painted a dashing dramatic tale but also imparted moral messages and encouraged bravery, kindness, and humility. Over time Fionn Mac Cumhill became something of a nationalist champion; the term Fenianism became intertwined with the Republican movement in the North and they prided themselves on being the defenders of Ireland, much like the Fenian warriors. Long before the creation of Northern Ireland, Irish around the world invoked the name of Fionn and his warriors. For example, in 1866 a group of Irishmen attempted to invade Canada through New York.⁷ Regardless of the fact that their campaign was hugely unsuccessful, the invaders got away, sparking the beginnings of a terrorist and guerrilla campaign that dogged the British authorities and inspired Irishmen all over the world for the rest of the nineteenth century. The name of their group, the Fenians, was meant to associate them with the Irish warrior tradition and spoke volumes for the place that Irish legends and heroes held in Irish culture.

⁶ George Townshend, *Irish Mythology*

⁷ "CAIN: Chronology of Key Events 1170 to 1967." CAIN: Chronology of Key Events 1170 to 1967. Accessed April 28, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch67.htm#1603>.

In the north, communities that were separated by Protestant or Catholic belief also tended to be separated by political views. The two communities displayed their allegiance, memorialized their dead, and showed their communal and cultural pride through the hundreds of dedicated murals in Belfast, Derry and other northern cities. Cú Chulainn, a hero in Gaelic mythology, became a symbol of both Unionist and Nationalist ideology. Cu Chulainn's origins are unclear and both cultures claim him as their own. Nationalists say that the Hound of Ulster, as he is commonly called, was descended from an ancient Celtic bloodline. The Unionists argue that Cu Chulainn is from a pre-Celtic tribe that was located specifically in modern day Northern Ireland.

The image below shows an example of the mural of Cú Chulainn in a Unionist mural in Belfast City.



Source: Martin Melaugh, "CAIN: Photograph - Loyalist Mural (9), Belfast," CAIN: Photograph - Loyalist Mural (9), Belfast.
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/images/photos/belfast/murloy9.htm#murloy9>.

What was important about Fionn and his men was that he fought for Ireland, not in the same capacity that rebels against English rule did in Irish history, but that never stopped the rebels from invoking his name. The stories from the Fenian cycle reminded the Gaelic Irish of their strong heritage. As a people, the Irish had been strong before the British had arrived. Was it not true then that Ireland could be strong again if and when the British abandoned the North?

In Northern Ireland 98% of children attended a school segregated by religion, Protestant or Catholic. Alongside the traditional curriculum, Catholic schools used the education system to teach all they could about what makes a person Irish and instill in the children a sense of nationalism at a young age. One of the main ways this was done was through learning about the myths and legends that were imbedded in the Gaelic culture. Students would learn about the Fianna and Cu Chulainn alongside other nationalist heroes like the men of the Easter Rising.⁸ The government neglected the Catholic schools in Northern Ireland outright. There were various acts that ensured funding and equality in the education systems but through some convenient technicalities the schools in the Catholic communities were continuously underfunded.⁹ As Catholic children left their school years behind, there was an undertone of nationalist pride already living within them based on their education and their community upbringing.

A huge element of myth is at the mercy of the storyteller. In early Irish history storytelling was both a written and oral tradition and continues to be that way. Each time

⁸ Helen Brocklehurst, "CAIN: Issue: Children: 'The Nationalization and Militarization of Children in Northern Ireland' by Helen Brocklehurst" CAIN. Accessed April 27, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/children/brocklehurst/brocklehurst99.htm>.

⁹ "History of Education." History of Northern Ireland Education System. Accessed April 27, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/educ/eductime.htm#14>.

the story is retold it changes slightly as the storyteller bends the myth and the history to suit their needs. This is where memory comes in to play. Much like the death of Luigi Trastulli that Portelli discusses, the factual parts of the Fenian cycle are not as important as the warped versions that are told and retold and that have impacted cultural movements and communal mindsets. The Irish legends that are filled with larger than life characters may have started out as a recounting of the deeds of someone who was somewhat stronger or braver than others. Over time, the stories become filled with great deeds of bravery and men described as giants because that is what the people needed at the time. So from generation to generation the story is recreated to suit the needs of the people. What the story has turned into is more important than how the story started out.

Material culture historians look at non-traditional sources like folklore and music to see what can be learned from the source sub-textually. In his book *In Small Things Forgotten*, James Deetz gives three definitions that make analyzing the importance of folklore as simple as substituting into a math formula. The first definition is technomic function. Technomic function relates to a strictly utilitarian purpose, i.e. a candle is used to give off light. The second definition is socio-technic function. Socio-technic function is how the source is used in a social way, i.e. the candle is used at a dinner party. The third definition is ideo-technic function. Ideo-technic function describes the object's use in a religious or ideological context, i.e. a votive candle in a Catholic Church.¹⁰ Each level of analysis digs a little deeper into the meaning of the source or artifact.

¹⁰James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977. 74-75.

Fenian legends fit this model in the context of twentieth century Gaelic Irish communities in Northern Ireland. In their technomic function, the Fenian legends are in their purest form stories that are meant to entertain. In their socio-technic function, these stories would often be told at gatherings or in party settings. Socially the Fenian legends held a lot of history, and by sharing the stories people expanded their cultural education and passed it forward to the next generation. In their ideo-technic function, the Fenian legends were a direct link to the past, to a world that no longer existed but which the Irish republic to the south seemed determined to recreate in the era between the 1930s and 1960s. Like folklore from many countries, the stories instilled lessons. By reciting and reading Fenian legends in twentieth century Ireland, a minority community could instill the morals of Fionn Mac Cumhill and his idealized Fenian warriors in a community whose inferior status in the north seemed to demand heroic stamina and strength. Deetz's method of studying material culture is invaluable when understanding Irish cultural roots.

Memory and culture is carried on in many ways. That is evident in the telling of stories from one generation to the next that vary in ways but keep the same moral message and invoke the same feelings of pride and community. Ireland has a very strong tradition of folk music in their culture. The music is not only meant for entertainment purposes, but like the stories, the songs carry on some part of history, a memory, or identity and allows it to transfer through the years almost seamlessly. Irish folk music is all about stories. "Music is the first faculty of the Irish, and scarcely anything has such

power over them."¹¹ Ballads, war songs, love songs, dirges, and lively upbeat-tunes all express the history of Ireland. Most of the songs were written as poems and later put to a melody.

“The Wind that Shakes the Barley” is a popular poem and song that tells the story of a young man torn between his love for a girl and the love of his country. As the song progresses he decides to leave his young love to go and fight for Ireland because as he says; "Twas hard the woeful words to frame to break the ties that bound us/"Twas harder still to bear the shame of foreign chains around us".¹² Songs about young men leaving their home to fight for their country are not a rarity in Ireland. In terms of numbers, only songs of loss and remembrance surpass them. Countless song titles in Ireland start with the phrase "The lamentation of..." or "In remembrance of..." Often death is glorified in Irish folk music. The songs talk of men going to meet their "martyr's fate" and death being a reasonable cost to pay for their nation.¹³ The songs not only serve as means of remembrance but they also serve as an example for the young men of Ireland.

As Patrick Pearse said in his oratory at O'Donovan Rossa's graveside, "They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace."¹⁴ Almost every rebellion in Irish history is spurred on by the remembrance of the dead. Then when that rebellion goes wrong and people die, their martyrdom lays the groundwork for the next rebellion. Nowhere is the glorification of death and sacrifice

¹¹ *The Spirit of the Nation*, 56th ed., VI, Dublin: J. Duffy, 1843 <https://ia600305.us.archive.org/10/items/spiritofnacionor00dubl/spiritofnacionor00dubl.pdf> (Nov 23,2014)

¹² Robert Dwyer Joyce, *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*. 1861.

¹³ Anna MacManus, and Seumas MacManus, "Rody McCorley", in *The Four Winds of Eirinn: Poems by Ethna Carbery* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1918) 82.

¹⁴Hull, "Oration of P.H. Pearse Over the Grave of O'Donovan "Rossa""

more apparent than in the movements of the 20th century, particularly in the North.

Music was key in insuring that those who were lost to the cause were remembered. Often in these songs, the story of "what really happened" is cast aside, and the events appear the way a faction of society remembers them. The songs are created from a complex mix of "history and memory, belief and imagination."¹⁵

There have been acts of martyrdom in Ireland dating back to the time of Wolfe Tone, the famine, the Easter Rising, and through the Troubles. Alongside those who died were those who lived to write about the events in the form of song and poem. The songs were meant to inspire people to fight for those who died. The memories conveyed in the songs effect both the past and the future. Eamonn Hughes argues that: "Memory has two orientations, towards the past and toward the future rendered as a purposeful modification of memory."¹⁶ Songs are not a traditional historical source; for many years musical traditions were ignored, as they did not directly impact the historical accuracy of a topic. Music however is a direct view into the cultural consciousness of a people at the time it was created, and ignoring the affect music has on a culture does a huge disservice to cultural studies.

Although there was a relative peace in Northern Ireland from its creation to the start of the Troubles, there were definitely waves of discontent that would occasionally manifest in violence. These events were perfect catalysts for a song to be written on the subject. There was rarely an event that happened under the umbrella of Gaelic Irish culture where music was not played; births, deaths and everything in between were

¹⁵ McBride, ed, *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 43.

¹⁶ McBride, *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, 43.

occasions for music. The song "Kevin Barry" is a part of a genre of Irish music referred to as a "rebel song". The verses of the song tell the story of Kevin Barry, a young member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who was executed in 1920. Like many Irish songs, the words are set to the tune of another song; in this case the words go to the melody of "Rolling Home to Dear Old Ireland". The author of the song is unknown, but it is believed that the song was written shortly after Kevin's death.¹⁷ The song's refrain is a perfect example of the idea of Irish martyrdom, commending Kevin for his sacrifice and glorifying his death as a soldier of Ireland.

In Mountjoy jail one Monday morning
High upon the gallows tree,
Kevin Barry gave his young life
For the cause of liberty.
Just a lad of eighteen summers,
Still there's no one can deny,
As he walked to death that morning,
He proudly held his head on high.

This very clearly painted image makes Kevin out to be a stoic hero. The song states he died proudly and makes it seem that the loss of his life is directly affecting the success or failure of the cause he died for. The refrain continues:

Shoot me like an Irish soldier.
Do not hang me like a dog,
For I fought to free old Ireland
On that still September morn.
All around the little bakery
Where we fought them hand to hand,
Shoot me like an Irish soldier,
For I fought to free Ireland

¹⁷ "Songs of Rebellion", *BBC News* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/easterrising/songs/rs04.shtml> (Accessed April 20, 2015).

The refrain bolsters a sense of pride. Those who are fighting in Ireland in the south and later during the Troubles in the North were often considered criminals and not taken seriously by the average British citizen, or the government for that matter, but the refrain of this song does a lot to rationalize and legitimize the fighting and dying for the "Irish soldier".

Just before he faced the hangman,
In his dreary prison cell,
British soldiers tortured Barry,
Just because he would not tell.
The names of his brave comrades,
And other things they wished to know.
Turn informer or we'll kill you
Kevin Barry answered "No".

Proudly standing to attention
While he bade his last farewell
To his broken hearted mother
Whose grief no one can tell.
For the cause he proudly cherished
This sad parting had to be
Then to death walked softly smiling
That old Ireland might be free.

Another martyr for old Ireland,
Another murder for the crown,
Whose brutal laws may kill the Irish,
But can't keep their spirit down.
Lads like Barry are no cowards.
From the foe they will not fly.
Lads like Barry will free Ireland,
For her sake they'll live and die.¹⁸

It is easy to imagine a group of people singing this song at a gathering, getting louder and louder as the words they sing turn into actions they believe in. The song draws upon the

¹⁸ "Kevin Barry Lyrics and Chords." Irish Music Daily. Accessed April 27, 2015.
<http://www.irishmusicdaily.com/kevin-barry-lyrics-and-chords>.

most basic of human emotions: grief, hatred, and pride. The actual historic events that surround the death of Kevin Barry are a bit hazy, but the actual historic events no longer matter because the event portrayed in the song is how Barry's martyrdom is remembered.

"Kevin Barry" became popular enough to interest the Protestant-dominated government at Stormont. The song was mentioned in an article in *Billboard* from October 9, 1961, because "Kevin Barry" and other notable folk songs were banned by BBC Northern Ireland and thus denied radio play. In the article the spokesperson for the BBC said "The song is political propaganda advocating the end of the Irish Partition. We do not as a matter of policy allow political propaganda in music."¹⁹ Despite the radio ban, the song was mentioned again in the March 21, 1964 edition of *Billboard*, this time in an article about the success of an album containing popular Irish "marches and patriotic songs".²⁰ The song's inclusion on the album meant it grew in popularity despite the radio ban and stayed popular throughout the course of the Troubles.

A lot of songs that were popular in the North amongst the nationalist and Catholic communities were songs that came out of the south. As the Troubles were brewing in Northern Ireland, the Irish in the south were living a better life than the Catholic Irish in the North. The Republic promoted ancient traditions being reborn in modern times, and the Catholic Church had a very heavy hand in politics. Songs like "Come Out Ye Black and Tans" falls under the category of rebel song. The song was written about a situation in Dublin, but the context and sentiment of the song can easily be shifted to the north

¹⁹ Ken Stewart, "Reprise Issue First Singles: BBC Ban." *Billboard: The International Music Record Newsweekly*, October 9, 1961, 42.

²⁰ Jack Maher, "ABC-Paramount Boosts Irish." *Billboard: The International Music Record Newsweekly*, March 21, 1964, 34.

where the presence of British troops and the RUC was heightened just prior to the Troubles. Dominic Behan wrote, "Come Out Ye Black and Tans" in the 1960s. The song is full of references to the past that would strike a nerve in the nationalist communities. The song expresses frustration about the heavy British presence in Dublin, and the refrain actually calls out the "Black and Tans," referring to the auxiliary force in Dublin, to have a fair fight and alludes that all of their past victories have been unfair. The chorus goes:

Oh, come out you Black and Tans;
Come out and fight me like a man;
Show your wife how you won medals down in Flanders;
Tell her how the I.R.A. made you run like hell away
From the green and lovely lanes in Killeshandra ²¹

The song plays less on the grief emotions that "Kevin Barry" does and more on the emotions associated with trying to regain dignity or power. The song has been recorded many times during and after the Troubles; the song is without doubt a fighting song. The quick tempo and the callous way the verses and chorus are delivered has a tone of anger and spite that would get listeners' adrenalin going.

Not all songs that are considered "songs of rebellion" are meant to inspire a fight or martyrdom, some of the songs are beautiful and heartbreaking. A Scottish playwright, W Gordon Smith, wrote "Come by the Hills" to the tune of an old Irish song "Buachaill o'n Éirne".²² It is difficult to say whether the song was written with Scotland or Ireland in mind, but the song became very popular in Ireland and was recorded through the years by many Irish folk artists.

²¹ "Come Out, Ye Black and Tans", Dominic Behan (1960).

²² "Come by the Hills", *Song of the Isles*, June 23, 2013 <http://songoftheisles.com/2013/06/23/come-by-the-hills/> (Accessed April 21, 2015).

Come by the hills to the land where fancy is free
And stand where the peaks meet the sky and the lochs meet the sea
Where the rivers run clear and the bracken is gold in the sun
Ah, the cares of to-morrow can wait 'til this day is done

Oh, come by the hills to the land where life is a song
And sing while the birds fill the air with their joy all day long
Where the trees sway in time and even the wind sings in tune
Ah, the cares of to-morrow can wait 'til this day is done

Come by the hills to the land where legend re-mains
Where stories of old fill the heart and may yet come a-gain
Where our past has been lost and the future has still to be won
Ah, the cares of to-morrow can wait 'til this day is done²³

The first two verses of the song depict a rather beautiful image of a peaceful and beautiful land. The last verse of the song ties together the past, the losses the nation has suffered, and a simple hope for the future. The song is hopeful and nostalgic; it is a nice change from the harsher, brasher rebel songs. Along with many other ballads and rebel songs, "Come by the Hills" was published in a third edition of the *Songs of Resistance 1868-1982* that made popular nationalist songs accessible in both the North and South.²⁴

The following is a break down of music as a cultural outlet in the context of twentieth century Catholic Irish communities in Northern Ireland:

Technomic function: Music is meant to entertainment

Socio-technic function: Music was often the center of any social gathering. The music a person knew was a direct reflection of their social class and often their political or religious affiliations.

Ideo-technic function: In twentieth century Irish Catholic communities music, specifically rebel songs, were at the heart of their cultural movement. For centuries Gaelic Catholics turned poems and stories into songs and this kept the histories alive.

²³ Phil Coulter, "Come By the Hills", in *Celtic Thunder: The Music* 24 (New York: Hal Leonard, 2008).

²⁴ "CAIN: Music - Songs of Resistance (1982)." CAIN: Music - Songs of Resistance (1982). Accessed April 28, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/bibdbs/music/songs82.htm>.

People have been telling stories through songs in Irish history for centuries. The songs, like the folklore, are handed down from one generation to the next. History in the form of music and stories is easily transferable and relatable. Culturally and consciously people relate to the music, while subconsciously they are learning about the past and inheriting cultural traditions and burdens. "Come by the Hills", "The Wind that Shakes the Barley", "Come Out Ye Black and Tans", and "Kevin Barry" along with countless others found a place amongst the struggling Nationalist and Catholic community. Music and folklore became a way for such people to connect with the past in a time and place where the failures of the past were constantly in their face. Through music, the dead were remembered, the fighting was justified, pride could be restored, and feelings of hope could embrace the community. The musical, literary, and oral traditions that were practiced in Northern Ireland connected the community to the past and kept the proverbial cultural fires lit, despite Protestant attempts to stomp them out.²⁵

While cultural memory, in some distorted form, is preserved through music, communal bonds need to be kept and made. One way that many Irish preserved these bonds was through traditional Gaelic sports. In the south, sports like the Aonach Tailteann were being used to create a traditional identity. The North did a similar thing, only their sporting events were not as old as the Aonach Tailteann and the northern Stormont government did not support it. Gaelic sports became a huge part of Irish society since the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884. Despite the large diaspora

²⁵ "CAIN: Music - Songs of Resistance (1982)." CAIN: Music - Songs of Resistance (1982). Accessed April 21, 2015. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/bibdb/music/songs82.htm>.

of Irish natives around the world to places like England, Canada, America, and Australia, Gaelic sports are played almost exclusively in Ireland.

There are three sports that are at the forefront of Irish sport culture: hurling (camogie is the female version), handball, and football. Hurling without a doubt has dominated the other two for centuries. Hurling has the oldest Irish roots with records of matches dating back to 1272 B.C. From that time hurling has been the dominant sport amongst the Irish for 2,000 plus years.²⁶ "Hurling is a territorial team game involving running and the throwing and hitting of a hard ball with opened-faced wooden clubs called hurleys."²⁷

From the time when lowland Scots and land-hungry Anglicans settled in the Plantation of Ulster, there were two distinctly opposite cultural forces in the North. There were many hard years for the Gaelic Catholic Irish in the Northern Province. The famine in the 1800s found the Northern Catholic community on its last legs. After the famine, the Irish language and traditional Gaelic sports were all but extinct.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century groups like the Fenian Movement and the Land League encouraged a distinct Irish identity separate from the British through a revival of Gaelic culture.²⁸ Sport was a major part of the revival. Sports bring people together; in Ireland, Gaelic sporting traditions brought together many likeminded people. Gaelic sport matches and practices were not only for enjoyment and competition; the events became a forum for nationalist ideas to spread. Many groups like

²⁶ John Sugden and Alan Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland* (London, England: Leicester University Press, 1993), 24.

²⁷ Sugden and Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, 24.

²⁸ Sugden and Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, 26.

the IRB recruited members at sporting events. Eventually hurling became a symbol, not only for the Irish national identity, but also for the Nationalist movement.²⁹

In 1884 the worlds of sports and politics officially collided with the creation of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). The main supporter of the GAA was Michael Cusack, a nationalist who believed in the importance and power of organized sports as a tool for unity. Cusack felt that English sports like cricket, association football or rugby were conducted in an elitist manner and attracted an elitist audience. As such, they denied access to the majority of the native Irish, almost by definition.³⁰ The GAA had a very strong and loyal nationalist following. In fact, there were so many GAA players that were imprisoned after the 1916 Easter Rising that the 1916 final of the Wolfe Tone Tournament was played between Kerry and Louth in Frongoch Prison Camp in Wales.³¹

Pat Fanning recorded an interview for the GAA Oral History Project. The hour and a half long interview details Mr. Fanning's ties to the GAA and his time as president of the association from 1970-1973. In one section of the interview, he discusses the North and what he thought the GAA meant to the players in Northern Ireland.

Interview: Do you think it's very different to be a member of the GAA in the north of Ireland than it is in the rest of Ireland?

PF: Oh it is. It's obvious. I spent a lot of time during my presidency in the North and experiencing it first hand. All the Troubles at funerals and everything else, and eh the degree. Now in the North there's a Universal among our people. I say our people I mean the GA people. Among out people there's a universal acceptance that the GA is national and means something more then playing football, and football is just the means to the end. Football sustained them during the last 30 years. The games gave them a reason. A raison d'etre of their lives was the playing of the games. Recognizing what the games meant to them in their

²⁹ Sugden and Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, 26.

³⁰ Sugden and Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, 27.

³¹ Sugden and Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, 32.

lives. It was like a hurleys before the troubles, cause you couldn't carry one during the Troubles. Carrying a hurleys was like a badge of honor, a declaration of your allegiance. And there all understood that. On my trips, you sensed it immediately, and there again too their attachment of their language is stronger, and to the music and culture generally. There is that born of circumstance. We would have reacted the same way were we challenged, we down here in the same way. But the north is very much the GAA and nationalism.³²

In the North, ties to the GAA and Gaelic sports in general were very strong. The games were a symbol of the culture that had survived hundreds of years of invasion and cultural dilution. The GAA was a seemingly peaceful organization that existed in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which acted as a bonding agent between one nation living in two states. The little funding that the GAA received in the North was often a point of contention amongst politicians. On one hand support for the group was used as a way to appease the Catholic nationalist community. Yet Unionist members were constantly lobbying to cut the funding and ban the organization.³³

An important part of material culture analysis is looking beyond what is obvious about the source to try to understand what the item meant to an individual or a community. This is where the break down of technomic, socio-technic, and ideo-technic function that James Deetz discusses folds into the analysis. By identifying the three function of the object historians can peel back and develop the layers of meaning the source possesses. The hurleys for example have become symbols of the nationalist movement. By looking the hurleys through the lens of cultural history and material culture analysis the meaning of the hurleys can be examined and a piece of a cultural community better understood.

³² Pat Fanning, interview for GAA Oral History Project, November 2008.
http://www.bc.edu/centers/irish/gaahistory/Previous_Themes/Interviews/Pat_Fanning.html.

³³ Sugden and Bairner, *Sports, Sectarianism and Society in a Divided Ireland*, 36.

The following is a break down of the hurley. A piece of sporting equipment used in the traditional Gaelic Irish game hurling. The hurley will be examined through the cultural context of twentieth century Catholic Irish communities in Northern Ireland:

Technomic function: A hurley is a piece of sporting equipment that is used in the game of hurling.

Socio-technic function: Traditionally hurling is a Gaelic sport that is played almost exclusively in the North by men in the Catholic community. The game is also supported on some level by the GAA. Therefore if someone was in possession of a hurley they were more than likely a member of the Irish Catholic, and minority community in Northern Ireland.

Ideo-technic function: Hurling is an ancient sport and can be used not only to connect with peers who share similar ideas of culture and nationhood, but also to connect with the past and the roots of Gaelic culture. The hurley became a symbol of nationalism, and in many ways a symbol of defiance against the Protestant culture.

In Ireland many cultural elements have taken on meaning and symbolism over the years. Just like with folklore and music culture elements of the Gaelic sports tradition have developed meaning.

The self-sustaining violence that is infused into the Irish historical identity is perpetuated through the glorification of death and ancient heroes who fought and died bravely and killed with what is perceived as just cause. This cultural element is in many ways what drove the Gaelic, Catholic, nationalist Irish community to every rebellion, every hunger strike, and every march. The Catholic community learned a long time ago when Daniel O'Connell failed in his peaceful attempt to secure equality that those in control in Ireland don't respond to peaceful negotiations, whether British or Ulster

Protestants. The jaded memory secured the idea of reaching a goal through violence in the minds of the northern nationalist culture.

The past is so present in Irish life because the reality of Catholic Irish in the North does not align with the historic image of the great nation reborn in the south. Stories about Vikings and Norman invasions were relevant in all of Ireland, but were especially resonant for the second-class citizens in Northern Ireland who could see themselves as descendants of giants and warriors like Fionn Mac Cumhill and the Fianna. Ireland and the Irish are known for being hospitable, an element of old Irish laws that survived years of turmoil and political and governmental restructuring and is still an identifying part of Irish culture. Things like sports, music, folklore, and a distorted historical memory bind the Irish Catholics of the north to those in the south. The creation of a border stifled the collective identity but could never wipe it out completely. By looking at the action, reaction timeline for the Native, Gaelic, Catholic, Nationalist Irish community, it should have been clear that the violence and the struggle for civil rights that was reoccurring for centuries would eventually reemerge in the north.

Conclusion

For England the occupation and colonization of Ireland did not result in Anglicization for several reasons. The biggest reason is that England failed to appreciate the cultural maelstrom they were getting themselves into. As colonizers England sought to remake Ireland in their image, but much like the failure of the first Roman Catholic envoy in 431, they failed because there was a lack of cultural understanding and respect. Historians have studied the relationship between the Irish and the British for many years. Many of them wonder why the two nations could not get along or accept each other. Why did Ireland have such success with the previous foreign cultural encounters and why were the British so different? The respected historian of nineteenth century Ireland F.S.L. Lyons discusses the fated history of these two nations and the dichotomy of "seemingly irreconcilable cultures, unable to live together or to live apart, caught inextricably in the web of their tragic history"¹ That lack of cultural respect was the web in which the Irish/English relationship was ensnared.

There was an attempt in modern scholarship to erase the nationalistic elements from Irish history, to achieve an allegedly more honest depiction of Irish history. Revisionist historians like F.S.L. Lyons felt that by allowing the elements of nationalism into the recorded academic histories, historians promoted the nationalist point of view, and in turn, the violence in the North. In the article "The Burden of Our History" Lyons writes that Ireland needs to divorce "the realities of what has happened on this island

¹ F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939* (Oxford, 1979), 177.

from the myths we have chosen to weave around certain symbolic events."² Revisionist historians wanted to reevaluate the known and accepted history of Ireland and pull apart the events from the mythological elements that surrounded them.

The revisionists minimize the British impact on Ireland. Revisionist historians gloss over the atrocities committed in Ireland by British forces. They trivialize the suffering of Irish civilians and attempt to justify the crimes against Irish natives by blaming outside forces or reinterpreting documents to fit their needs. Many revisionist historians present sanitized versions of what actually happened. There is an agenda behind the revisionist work, which jeopardizes its credibility.

The sanitized histories have not been overly successful in the public eye or at times in the academic world. Brendan Bradshaw is an early modern Irish historian who has had a great deal to say about the revisionist sect of Irish scholarship. Bradshaw says, "Revisionism is committed to a version of history shorn of moralizing, but also emptied of values and ethics."³ His argument is that when scholars look through historical sources with an agenda they will not only resurface with the conclusion they are looking for, but they will present a history that is full of skewed truths. Bradshaw has written several books that discuss the progression of modern Ireland, but his notoriety comes from this debate that centers around himself and Roy Foster on the legitimacy and methodology of revisionist history in the Irish tradition. The debate, sparked in the early 1990s, has

² Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland." In *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian McBride, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2001, 37-38.

³ Brendan Bradshaw, "Nationalism and Historical Scholarship in Modern Ireland." *Irish Historical Studies* 26, no. 104 (1989): 329-51 P. 329.

continued through another generation of Irish historians. In an interview with an Irish history magazine Bradshaw said:

I feel that my mission is to show that you can interpret Irish history another way, to attempt to capture the reality of that experience in all its grandeur and nobility, in all its tragedy and pain, as well as in all its shame. I want to show that you can do that in a fully scholarly way and that there is a rational conceptual framework, which will justify that approach to history.⁴

Where the topic of Northern Ireland is concerned it doesn't make sense to present a history that is devoid of nationalist ideas. The ideology and rhetoric of a nation must be analyzed in order to truly understand historical and nationalist motivations and the events that result from them.

In 1968 when marchers and the RUC collided in Derry, a proverbial fire was lit in Northern Ireland that would burn for thirty years. The Troubles would rage on in Northern Ireland and leave a scarred nation in its place. During the course of the troubles close to four thousand people were killed and thousands more were injured or imprisoned.⁵ The majority of the violence stopped in 1998 when the Good Friday Agreement was signed. In some ways it seems that a different Irish tradition has succeeded. The hopes of Daniel O'Connell were finally realized, not in the way he originally conceived of them, but there was finally a place in Ireland that peacefully contained two distinct religious communities living together in equality.

The creation of the two new states, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, divided the collective identity for half a century. It survived because Gaelic Catholic Irish

⁴ Brendan Bradshaw, "Interview with Dr. Brendan Bradshaw: A Man with a Mission." Interview by Tommy Graham. 2015. <http://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/interview-with-dr-brendan-bradshaw-11/>

⁵ "The Troubles." BBC News. Accessed April 30, 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>.

in the north found outlets for expressing the collective identity. The rise of a civil rights movement amongst Catholics in the north in the 1960s can be attributed as a part of a longer historical and mythological expression of identity rather than as an isolated event. The circumstances in Northern Ireland did cause traditional Irish Catholic culture to change in some small ways, but the larger elements of the culture stayed the same. In many ways the pressure the Stormont Government put on the Catholic community caused them to retreat to a place where they were comforted by their past. At a pivotal turning point during the Troubles, while hundreds of men and women were imprisoned in jails across the north, the famed hunger striker Bobby Sands reflected on the shared expression of culture that brought a sense of relief to himself and his prison mates. In his prison diary he wrote:

Then one of the lads began to sing "Ashtown Road." The wing went deadly silent and I sat, lightly shivering, listening to every note and every word of the beautiful rendering as the singer sang on in his very sad voice. I felt my morale rising and once again I was glad I was resisting. Better suffering while resisting than being tortured without fighting back at all.⁶

A shared cultural identity has the power to reach beyond borders, or in Bobby Sands' case a prison cell. For the Catholic community in Northern Ireland it was the only thing that bound them together with the larger Catholic community in the Republic. A shared history, a shared understanding of the past, and a shared spiritual connection to that past through a collective memory caused the minority community in Northern Ireland to assert themselves in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

The Irish have a very strong personal and emotional connection to their past. In many ways the historic narrative of Ireland becomes entwined with the personal narrative

⁶ Bobby Sands, *One Day In My Life*. Cork: Mercer Press, 1983. 114-115.

of the Irish people. Within Catholic communities nationalist ideas were inescapable. Children were exposed to nationalist ideas at school, in music, at sporting events, even in the fairy tales and folklore they were raised on. As discussed previously, collective identity is defined as shared feelings of peoplehood tied to a specific old world ancestry and how that group understands their place in the social world, as well as how others view them as a collective.⁷ For many years the Gaelic, Catholic, and eventually the nationalist community had a conflicting self-image and reality. The reality was that the Catholic community lost power in Ireland and was treated poorly for centuries prior to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, but the history that the community identified with and the cultural traditions that remained relevant in the lives of Irish Catholics perpetuated the fight to win back their rights. If a community sees themselves as descendants of legendary giants, great saints, poets, scholars, and fierce warriors, being suppressed as a population is probably not going to sit well with in that community because their reality of suppression does not reflect their proud past.

The Irish cultural memory was sustained by folklore, music, and sports. Through those same three aspects of culture a nationalist agenda could be filtered through the community. Pierre Nora a French historian and identity theorist discusses the realms of memory and how it exists in contradiction to history in his book *Realms of Memory*.

Nora says:

Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be

⁷ Russell Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3.

suddenly reawakened. History, on the other hand is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.⁸

Culture is the lifeblood of memory. Tangible culture like architecture, fabrics, and photos act as a touchstone to the past, while musical traditions, folklore, and traditional sports connect generations through the wider realm of memory and invoke a sense of cultural pride.

"They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace."⁹ This line of Patrick Pearse's speech speaks volumes to the immense burden and sense of duty Irish Catholics and nationalist feel toward the maintenance of their sense of the past. Carrying the burden of centuries of death, unrealized dreams, and continued suppression is what led to the conflict in Northern Ireland, and it is the Catholic culture that ensured the past remained present. In many ways the Gaelic Irish Catholic community in Ireland in both north and south has been imprisoned by that past. In Northern Ireland the Catholic community was trapped in something along the lines of a glass roof constructed by the Stormont government and their supporters. The roof eventually broke, but it took a violent explosion to shatter the glass.

⁸ Nora, "General Introduction: Between memory and History", in *Realms of Memory* vol. 1, 3.

⁹Eleanor Hull, editor, "Oration of P.H. Pearse Over the Grave of O'Donovan 'Rossa'", in *A History of Ireland and Her People* (London: Ayer Co Pub, 1972),
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