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Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Tlemcen



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The Emergence of Irish and German Immigrants in the United States

*Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master in Literature and Civilization*

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Academic Year: 2016-2017

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents for raising me to believe that everything is possible.

To my brother, and my sister.

To Shelley who encouraged me to fly toward my dreams.

To all my friends.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would have never been accomplished without the considerable help, advice and guidance of my supervisor Dr. Mouro Wassila. For that, I owe her my gratitude for all her efforts.

I express my thanks to Ms. Shelley Urchek for her help and support.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to show the attributes of the increased immigration of the Irish and German population. Both groups experienced hardships in their homeland in a similar format but in different aspects. Irish immigrants had limited skill sets beyond farming; whereas, German immigrants had more specific skill sets that set them apart from other immigrants and even Americans. The amount of resources that both groups had to accompany them also varied. With more resources at their disposal, German immigrants could spread out further from where they arrived but the Irish immigrants had no such resources hence higher concentrations in arrivals ports such as New York and New Jersey. The research will show specific attributes of each group of people, their contributions and their struggles. The research will show two resilient groups of people who overcame physical and mental struggles to achieve a better life than the one they left.

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General Introduction

General Introduction:

“I had always hoped that this land might become a safe and agreeable asylum to the virtuous and persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong.”
–George Washington

Washington’s anticipation was functional. In the next contracts from this nation’s establishment, people from the entire world immigrated to America, Irish and Germans being two of many groups. Faced with unbelievable economic and social hardships with no hope for a positive future in Ireland and Germany, the Irish and German people escaped their homelands abundantly during the nineteenth century. In establishing their lives in America, they found exactly what they sought: opportunities. In America, the Irish and German immigrants quickly obtained jobs and advanced economically. Despite finding the solutions to their problems, they did not anticipate encountering social stigma. With the rampant rise of nativism, the Irish and German immigrants struggle to assimilate into the American society. They, however, overcame this.

These immigrants seized on the notion of America as representing the land of the free and home of the brave, and made it a living and breathing reality. Rights that America guaranteed served as the ultimate weapon; the freedom to organize, to associate, and express oneself were essential to the Irish and German immigrants’ success.

In the face of dual adversity, the economic and social hardships in their homelands and the cultural barriers that they encountered in America, the Irish and German immigrants of the nineteenth century nevertheless were able to better their lives in America due to their great utilization of opportunities that America presented.

This paper seeks to answer the following questions:

Who are these Irish and German people?

What kind of background did they have before immigrating?

How did they make it and succeed in the United States?

In order to answer the above mentioned questions, this work is divided into two chapters; the first chapter will deal with the Irish Plight, we will see the reasons behind the immigration of the Irish, their hardships and struggles in America, then their integration and accomplishment.

Chapter two will be devoted to the German immigrants. We will see their cultural background, their move to the United States, the problems they faced once there and then their success.

Chapter One:

The Irish Plight

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1.1 Introduction

Irish citizens were frustrated with the current political and economic system in their country. They were treated poorly by an empire that held control and took advantage of that control. Often Irish citizens did not and could not own land. The land they farmed was owned by an upper class of citizens who taxed heavily and often appropriated much of the food. When a famine occurred on their most valuable crop, the citizens looked across the ocean in hopes of a better, sustainable life for themselves and their family.

1.2. Reasons the Irish Left their Homeland

Emigration surged during the mid-1800s with Irish and German immigrants hoping to start a new life in the United States. According to Carl Wittke, in proportion to its population, people emigrated from Ireland more than any other country. More than four and a quarter million Irish immigrants came to the United States from 1820 to 1920 (Wittke, 1939, p.129). Many immigrants travelled weeks aboard cargo ships just to get a chance to survive and thrive in a new world. That is, if they survived the trip itself. Disease and starvation were common enemies aboard these ships although emigrants were aware of the dangers of sailing to America; they believed that it was worth the risk (Adams, 1932, p. 210).

Ireland had many troubles during this epoch which increased immigration rate of the Irish people. The Irish abominated not only foreign rule by the British, but a foreign church which their conquerors tested to show through them (ibid). In addition, the Irish people were under a system the held land and commerce restrictions, which wounded their economy and declined them of the stimulus to improve their status. Moreover, the major factors that drove the Irish out of Ireland included “unsuccessful revolts, periodical starvation, naive agriculture techniques, joblessness, low salary and raise leases and sporadic civil wars between different factions” (Wittke, 1939, p.130). Agricultural wash out as well as tithes and rents beneath the White Boys, a secret agrarian community, that way formed a state of farmers in Ireland. Thus, the cases that led the Irish people to migrate were due to social and economic suffering.

The Irish looked to the United States as the paradise of good hope and growth that ensured them occasions that they were forbidden in Ireland (Adams 1932, p.129).

1.3 The Great Hunger of 1845-52: “An Gorta Mor”

From 1815 forward, Ireland attested a cumulative rejection of its farming class. The Great Potato Famine of Ireland also famed as the Great Hunger of 1845-1852 (An Gorta Mor¹) inflamed the Irish transmigration in this epoch. A cause of this Great Potato famine is “late blight, a disease of potatoes that swept across Ireland like a scythe.” (Paulson 2004, p.119)

The spread of the potato product in Ireland dates back to the mid-1500s. By the end of the seventeenth century, the potato started to become an important crop in Ireland and by the eighteenth century it was the main essential food (ibid). Potatoes during this time made sixty percent of their food supply of about 8.1 million people, with some 3.3 million Irish based on it (ibid). Potatoes were completely a cheap product and so easy to crop, for this they were mostly accommodating to the poor. For instance, an acre of land gave sufficient potatoes to feed a family with ten pounds of potatoes a day for an entire year. The median per capita²consumer of potatoes was considerable: In agrarian zones it was in a year, or more than five pounds a day, and as much as fourteen pounds a day for adult males (Paulson 2004, p.130). Potatoes were grown amply and were attainable to nearly each family, it is clear that crop potatoes could not just feed an average family, but was also making them perfect.

¹The great famine in Irish language

² is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

Due to the “lack of raw minerals, investment capital, and a skilled labor force,” Ireland based predominately on agriculture with potatoes being their primary harvest³. For example, in the 1840s, over two-thirds of the work force based on agriculture, and potatoes provided over fifty percent of the population with an enough and sanitary nourishment (Kinealy, 2002, p.109).

Laborers were even compensated in potatoes or sometimes in the use of land to grow them (Paulson 2004, p.128). What also is referred to this over reliance is the reality that the potato was better adapted than other essential crops to the cold, wet cases in Ireland, then making it more prolific and extra dependable (ibid). When the potato harvest was unsuccessful, it took a toll on the whole nation. The Irish rocky soil did not produce enough of a variety of vegetation and livestock was limited in order to survive the plague on the potato. And this harvest could be stored for only some months by digging a pit, filling it with potatoes, and covering them with moss or leaves It is important to underscore that this was a time period when no food preservation existed, for example refrigeration. Hence, the damage to the crop created mass starvation given that those potatoes that were stored would eventually be “vulnerable to mold” and that the potato crop failed totally (ibid).

The operation of how the potato blight came about is significant. A fungus caused the demolition of the crop which was the late blight. The spores of phytophthora⁴infecting germinate on the leaves and stems and on the soil too which destroyed the potato crop, because this disease destroyed late in the growing season. Dark sports signal the initial infection, when the mushroom’s invasive, threadlike hyphae have penetrated the hosts’ plant’s epidermis. In damp situations, like in the environment of Ireland, a type of fungus is ripe for taking hold. The fungus attacks the plant through its leaves and stem to the core of the plant. As a consequence, the plant dies, the leaves and stems crumblethis damage guide to one of the most ominous famines in history. Each fungal lesion per leaf could breed 300,000 progeny every five days, and each of those, 300,000 more in turn.

³ <http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day/history-of-st-patricks-day>

⁴ weapons of the planet destroye

In few days, a potato field could be wiped out by phytophthora infesting. The fast destruction of the harvest could not have been stopped or turned off directly because the fungus would rapidly multiply overnight. The people of Ireland suffered a lot from this blight. The extent of the suffering was massive for such a small country. Many either died from hunger which is derived by the blight itself, or as they have a try to immigrate on the coffin ships. There were horrible smells that permeated the countryside (Paulson 2004, p.31).

Stench from rotting vegetation and decaying bodies of the victims of famine lay out in the open. Villagers and family were too weak from starvation to attend to such matters as burial and clean-up, which was a “lost-bourse relapsing fever and especially louse-borne typhus [...]”In addition of this evil blight that was fueled by the potato mildew large amounts of food were shipped out of Ireland to Britain (Wagner 1995, p.131). These conditions were the cause of immigration to the United States. The ships they came with were tightly packed with immigrants and undermanned. Occasionally there were not enough loads to carry those who wanted to sail to America. In 1827, Irish emigration population to America was around 20,000(ibid). Years by years, the proportion of immigrants increased significantly, but during the Irish famine migration mounted to startling totals. Figure 1 depicts the emigration rate in Ireland from 1846 to 1850. The statistics indicate that every year following the famine emigration increased significantly. It is particularly noticeable that during the immediate years of the famine, between 1846 and 1847, about 104,000 Irish people migrated. This supports the idea that the famine itself formed not just a destructive strike to the Irish economy, but it also gave high to a bleak future; there was no hope for a better and improved Ireland. The census of 1850 reported 961,719 Irish in the United States, and by 1860, the total had reached 1,611,304 (Paulson 2004, p.132).

1.4. Religious Persecution

In the nineteenth century, religion played a prominent role in the Irish society, in which Catholicism was particularly central to Irish national identity. Because the Irish society was sincere to its Catholic belief, and included the church in all sides of their lives, the church was far reaching and powerful. But, the big role of

Catholicism in Ireland was increasingly opposed by the British Empire. The government was worried about the church's ability to impact behavior, and particularly that the Church's hierarchy was overriding upon the faith and ethics of the Irish people. The government tried to control the spread and influence of Catholicism by passing several stringent laws called Penal Laws. The level of persecution is noteworthy: Irish Catholics were prohibited to fill public office, vote, practice law, open or teach in a school, manufacture arms, or hold a post in the military or civil service (Ignatiev 1995 ,p. 34). As well as that Catholic farmers would be expelled from lands that were once under their ancestors. The English appeared to have little regard for the people they ruled over; instead, their hardness to the Catholics showed avarice. Baring the Catholics away of basal human rights was indicative of the Irish Catholics shortage of liberty in Ireland. As a result, from 1845 to 1855, over 1.8 million Irish people, who were mainly Catholic farmers and laborers, migrated Ireland (ibid).

1.5. Other Reasons for Emigration

In addition to the famine and religious persecution as prime reasons for such a high rally for immigration, there were also other causes of immigration from Ireland. Under British rule, the life of the common Irishman was difficult. For example, the pay level per day was six pence overall one meal and eight pence per day without food (Wittke, 1939, p.129). The poor, mainly, ate just potatoes, a small amount of milk, and sometimes fish. People occasionally ate meat because it was so rare; many families never saw it from one year to the next (ibid). Not only did they eat poorly, but their housing was also unsuitable. The house of a farmer where he raised his children was "dirty, damp, cold, and smoky." (Wittke, 1939, p.130) It was common for families to live in one room of the home, and in several cases with the family's pig. Many regions of Ireland, including the slums of Dublin, were ruined by poverty, diseases, and filth in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Negation of certain excellences in Ireland made it a fertile recruiting country for immigrants (ibid).

Hundreds of families were deprived of education, maybe due to the rise of the poverty rate. Political privileges were also denied (ibid). The Catholic Irish were

obliged by the British to practice their religion in secret (Paulson 2004, p.101). They also put a financial pressure on the Irish. The Irish people had the charge of paying tithes for the prop of a Church establishment which Irish Roman Catholic's hated (Wittke, 1939, p.130). Predominantly, the lands of the Irish people were confiscated, and occasionally they even had to push rent for their own land (Paulson 2004, p.103). When six million Roman Catholics rejected to pay tithes to the Church of six hundred thousand Protestants, their ownerships were liable to confiscation (Potter 1973, p.78).

1.6. Life in the United States for the Irish: Economic Opportunities

The plurality of Irish emigrants in the United States started out as inexperienced factors. The cause for this was because their status in Ireland became their same status as they come in America. Around all of the Irish who escaped their native land were needy and boorish. They had no commerce and needed special skills (Wittke, 1939, p.131). With little means of support, Irish immigrants took any work they could get, which were mostly in towns close to the harbors where they had arrived. For instance, around three thousand Irish were hired on the Erie Canal alone as soon as 1818. The Irish work was integral to nearly each canal construct in the United States before the Civil War. The Irish emigrants worshipped the streets themselves and received minimum pay (Paulson 2004, p.103). The United States went as far as to send money to Ireland to recruit the Irish to work here for cheap labor (Wittke, 1939, p.131). Women worked as servants and in service areas (ibid). Then there is another Irish immigrant worked in mill cities and in timber industries in New England. Numerous immigrants wanted to progress westward, but being poverty-stricken confined them to the New England states. Many Irish immigrants also despised the Blacks because they had to compete with them for low salaries works. In unusual cases, entrepreneurs for interior improvement projects recruited them in the work market of the East and brought them to the West and South (Wittke, 1939, p.134). Capitalism in this period had small or no regulation, as a result, Irish immigrants were often times exposed to exploitation (ibid).

The Irish were labored in harsh working conditions in the United States. According to newspapers notified that those who were employed in canals and railroad

structure projects were considered “like slaves.”(Wittke, 1939, p.136) Moreover, though Irish employment was big in these areas, newspapers favorable to the Irish emigrants warned them to stay from these fields (ibid). The pays of the Irish was low; it was commonly one dollar a day but often less. Because their wages were not stable, they were paid partly in whisky and “store pay,” or merchandise, sold at high prices (ibid).

In addition to having to work hard, many Irish emigrants saw life in the United States much better than in Ireland. For example, although they had low pay for their work but were still happy living here. Letters that were written home by Irishmen as early as 1830 emphasized that, in American, meat, flour, and gin are cheap and that “there is no complaining on our streets” [...] “if a man likes work, he needs not want for victuals.” (Wittke, 1939, p.132) This shows that even though the Irish faced economic hardship, they still had had opportunities to better themselves in America. Another letter written by an Irish immigrant in 1850 stressed the cheapness and abundant availability of land in America. He remarked, “On arrival I purchased 120 acres of land at \$5 an acre. You must bear in mind that I have purchased the land out, and it is to me and mine an estate for ever [...]”⁵ His experience demonstrates that Irish immigrants were able to become successful in America, and success was presented as a permanent dream rather than a temporary or nonexistent one in Ireland. Furthermore, the context implies to us that farmers wrote these letters, that is, the Irish farmers in America who were once deprived of their own farm land in Ireland.

⁵<http://www.ushistory.org/us/25f.asp>.

1.7. The Irish's Social Experience in America

Living Conditions

Irish immigrants struggled with life in society. At first, the majority of the Irish emigrants lived in poor conditions. Because many came to the United States as poverty-stricken persons, they took each affordable habitation they found, mostly were poverty housing. They lived in crowded houses, most of time with twenty or more families living in one house (Wittke, 1939, p.134). For instance the horrific living conditions of the Irish are noted at the Tenement Museum in New York City. During the 1860s, a Catholic-Irish family, the Moors, dwelled at 97 Orchard Street. Their full housing is as to what is today a standard bedchamber. With their kitchen and bedroom all congested in one small zone, there was no ventilation. These living conditions had ominous health results. The rate of death between the children of the Irish poor was too high. Diseases, like cholera epidemics, always damaged immigrants living in hovels in the western and eastern sections of New York City than in other societies. Unfortunately, the Moore's daughter, Angus, died as a consequence of such diseases and malnourishment (Wittke, 1939, p.135).

In spite of the tough living situations the Irish faced in America, the lives they had over here were better than the one they left in Ireland according to the plenty of opportunities. During the 1840s, many viewed emigrating from Ireland as a "flight from poverty." (Bodnar, 1985, p.6) Due to the gravity of the famine more than one million people died of hunger and famine related diseases. Consequently, migrating to the United States was the best solution for the Irish at the time because food was available and their lives could prolong longer than in Ireland. The English government, which presided over Ireland, also did not supply opportunities for economic growth among the countrymen. Instead, the economy was almost exclusively agricultural "catering for its own growing population and for the quickly increasing British market." Ireland was in lack of a reliable real salary system. This not only an example of the government, but it also provided little or no incentives for people to work. During the mid-1800s, America was experiencing acceleration in economic growth, which expanded both domestic and foreign markets in manufacturing and agriculture. Contrary to Ireland, living in the United States was more suitable because

economic opportunities here paved the way for self-improvement; the Irish who lived in urban squalors at least had the chance to save up their money and move to better comforting areas whereas in Ireland poverty was deemed permanent (ibid).

1.7.1 Discrimination

Irish immigrants during the 1800s endured prejudice and discrimination, especially the Irish Catholics. Particular areas tried to trap the sale of lots in order to keep out Catholic buyers, and the marks “No Irish Need Apply,” were published on several factories (Wittke 1939, p.137). According to the Irish Outsiders Tour by the Tenement Museum, it is known that the British had a portion in this kind of discrimination (ibid). Anti-Irish jokes were also popular in this time. Jokes towards the Irish were told in a trick fashion with the use of the Irish accent; it often portrayed the Irish as lazy and incompetent. Based on their transferred social status from Ireland as poor immigrants, the Irish were the least likely to have power to object to such discrimination. In addition to these, while the Irish emigrants were “the first group that was actually poor,” they were being pictorial as a fully “separate race.” (Paulson 2004, p.82) People in America saw the Irish differently in a negative light even scrutinized their physical attributes and determining that it set them off from the other races (ibid). This level of discrimination by the American society created many obstacles for the Irish immigrants. The negative pattern blocked the Irish from earning non intensive labor jobs, and further ostracized them from the mainstream society. The Irish fought hard to beat the negative social conditions that were related to their status. They inserted themselves in the American society over their different and heavy participation in much region. They worked during the Civil War and flaunted their American patriotism and Irish legacy. For example, they carried green flags alongside American colors during the war (Wittke, 1939, p.165). As the Irish population constantly increased in the United States, they started taking advantage of their political power. The Irish marshaled themselves and made a voting block known as the “Green Machine.”⁶ St. Patrick’s Day, which is an Irish religious holiday on March 17th, became increasingly prominent in America after a group of Irish soldiers marched in lower Manhattan in 1762 (ibid).

⁶“History of St. Patrick’s Day,” *History.com*, Internet, available from <http://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day>.

In 1848, one official New York City St. Patrick's Day was created as a result of several New York Irish Aid societies' efforts in the previous years (ibid). Today, St. Patrick's Day is not only known as a national holiday, but the parade is one of the longest and widely celebrated in many states. Nearly three million spectators present at the St. Patrick's Day parades (Wittke, 1939, p.167). This shows that the Irish were have confession for their legacy and were being accepted in the American society. Hence, although America initially presented the Irish with great challenge, they were able to break away from their once stereotypical and dehumanizing image by proving their self-worth in the public sphere.

1.7.2 Ties to the Roman Catholic Church

The Irish brought their religion with them, when they left Ireland for the United States. As when they were in Ireland, Irish emigrants went to and viewed the church as resolution to their problems. In the new land, the church grants the Irish "a measure of dignity at a time when he was often made to feel that he was a lower breed of humanity." (Wittke, 1939, p.151)

The function of the Church was important in other regions of the Irish immigrants' life: it provided cramped schools, dispensed alms in many forms, and provided the counsel of priests for sufferings that the immigrants faced in their new environment (ibid). As more Irish immigrated to the United States, there was a huge extension of the Catholic Church. It has been rated that there were thirty thousand supporters of the Roman Catholic faith in the United States in 1790. By 1830, the Church alleged 600,000, and by 1860, 4,500,000 members (ibid).

By 1852, there were Catholic newspapers in nine of the major towns and Catholic spread houses in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston As a consequence of the fast paced immigration average of the Irish in the United States, the Church not only turned as an important religious institution for them, but it created big social agency, and therefore the religion became diffuse (Wittke, 1939, p.152).

In the 1840s, nativists organized protests against the Catholic Church in Philadelphia. It was meditated that they chose the heart of the Catholic turf because they had a will to rouse the Irish (Ignatiev, 1995, p.153). Although they were faced

with a tremendous amount of religious intolerance, the Irish Catholics fought back. Noel Ignatiev's book, "How the Irish Became White", notes that in a nativist riot in 1843 local Catholics intervened, breaking up the rally by heckling and throwing rocks and garbage (ibid). The nativists organized another rally three days after. The Irish again did not concede. It is known that they actually waited for the nativists, and this time arms were fired (ibid). These disturbances alarmed the city of Philadelphia. Ignatiev denotes that one reason for such alarm was "the willingness and ability of the Catholics to defend them." (ibid) Although violence is not always an ideal response to hostility, the Irish retaliation shows how they were standing up for themselves in fighting against the anti-Catholic agitation. Upon a personal contact with Dr. Kerby Miller, who is scholar on Irish immigration, he states that:

"In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Yankee establishment realized that the Irish immigrants' religion, Catholicism, was counter-revolutionary, and the Church and its clergy (and parochial schools) were bulwarks of capitalism and conservatism. From that point on, anti-Irish and anti-Catholic agitation was, for US political elites, merely an occasional and insincere tool to mobilize the elite's "useful idiots" at election time."

Miller's words confirmed how the Irish began blending into the American society regardless of their negative image that time. The biased nationalists had no choice but to put aside their revolutionary inclinations for the Catholic Irish vote in order to sway American political policies in their direction.

1.7.3 Politics and Political Machines

During the 1850s, many Irishmen were associated with Tammany Hall politics in New York City. They represented Democratic ideologies, more so because the "Irishmen had little in common with the 'Anglo men and monocarps'" who supported Federalists and Whigs." (ibid) As early as 1820, Tammany Hall composed of Irishmen (ibid). They operated in Tammany Hall by buying votes such as providing

jobs and housing to immigrant families in exchange for their vote (Miller, 2001, p. 53). Tammany Hall was seen as a corrupted political machine. Political bosses stuffed ballot boxes, “fixed” arrests for petty violations of the law, and paid the rent of the poor when the landlord threatened eviction (Wittke, 1939, p. 157). However, during that time they also had a reputation for being faithful to their Irish counterparts that faced hardships in America, particularly “basing their politics on personal loyalty to friends and relatives in the absence of a strong central government structure.” (Bodnar, 1985, p. 203) The Irish obtaining social and economic opportunities in the United States during that time was a product of the social cohesion generated by the Irish who were politically powerful. Tammany Hall not only, provided communal services to poor Irish immigrants in helping them overcome their struggles and developing their lives in the United States, but it paved the pathway for the Irish to achieve political power (Bodnar, 1985, p. 217).

1.8 Irish Immigrants Assimilation and Accomplishments in the United States

As the years progressed, the Irish immigrants were no longer seen as mere immigrants. Rather, they had assimilated the American culture and became “thoroughly Americanized.” (Wittke, 1939, p. 175) An observer notes that in the second generation, “the Irishman has disappeared,” and the “children of Irish decent have generally lost their distinctive marks of their origin.” One reason that is attributed to their social and economic elevation in America was that many Irish men and women were being educated History considers that Tammany Hall led to this since Irish politicians were gaining an incredible amount of power and leverage as they ran political machines. As a result, being the voice of the Irish political world, Tammany Hall served as the foundation for the future success of many Irish immigrants and those of Irish decent. The Irish went from having common labor jobs to white-collar jobs (ibid). During the 1850s, Irish immigrants sent, at minimum, \$1,000,000 a year, and many prepaid tickets to their friends and family in Ireland (ibid) This shows that as the Irish were moving up the social ladder in America, they were helping their fellow loved ones back in Ireland to advance in their lives as well. Alexander T. Stewart

remarks that in less than twenty years “the lucky Irishman became the owner of the finest store in the world and one of the largest real-estate owners in New York.” (ibid) The Irish in the future generations made significant political gains. The vastness of opportunities in America was further broadened by the New Deal during the 1930s. New Deal appointments enabled Irish politicians to obtain federal positions as well as judgeships⁷. These appointments, in turn, ushered the future success of Irish-American elected officials such as Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and President John F. Kennedy (ibid).

The fact that both Daley and Kennedy were products of Irish immigrant laborers and that both were able to obtain prestigious white-collar jobs signifies that the American dream is feasible if one is willing to work hard. The Irish advanced both socially and economically. The transformation of the Irish labor is significant in that the construction jobs they once did is now done by newer immigration groups, such as the French-Canadians, Italians, and Poles (Wittke, 1939, p. 177). Many went into clerking, bookkeeping, and business or have become a traveling salesman (ibid). This advancement counters the preconceived notion of the 1800s that the Irish would never advance but would instead “become the first permanent working class in the United States.” According to the United States Census Bureau, as of 2009, the median income for Irish-Americans was \$56,383⁸. The poverty rate among this group is 10%, which is lower than the rate of the 14% Americans (ibid). The statistics tell that the economic life of the Irish has significantly transformed in that their salaries represent the average white collar Americans’ rather than that of the second class citizens’.

⁷<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/alt/irish8.html>, accessed March 2, 2014.

⁸http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/cb11ff03_irishamer.pdf.

Socially, the Irish overcame the pressure to forego aspects of their culture that nationalists once imposed on them. They made an impact on the American language: Numerous Irish words and phrases have been absorbed in our everyday speech; whiskey, galore, and hooligan are such examples (Wittke, 1939, p. 178). Nativists often attacked the Irish religion (Catholicism) and perceived it as a threat to their way of life. This anti-Catholicism sentiment was ultimately put to rest when John Kennedy was elected President. He said, “I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party’s candidate for President, who happens to also be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters – and the church does not speak for me.” (Bodnar, 1985, p. 73) Kennedy’s words and his victory in being elected president demonstrate that the Irish did not have to give up their religion in order to be successful in America (ibid).

1.9 Conclusion:

To sum up, although the Irish immigrants took the hard road to achieve their goals, they succeeded in finding their niche in America. Despite prejudice and discrimination, the Irish immigrant influenced changes in the current society in laws and customs with vast with last effects.

Chapter Two:

The German Influence

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2.1. Introduction

Similar to the Irish plight, German citizens were also burdened with economic pressures due to a controlling class of people (French) and a failed cash crop. The German citizens were squeezed on both sides between physical oppression of unobtainable demands from a foreign faction and from starvation. German immigrants sought solace in America.

2.2. Early Germanic State

Until 1871, Germany as a nation did not exist. At the time of the travel to the New World in 1492 by explorer Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), the towns and states where Germanic-speaking people lived were part of the Holy Roman Empire¹. Previously, a Kaiser had ruled over the whole empire with the acceptance of the Roman Catholic pope. The empire's territory harshly included present-day Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, and parts of northern Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. However in the thirteenth century the central rule of the emperor weakened, and local rulers became strong in their area (Frost, 2002, p.49).

One royal family line, the House of Habsburg, took over and then held onto the crown, but the princes of the large towns and districts had more control of their people than the central monarch (Ibid). At that time, many of the German nation-states were flourishing, becoming major European centers of finance and the arts. The people of the empire were Roman Catholics, but a time of reform of the church was at hand. On October 31, 1517, German priest and scholar Martin Luther (1483–1546) nailed to the church door in Wittenberg, a city in the state of Saxony in eastern Germany, his list of ninety-five theses, or statements, questioning the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Luther believed that people should live their lives by following the Bible, not the pope.

¹<http://www.historyhit.com/1871-unification-germany/>

Pointing to the corruption he had witnessed in the church, he urged people to find their own salvation through faith; they did not need the Catholic Church. His call for reform brought about the rise of Protestant churches throughout Europe(Luebke, 1990, p.48).

As it would in other European countries, the era of reformation and Protestantism brought about widespread religious dissension (disagreement and conflict) and led to war in the German states of the Holy Roman Empire(Wittke, 1939, p.207).From 1517 to 1555, the Roman Catholicswarred against the Lutherans. In the peace accord that ended these wars, Lutheranism (a Protestant church following the teachings of Martin Luther) was finally accepted, and each German state was allowed to choose its own religion (Frost, 2002, p.54).

After the peace of Augsburg in 1555, the biggest German nation-states grew very strong, rich, and militaristic. The states of Bavaria, Brandenburg (later known as Prussia), Saxony, and Hanover all formed their own governments and economies. Austria obtained Hungary and parts of the Balkan countries. SubsequentPrussia and Austria would become fierce rivals for power (Wittke, 1939, p.268).After these wars, different forms of Protestantism arose, many of which were not agreeable. One of the major was Calvinism. Established by John Calvin (1509–1564) in Geneva, Switzerland, Calvinism applied more rigid "puritanical" interpretations to Luther's Reformation (ibid).

Calvin felt that the purpose of life was to understand or know God as well as possible and then to follow God's willed. Calvinism demanded that all people fight to live a moral lifestyle. The church was to be an act of strict moral discipline. Calvinism also believed that the world had been a corrupt place since the time of the original crime. In the Calvinists' opinion, churches, with their ritualism and bishops, could not get about religious enlightenment. They imagined that only elite persons, through the grace of God, could be saved (Frost, 2002, p.89). Calvinism spread fast among the German peoples, as did several other forms of Protestantism, including the "plain" churches, called the Anabaptists, the Mennonites and the Amish, the German Brethren, or Drunkards, so called for the way they baptized members by dunking them, most likely in a stream; and the Society of Friends, or the Quakers(Fogleman, 1996, p.102). All these groups believed in nonviolence and in simple worship based on readings of the Bible.

They believed that knowledge of God must come from within oneself and that the rituals and politics of existing churches were a hindrance to true faith and worship (ibid). The Anabaptists believed that an individual should decide to be baptized as an adult, when he or she fully understood what baptism meant, rather than in infancy as was the custom in the Roman Catholic Church. These beliefs brought persecution upon the Anabaptists, particularly the Mennonites, especially those living near the shores of the Rhine River in a region known as the Rhineland (Frost, 2002, p.69).

2.3. The Journey to America

While political disturbance and religious inhibition in Europe made small waves of German migration to the United States, most historians observed that the mass migrations were mainly encouraged by the desire for economic opportunity and prosperity(Fogleman, 1996, p.55).

As the German states faced industrialization, the change from a farm-based economy to an economic system focused on the industrialization of merchandise and distribution of services on an organized and mass-produced mass, the old way of rural life was speedily disappearing. Many were forced to move into cities and learn new skills. Yet, with unemployment in Germany rising, the cities did not always hold much hope (ibid). Between those who immigrate, some has few options left in Germany and search more occasion. Steady migrations were outstanding starting in the early nineteenth century.It was a significant and difficult trip across the Atlantic(Fogleman, 1996, p.58). Germans began the journey by making their way to a port city. During the peaks of emigration there was a fixed influx of traffic on the roads to the ports made up of families pushing carts filled with their belongings (Fogleman, 1996, p.91). In Germany, most emigrants left from Bremerhaven or Hamburg. Some made their way to Britain in the early eighteenth century, hoping to find passage to North America from there. Others went to Rotterdam, Holland, or Le Havre, France, and sought a ship there. They were often robbed or swindled when they arrived in ports(Frost, 2002, p.20).

The provisions on the sailing ships that took the German immigrants across the Atlantic were horrific(Frost, 2002, p.22). Many people could not bear to buy a first- or

second-class ticket, and so they traveled in steerage, in the lower decks of the boat that were designed to transmit load (ibid). Aside from being miserably overcrowded, the accommodations often lacked clean drinking water and adequate toilet and washing facilities. Rats, head lice, and bedbugs were common afflictions; and infectious diseases spread quickly .In the years following, steamships would shorten the voyage and regulations on ships would correct some of the worst abuses of travelers(Frost, 2002, p.25).

Even so, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many immigrants faced misery and even death to get to the United States. Despite the hard trip, for over a century Germans immigrated by the hundreds of thousands to the United States (Wittke, 1939, p.217).

2.4. Religious Backgrounds

Most of the German immigrants were Protestants, and between them Lutherans were the majority. Around one-third of German immigrants were Catholics. A fundamental section of the German immigrants were Jews². Jews had lived in Germany since the fourth century; many of them were stable in the Rhine area (Falk, 2014, p.15).

They had long been integrated into German cultures when suddenly, from the 1830s into the 1880s, several German states began to pass anti-Semitic laws (laws hostile toward Jews) (ibid). In southern Germany, these laws prohibited young Jews from marrying or starting a family in their communities. Some decided to immigrate to the United States. The first Jews from Bohemia, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, and Alsace-Lorraine came in the 1820s. Many of these immigrants were young, aspiring, and middle class, skilled at a trade or a profession. Often they were equipped with savings to get them started in a trade in the new country. A significant portion was well educated(Falk, 2014, p.32).Many of the Jewish immigrants settled in New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, but other cities, including San Francisco, Chicago, and New Orleans, had large Jewish communities as well(Falk, 2014, p.60).

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Americans

2.5. German American Culture

Many German Americans lived in German-speaking groups throughout the United States until World War I. The communities spread from small rural villages to city districts (Wittke, 1939, p.222). Though they are far too many to list, a small sampling demonstrates the wide scope. The village of Myerstown, Illinois, was settled exclusively by German immigrants of the Forty-Eighter movement³. New Braunfels, Texas, was established by one of the princes of Prussia for German settlement. Shipshewana, Indiana, was settled by the German Amish. Frankenmuth, Michigan, was founded by German Lutheran missionaries in 1845 (ibid).

The German colonists who established farms in Frankenmuth pledged to keep the community exclusively German Lutheran and to remain faithful to Germany and the German language. German communities or "Little Germanys" developed in many large cities, such as New York, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Baltimore, Maryland; St. Louis, Missouri; and Cincinnati, Ohio (Wittke, 1939, p.229).

Though not all Germans lived in a German-speaking environment, it was very significant to numerous of them to preserve their native language (Lemke, 1990, p.101). German Americans took political action to make sure their children could be educated in the German language (Lemke, 1990, p.102). Parochial schools, if Lutheran or Catholic, educated students in German and English, or only in German. In the public schools, the German American parents succeeded in different states to get laws passed that mandated German instructions when a portion of parents in the community wanted it (ibid).

³Europeans who participated in or supported the revolutions of 1848 that swept Europe.

2.6. The Germans' Social Experience in America: Language Barrier

Despite the German's quick success in America and their ability to assimilate faster than the Irish, they encountered struggles with their language. Several institutional efforts to eliminate the German language were made. Opposition of allowing the German language to assimilate in the United States was championed through the enactment of laws in school(Luebke, 1990, p.19).

During the early nineteenth century, it was common for German immigrants to arrange with school boards to have subjects be taught in German or in both German and English; school laws were even passed to uphold this. As time progressed, however, Anglo-Americans felt that the spread of the German language was un-American and would disrupt the American way of life(Bodnar 1985, p.123).

By insisting that English is the only language that should prevail, they created instruction laws to be binding on this notion in states such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Louisiana, and Iowa. The Bennett Law of 1889, for example, "made attendance in public or private schools compulsory for children and defined a school as one in which the common subjects were taught in the English language". Although such restrictive laws were later repealed, the German immigrants of that era extremely faced obstacles with their language that was particularly threatening to their assimilative powers in the United States (Luebke, 1990, p.32).

2.7. German Assimilation and Success in the United States

In the United States, German immigrants and their children experienced occupational mobility. Because German immigrants came to America with an incredible amount of talent, they were able to quickly surround themselves in the labor market (Wittke, 1939, p.241). They were especially prominent in manufacturing. Skillful Germans were able to start full scale manufacturing concerns in the 1870s and 1880 (Bodnar 1985,p.173).They established plants to manufacture carriages, fireproof safes, soap, and beer (ibid).

In Poughkeepsie, forty-nine percent of skilled Germans raised to white-collar

positions (ibid). Second generation German Americans made important contributions to American business. They established factories, tailoring, banking, butchering, brewing, and cigar making businesses in Western states (ibid). They also took over jobs in carpentry. From 1850 to 1860, the proportion of German carpenters increased from twenty-eight to fifty-four percent whereas American-born carpenters dropped from forty percent to twelve percent (ibid). This shows how the Germans not only were able to rapidly establish themselves in economic sectors, but also how they began to dominate in certain occupational fields. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century the rise of machine competition in Germany resulted in heavy losses of jobs. For example, line weaving wiped out the cotton industry (Lemke, 1990, p.162).

However, with their incredible skill to produce inexpensive ready-made clothing; they successfully thrived in the retail business in America. About ninety percent of all ready-made wholesale clothing and eighty percent of the retail business was controlled by German Jews towards the end of the nineteenth century. Industrialization was more accommodating to the German immigrants in America than in Germany. Although the German immigrants came to America to improve their lives, they simultaneously and inadvertently contributed to the success of American business as well (Bowers, 1984, p.77).

A great number of German immigrants became successful farmers in the United States because they came with skillful farming experience from Germany. With their methodological and frugal agriculture practices, they contributed to building the American economy. The Germans were willing to invest the labor and capital necessary to keep productivity high (Bowers, 1989, p.79). As a result; they diversified agriculture in the United States, which included cotton, strawberries, grapes, potatoes (sweet, rye, and white) and much more. During the nineteenth century, German immigrants started no less than 672,000 family farms. This number of farms covered a total of 100,000,000 acres (Wittke, 1939, p.204).

The Germans extraordinary success in farming in American is thereby viewed in light of their utilization of resources that America had, which is in comparison to what Germany lacked at the time. Not only did America provide land opportunities, but it also provided the means for acquiring land. Purchasing land from the

government was one way, and it was the cheapest and safest way (Siegmar, 1990, p.68). The government had land offices where people could go to, and they would sell an acre at a cost of \$2.00, with 160 acres the minimum purchase. By generating profits from their plots and reinvesting, the Germans were not only accelerating capitalism, but they were advancing their Americanism (Bowers, 1984, p.9).

The Germans agriculture practices simultaneously promoted the conservation of the environment. With their diversified farming and extensive cultivation of land, the Germans contributed to preserving the soil (Wittke, 1939, p.230). For example, in Franklin County, Tennessee, they revived the worn out soils. By ensuring that the lands are well taken care of, they marred the fields and carefully rooted out stumps and stones. The German-American farmers concern for the conservation of natural resources, and the interest they had for the family farm “has been an enduring legacy that can still be appreciated today.”(ibid)

An imprint of the German culture still exists today through food adoptions. Germans made substantial contributions to the food industry. Labels such as Blatz and Miller are products of the German brewing business that still exists. Names of food products that are of German root, such as frankfurter and sauerkraut, are foods that Americans today cannot go without on the Fourth of July or even during a regular lunch day in the city(Wittke, 1939, p.231). The pretzel, Hausfrau, and pumpernickel were incorporated with their original German spelling into the American dictionaries. This shows that America not only have been accepting towards the Germans’ culture over time, but their way of life has also become an addition the American way of life (ibid).

2.8. The influence of German immigration on American culture

German immigration flourished in the 19th century. Wars in Europe and America had decelerated the arrival of immigrants for several decades starting in the 1770s, but by 1830 German immigration had increased dramatically (Aaslestad, 2006, p.360). Once established in their new home, these settlers wrote to family and friends in Europe

describing the opportunities available in the U.S (ibid).

Germans became one of the predominant immigrant groups of the 19th century; it was natural that they would come to have a strong impact on the development of American culture (Bodnar, 1985, p.101). Some German contributions to U.S. life are easy to locate- sauerkraut, for instance, or the tuba, or the national fondness for beer. However, the German influence on life in the United States runs much deeper, influencing many of the institutions, traditions, and daily habits that many today think of as being American(Nadel, 1990, p.16).

For instance, the U.S. education regulation would be unrecognizable without ideas defended by German immigrants. German culture has long cultivated a powerful commitment to education, and Germans transported this devotion with them to their new home (ibid). In 1855, German immigrants in Wisconsin started the first nursery school in America, instituted on the kindergartens of Germany(Siegmar, 2002, p.26). Germans introduced physical education and professional education in the public schools, and were responsible for the modulation of gymnasiums in school buildings. Then, they were chiefs in the call for universal education, a notion not common in the U.S. at the time (ibid).

2.9. Conclusion

Conducting research for this chapter has enabled us to uncover the prejudices towards the Irish and German immigrants of the 1800s. We learned that the prejudices of the time were not completely indicative of the historical reality of these groups' experience. The faith that the German immigrants were all of the middle-class, and more witty than the Irish immigrants is a misrepresentation and overgeneralization; the results of Furstnwarther's fieldwork revealed this.

What we also discovered is that although each groups' reasons from emigrating were fairly different; their experiences in America were similar. The German immigrants struggled to assimilate into the American society. No one group had it easier than the other. Because the measures that they took to overcome the unfair treatment against them were small scale in nature, the German's advancement were deemed insignificant; is important that we, as the modern generation, do not implicate this view. These measures

should be viewed by the history field as well by the outside world as a macro level triumph in light of understanding the theoretical refinement of German immigrants' status. Moreover on the qualitative end, the German immigrants' steps to success, though not ideal by the mainstream society, were taken generally due to their marginalization.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This thesis focused on the transformation from hardships to ameliorations to success of the Irish and German immigrants of the nineteenth century. With the immensity of mass hunger that was fueled by the evil blight, and utilization by the hands of British rule, the people of Ireland wanted to escape by all means. Despite the dangers of sailing to America, the Irish believed that it was worth the risk and that what they were about to encounter would be no worse than what they were leaving behind.

To the Irish people, America represented freedom, good hope, and prosperity. The German immigrants also embodied this preconception but they were mainly propelled to emigrate because America was portrayed as having the economic opportunities that they lacked. Both of these groups quickly found jobs in America.

The types of occupations in which they labored in; however, were vastly different from one another. The Irish immigrants experienced more occupational mobility than the German immigrants because they started off as common laborers whereas most German immigrants came to America with incredible skill and they tended to dominate the same trades.

Although many German immigrants were of the middle class, some were impoverished; they went into indentured servitude upon arrival in America. In general, all aspects of the Irish and German immigrants' finances in America was deemed as better than what they escaped. Letters highlight that despite their low wages, the Irish and German immigrants were able to purchase plenty, particularly the former with food and the latter with cattle and land.

In spite of attaining economic stability, both the Irish and German immigrants' culture were challenged by nativists. The Irish immigrants, who were confronted with prejudice, were portrayed as being too incompetent to rise up the ranks in the American society due to their alleged degenerated moral standards. Their low status was further exacerbated by suspicions with their ties to Catholicism.

The German immigrants were also ostracized because they practiced alternative Christian religions and Judaism. In addition, the German language was deemed as disruptive to the American way of life. With all of these oppositions towards the Irish and German culture, the Irish and German immigrant's assimilative powers were

threatened. Notwithstanding these hardships; however, their lives were not replicated to mirror their struggles back in their homelands.

In employing the First Amendment right that United States Constitution guarantees, these groups were able to invalidate themselves as targets of discrimination. Through their creation of unions and utilization of Tammany Hall, the Irish immigrants were practicing their right to organize, and simultaneously capitalizing on their opportunities to get ahead. Similarly, when their language and religions were threatened by obstruction, the German immigrants practiced their right to organize by intensifying the social cohesion among themselves in order preserve their German national identity. The result of these struggles are all encompassing of the steps that the Irish and German immigrants took to improve their lives and better their status.

As time progressed, the Irish and German immigrants' improvements were evolving into evident success. Their transition in the labor market to white collar positions, as well as how imbedded their cultures has become entrenched into the American society all signify their success in their pursuit of economic stability and social integration.

In order to get a broader outlook on this topic, future research ought to delve deeper into investigating the turning point between Irish and German immigrants struggle and success. This work has striven to get beneath that surface, and uncover the unknown. Overall, despite the exceptional challenges that these immigrants were faced with, their utilization of opportunities that America presented aided in redefining their status in America, which in turn enabled them to climb out of poverty and thereby prove their true worth.

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